



Winter

The Color Palette Approach to Marketing Colored Gemstones

CYNTHIA R. MARCUSSEN
CYNTHIA RENÉE CO.

Warms

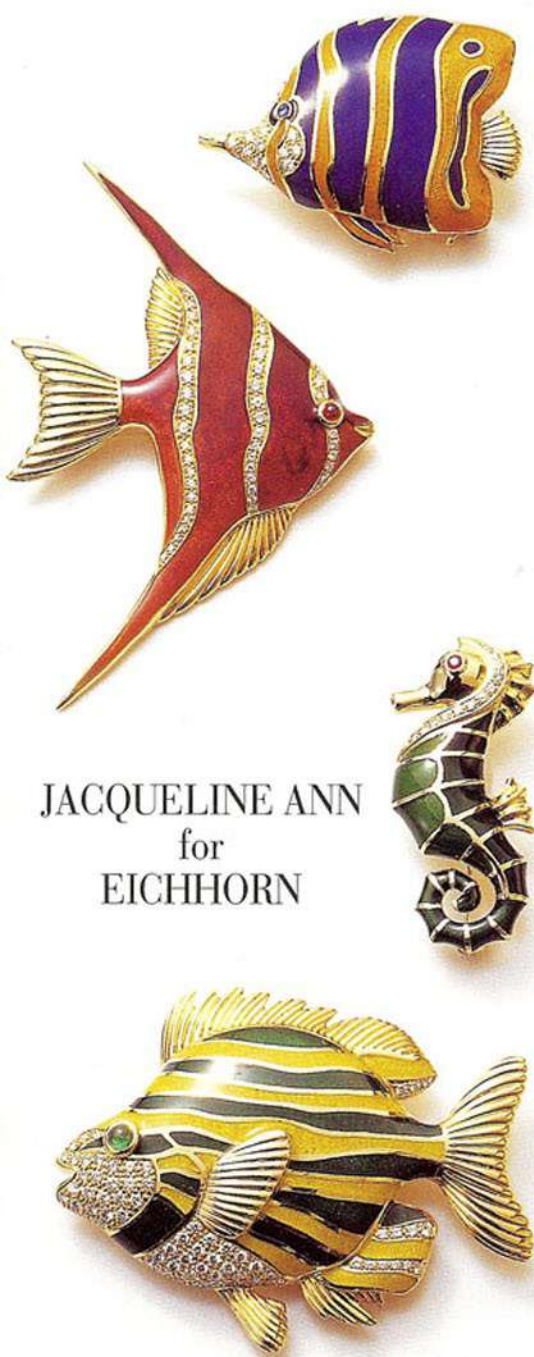
*Blended ametrine is like
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and umber. Photo by
C.R. Marcusson.*



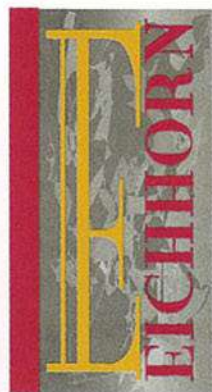
*This intense golden zircon
has the power of the sun.
Gem from Cynthia Renée
Co., photo by Weldon.*

“What’s the hot color? What’s the hot stone?” Inquiring minds wanna know! I can give a few short answers, but... Successful marketing of colored gemstones involves more than just hoping to cash in on one or two current “hot stones.”

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Being proactive leads to success: plan your colored gemstone offerings, marketing and display to coordinate with societal interests and fashions. Don't limit yourself to one or two "hot" gems. Stimulating and exciting, color palettes widen the window through which jewelry stores attract customers to colored gemstones.

A color palette is a grouping of colored gemstones of a similar feeling, tone or hue. Think of an artist's palette—the paint colors express the artist's emotions on canvas. With our color palettes, the gemstones are the paint and jewelry is the canvas of self-expression. We create our color palettes in gemstone themes that harmonize and contrast in a way that tells a visual story.

