

Natural Coloured Gemstones: A Timeless Investment



SAFIR
JEWELLERY & GEMS

True Masterpiece

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Published by Safir Jewellery & Gems Sdn Bhd
(Co. No. 1116379-U)

Address:
A4-UG1-01 Publika Shopping Gallery
Solaris Dutamas
50480 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

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1. PREFACE

This book is a culmination of my career, business and life in the gemstones and jewellery industry and I am especially thankful to the Almighty for his grace and blessings that has today allowed my family to be the proud owners of the brand Safir Jewellery & Gems.

Safir Jewellery & Gems has provided certified natural coloured gemstones and jewellery for thousands of clients throughout the world, including very special orders using some of the rarest and most valuable gemstones one can find in the world today.

I was exposed to the industry at a very young age as both my father and late grandfather were involved in the trade in my home country of Kazakhstan, and I must credit my success today to their blessings, guidance and education.

And I am thankful to my family for understanding my struggles to create a name in this industry, especially the many sleepless nights and millions of air miles clocked up crisscrossing the globe to serve different clients in different cities over the past decades.

From sourcing gemstones at mines in some of the most remote parts of the world to serving royalties in their palaces, I must say life has taught me some very valuable lessons in understanding the different cultures and people of this world, and that has certainly shaped me to adopt a global perspective in doing business.

My travels around the world has made me realise that everyone on this planet, regardless of ethnicity, language, religion or tradition, are essentially the same inside and they most certainly react the same way to beautiful gemstones when they see one.

The beauty of this planet, just like in the diversity of its people, can be found in the diversity of gemstones formed millions of years ago in different parts of the world.

I am personally in awe of mother nature whenever I come across rare pieces of gemstones that make my jaw drop, especially the ones which have such mesmerizing beauty due to its different hues of shades and colours.

Until today, I must say that some gemstones give me the goosebumps when I observe them as they are simply ‘out of this world’ and I am lost for words to describe their raw beauty, elegance and intensity, especially when I realise the millions of years it took to form them inside the earth’s crust!

Armed with the knowledge and experience of almost three decades in the gemstones and jewellery industry, and having lived and done business in different parts of the world, I felt there couldn’t be a better time to write a book on gemstones.

I believe gemstones are a timeless investment and certainly something of profound value which will only increase in time to come – hence the title of this book.

In fact, some natural coloured gemstones could be more valuable than the finest diamonds in the near future with overwhelming demand exceeding global supply. This is due to some very important factors which I believe to be true as explained further in this book.

My inspiration to write this book is to educate the public, especially gemstone lovers and investors on some basic facts and information on how to invest in gemstones.

It took more than a year to bring this book to fruition since it was first proposed by a mutual friend who then compelled and motivated me to

document and put my knowledge and experience in the gemstones industry into a book for public benefit and knowledge.

It was a painstaking experience but the final product was worth every single effort.

I felt a sense of accomplishment when this book was completed as the process of researching was arduous and the challenges were many, especially as I am a non-native speaker of English. Eventually, determination and courage saw me through.

I hope my dear readers will gain valuable knowledge on the gemstones industry, especially those who want to buy for investment and long term gain.

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2. INTRODUCTION

For those who wish to know how we got involved in the gemstones and jewellery business, well, the history of Safir Jewellery & Gems has its roots tracing back to 1932 in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan.

The business was founded by my late grandfather, an affable, loving and principled miner and gems trader with whom I shared a lot of time and memory growing up. There are some interesting facts about my late grandpa and how I was eventually named after a dear friend of his.

My grandfather was born in Kazakhstan, which was then part of the Soviet Union (USSR). Sometime in his late 20's he got involved in the tungsten and gold mining business. He worked hard and eventually moved into the mining and trading of natural coloured gemstones.

During his time of doing business, he met and became close friends with a great man named Olzhas Suleimenov, a Kazakh Soviet Russian-language poet, Turkologist, Kazakhstani politician and Soviet anti-nuclear activist.

My grandfather was so proud of his close friendship with Olzhas Suleimenov that he decided to name me as 'Olzhas' - as a tribute to his good friend.

Sadly, my grandfather passed away in 2010, leaving behind a legacy and a void too large to fill. As the business is now managed in the hands of its third generation, I make it a point to carry on the legacy of my late grandfather with the Safir Jewellery & Gems brand.

By the grace of God, we have grown and established our presence in countries such as Turkey, Russia, Europe, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. What started out as a small family-based business has today become a global brand in the natural coloured gemstones industry.

Growing a worldwide gemstones business is not easy but I always remember the advice given by my late grandfather and also my father, that is to find ways to grow the business in all corners of the world and make the family proud of its legacy.

And that is the reason I decided to expand beyond Kazakhstan and first spread my wings to Dubai and then to Japan. But eventually, I came to Malaysia in 2014 and made it a home as we loved the tropical climate and friendly multi-cultural society.

This saw Safir Jewellery & Gems setting up its new corporate headquarters and the Safir Gems Hub based in Kuala Lumpur. And we have travelled extensively to set up Safir boutiques in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Africa and other countries as part of our vision to build a global brand.

What makes Safir Jewellery & Gems unique is our wide collection of natural coloured gemstones, some of which are very rare and valuable. We have, over the years, build a strong network among mining companies and traders that allows us to source for any type of rare gemstones in any part of the world today.

We are also a strong advocate of ethical and responsible mining practices and we strictly ensure that all our gemstones are sourced from legal and sustainable mine-to-market suppliers using legitimate supply chain.

This is a quick introduction to our history and how we got into the business and hereafter, I will elaborate why natural coloured

gemstones are definitely a timeless investment and that one can never go wrong investing in the right stone.

Today, we clearly see a trend where fine quality precious, natural gemstones continue to rise in prices every year and investors often race to outbid one another for top quality pieces to keep as long term investment.

We have seen rare gemstones appreciating greatly in value overtime, including the famous big three comprising sapphire, ruby, and emerald.

And in some instances where certain mines for some particular gemstones have ceased operations due to exhausted supply, the spike in price is very high.

For example, the fact that ruby's mining supply is rarer and near depletion worldwide drives its prices up higher yearly.

Some rare gemstones are very much in demand and have ready buyers and investors and these are gemstones such as spinel, padparadscha sapphire, fine jadeite, conch pearl, melo pearl, paraiba tourmaline, alexandrite and tsavorite garnet.

