

Zircon

Zircon is the oldest mineral on earth, with specimens in Australia dating back 4.4 billion years. Because it is quite brilliant and has fire close to that of diamond, colourless zircon has been used as a natural diamond substitute until recent decades, but it is a beautiful gem in its own right.

The way zircon breaks up light causes viewers to see double when looking into the stone, meaning that zircon doubles its own sparkle. Beloved throughout history, this gem was thought during the Middle Ages to aid sleep, drive away evil spirits, and promote wisdom.

Colour

Zircon's varied palette of yellow, green, red, reddish brown and blue makes it a favourite among collectors and consumers alike. Blue is the most popular and valuable colour. Green and red are among the rarest colours in natural zircon.

Clarity

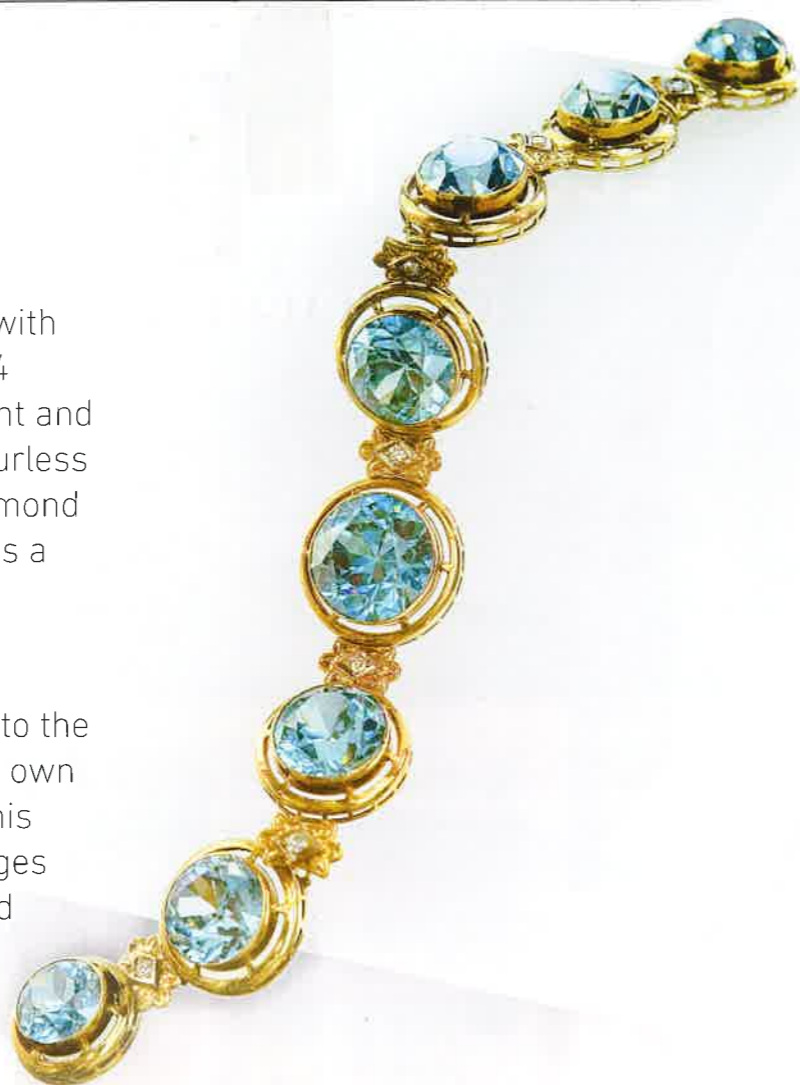
Untreated zircon can have a cloudy or smoky appearance and it sometimes contains long parallel inclusions that create a cat's-eye effect when the stone is cut into a cabochon.

Treatments

Brownish zircon can be heated to become colourless, yellow to orange (sometimes called golden), red or blue. Although zircon in these colours does exist in nature, these colours are rare.

Sources

Some of the finest zircon comes from Madagascar, but this gem is also found in the United States, Canada, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Australia.



To learn more about zircon and other popular gemstones, visit GIA.edu/gem-encyclopedia



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