Color palettes use the emotional impact of a group of thematic colors to draw the customers' interest. Within each palette are gemstones of different sizes, prices and hues. The visual impact of color palettes is exciting and stimulating. It gives the salesperson the opportunity to tell a story. Offering palettes of colors heightens the customer's desire to possess and assemble a collection of colored-gem jewelry. Seeing how various types of colored gems can mix and match inspires your customer to go far beyond the single birthstone purchase to the wearing of colored-gem jewelry for self-expression.

Colored-gemstone jewelry is the best medium for expressing one's individuality, uniqueness and passion for life. Create interest and ignite passion in your customers through marketing by color palette, or at least setting up one display case arranged by color. Jewelry designed to focus on the colored gemstone, with minimal or no diamonds, allows a woman to

feel put together, wellgroomed and sophisticated without being overdone. Gone are the days of overblown glitz and fussy jewelry. The innovative Jeweler can keep increasing sales by transforming the way women wear, and feel about, jewelry. Take it out of the cases, put it on their bodies and let them see how it enhances their everyday life.

How do you find color palettes? We study a number of trends in order to choose our color groupings. One such indicator is fashion. When a color becomes a culture's so-called 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. Instead, bombardments of these colors stimulate our awareness. Then, we gravitate toward a gem we might never have noticed or accepted as easily before.

Peridot is a great example. Over four years, it has risen from the bad rap as "August's icky birthstone" to one of the top colored-gemstone sellers. The yellowish

green peridot color began showing up in women's fashions about five years ago. The purchase of a peridot ring isn't a trendy purchase, though the awareness and acceptance of this color began in the fashion boutiques. When a woman visits a jewelry store, her presensitized eyes hone in on the same color she sees in the boutiques—"There it is! The same color as my new jacket!" Long after her jacket is threadbare, her peridot ring will accessorize every other color of her wardrobe, except possibly icy pastel hues.

What's the next hot color scheme we can plan to take advantage of? Turn to fashion for the answer. Last winter, *Vogue* magazine proclaimed



Cynthia Marcusson

"Brown is the new black." That proclamation accelerated interest in what was already being seen in every boutique and department store: clothing in variations of camel, chocolate, curry, ivory, mocha, mulberry, acorn, java, mahogany, briar, plus the resurgence of tweeds, just to name a few. This wave is far from cresting; one recent issue (October 1995) of just one magazine (*Elle*), extolled that, "Designers have suddenly developed a yen for deep, rich brown, which looks surprisingly sophisticated in city-smart day clothes"; and,

"Often dismissed as dreary or drab, the neutral is now polished and.... quite luscious"; and, "Dark like black, but less harsh and more complex, brown is serious enough for work, sensual enough for anytime after." Our basic colors are being transformed. The combination of fashionable colors, the increase in women's economic power and colored gems as the jewelry medium with which to express one's individuality equals a colored-gem business bonanza.

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We're in the middle of a colored-gem business bonanza.

One strong color palette over the next three or four years is made up of what we call the "spicy-hued" gems. What are they? We present the same gemstones differently with the seasons. In the fall and winter, radiant "winter warm" gems recall fall foliage, a crackling fire, spiced cider and copper kettles. Spring and summer bring the "desert hue" gems of sunflower, mocha ice cream, terra-cotta and

DISPLAY AND TIPS FOR COLOR

One spicy color won't create much interest. Use a variety of hues and tones within the spicy color scale. Then, increase the visual impact through enriching the palette with gems such as peridot, green and rose tourmaline, rhodolite garnet and amethyst. Blended ametrine is a fanciful cornerstone of the spicy color palette, as it contains golds and copper tones as well as a plum accent.

Visit the local florist for some beautiful wooden branches and/or silk flowers in the spicy palette. A crafts shop near our office offered beautiful display pieces of branches, natural colored raffia and silk sunflowers that would look great in the case. Or take a walk and gather seed pods. Scatter about cinnamon sticks, cloves and nuts in their shells or multi-colored fall leaves, real or faux.