The top tier of what are considered valuable heirloom gemstones include rubies, sapphires, emeralds and spinel. Rubies and sapphires come from the same mineral family – corundum, which is made of densely packed oxygen and aluminium atoms which typically results in a colourless sapphire.

For a ruby to form and obtain its deep red hue, it requires the presence of chromium. While the colour of a ruby can range from purplish red, pinkish red to brownish red, it is important to invest in a ruby that is red and lively.

The most valuable shade of red is called pigeon blood. This colour commands a large premium over other rubies. Now, the interesting

part is that rubies are getting valued at higher prices than diamonds due to the scarcity of ruby mining.

For example, in the 1990s, a one carat sized unheated ruby from Myanmar was priced around US\$1,000 to US\$3,000 per carat, but today the exact same pieces of rubies are easily worth US\$10,000 to US\$30,000 per carat, becoming highly-sought after as collector's pieces'.

Sapphire of bigger sizes are generally more available compared to rubies, hence the price of sapphires is lower. As an example, one can easily find a 10 carat sapphire, but it is not as easy to find a 10 carat ruby.

For a blue sapphire to form in the corundum mineral, it needs traces of iron and titanium, and the two most valuable blue colours are called cornflower blue and royal blue. Over the years, blue sapphire prices have been increasing at a fast pace.

From the 1980s to 2015, world auction records for sapphires from Kashmir and Myanmar have increased by five times. The sapphire mines from these two locations have been depleted and production has fallen, causing prices to soar.

Today, top quality sapphires from Sri Lanka are valued at US\$20,000 per carat or more. Sapphires come in a rainbow variety of fancy colours, such as green, yellow, pink, purple and orange.

There are also the little nuances of blue-green, orangey pink, or purplish pink sapphires with various varieties attributed to different impurities influencing the colours.

The Padparadscha Sapphire is the most valuable and rarest sapphire colour of all. The name Padparadscha is derived from the Sinhalese word for aquatic lotus blossom and has an unusual mixture of colours between pink and orange.

Meanwhile, the intense green of an emerald is a hue that matches all skin tones, and these heirloom-worthy jewels work well with white, red, blue or pastel wedding dresses. The emerald is a variety of the mineral beryl and coloured green by trace amounts of chromium and vanadium.

Most emeralds naturally contain a lot of inclusions, and thus oiling treatment is common to fill in cracks in the gem to improve clarity and stability of the gem.

The less oiling an emerald undergoes, the more valuable it is, provided its colour is also an attractive shade of green, with the most valuable shade of green being vivid green, also called Muzo green.

An up and coming rising star for its beauty and rarity is the spinel. Historically, spinels have been misidentified as sapphires and rubies due to their similarity in colour and to this day royal jewel collections actually feature spinels due to these oversights, such as the infamous Black Prince's Ruby.

Spinel has served as an alternative to the pricier sapphire and ruby for a few decades but its popularity is seeing a revival in the international market for its own merit and beauty – its lustre could be more brilliant and dazzling than sapphires and rubies.

Sweet pink and violet spinels make stunning and head-turning jewellery that appear brighter even under candlelight or soft light. The most valuable and rarest shade is vivid red and cobalt blue.

Gem-quality red and blue spinels are very rare. Spinel's supply is limited and unreliable, making it hard for the gemstone traders to promote it. Spinel prices have increased more than twofold within the past decade.

With real statistics to back as proof and evidence, it is undeniable that the gemstones industry is set to see a boom in coming decades and

investors globally are expected to snap up rare and valuable gemstones no matter how expensive it is going to be.

That is the reason we say natural coloured gemstones are a timeless investment as they are not going to be affected by changes in society or fashion.

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3. WHAT ARE NATURAL COLOURED GEMSTONES?

To the untrained eye, it can be difficult to tell the difference between a clear, impeccably cut natural coloured gemstone with a synthetic gemstone. Looks can be deceiving and even the fake ones are coming in good quality nowadays.

And it's certainly not an easy task to master this art of investing in natural coloured gemstones as there are simply too many scams and frauds out there. One wrong move could result in financial losses from a few hundred bucks to several hundreds of thousands, or even more.

But if investing or purchasing is done with the right set of knowledge and skills, it could truly be a very rewarding experience, not to mention a profitable one too!

So I hope with some knowledge from this book and some experiences acquired along the way, one can master the basic art of preliminarily understanding, selecting and purchasing a natural coloured gemstone for investment or as a piece to be incorporated into jewellery.

Let me reiterate it's not a simple process but eventually, you can get it right to a certain point and make the right investment in gemstones without any regrets.

But before delving into the natural ones, one must first understand what are synthetic gemstones or also known as laboratory-grown gemstones. Fundamentally, natural is mined and synthetic is manufactured in laboratories.

Synthetic gemstones and natural gemstones almost always possess the same physical properties and chemical composition, making it difficult to distinguish between these two types.

However, a closer look through the ‘trained’ eyes can often reveal some telltale signs whether one is viewing a synthetic gem or a natural one. Some are easy to identify with the naked eye while others need to be examined by a trained gemologist or specialist with a magnification loupe that requires correct lighting condition and magnification level.

The manufacturing techniques of synthetic gemstones or ‘growing’ methods often involve the application of pressure and temperature to carbon and other elements inside the laboratory. There are many methods available with technology today.

Unlike natural gems which are found far below the earth’s surface and have some kind of impurities permeated into the stone known as inclusions, synthetic gems often have less inclusions and often come across as ‘too perfect’ in their appearances.

Inclusion refers to an imperfection or not absolutely ‘perfect’ attributes in the gemstone that can make its colour or luster look ‘weak’ and they include gas bubbles, crystals, fractures, feathers and sheaves. Basically, inclusion refers to any material that is trapped inside of another mineral, while that mineral forms.

Synthetic gems are usually more brilliant in colour compared to natural gems due to the lack of inclusions but are often less valuable in price than natural gems in comparable size and color.

With the exception of diamond where inclusion is not viewed favorably, natural coloured gemstones with inclusion are prized for the beauty of the patterns they produce.

Inclusions act as a marker of the gemstone's unique identity same as our finger prints determines our uniqueness. Inclusions also have an impact on the natural gemstone's brilliance.

So for me, I would say the most important unwritten rule when investing in gemstones is to first know if they are natural or synthetic.

Basically, there is nothing wrong in buying a synthetic gemstone if one is cost-conscious or if buying to be given away as a gift, especially when there is no intrinsic investment value to be derived.

