

Alexandrite

It's absolutely fitting that Alexandrite was first discovered in the final period of Imperial Russia. Alexandrite was first discovered on the day of Alexander II's coming of age ceremony. The first Alexandrite was found in emerald mines on the banks of the Takovaya River in the Ural Mountains. This was a productive mine for a few decades, but then was closed. Due to recent political changes in Russia, this mine has been revisited, and found to still have gems available for mining. The bitter winter weather prohibits work at the mine most of the year. Today they are most significantly mined in the Ural Mountains, Brazil, Tanzania, and Ceylon.

Depending on the light in which Alexandrite is being viewed, it looks either reddish or greenish. This was of great significance in Czarist Russia, since red and green were their military colors. Alexandrite is one of the few gems that exhibit such a dramatic color change. In daylight or fluorescent light it appears to be a bluish green, and in incandescent light it appears to be a brownish red. Alexandrite's color change phenomenon can be attributed to the "differential absorption" of different wavelengths of light by the trace amounts of chromium present in the alexandrite. The light we see appears "white," but is actually made up of all the colors in the rainbow, and those colors all have their own wave-length. Different chemicals absorb each wave-length differently. There are very few gems that have chromium present in the right amount to create this color change, and this is one of the reasons that alexandrite commands such a high price per carat. Both red and green are always present in Alexandrite, but if there is an abundance of red in the ambient light then the red will prevail in the alexandrite. Alexandrite had been called "ruby by day and emerald by night."

Alexandrite is a very wearable stone because of its hardness. It rates an 8.5 on the Mohl's scale. It is of average density, and relatively high refraction. Refraction is the degree to which it bends light.

Alexandrite is the recommended gem to commemorate the 45th and 55th anniversary, and one on the gemstones for those of us born in June. Alexandrite is a "must have" for any collector because it is one of the great, grand gems of all time. Come in and see why.