Serve spiced cider you make in a Crock-Pot by combining apple juice with a few cinnamon sticks and cloves. The smell alone will set the mood.

Tie in the spicy colors with fashion. Rove through the pages of *Vogue*, *Bazaar*, *Elle*, *Town & Country* and *W*. Cut out pages with clothing colors these gems will accessorize, and laminate the pages to display in the case. Have a calligrapher use col-



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PROMOTIONAL THE SPICY PALETTE

ored ink and copy magazine quotes referring to the colors on small stationery cards. Use the *Vogue* quote, "Brown is the new black," plus other quotes given in this article.

Work into a display fashion accessories such as scarves, belts, leather gloves, etc., that tie into the color palette. Don't use just brown accessories; we don't want to limit the enjoyment of these gems to the wearers of the chocolate shades. There are spicy palette gems that will harmonize with most other colors—the point is that they are neutrals!

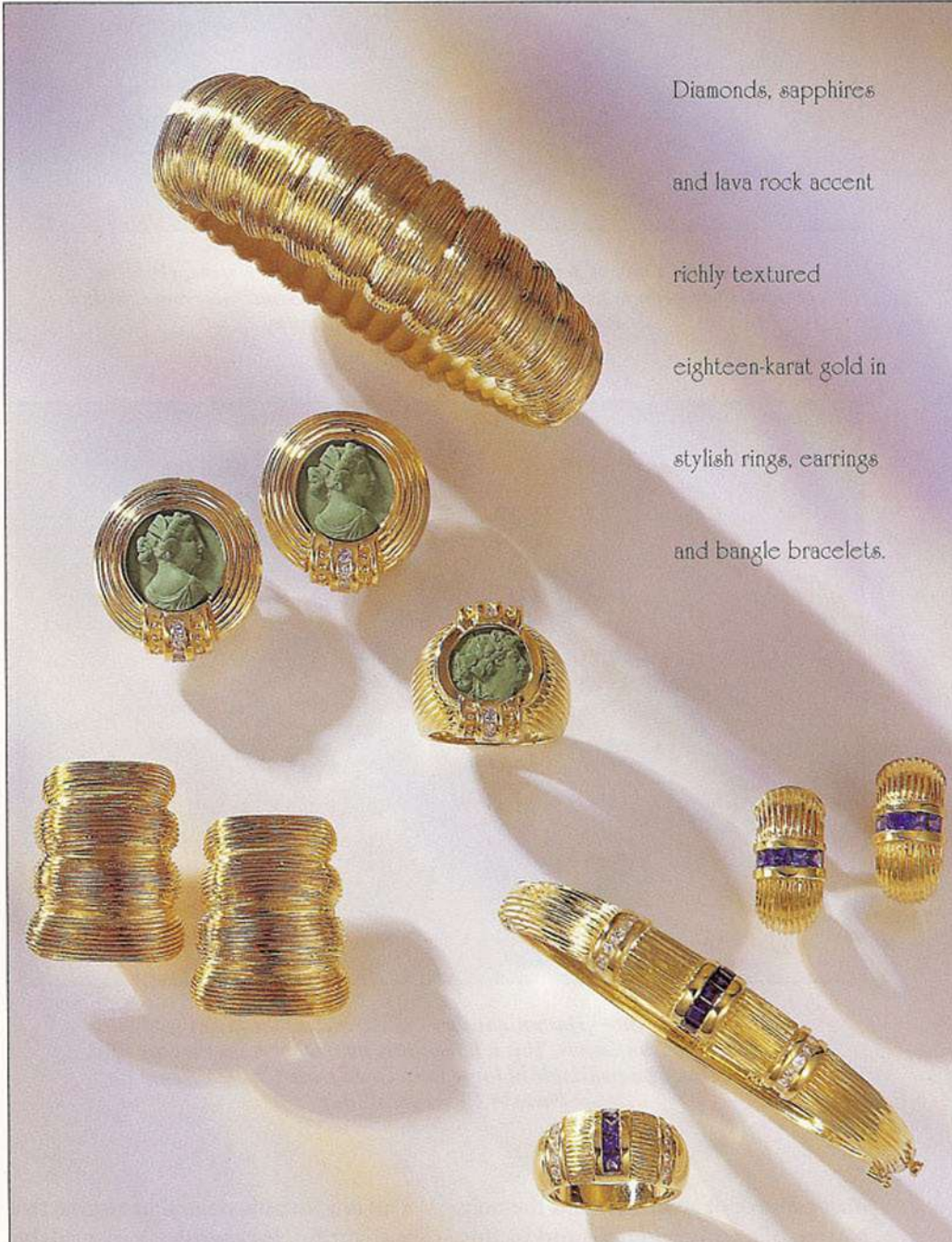
Have a special evening inviting thirty to fifty of your customers for a sampling of mocha or mocha java and the jewels. It can be a feast for all senses. Sample a few different types of gourmet coffee, chocolates and the spicy color palette in a form appropriate for your purpose. Decorate the store with sunflowers and cinnamon-stick bouquets. Make sure the staff coordinates their dress and jewelry. Give a ten-minute presentation on the different types of gems and what they can do for your customer and provide a one-page hand-out explaining the gems for them to take home. Make sure to follow up with phone calls and have your staff calendar their next moves.