We can equate this experience as similar to that of buying a property where one must give importance to the location and type, as these factors determine if the property price will appreciate in years to come and prove to be a good return on investment.

So similarly, when you want to invest in gemstones, my advice is just go for the natural ones, and always remember to get them tested and certified by experts. The good news today is that there are highly trained and educated gemstones experts in most major cities around the world who can help you evaluate a gemstone to determine its origin, quality, and investment value.

Natural coloured gemstones are natural wonders of this planet as they are mined from the earth's crust and therefore, they are unique, rare and special, and synthetic gemstones can never be placed on the same pedestal as them.

The correct way to buy a natural colored gemstone is by way of a certificate of authenticity that will help verify a stone's color, cut, carat and clarity. Purchasing a gemstone accompanied by a certificate is the best way to boost its value.

Now, there is another interesting factor to consider here. We can divide natural coloured gemstones into two categories – untreated or treated.

Untreated gemstones are not altered or enhanced in any possible way or method and stays in the same form as it was mined or extracted from the earth.

And untreated gemstones often fetch higher price than treated gemstones because it stays true to its intricate beauty although they can be cut and polished later for jewellery or accessories. And in some parts of the world, it is believed that untreated gemstones can give the wearer greater astrological benefits or better luck.

Treated gemstones, on the other hand, have gone through different processes such as oiling, waxing, heat treatment, bleaching, surface coating, dyeing, fracture or cavity filling, high pressure high temperature (HPHT) treatment, impregnation, irradiation, laser drilling and lattice diffusion, all in the name of artificially enhancing the gemstones' color, texture and intensity.

Don't forget a point to note here: It is very important to distinguish between natural gemstones that have been treated and synthetic ones because sometimes they can appear similar in looking almost perfect because of the absence of inclusions.

Based on market figures from industry experts, one must not assume that it is the highest-end or highest priced gemstones that create the best investments. Alternatively, seasoned investors often seek low to moderately priced gemstones to purchase since data suggests modestly valued gemstones often appreciate more and are easier to sell.

Remember to always seek the assistance of an industry expert before you purchase. With the help of a skilled gemologist or experienced industry professional, you can make the right choice to determine whether a specific gemstone is natural or synthetic.

Gemstones in general have also been divided into two categories – precious and semi-precious since the 19th century.

I would say this classification is outdated nowadays but let me explain briefly since many have asked me on this frequently.

Diamond, sapphire, ruby and emerald were known as precious gemstones and all others as semi-precious. The distinction is due to hardness which is measured on the Mohs scale of 1 to 10 and also by colour.

And back then, people didn't have advanced gemological equipment so they identified precious gemstones by colour and hardness. So the value differentiation between precious and semi-precious was also due to lack of technology back then.

But the term precious gemstones do not necessarily reflect value in today's market as sometimes, the semi-precious stones could be more expensive and in demand compared to the precious ones. Many semi-precious stones are rarer than precious stones.

In terms of beauty and richness of colours, the semi-precious stones are more diverse and vibrant with an infinite palette of colours and shades.

So the terms precious or semi-precious should not be a concern or main criteria when it comes to investment. This separation between precious and semi-precious has no real scientific backing and also makes no difference when it comes to investment grade natural coloured gemstones.

All gemstones to me are precious in the sense that they provide meaning and value to the buyer or when added into a piece of jewellery. Gemstones radiate feelings and emotions, either of beauty, brilliance or wealth to its buyer.

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4. The four C's - colour, cut, carat & clarity

When it comes to investing in natural colored gemstones, there are the 4C's which you must always follow and they are colour, clarity, cut and carat. This is because each gemstone has its unique chemical and atomic structure.

There are a wide range of gemstones with each having its own characteristic colours, or in some cases, a range of colours. The origin of these colours has a chemical basis, and the precise colour can vary depending on the chemical composition of the gemstone.

There are also examples of variations of colour within the same gemstone. The prime example of this is alexandrite. Alexandrite appears green in daylight, but red in incandescent light. This is due to the fact that natural light is richer in green light, to which our eyes are more sensitive, so we perceive the gem as green. Incandescent light, on the other hand, is richer in red light, leading to more red light being reflected, and our eyes perceive the gem as red.

Different colours of light have different wavelengths, so the exact wavelengths that are absorbed will affect the colour that the object appears. For example, an object that absorbs all wavelengths of visible light that pass through it, but does not absorb red light, will appear red.

The absorption of light occurs in the first place because this is dependent on the elements present in the structure of the gemstone.

Many gemstones can be found in a wide range of colours for example, garnets. Although commonly well known as red in colour, it can also be found in many other varieties.

Emeralds, diamonds, topaz and opal, for example, has their most defining features because of their colours. From vibrant reds to earthy greens, gemstones are primarily characterized by their appearance in colour.

As example, diamonds are made of carbon, rubies and sapphires are made of aluminum chloride, and so on. This, along with the presence of impurities, leads to the absorption of different wavelengths of light. The result is that gemstones vary in colour.

Topaz and Spinel come in a variety of colours, depending on the impurities present. Green is usually caused by chromium ions replacing aluminum, while iron within corundum produces blue.

The colour of a gemstone can also be predicted by where elements appear in the periodic table as this indicates its ‘behavior’.

If an element in the first line of the period table is present within a gemstone, it will appear colourless. But the transition metals found in the middle section of the periodic table can reflect coloured light - because of the ‘D-orbitals’ where electrons reside. That means they will appear as differing colours - from deep oranges to dazzling blues.

But it’s not all about transition metals. When a gemstone absorbs certain wavelengths of light, it can cause a transfer of electrons between ions, which affects colour. This happens with sapphires.

When elements of chemistry and physics are taken into account, the science behind gemstone colours is far from simple. The chemical makeup of each gemstone can vastly affect its colour: so for example the presence of chromium in emeralds will produce its characteristic green, while the same impurity in corundum will produce red.

When chemistry is not responsible, human intervention may be the reason for a gemstone’s colour. Treated gemstones can deepen or lighten in colour or increase in clarity. I have mentioned the treatment methods in the previous chapter.

Next, we move to Clarity...

Gemstone clarity is an important factor to consider when making a gemstone purchase, especially for investment.

Clarity can significantly determine a gemstone's price and its appearance. So before you get the urge to invest in a gemstone, you may want to consult with a qualified jeweller to get proper insight into the different levels of clarity and how they impact the investment value of the gemstone.

