

FASHION

& COLORED GEMS

Cynthia R. Marcusson — Cynthia Renée Co.

H a u t e C o l o u r s . . .

My friend Clare Kittle just telephoned from her periodic pulpit. She was reelin', she was rappin', she had me exclaiming, "Amen!" (For those of you who are missing the pleasure of having Clare in your life, she is a top-rate graphic designer specializing in jewelry industry marketing—you know, a savvy, creative type.) What's this gospel all about?

Just a "couple white chicks sittin' round talkin'" fashion? Well, sometimes—but not now. Rather, two female business owners who would probably score high on the customer

premise: There is no One Way to look.

Finally, we find our differences something to be highlighted; we celebrate our individuality. We don't want to be alike. "Remember when we went with a certain hem length that was Right or Wrong?!" exclaimed Clare. "What's wonderful about fashion now is that there is no mean level. Now, we can go everywhere from the bottom on up to the top: diamonds for day, makeup or bare-faced, cropped hair or long tresses, wide pants or leggings." Fashion for the first time is



Yellow is universally associated with rays of sunshine; the wearer of this golden zircon could dial the sun with a glance!



Imperial topaz and other spicy-colored gems are some of today's hottest colors.



Indicolite is the gem of choice for riding the wave of popularity of "tropical water blues."

demographics you're targeting. We're aware of fashion, we control our own purse strings, and we *love* to buy in stores that help us consume.

Gemstone fashion is not just about which colors are "hot." It is much deeper than that. Yes, we see shifts of popularity in certain colors of gemstones. But, if we are going to market jewelry and fashion, let's build it on a much bigger and stronger foundation. Colors are external to fashion's core

about choices and freedom of expression. Colored gemstones are a strong medium with which to express one's unique voice.

Where is fashion? In our minds. Explains Clare, "It's boiled down from What You *Should* Wear to Here's What I *Want* to Be." Consumers are actively making fashion choices in many mediums, yet have no idea how to individualize themselves with gemstones. Consumers *need* you! They *want*

And Beyond

you! Create reasons for them to purchase jewelry beyond a diamond solitaire and string of pearls. Visiting a jewelry store should not be an exercise in staid conformity.

The Hot Color — More Than a Trend

When a color becomes our culture's Hot Color, we see a corresponding rise in the popularity of gems of a similar color range. This doesn't mean these particular colored gems represent short-lived trends. Cultural bombardments of The Hot Color heighten our awareness. We then gravitate towards gems we might not have

noticed or accepted as easily before this priming. It's like flirting. We're stimulated and more accepting of the eventual seduction.

Peridot is a great example. The yellowish-green peridot color began showing up in women's fashions about three years ago. The purchase of a peridot ring isn't a trendy purchase. Rather, the awareness and accep-



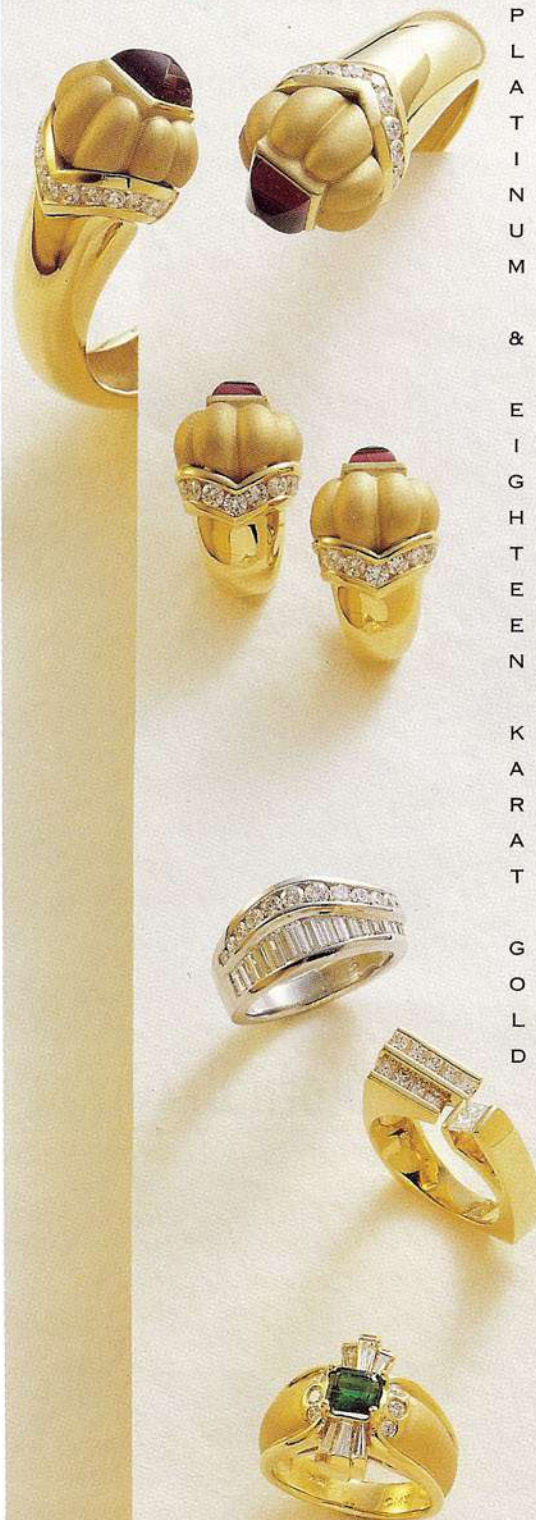
This suite of silvery pink spinels captures the trend toward neutral colors.