sandstone. Accent this palette with touches of plum and/or green. Whatever the season, these colors of gems add spice to life.

Let's highlight the menu of spicy gemstones:

Sunflower Citrine—This unique and distinct shade of citrine has the tawny golden hues of sunflowers. While the gem citrine has several sources, there is only one source for sunflower citrine: Bolivia's Anahí Mine. Like the other gems from the Anahí, the sunflower citrine is unheated. In fact, this is the only commercially available unheated citrine on the market. Interestingly, the Anahí is also the world's

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A stimulating mix of gemstones within the spicy palette: citrine, rhodolite, peridot, spicy garnets accented with cinnamon sticks. Gemstones from Cynthia Renée Co., photo by Charles Colladay.



Sunflower Citrine—This unique shade of citrine has the tawny gold hues reminiscent of sunflowers. This is a fantastic neutral gem that is beautiful, inexpensive and available in large sizes. Gems from Cynthia Renée Co. Photo by Charles Colladay.

major source of amethyst, plus the only source of another gem found in this color palette, the enigmatic blended ametrine.

I've been very encouraged by the public's reaction to sunflower citrine.

This is a fantastic neutral gemstone that is beautiful, inexpensive and available in large sizes. It is a great gem with which to initiate your customers to the joys of collecting and assembling a jewelry wardrobe. With its unique smoky

gold color and fashionability, it is equally appropriate for established gemstone enthusiasts.

Proper cutting is vital to sunflower citrine so that its color glowingly reflects from the gem's body. With your customer, take this citrine from the direct showcase lighting to subdued indirect light where it absolutely glows! This is a great sales technique for all well-cut colored gemstones, especially the lighter tones, as a well-cut colored gemstone dances in direct light. Sunflower citrine ranges in price from \$8–\$30 per carat, retail, and is durable enough for a wide variety of jewelry uses.

Sunflower citrine is perfect for the chic monochromatic look of gold gem with yellow gold. Well crafted, this combination can present the intriguing optical illusion that asks, where does the gemstone begin and the metal end? At Wayne Jewelers of Wayne and Ardmore, Pennsylvania, a sales associate creatively placed a large sunflower citrine squarish cushion in the center of a gold brooch. It transformed a nice, but standard, brooch into an attention-getting piece of sophisticated jewelry still available at an inexpensive price.