Gemstone clarity is one of the key properties that gemstones are graded on. Clarity affects the way light interacts with and transmits through a gemstone, making it a crucial element in assessing quality.

Clarity refers to the imperfections or lack of it thereof that affect the transparency of a gemstone and this clarity can be divided into two categories: inclusions (internal impurities) and blemishes (external impurities).

Inclusions refer to any foreign material present within the stone such as minerals, fractures and other organic materials. The number, size, type and color of inclusions determine the clarity grade of a stone.

Some natural stones have no visible inclusions at all while others may have many visible inclusions. This is why it is important to carefully inspect a stone before making your purchase.

Blemishes refer to any surface irregularities including scratches and chips caused by mishandling or cutting of the stone during its production process.

Clarity is an important measure of quality when it comes to evaluating gemstones as it can drastically affect their desirability and worth. Each gemstone is graded on a range that goes from 'internally flawless' (IF) to 'included' (I).

For coloured gemstones, internally flawless (IF) is the top grade you can find, as finding a coloured gemstone without blemishes is extremely rare, even rarer than a flawless diamond. So that will be top grade investment quality

There are examples of flawless emeralds, but their rarity means their price is significantly higher than any other type of emerald. Darker coloured stones such as garnet or blue topaz can have deeper inclusions because their depth of colour is able to hide the flaws in the stone. Lighter coloured stones have more trouble disguising flaws under a rich colour.

Many gemstones are graded for clarity base on their visible inclusions. One must also note a point, that for example, Zambian Emeralds or Mozambique Ruby has the colour and hues to mask inclusions in their deep and strong shades.

Emeralds are naturally a Type 3 coloured gemstone. That means they are naturally blemished and flawed. If you were to compare two stones, one being a higher quality stone with less inclusions and the other being highly flawed, you will see a visible difference in brilliance.

That means how each stone shines as light passes through. The high quality stone will be brighter and more attractive, while the lower quality stone will appear dull. That is what translucent means in terms of grading a gemstone's clarity.

The stone allows no light to pass through. Stones such as cabochons are naturally opaque, because they don't let any light shine through. What they do is reflect the light. A well-cut cabochon will reflect light evenly as you slowly rotate it in your fingers, whereas a lower quality cut will make the light snake across the surface.

In grading the clarity of a gemstone, the term opaque means the stone will hardly shine at all when light is passed through it. The example of the cabochon shows how light still reflects off its surface, despite being opaque, and thus showing a better quality cut.

In order to understand how clarity in gemstones really works, you need to understand the inclusions and how they are classified. Basically, inclusion categories are split into how visible they are.

The highest clarity category is Free of Inclusions. This does not mean that there are absolutely no inclusions whatsoever because gemstones are natural after all, and as nature will have it, even the finest stones have some type of minuscule 'flaw'.

It does mean, however, that even under the 10X magnification loupe, the inclusions cannot be seen. For all intents and purposes, this type of stone is inclusion-free; the highest clarity level obtainable in gemstones.

The next category is Very Lightly Included. This refers to stones that may have inclusions that can be seen by a professional with the help of a lens.

Then we have Lightly Included. Lightly Included stones have inclusions that can be detected through 10X magnification, but cannot often be seen by the naked eye.

The category of Moderately Included gemstones includes stones with inclusions that one can see, unaided by any tool. Generally, although these types of stones include visible flaws, they are present in a way that does not destroy the stone's beauty or total value.

Lastly, Heavily Included and Excessively Included stones are ones with very visible inclusions that do affect the stone's appearance. In the case of the latter category, the inclusions are so severe that they may have an effect on the stone's durability.

Next comes the Cut...

While some cut names may describe the face-up shape of the finished gem, others refer to the shape and arrangement of the gem's facets.

These cuts are also known as gem cutting styles. The three most basic cutting styles are brilliant, step, and mixed. For example, a round brilliant gemstone has a round shape but a brilliant cutting style.

These styles are combined to create many different gem designs. The three basic gem cuts are brilliant cut, step cut and mixed cuts.

Brilliant cuts consist of triangular and kite-shaped facets that spread outward from the center of the gem. As befits its name, the brilliant cut gives off the most scintillation of any cut.

Step cuts consist of rectangular facets that ascend the crown and descend the pavilion in steps. Examples of step cuts include emerald and baguette cuts. These are popular because they show off the stone's colour and clarity and produce a subtle gleam.

Mixed cuts combine step cut and brilliant cut styles. They have brilliant facets on the crown and step facets on the pavilion, or vice versa. Mixed cuts may even combine cabbing and faceting techniques.

Shape and style combinations in a gemstone's cut have an impact on its investment value. It's good to know what cut is your gemstone before purchase.

For example, a square modified brilliant is a princess cut. A square step cut with beveled corners is an Asscher cut. A square mixed cut is a Barion cut. You can also find variations within all shapes. A triangular gem can have many or few facets, much or little brilliance and scintillation or etc.

While brilliant and step cuts are currently quite popular, the rose cut is a unique style important to gem-cutting history. Dating back to the 16th century, the rose cut has a round, cabbed flat base and a faceted top. For 16th-century gem cutters, roses maximized the use of flat rough and created gems with more brilliance than previously seen.

Gem cutters can modify brilliant, step, and rose cuts to maximize use of rough or create interesting effects. The shape and facet types remain the same, but the number and arrangement of facets may differ.

If cut differently from the standard, gems have the term 'modified' added to their names. For example, 'modified round brilliant' or 'modified emerald cut'.

Gems cut in the brilliant style are always called brilliant cuts, for example, round brilliant. Gems cut in the step style generally have specific names attached to them.

Gems polished into domes are called cabochons or cabs. These types of gems date back to ancient times and have remained popular in the centuries since.

Lapidaries cab certain gem species, such as opal and moonstone, to better display visual effects such as play of colour, cat's eye, and asterism.

In faceted gems, these effects would be less visible. Some stones may be cut into cabochons because they're lower quality or too opaque for faceting.

Cabbing these stones would emphasize their color and luster rather than brilliance. Softer gem materials may also receive cabochon cuts, since cabs don't show scratches as easily as faceted gems do.

Cabochons usually have circular or oval shapes. Sometimes, gem cutters may give them square or rectangular shapes. In those cases, they will show creases. Cabochons can be single cabs or double cabs.

Typically, natural stones are polished into double cabochons to maximize weight.