All photos by Weldon. All gems by Cynthia Renée Co.

tance of this color began in the fashion boutiques. When a woman visits a jewelry store, her sensitized eyes hone in on that same color. "There it is! The same color as my new blazer!" With proper care, that peridot ring will wear for decades. Not only will it accompany her new blazer, but it contrasts beautifully with every other color of her wardrobe, except possibly creamy pastels.

Don't be limited to tying colored gemstones strictly to particularly fashionable colors in clothing. Capitalize on sensitivity to The Hot Color to create initial in-

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terest and acceptance, then use these colors of gemstones to integrate with a wide range of wardrobe colors.

Spice Adds Spirit

Yet to crest, the popularity of spicy-colored gems has been building for several years. (See author's article, "Spicy-Hued Gemstones Curry Customer Favor," *JQ Magazine*, July/August 1991.) Spicy colors team an emotional visual impact with the zestful flavor of life. By carrying gemstones

from the spice color range, you can create excitement among your clients and add punch to your sales figures. Look in your spice cupboard: paprika, curry, cayenne and ginger probably stand out to greet you. Spice-colored gemstones are as dramatically toned as the herbs are fascinatingly flavorful. Two favorites are the fiery imperial and precious topazes and the sun-kissed varieties of garnets.

Fine topaz can add spice to everyone's sales figures. Unfortunately, most people have not experienced the radiating beauty of a fine topaz. With its romantic sunset colors, brilliant luster and shimmering qualities, fine topaz is a true gem for connoisseurs. Those who stock fine topaz find it an important part of their colored gemstone business. Designating topaz as merely the November birthstone or "by request only" is immensely limiting. Although fine topaz is rare, its name enjoys tremendous recognition. Its beauty, coupled with the security of a known name, make the sale much easier.

Sizes over ten carats are available, though the most common size for jewelry is two to six carats. The supply of fine topaz is extremely low, and demand is up, along with the price. Expect prices to range from \$200 to \$1,200 per carat depending on the depth of reddish-tones and the size.

Spice-colored gemstones are as dramatically toned as the herbs are fascinatingly flavorful.

Beyond pomegranate red, garnet provides a sweeping sunset of colors with which to create fine jewelry. There are many species of garnet. They are categorized by their refractive index, not their color. As a group, garnets are very friendly: they easily interbreed, creating hybrids which further add to the great range of this gemstone.

Some colors of garnet can burst with the intensity of a tangerine dream, flame like a campfire or exhibit the brooding tones of rootbeer. These attractively colored garnets are found in the species spessartite and grossularite, and the varieties hessonite and malaya. When shopping for one of these spectacular garnets, are you looking for



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a specific color or a species? Several spicy garnets may look very similar to the eye, but still differ considerably in their properties and chemical composition. Let your gemstone supplier know if you are shopping for color or chemistry.

The vivid orange-red and pinkish-orange colors fetch the highest prices. The price of all the spicy-colored garnets decreases with the presence of brown.

For Warmth, Go Exotic

Warm tones are so inspiring. When shopping for warmer-toned gems, select colors that bring to mind the cultural influences of Africa, India, Indonesia and the Middle East. Look for the grass greens of peridot and tourmaline; the burgundies and burnt umbers of garnet, tourmaline, fancy sapphire and spinel; and the deep purples of amethyst, fancy sapphire and spinel. For an up-to-date look, combine amethyst with rhodolite or green tourmaline, spicy-colored garnet with tsavorite, and peridot with rhodolite or amethyst.