If the monochromatic look isn't for you, try combining the sunflower citrine with rhodolite or peridot accents. These gemstone combinations are attention-getting yet restrained, not overdone. Michaeline Mason, of Nordstrom Fine Jewelry, Paramus, New Jersey, has used sunflower citrine to get several customers started on collecting colored-gem jewelry. She gets them excited with colored gemstones by mixing fun inexpensive gemstones together in one fashionable piece. She has used sunflower citrine with rhodolite, mocha zircon with a small tsavorite, butterscotch garnet with rose spinel. One client's passion for collecting was started with a flower pin made with a different color and shape gem in each petal. This way, she could joyfully display her hand-picked gemstones in one piece. "Start with some inexpensive gemstones, put them together and set something fun—this way the customer gets to see how fun it is and gets

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started in expressing herself with colored gem jewelry."

Blended Ametrine—Unique in the world is the Anahí Mine of Bolivia where amethyst and citrine blend together forming a beautiful multicolored gem called "ametrine." Ametrine is usually faceted in a rectangular shape to show a sharp definition between the two colors. We cut our ametrine differently, blending the colors so they mingle and change as the ametrine is seen from different angles. Blended ametrine is an artist's palette of colors with which we create gem landscapes of light and wonder.

Blended ametrine is like a sunrise that lasts for all time. Light shifts through deep purples and lavenders, races around the sun's golden hues, then flows through tides of copper, peach and umber. No other gem offers blended ametrine's wide range of color. It is a deeply mesmerizing gem that evokes strong human emotion. Think about it. What attracts us as human beings? We are drawn to what we cannot completely hold and possess—toward questions that aren't completely answered. This is what continually captures our imagination, and this is what blended ametrine does. Wearing blended ametrine, different colors beckon us with our every movement. Like watching a sunrise, we never have the same view twice; we are continually intrigued and refreshed by this gem.

*The customer just
 couldn't get the
 ametrine out of her
 mind—she was
 totally fascinated.*

As this article was being written, a \$5,000 (retail) unset blended ametrine gem was sold by Bob

Gasser of John Gasser & Son Jewelers in Ohio. As Bob told me, "I showed the customer the ametrine five days ago. She left the store without it, but just couldn't get it out of her mind. She was totally fascinated. Ametrine activates and satisfies the curious nature in most people; they



can't look at it only once." Lee Dorn, of Distinctive Image Jewelers in Wisconsin, described blended ametrine as a "moving landscape of hues." A sales master, Lee advises selling the gem by placing it on the customer's closed hand, "then have her rock her hand back and forth slightly and gaze upon ametrine's shimmering interplay of light. Customers for whom we have made jewelry with blended ametrine have expressed great satisfaction in owning these prized and unusual gemstones and have asked for compan-

ion pieces." Companion pieces?? I love that term!

Another attraction for your customers is that they are getting in on the ground floor of ametrine's marketing. All ametrine comes from one mine in the world: the Anahí in Bolivia. One-locality gemstones hold

jewelry-store staple.

Gemstone prices are set by the laws of supply and demand. Since most consumers are unfamiliar with ametrine, its relatively low price is not at all reflective of its rarity and beauty. As demand increases for this limited supply, prices will rise.



Mocha zircon has the richly satisfying depth of espresso beans and feel of chocolate on fire. Cognac and gleaming mahogany are also members of the mocha zircon family. Gems from Cynthia Renée Co., photo by Weldon.

a special place in the gem world for their rarity and greater tendency to appreciate over time. Coming from only one mine, there is a limited supply—much more limited, say, than that of blue sapphire. Before now, ametrine was seen only sporadically in the gem trade. The recent organized mining and marketing of ametrine will allow it to become a

Ametrine is a completely natural gemstone; its colors were formed deep in the ground. It is also a very durable gem, widely suited for a variety of jewelry uses. Most shapes are available; though emerald cuts in the blended ametrine cannot have the standard step-cut pavilion. The darker colors will show more easily

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A color palette is a grouping of colored gemstones of a similar feeling, tone or hue. We create our color palettes in gemstone themes that harmonize and contrast in a way that tells a visual story. Here are butterscotch and rhodolite garnets with bluish-green and pink tourmaline. Gems from Cynthia Renée Co.; jewelry crafted for Linds Jewelers, Washington, by Barbara Westwood. Photo by Sky Hall.