Over at Safir, we introduced a few names to different types of cuts such as the Aysha cut, Fatima cut, Aminah cut, Tamara cut, Aru cut, Alyah cut, Zahra cut, Alexandria cut, Farida cut, Munira cut, Samira cut, Esmā cut, Maryam cut, Belle cut, Iman cut, Ayasofia cut, Fida cut, Camille cut, Jamila cut, Suleiman cut, Malika cut, Layla cut, Nur cut, Aida cut, Dariya cut, Amira cut and Madina cut.

Next we move to Carat...

First attested in English in the mid-15th century, the word carat comes from Italian carato, which comes from Arabic قيراط qīrāṭ.

Carat also sounds the same as karat, but that's a measure of the fineness of gold or the ratio of pure gold to alloy metals in a mixture.

Carat is abbreviated as 'ct' while Karat is abbreviated as 'K'.

One carat equals 1/5th of a gram or 200 milligrams. You could also phrase that as five carats in a gram. A kilogram is 1,000 grams or 5,000 carats.

Gemstone weights are occasionally expressed in common fractions like $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ carats but are now more commonly expressed as decimal fractions. (0.25 carats equals $\frac{1}{4}$ carats).

A carat is further divided into units called points. There are 100 points in a carat. So, for example, 25 points, 0.25 carats, and $\frac{1}{4}$ carats are all the same weight.

Long ago, before there were all sorts of sophisticated tools available for individuals to go about measuring stones accurately, there were precision scales on which the stones were set alongside carob seeds.

This is the way in which a gemstone's weight was measured. The carat system came about this way, and is still used until today. Within each carat are one hundred points. Each point represents 1% of a carat, meaning, a stone that weighs one and a half carats is a 1.50 carat stone, or a stone of 150 points.

Though diamonds and gemstones both use the carat system, they are not equivalent in terms of carat sizes. Well, although a diamond is a gemstone, it has different specifications than a ruby and therefore stones of equivalent carat weight will have different visual sizes.

For instance, rubies are denser than diamonds, so a 1-carat diamond will look bigger than a 1-carat ruby. A 1-carat brilliant cut diamond has a diameter of 6.5mm, while a round cut ruby of 1-carat is only 5.35mm in diameter. The reason for this is the difference in specific density of the two gemstones.

Weight is not size. Something many people fail to understand or to realize is that the carat weight of a stone is not the same thing as its size. Similar to the way in which the density of the stone plays a crucial role in its carat weight versus its visual size, so stones with identical carat weights appear differently due to the way that they carry the weight.

Stones that have large crowns and short pavilions can appear large and yet be equal in carat weight to stones with small crowns and deep pavilions, which appear less impressive than the former stones. The same works the other way around. Two stones that look identical in size can in fact bear different carat weights if they are different types of gemstones and are formed differently.

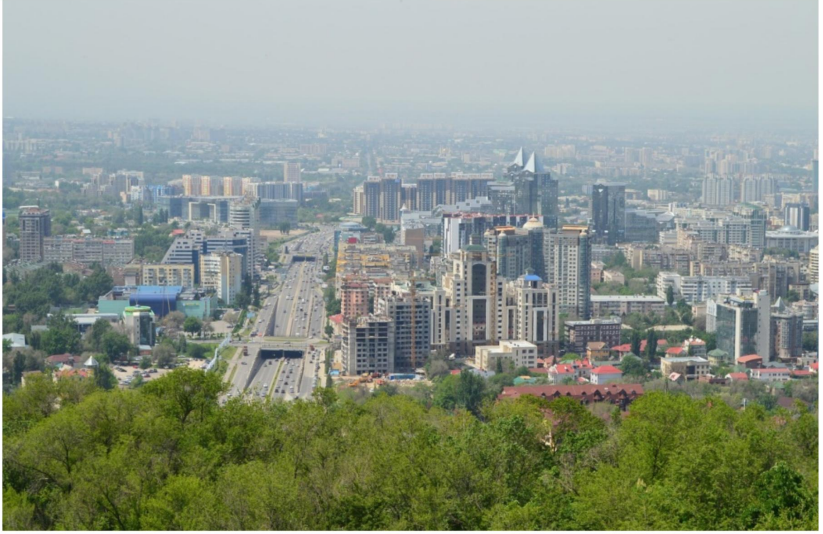
Gemstones should neither be too shallow or too deep, but one can get a larger looking stone for the same price as a smaller looking one of the same carat weight, which will suit his or her needs without hurting one's pocket too much. This can be achieved by looking for a stone of the desired carat weight that has a large crown and table, thus giving off a large appearance.

Another important aspect to remember in regards to gemstone carat size is that a stone with a low carat weight does not necessarily mean that it will be less expensive. This is because larger gemstones, especially rubies, tend to have many inclusions. Smaller ones, more often than not, will have a higher clarity level, thus making them pricier.

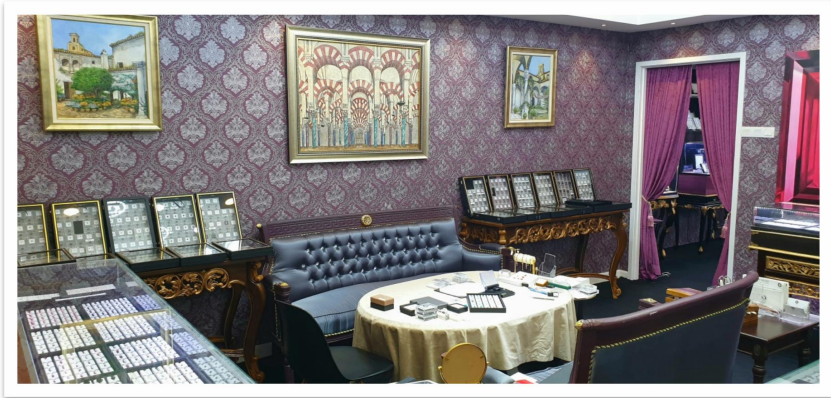
That is why it is necessary to factor in all this information when looking for a gemstone with carats. And discussing gemstones are not the same as karats when discussing gold.

In contrast to precious metals, it is not possible to define a standard price per carat for gemstones. Alongside its weight in carats, the following characteristics have a strong influence on the value of a gemstone and they are: Naturally coloured or treated, Colour and intensity (saturation), Clarity, Source, Cut-type and the Certificate.

