


Hot jewelry in hot colors:
The lush warmth of
peridot and hot pink
tourmaline perfectly
accents clothing in bright
and tonal palettes.
Open Spaces Collection
by Cynthia Renée.
Photo by John Parrish.



EYE FOR COLOR



"Color Cues" is a column by colored-gem and marketing expert Cynthia Marcusson of Cynthia Renée Co. "Color Cues" provides concise, pertinent and highly usable information in a quick-read format for the busy professional. Whether demystifying technicalities, giving insight on using self-expression and fashion in marketing or providing how-tos in building your clientele of collectors, the topics raised in "Color Cues" will help you build your success with colored-gem marketing. Clip "Color Cues," circulate it among your staff, then save them in a special binder that can serve as your reference guide.

A trained "color eye" is indispensable in purchasing colored gems and designing jewelry. In fact, it would not be too much of a stretch to say that color awareness is integral to a Jeweler's success. Beyond this technical and aesthetic skill is a more esoteric one: the often overlooked ability to assist women in wearing their clothing and jewelry in ways that help develop and enhance their personal style.

Color combinations can be "constructive" or "deconstructive." Deconstructive combinations cancel each other out; sometimes they aren't just neutral but disharmonic, like a grating musical chord. Constructive combinations let the colors sing and increase a woman's beauty and sense of self-confidence. The goal is to have clients who feel fantastic in the jewelry we recommend and who wear it to project their own individual style.

Luckily there are endless color shades, blends and textures capable of conjuring up infinite dreams and mental images. Certain shades of green remind you of a misty shore with soft, whispering seafoam; other greens are solid and still as a forest of giant sequoias. A woman who wears a tourmaline pendant in heavy forest green with her light and fluffy seafoam chiffon blouse is likely to be mixing color "feelings" in a way that drags the seafoam chiffon down, like a rock in a pond, nullifying both pieces. Similarly, a soft seafoam tourmaline pendant is probably lost when worn with a pine green jacket.

It is the job of consumer fashion magazines to herald new color palettes. It's how we present these so-called fashionable colors to our clients that makes the difference. Over the past few months, the magazines have been proclaiming pink in all its forms as today's fashion wave. How does this relate to our jewelry marketing? How can we help a woman increase her joy in wearing fine jewelry?

Actually, the question is broader than, "How can I take advantage of the hot color?" There are two aspects in studying color trends: (1) Forecasting fashion colors and planning your colored-gemstone marketing, and (2) Knowing how to help a woman accessorize her new clothing. A woman will have little need to purchase more jewelry unless you show her how to wear it in different ways, in different combinations and in different forms of expression. Let's look at both aspects of marketing and color-trend awareness.

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THE HOT COLOR PHENOMENON

TYPICALLY, RESPONDING TO A REPORTER'S QUERY OF WHAT gem is selling, a dealer may proclaim in print something like, "Rhodolite's big this year—especially since pink is popular in women's clothes this spring." The answer assumes that rhodolite accessorizes pink clothing. The fact is that the overwhelming majority of rhodolite clashes with most pink clothing. Furthermore, there is usually a lag time of at least two to three years between the emergence of a "hot color" in fashion and a noticeable increase in popularity of gems in that color.

We can build on the fashion world's color-of-the-moment to increase awareness and sales of colored gemstones within that color family. This doesn't mean these particular colored gems represent short-lived trends. Cultural bombardments of the so-called hot color heighten our awareness of that color.

Consumer acceptance of peridot is a case study in tying gemstone marketing to a current hot color. When this yellowish-green hue was first seen in women's fashions nine years ago, most found it less than palatable. But today most women own a piece of clothing in this color; it's extremely difficult for a woman not to be influenced by fashion's bombardment of "in" colors. A woman comes

to a jewelry store pre-sensitized to fashion's colors—consequently she may gravitate toward gems she might not have noticed or accepted as easily before.