Red Spinel the color of fallen maple leaves fall into the spicy color palette. Rings by Nanz Aalund for Nordstrom Fine Jewelry; gems by Cynthia Renée Co. Photo by Jeff Engelstad.

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in gems over ten carats. Blended ametrine retail prices range from \$16-\$70 per carat. Here is a new, beautiful and rare gem in an affordable price range.

Mocha Zircon—Why “mocha”? Because the gem color has the richly satisfying depth of espresso beans. Because it looks like chocolate on fire. Cognac and gleaming reddish brown mahogany are also members of the mocha zircon family of colors.

Zircon is a natural gemstone with greater dispersion than diamond. What this means is that, when light moves through zircon, it easily breaks up into its rainbow, or spectral, colors; this property is also what puts the “fire” in diamonds. As in colored diamonds, the darker colors of zircon somewhat mask the “fire” phenomenon, though all of these mocha zircons have a bright and gleaming quality. This is a strong and powerful gem that commands attention.

Mocha zircon, like sunflower citrine, ametrine and the spicy garnets, is unheated and completely natural. Heating increases the brittleness of zircons, particularly the blue and colorless varieties. Since our mocha zircon is unheated, it isn't as prone to chip in ring wear. Certainly less fussy than emerald, opal or tanzanite, with a little extra care mocha zircon can be enjoyed in rings over a lifetime. Wearing instructions are:

“When you come home from work and change your clothes, take off your mocha zircon ring and it will endure to be passed down through the generations.” Bezel-setting the mocha zircon helps to protect it. Retail

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prices range from \$50–\$120 per carat; sizes typically range from four to nine carats; typical shapes are ovals, cushions and pear shapes; rounds are rarely over 5 mm.

Zircon has name recognition as December's birthstone. Since most customers aren't familiar with the wide range of zircon colors, some confuse it

Tacoma, Washington, has found that, "People don't know what it is right away, so we have to explain. But we have to do this with so many of our gemstones. Our customers say, 'What is that?' and we start the conversation."

I love my newest ring. It is a mocha zircon set in a twenty-two-karat yellow gold simple bezel-set ring, designed by

Nanz Aalund of Nordstrom Fine Jewelry. Nanz adapted her initial wax for this ring, which was designed to hold a signet center, to frame my mocha zircon perfectly. The twenty-two-karat gold contrasts beautifully with the zircon's mahogany gleam. I've already found many occasions to wear my ring, and it has moved smoothly from com-



Blended ametrine is a moving landscape of hues. Different colors beckon us with our every movement. It is like watching the sunrise; we never have the same view twice. Cynthia Renée Co. Ametrine cut by Bob Birt; photo by Weldon.

with CZ. I recommend the proactive approach: while handing the customer the mocha zircon, say, "Isn't this beautiful?! This is natural mocha zircon from Sri Lanka." This reinforces that zircon is a natural gemstone, found in a real country and, therefore, worthy of attention.

In selling mocha zircon, Katherine Lundberg, of Nordstrom Fine Jewelry,

*Beautiful color
drives the
successful marketing
of gemstones.*

plementing the white linens of summer to winter's darker hues.