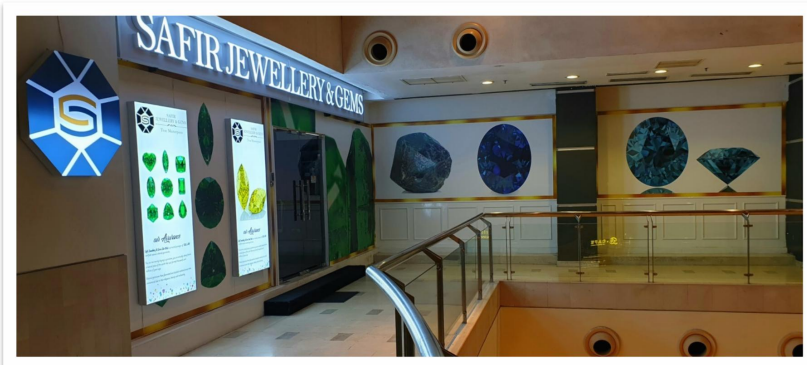
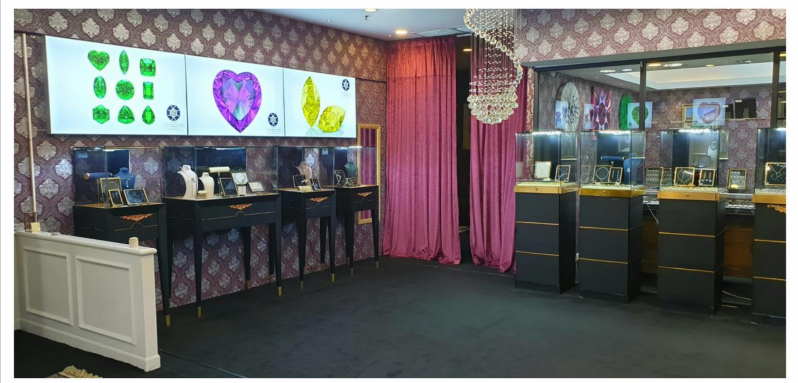
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Safir Jewellery & Gems has its roots in The Republic of Kazakhstan (above) where it started the business of mining and gemstones in 1932.



Safir's main showroom is located in a premium shopping gallery in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with over a million gemstones of various types and sizes available for sale.





Various cuts of Emeralds from Safir Gems. Emeralds are among the top three coloured gemstones very much in demand today.



Rubies in various shapes and sizes cut by Safir Gems. With fascinating hues and intensity of red colours, rubies are among the top three most sought after natural coloured gemstones in the market today.



Various shapes and sizes of Tanzanite cut by Safir Gems.



Sapphires in various shapes and sizes cut by Safir Gems.



Top row (from left): White Sapphire, Amethyst & Sapphire.

Bottom row (from left): Yellow Sapphire, Ruby & Peridot.



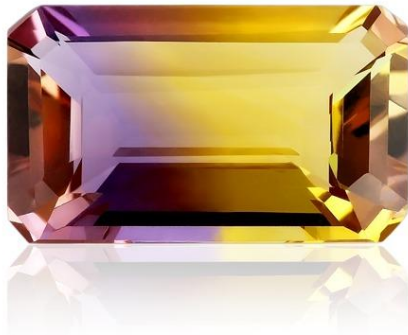
Rubies are among the top three coloured gemstones in demand today. From raw stones (top picture), they are cut and polished into beautiful pieces.



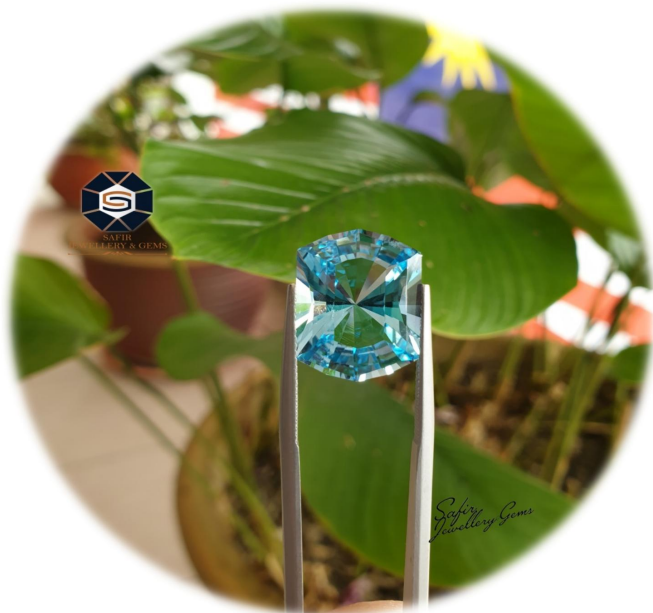
**Gemstones in raw form before they are cut and polished,
according to a buyer's preference.**



Pearls, such as these South Sea Pearls, are very much in demand for use in ladies' jewellery and accessories.



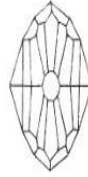
Topaz (top picture), Ametrine (middle) and Alexandrite are stunning natural gemstones with different hues and colour intensity.



An amethyst (above) and a topaz cut by Safir Gems and ready for use in jewellery.



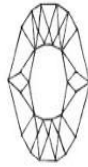
Nur cut



Aysha cut



Aida cut



Fatima cut



Dariya cut



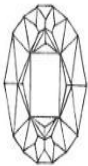
Aminah cut



Amira cut



Madina cut



Tamara cut

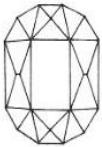
**Cuts are very important as they determine the beauty of the natural coloured gemstones.
Here are some of the cuts available at Safir Gems.**



Farida cut



Maryam cut



Munira cut



Belle cut



Samira cut



Iman cut



Ayasofia cut



Esma cut



Fida cut



Aru cut



Camille cut



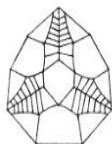
Alyah cut



Jamila cut



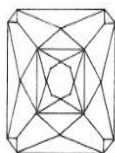
Suleiman cut



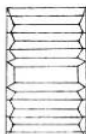
Zahra cut



Malika cut



Alexandria cut



Layla cut

5. WHY INVEST IN NATURAL COLOURED GEMSTONES?

The facts speak for themselves when it comes to investing in natural coloured gemstones. Besides being one of the oldest forms of investment assets, coloured gemstones are fast outperforming diamonds in terms of price appreciation and a large number of younger buyers are gravitating towards them.