When well cut, the more delicately colored gems reflect an inner glow—like afternoon light skipping across a lake.

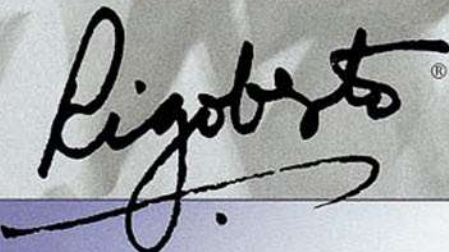
Anne Telford, in her article on "Color Predictions" in this issue of *JQ Magazine*, states, "One of the strongest color stories is yellow." I agree! Interest in yellow sapphire keeps increasing—as do sales. Everyone is familiar with the name sapphire, and a yellow is much less expensive than a blue of equivalent quality. Finer yellow sapphires most commonly come in ovals, cushions and pear-shapes, and less frequently in emerald-cuts and in larger (over 6 mm) rounds. Emerald-cuts, because of the long rectangular step facets on the pavilion, don't give sapphire all the brightness a mixed cut on an oval or cushion will.

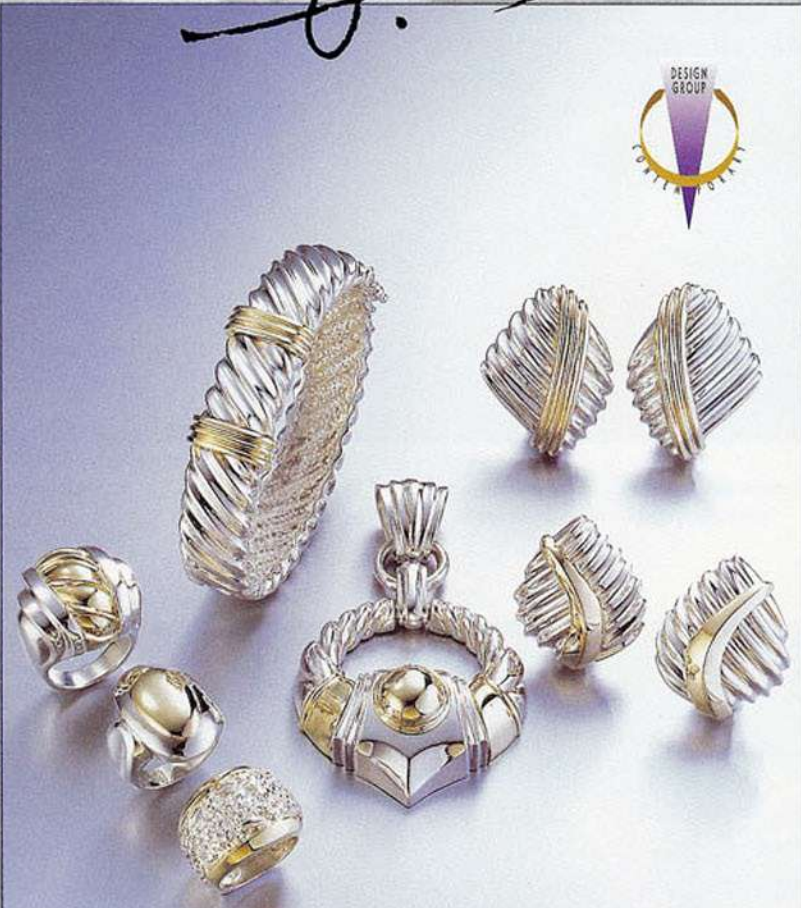
Yellow zircons can be almost explosive in their yellow though they can't match the durability of sapphires. Zircons are best in pendants, brooches or earrings.

Tropical is another trend. Imagine exotic flora and equatorial seas. Tourmaline captures these hues particularly well. A tourmaline can be greenish-blue, bluish-green or a blend of equal amounts of blue and green. The unique Paraiba tourmaline epitomizes the exotics. Some tourmaline and beryl are more subtly seafoam-colored. The gem aquamarine is even named after the sea. Chrome and green tourmaline, peridot and tsavorite evoke the lushness of foliage.

Neutral-colored gemstones? Yes! Peaches, lavenders, sil-

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F a s h i o n & C o l o r

very pinks and gentle minty greens blend with any wardrobe. The key to selling the lighter tones is in the cut. When well cut, the more delicately colored gems reflect an inner glow—like afternoon light skipping across a lake. They don't always show best in the sharp light of your display case. You must demonstrate how these gems literally dance with light,

so that your customers will fall under their spell. Take them out of the case and into subdued light. If customers don't want to put the jewelry in their hand, show them from a distance of several feet. Once they get a glimpse, they'll come closer! If you like two-toned rings with the neutrals, the combination of white metal and rose gold is exquisite.