Now that peridot has been mainstreamed by the jewelry public, what are current and future "hot color" gems? The citrus shades are being heavily promoted in fashion—alone or as accessory pieces. Look toward clear, bright yellow stones, such as yellow sapphire, yellow beryl and yellow citrine. Also, expect varieties of bright orange garnets. While yellow citrine has mass appeal, yellow sapphire is gaining in the mid to high end. It is a sleeping beauty—with name recognition, durability and strong color, it is soon to be recognized on a wider scale. Runners-up are aquamarine and the lighter blue sapphires, not only because of the glacial blue tones showing up in



Precious stones, like these outstanding intensely colored sapphires surrounded by diamonds, complement vivid clothing colors. Earrings by John Buechner, Inc. Photo by JQ Magazine.

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fashion, but also because they are a perfect fit with the icy gleam of the increasingly popular white metals.

Today's popular fashion colors, orange and yellow, are not as universally appealing to women as, say, blue sapphire or green tourmaline—they may be more of an acquired taste. The yellow and orange gems are examples of gems with relatively low price points today that will become more difficult to source as female buyers warm to the colors.

For a gem to reach mammoth "hot color" proportions, there must be enough of a supply to create widespread demand. Just because pink is a popular fashion color doesn't mean you will see a concurrent rise in sales of pink gemstones. The quantity of true pink gemstones available on a consistent basis for manufacturers isn't as high as quantities of peridot were in the mid-nineties when it caught the hot-color wave. Furthermore, pink gemstones already have acceptance—it isn't a difficult color that is an acquired taste as peridot was and yellow and orange gems are—there is no acceptability hurdle to fly over, creating low prices.

Pink is great for clothing, but what pink gems can be sourced on a large scale to take advantage of this? Rhodolite garnet, though beautiful, is too "dusty" or "rosy" to accessorize clear pink, as is a lot

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Icy blue aquamarine creates a balanced tension with the warmth of peridot set in white gold. Limited-edition pieces from the Chinois Collection by Cynthia Renée. All drops are detachable. Photo by John Parrish.



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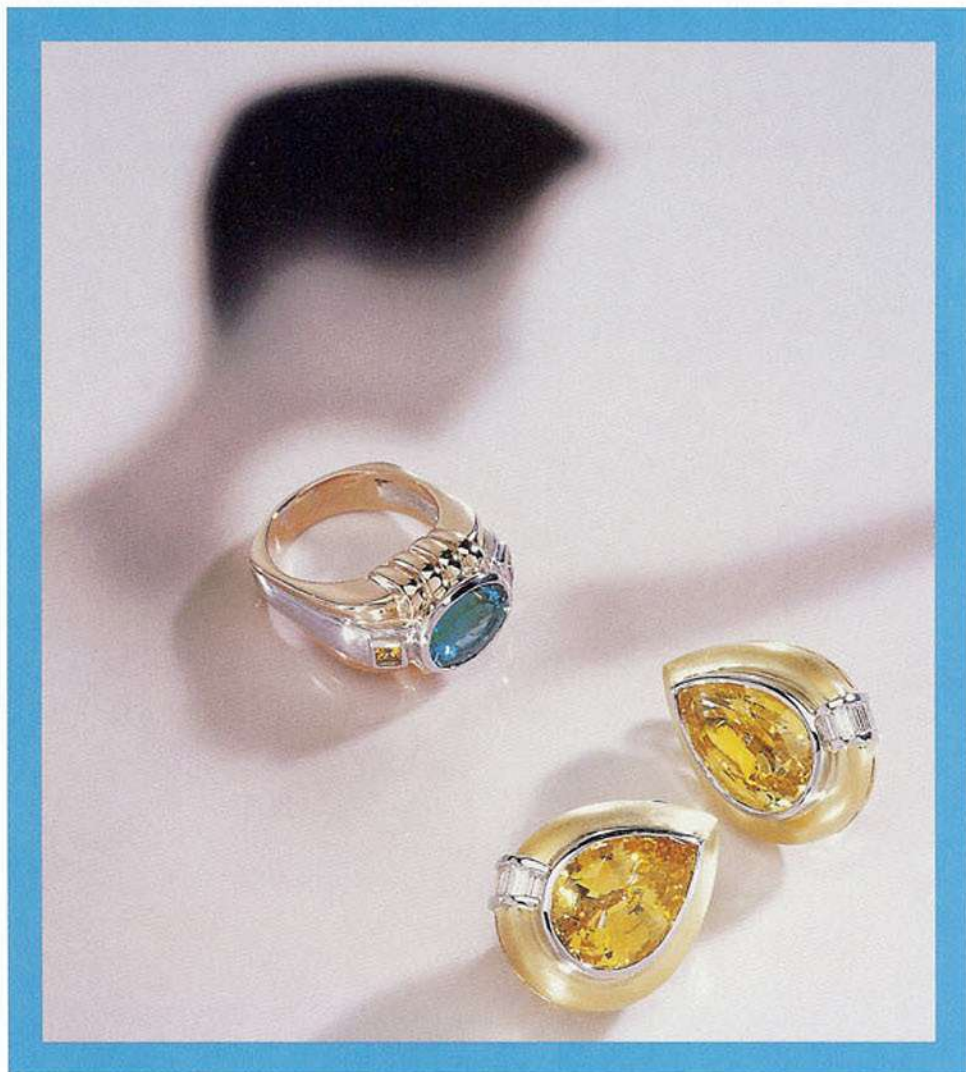