Spicy Garnets—Spicy-colored garnets call out strong emotions and pungent flavors. Curry, cloves, cayenne, ginger and cinnamon come to mind. A sweeter side dish to the darker spicy garnets is butterscotch garnet, a lighter toned orangish peach garnet that is especially bright when well cut. There

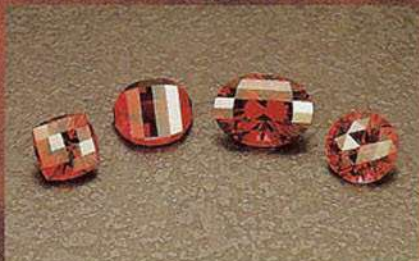
are many species of garnet. They are categorized by their refractive index, not their color. As a group, garnets are very friendly: they easily interbreed, creating hybrids which add further to the great color range of this gemstone. Some colors of garnet can burst with the intensity of a tangerine, flame like a campfire or exhibit the brooding tones of root beer. These spicy-colored garnets are found in the species spessartite and grossularite, and the varieties hessonite and malaia. Since all these varieties can have a similar color, and it is beautiful color that drives the successful marketing of gemstones, we've grouped all garnets of this color range into one group: the spicy garnets. Several spicy garnets may look very similar to the eye but still differ considerably in their properties and chemical composition.

Ann Sorkin, of Wynnewood Jewelers in Pennsylvania, has been very successful using the spicy color palette. As she explains it, "The customer is discovering colored gemstones, and I think the spicy colors make them feel that winter is not so nasty."

One of my favorite ways of setting a spicy garnet is to use a combination of metal colors: yellow or rose gold with white gold or platinum. The burning umber of the spicy garnet contrasts with the gleaming whiteness of the white metal. This contrast of opposites creates an interesting tension. Heating and quenching, or the sun and the moon captured in one piece of jewelry. A startlingly beautiful "ring with a story," is a spicy garnet combined with tsavorite garnet. The hot and spicy can also be well accented by diamonds.

The more delicate shades of butterscotch garnet reflect an inner glow—like afternoon light skipping across a lake. They don't always show best in the sharp light

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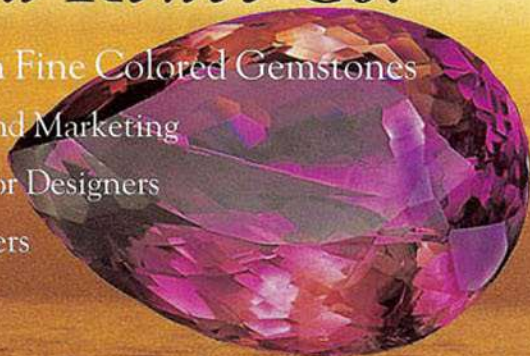


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*Sunrise over Lago Mandioré, Bolivia
Ametrine from Bolivia's Anahi Mine*

Citrine is perfect for the chic monochromatic look of gold gem in yellow gold. Well crafted, this combination can present the intriguing optical illusion that asks, where does the gem begin and the metal end? Eighteen-karat yellow gold jewelry from Miriam Butz-Brown, San Diego.



of your display case. You must demonstrate how these gems literally dance with the light so that your customers will fall under their spell (and they will!). Take them out of the case and into subdued light. If customers don't want to put the jewelry in their hand, show it to them from a distance of several feet. Once they get a glimpse, they'll come closer! The spicy garnets are not easily found in round shapes and the emerald cut doesn't give garnet all the brilliance it can achieve. For maximum brilliance and availability, look for oval, cushion, pear and, occasionally, fancy cuts. Prices for spicy garnets range from \$60-\$500 per carat. Attractive gems over two carats can be difficult to locate. The spicy garnets are durable ring gemstones and present no particular problems for the goldsmith.

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., Ms. Marcusson is a popular speaker/educator and conducts in-store marketing/training seminars. Cynthia Renée Co. is the sole marketer of blended ametrine working in partnership with the mine owner. The company offers an ametrine promotion kit for Jewelers. The kit contains black-and-white ads, color postcards, mailers, press releases, counter signs, creative display ideas and training points for salespeople. For information, please contact Cynthia Renée Co., P.O. Box 1763, Fallbrook, CA 92088, Tel: 619-728-5150, Fax: 619-728-2636.

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