With colors shifting towards yellow and the popularity of "nature-derived" pigments, peridot will no doubt continue its winning run.

Well-cut peach- and mint-colored tourmalines are glowing members of the pastel group.

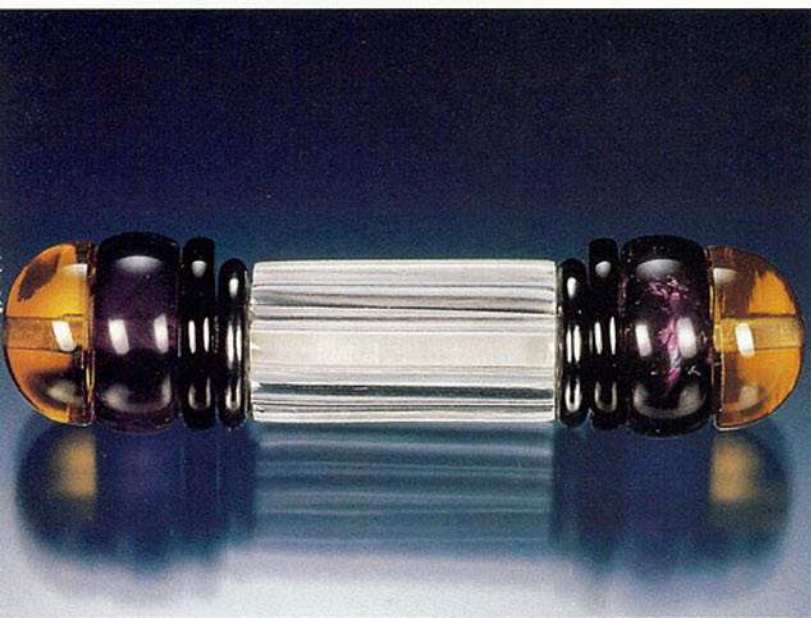


Yellow, as in this sapphire, is one of the most important color trends we'll see over the next several years.

Using the natural combination of peridot and rhodolite, Michael Angelo Designs hints at the earthly delights of green leaves and burgundy fruit.

Green and spicy-colored garnets echo nature's palette.

The rise in popularity of some colors does not mean the decline of others. We will always be moved by a passionate red ruby or spinel, the exotic colors of tanzanite, or a screaming pink sapphire, spinel or tourmaline. Don't underestimate the power of passion and the freedom of expression unique to colored gems. JQ

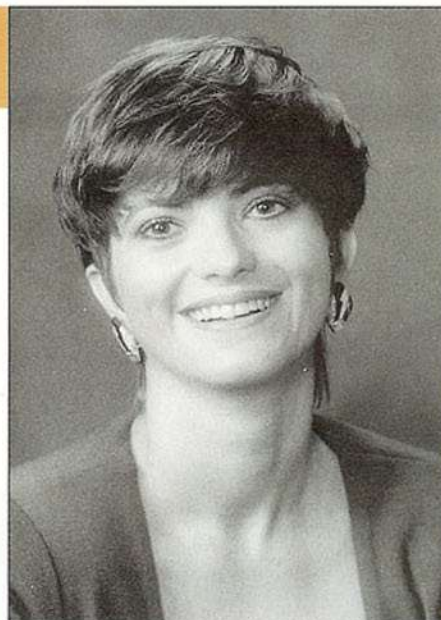


Carved quartz provides a neutral background to show off the popular combination of amethyst and citrine.



Combining amethyst with peridot plays with the heightened popularity of colors suggestive of exotic locales. Purple teams the passion of red with blue's serenity.

All photos by Weidon. All gems by Cynthia Renée Co.



Cynthia R. Marcusson is a frequent contributor to JQ Magazine on the subject of gems and gem promotion. In addition to operating her own business of selling fine colored gemstones to the jewelry industry under the name of Cynthia Renée Co., Cynthia is a popular speaker/educator and conducts in-store marketing/training seminars. For information, please contact Cynthia Renée Co., P.O. Box 1763, Fallbrook, CA 92088, Tel: 619-728-5150, Fax: 619-728-2636.

BRIAN CHARLES



Las Vegas R113 New York 3706

76 Webster North Tonawanda, New York 14120 Tel. 716-695-2652 Fax 716-693-6084