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EYE FOR COLOR



Colored gems to accent fashion's soft and gentle colors. Rainier ring with icy blue tourmaline, accented by yellow sapphire set in rose and white gold; twenty-five-carat yellow sapphire earrings with baguette diamond accent in eighteen-karat yellow gold and platinum. Jewelry by Cynthia Renée. Photo by John Parrish.

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of pink tourmaline. Pink sapphire can be a beautiful clear pink, though prices for larger sizes are dear, and most salespeople may need help in understanding its pricing structure. Currently there is interesting production from Madagascar of pink sapphire in melee and smaller calibrated sizes that may suit the needs of larger-scale manufacturers.

ACCESSORIZING COLOR WITH COLOR

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD, "I LOVE THIS pink tourmaline, but I don't wear pink"? Well, that's good. That pink gemstone will stand out more when worn with any other color of clothing than pink. Have

you seen how beautiful pink tourmaline looks with navy, cream, chocolate, sky blue or olive? This is why the rise in popularity of a particular fashion color doesn't necessarily correlate to an increase in desire for matching gems. For a gem to stand out from the clothing it is accessorizing, it must be a color that differs from the clothing yet matches it in strength. Pink doesn't show best on pink, but depending on the intensity of the pink, tanzanite, peridot or aquamarine can be remarkable.

But it's not just pink—there are several fashionable color trends. How do we assist women in wearing them? How do we stock gems to help them accessorize?

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Platinum beautifully highlights a rainbow of superb colored stones in these unique and extraordinary rings by Richard Krementz Gemstones. Photo by JQ Magazine.

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PASSIONATE RED

HOW TO WEAR: CONTRAST WITH CLEAR BRIGHT GEMS THAT match the red's intensity such as emerald, tanzanite, blue sapphire, yellow sapphire, yellow beryl, citrine, amethyst, lapis, peridot and yellow diamond. You can also harmonize with ruby or red spinel; tone layer with orangish or hot pink gems can work if they are clear and bright. Passionate red is a clear bright red, so use caution in combining it with "dusty" roses, "earthy" greens or "muted" tones.