Many people don't have a clue to this type of investment but once they understand how it works, it is going to get them hooked on buying this asset class that was formed inside the earth's crust millions of years ago.

In the last decade, coloured gemstones have experienced some of the biggest price jumps in history. Lucrative yields await those who are patient and buy the right gemstone with the right size. I would say, go buy something more than 2-carat. Not smaller than that.

In 2015, the world's most expensive ruby sold at an auction for more than USD\$ 27 million. It was known as the Sunrise Ruby and has 25.59-carat. Two years later, the world's most expensive emerald known as the Rockefeller Emerald was sold for almost USD\$5 million and it weighed 18.04-carat.

In a 2006 Christie's auction, an unheated Burmese Ruby of 8.62-carat sold for USD\$3.62 million and set a new world record at an average price of USD\$420,000 per carat.

While gold is always seen as an attractive investment and is worth around USD\$62,000 one kilogram at the time of this writing, one kilogram of fine rubies are worth upwards of USD\$185,000.

Collectively, leading gemstones such as rubies, sapphires and emeralds have increased in value by 5-8% per annum since 1995.

There is consistency and growth potential from several types of gemstones based on my observation, and this upward trajectory continues.

With the developments in recent years within the industry such as transparency, widespread certification of gemstones and gemological analysis, more and more people are becoming aware of investing in natural coloured gemstones and most of the basic information to get started is readily available from the internet.

Many have burned a hole in their pockets by investing in crypto currencies and other online investments that are not backed by physical assets, so when they understand how to invest in natural coloured gemstones, they are going to be confident and return to purchase more.

Although there is a rise in synthetic gemstones (which are grown in laboratories), I believe that something which is natural will always be worth more than a similar looking thing, but synthetic.

There is a whole list of process that natural gemstones go through, from mining, to cutting and polishing, plus the inclusions and many other features that are of great beauty and can only be found in natural ones. So the best rule to observe when you want to invest is to stay away from the synthetic ones.

Unlike other types of investment, such as crypto where the price is highly speculative and volatile, and comes with a lot of risk, investments in natural coloured gemstones provide a safe, progressive and secured way to make profits.

There is no way you can go wrong if you invest in the right type of gemstones.

With fast growing popularity and its appeal to risk-averse investors, especially the younger generation, we can only foresee the value of natural coloured gemstones increasing over time and become a leading investment asset in the near future.

The recent pandemic and uncertain global economy has taught us the importance of having assets that are not volatile or risky in nature.

And natural gemstones can provide that safe environment for storing wealth. We found an increase in demand for gemstones during the financial crises in recent decades.

After all, history has shown that gemstones have been used as a means for storing wealth thousands of years ago. It can be said that gemstones are probably the world's oldest commodity dating back as long as 5,000 years and holds more historical and cultural importance as an investment asset.

In simple terms, investing in natural coloured gemstones should be done with due diligence (selecting only authentic, natural ones), understanding its potential for value and growth, and also its appeal.

Not all gemstones are suitable for investment and one should consult with an expert before purchasing. When purchasing, always make sure the gemstones is presented with a certificate from a trusted geological institute. This will safeguard you from any sort of fraud, or buying overpriced gemstone with very less or no value.

The other important thing to note is that natural gemstones retain and grow in value due to its beauty, rarity and desirability. These are some of the factors that will have an impact on its future valuation. Recent valuations or the prices it sold at auctions can be used as a guide in making your purchase.

Unlike investments in stock, commodities, forex or crypto which are subject to the shorting culture and volatile nature that can see vast amounts of fortunes being wiped out overnight, gemstones have no

such reactions as these types of investments. Since it is tangible and non-volatile, it provides a different level of security for the investor.

The most well-known use of gemstones had traditionally been seen as a symbol to signify one's status. For centuries, royal families and noble people from around the world have worn gemstones in their jewelry as a way to demonstrate wealth, rank and power.

Today, although gemstones are used for the 'same' reasons as our ancestors did thousands of years ago, there is another group that purchases gemstones purely as an investment activity to secure wealth and hedge against inflation.

When it comes to investment value, records have shown that gemstones have the highest concentration of value, even higher than gold and has returned great yields. But it is kind of a 'hidden gem' in the investment world whereby not everyone knows how to do it.

And the ones who make a lot of money from investing in gemstones do not want to disclose any details and in most cases prefer to remain anonymous.

A guide to gemstone investment is that there is no fixed for 'x' weight of gemstones. There are multiple classifications which create an accurate valuation of colored gemstones, starting with the 4C's as mentioned in the precious chapter: colour, clarity, cut & carat.

While diamonds also use the same standard, there are additional indicators solely for coloured gemstones such as treatment and origin which can heavily influence the valuation.

Some details can be very impactful to the worth of gemstones. Two rubies of similar quality but from different countries can have vastly different prices.

For example, a ruby from Mozambique may be valued at USD\$100,000 and a similar ruby in shape and weight, but from Burma, can cost USD\$150,000.

The value of gemstones consists of three criteria: intrinsic value (market or trade value), aesthetic value (subjective and optical value) and historical value (if any).

Besides the intrinsic value, the aesthetic value and historical value often carries additional impact on valuation. A particular gemstone worn by a particular royalty or famous individual carries historical value that adds on to its intrinsic value and aesthetic value.

If a gemstone is obtained through legitimate means and sold by a reputable seller, you will receive a gemological certificate from a trusted laboratory. This will determine the intrinsic nature of the gemstone, and removes any risk involved in the purchase. Multiple levels of certification (from different testing laboratories) will make things safer for highly valuable purchases.

If the seller can't provide a gemological certificate, that is your sign to exit the deal. If it's too good to be true, then it probably is.

Another factor on why it's good to invest in natural coloured gemstone is because it is an investment that is non-correlative in nature to macroeconomic developments.

Gemstones will typically experience steady growth despite any financial downturns and it's because of this non-volatility that makes them a perfect choice for diversifying investment portfolios.

Many who wish to invest in gemstones for the first time may ask what determines the increase in a gemstone's price. Well, it has to do with two main factors: rarity and beauty.

For example, the real reason why rubies have experienced an exponential price increase is because ruby mines are depleting. The scarcity of supply is pushing prices up.

Gemstones are one of the earth's most exquisite natural treasures that take millions of years to form. It will constantly and always be a desired commodity. World demand for fine gemstones far exceeds the supply because they are rare, precious, durable and incredibly beautiful that promises wealth, fortune ownership and a notional gain as well.

