

JEWELRY CONNOISSEUR

WINTER 2004

Joan
Rivers:
Can we
talk
jewels?

Mystical
Mughal
Jewelry



John
Hardy's
Bali
Lifestyle



USA \$4.95
Canada \$6.95

Tanzanite

By Cynthia Renée

Eyes to the ground, searching for rubies in Tanzania's Merelani Hills, a prospector's heart fluttered at a sight for sore eyes: a gem of the most exotic mixture of deep blue and vibrant purplish-red. The first ever to wedge the gem from its resting place of millions of years, he instinctually held it to the sky and rapturously watched his world light up. This newest of gems flew from the parched plains of Africa to the concrete jungle of New York where Tiffany & Co. christened the stone "Tanzanite," and brought it to the public in 1968.

Tanzanite is found only in Tanzania, which is a fertile source of gems, including brilliant garnets, tourmalines, rubies and fancy-colored sapphires, the colors of which accent the Malaia Garnet ring that is pictured below. The supply of one-locality gemstones is particularly vulnerable, as the deposit can run out or politics can interrupt the flow.

One of the wondrous things about Tanzanite is its light. Turning an uncut crystal against the light, different colors will be seen — held in one direction, it appears blue, and in others, a violet or purple shade. A skilled gemstone cutter can orient the crystal to get a faceted gem that shows more pure blue or more purplish-blue. Whatever the hues, when it comes to pricing, the primary

consideration is a rich, highly saturated color that is free from gray. Inclusions dramatically lessen the price.

As a rule, the larger the Tanzanite, the deeper its color. A fine 2-carat gem is not going to have the depth of color and intensity of a fine 10-carat one. But the smaller gems can be a very lively lilac- or periwinkle-blue when well cut. Due to Tanzanite's exotic color mix, pairs may have a slight variance of color between the gems. Even more rarely, Tanzanite is found in shades of green, yellow and pink.

While Tanzanite can be unearthed with its violet-blue color, the color of the overwhelming majority of Tanzanites is coaxed by continuing the heating the gemstones received while inside the earth. If not for this permanent enhancement, only a few people in the world would enjoy this violet-blue jewel.

Jewelry designed with yellow, rose or white metals highlights different aspects of Tanzanite's personality. White metal is a gleaming contrast against the stone's deep, rich blue and, depending on the design, may have a formal feel. Yellow gold warms blue's coolness, while rose gold harmonizes with a Tanzanite that may have more purplish-red undertones.



Mark Schneider

Malaia Garnet

Granatum is the Latin word for "pomegranate," the seeds of which the garnet was thought to resemble. But pomegranate red is just a start; garnets offer a sweeping selection of color. Malaia Garnet is one of the most exotic of gems. Sometimes a fiery burning ember in color, other times, a luscious, seductive peach, Malaia stirs the passion pot.

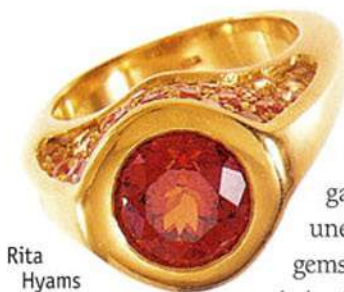
Like Tanzanite, the Malaia, sometimes spelled Malaya, Garnet was first discovered during the 1960s in East Africa. The miners who first found it were looking for the traditional red garnet and were disappointed upon unearthing these "strange" spicy-orange gems. Frustrated, they gave the gem the dismissive Swahili word Malaia, meaning outcast.

Malaia is also a slang name for a woman who "hits the streets," as

she becomes an outcast of society. But this Malaia was an outcast with a heart of gold. Soon, driven by its beauty, rarity and people's interest in this brand-new breed of garnets, the sun-kissed gem began commanding respect.

Garnet is a very complex gem family, which is composed of eight different species. These eight different strains sometimes "hybridize," like orchids, and bits of several species can be present in one gem. You can't tell a garnet by its color, since different types of garnets can have similar hues. A gemologist can distinguish the type of garnet by measuring the way light moves through it, which is distinctive to each garnet species.

Occasionally, a rare Malaia will sport an enticing pinkish-orange or peach color. Others may prefer their Malaia in a flashing fireball phase. Add too much red or brown, and the gem's desirability, and price tag, ebb. Most gems are less than 4 carats and oval, cushion or pear-shaped.



Rita Hyams

Cynthia Renée can be reached at 866-Colorful or cynthia@cynthiarenee.com.