SOLAR ORANGE

HOW TO WEAR: RED CLOTHING CAN HAVE A CLASSIC OR WILDLY tropical feel about it; hot orange is pure tropics: sunny, bold and lively. Contrast with clear bright gems such as amethyst, peridot,

tanzanite, blue sapphire, lapis, hot pink tourmaline, tsavorite and strong pink sapphire. Or, subtly layer with flame-colored gems such as yellow sapphire, yellow beryl or citrine. Harmonize with intense orange garnets or fire opal. Be wary about combining with dusty, earthy or muted shades that may drag down this clear, bright color.

HOT PINK

HOW TO WEAR: LIKE SOLAR ORANGE, THIS IS A COLOR WITH A madly tropical feel; contrast against strong, bright gems such as peridot, tanzanite, blue sapphire, yellow sapphire, yellow beryl, yellow citrine, tsavorite and lapis. Tone layer with the related shades of amethyst or red spinel or purple sapphire. Harmonize with hot pink tourmaline, sapphire and spinel. Dusty, earthy or

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muted shades can look dull against this color's vibrancy.

SOFT BABY PINK

HOW TO WEAR: CONTRAST WITH SOFT, icy-colored pastel gems: aquamarine, seafoam tourmaline, light blue sapphire, daffodil yellow sapphire, lilac amethyst. Subtly layer with peachy pink tourmaline or morganite. Harmonize with pink tourmaline, pink sapphire, pink topaz or pink spinel. Be careful with the peach—it may have too much brown in it to play well with soft baby pink. Some grass green gems such as tourmaline and tsavorite may also work if they are of an intensity that doesn't upstage the soft pink.

GLACIAL BLUE

HOW TO WEAR: CONTRAST WITH SOFT, icy-colored pastel gems: daffodil yellow

sapphire, lilac amethyst, pink tourmaline, pink sapphire, pink topaz, pink spinel; "butterscotch" garnet. Tonal layer with seafoam tourmaline; harmonize with aquamarine, light blue sapphire and iolite. Stay away from earthy muted tones that will muddy the effect. Dark and/or intense gems can overpower or weigh down the glacial blue; use caution.

NAVY BLUE

HOW TO WEAR: CONSIDER THIS LIKE A dark canvas on which you showcase most anything. Clear bright gems such as yellow sapphire, tsavorite, peridot, ruby, red spinel and intense orange garnet; earthy gems such as mocha zircon, rhodolite, sunflower citrine, green tourmaline, ametrine and precious and imperial topaz. Harmonize with blue sapphire, tanzanite, iolite and lapis. Soft pastels work if they are of a size that takes

notice—otherwise, they can get lost against the dark expanse.

CHOCOLATE BROWN

HOW TO WEAR: EXTREMELY VERSATILE: can wear earthy, bright and soft colors. Brights include yellow sapphire, ruby, red spinel, peridot, tanzanite, blue sapphire, pink sapphire, hot pink tourmaline and amethyst. Play up the earthy shades such as mocha zircon, citrine, ametrine, rhodolite, green tourmaline, iolite, "merlot" tourmaline and precious and imperial topaz. Layering with some shades of amethyst, ametrine and rhodolite gives a particularly restrained and sophisticated effect. Have you seen how beautiful aquamarine is with brown? Try it, along with light blue sapphire, lilac amethyst, pink tourmaline and pink spinel. It's like flowers in a wooden basket.

FOREST GREEN

HOW TO WEAR: THIS IS LIKE THE "earthier" green of forest pine trees—not a clear grass green. Wear with earthy or muted shades such as rhodolite, ametrine, mocha zircon, citrine, "merlot" tourmalines, iolite, imperial and precious topaz. Use caution that bright gems don't overpower the earthy green, but try blue sapphire, yellow sapphire, ruby, red spinel and tanzanite. JQ

Cynthia Marcusson, principal of Cynthia Renée Co., is a wholesaler specializing in fine colored gemstones and creative jewelry as well as a sought-after consultant on the marketing of colored gems. She can be contacted directly at: Cynthia Renée Co., 504 East Alvarado Street, Suite 208, Fallbrook, CA 92028, Tel: 760-728-5150, Fax: 760-728-2636.

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