

The Story Behind the Stone

by Diana Jarrett GG, RMV, NJA

Speaking of royalty

As Paraiba is to tourmaline, Imperial is to amethyst. There are diamonds, and then there are diamonds, some say. And if one knows the quality traits that separate bort from flawless diamonds, that phrase is loaded with meaning.

And so it is with a perennially favored colored stone, the royal amethyst. In general the material has often been called the Queen of Quartz, and when found to be of exceptional quality, it might just be the highest price member of any quartz variety.

Did you know that quartz represents one of the most plentiful substances on the face of the

earth? Since it is so abundant, it's obvious that it would be found all over the earth. Major deposits of this vivid purple gem include Brazil, India, Australia, Zambia, and Uruguay, just to name some.

Got a little 'something' in your eye? It might just be a microscopic bit of quartz wafting through the air. See what I mean?

But back to the subject of amethyst - are all amethysts created equal? I think not. While amethyst is known to be abundant and often available in large carat sizes with an expectancy of being relatively eye clean, the line is drawn in the sand when it comes to certain areas that produce this grapey col-

ored gemstone.

When spying Imperial amethyst, you separate it from the crowd by first noticing the intensely dense purple color which should be richly saturated. Many of your customers will mistakenly think that saturated color means deep toned or jewel toned, or rich or some other such idea. In gemological terms, saturation is the pure spectral hue of that color - lacking any muddy greyish or brownish contributions to that gem's hue, which would detour the observer from seeing the pure and predominate color.

And with Imperial amethyst, you have just that. Intense and

deeply clean, one detects interesting occasional flashes of pink, blue, or hot fuschia, if lucky. And these present fine selling points to your customer, because while fairly easy to be seen by them when you point these traits out, your customer will feel like a burgeoning gemologist themselves, just to



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learn these details.

Since this material is of course, naturally 'grown' in the earth, it also stands to reason that with some of these richer varieties one may encounter areas of color zoning. Obviously this is more apparent in the larger specimens. The color zoning of larger Imperial amethyst will likely be areas of blue violet or red violet washed across a section. But instead of a drawback, when you detect that in your large gems, take the time to point it out to your customers. You'll be surprised how it will enhance their fascination with amethyst, and gems in general. Make a detective out of your customer, and you've hooked them into becoming a jewel hound - often for life.

Graduate Gemologist and Registered Master Valuer Diana Jarrett is also a member of the National Association of Jewelry Appraisers (NAJA). She's a frequent lecturer at conferences and trade shows. Jarrett serves as Colored Stone Editor for Rapaport Diamond Report; with other works regularly appearing in trade and consumer publications. Contact her at info@dianajarrett.com or visit her website: www.dianajarrett.com.

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