Worldwide sources of gemstones (especially rubies and sapphires) are becoming exhausted. Earlier source countries in Asia as well as Russia are now creating high demand and auctions are raising market prices.

Gemstones are small and easy to transport and store in a safe deposit box or bank vault. In essence, they are a perfect tool to store wealth and pass it on to future generations or resell in the market at a higher price.

There are hundreds of kinds of gemstones, but not every gem is an investment stone. The most popular gemstones for investors include the big three such as rubies, sapphires and emeralds. However, other gems such as alexandrite, red spinel, tsavorite and tanzanite are also fast becoming hot items on the investor's radar.

Fine gems are distinguished by vivid, intense colour, outstanding clarity, and excellent cut, including excellent grades in all the 4C's. But the best is to buy a gemstone that you can afford because it is not money spent but rather money that is invested.

Investing in natural coloured gemstone is not only for those with deep pockets. You can start with gemstones priced from a few hundred or a few thousands. But you have to look at it as an investment and be patient, and let it appreciate over time.

If you invest in gemstones with an investment horizon of 5-10 years, then this is a good time horizon for an ideal return. The rarer and more valuable a gemstone is considered, the higher its market value and future performance will be.

From the market point of view buying and selling a ruby, sapphire and emerald are the best asset class. Constantly high global demand with decreasing supply means that there is only one way for price – up and up!

Also note that untreated gemstones are best suited for investment. The degree of oiling or waxing is critical in some gemstones such as emerald. Although more than 80% of emeralds in the market today are oiled, the best emeralds to invest are those that are not oiled or only slightly oiled.

Also bear in mind the market for gemstones is not liquid. This implies that there is no daily reference price like gold. That is why a lot of reading or going to auctions can help one understand the art of investing in gemstones.

To start, you need a competent and trustworthy expert who has excellent product and market knowledge as well as an outstanding network for gemstones to be able to offer you that special stone at a particularly good price.

At Safir Jewellery & Gems, we can guide you to start investing in natural coloured gemstones with our extensive network.

So, to summarize, an investment in gemstones is an investment in a substance value. However, you do not have a regulated and liquid market, but you have much greater opportunities and returns than stocks, government bonds or gold.

A crucial aspect is to have the right partner on your side to choose the right investment with expertise and market access or network for a particularly rare and valuable gemstone at its good purchase price

point. On the other hand, to sell your gemstone, you also need a right partner with the right network to obtain the desired price.

Networking with people in the gemstones industry also helps play a crucial role when it comes to selling your gemstones as they may be able to find the right buyer at the right or desired price.

Some owners looking to sell their rare gemstones have found astonishing prices at auctions.

So to summarize, investing in natural coloured gemstones will be an experience worth the time, effort and money if one was to do it the proper way and not rush the process.

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6. A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

‘Worthwhile’ means something which is enjoyable, useful, and worth the time, money or effort spent on it.

Similarly, investing in natural coloured gemstones is a ‘worthwhile investment’ because the experience is going to be a financial pursuit that is enjoyable, useful and worth the time, money and effort spent on it.

And unlike investing in stocks, crypto or other types of investment that exist only on ‘paper’, gemstones are physical items with mesmerizing beauty that you can touch and feel. You can use it in your jewellery and be the envy of others at a party, or simply lock it up safely for your kids or grandchildren.

The worthwhile way is also to acquire and use the gemstones in your necklace or ring, and then sell it off for a profit after a few years. Good, investment quality gemstones can also be pawned in some countries to provide for financial liquidity.

There is a peculiar kind of brilliance to gemstones as an investment class that is hard to find in other type of assets. Literally, there are many instances where gemstones have proven to be reliable assets such as during tough economic times, when the stock market is declining and currency is losing in value, the prices of gems continue to rise over time and tend to be a reliable store of value.

There are always people willing to purchase gems and today they are purchased to secure private capitals from the devaluation of money itself. Therefore, gemstones are a smart move for you if you have the money to invest.

Investors see them as an investment tool which represents a real portfolio diversification and with a predicted good return on investment.

It will be safe to say, based on statistic from the last 40 years that natural coloured gemstones have seen a constant, solid increase in value and viewed by industry professionals as ‘non-volatile’.

Natural coloured gemstones have historically proven to hold their value securely over the past four decades. They have been for thousands of years as a means to retain personal and family wealth, as evident from the crown jewels of royal families from around the world. Royal families have made it a point to ensure the gemstones in the crown jewels remain part of their family legacy and lineage.

The most well-known gemstone is the diamond, but it does not have the highest value concentration of coloured gemstones and has a rather low appreciation.

The gemstone with the highest value concentration and a growth of 8 to 10% per annum is the ruby, followed by blue sapphire at 6% per annum and the emerald at 5% per annum.

For those keen to invest, there are currently two industry leaders for gem pricing and market information such as gemguide.com and gemval.com. The former is for wholesale dealers and jewellers while the latter calculates market retail prices.

Alternatively, you can rely on us at Safir Jewellery & Gems to provide you with the right estimates for gemstones based on market prices.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, one must go for rare gemstones after doing the proper research if they want to gain handsomely in the future.

Does the right investment stone exist? The answer is yes but finding a true investment stone isn't an 'easy walk in the park' and requires some reliable advice about the quality, certification and origin/history.

It is important to bear in mind that investing in gemstones does not always mean you will make a significant profit on resale. A beautiful stone can always sell but sometimes with little profit and at times of crisis, could entail in a slight loss for the owner. As in every investment, there are risks.

But in order for it to be a worthwhile investment, a considerable amount of time reading up materials and speaking with certified gems experts can help you make that worthwhile choice.

For instance, Bangkok-based Lotus laboratory regularly publishes the prices obtained at auctions. It seems rubies, sapphires and spinels with more than five carats and with the perfect color and cut in desirable qualities and with a historical provenance have obtained very good prices in auction since the end of 1980s.

An interesting fact from the prize guide also shows that most of the stones were kept in safe-deposits for many decades. Hence, the wait was worthwhile for the owners or the inheritors.

And then, there are also interesting buys due to the scarcity of certain gemstone deposits that gets the attention of collectors fired up.

For example, a 8.62-carat Graff Ruby, a stone from Burma was bought in 2006 by Graff for \$3.6 million, amounting to \$424,000 per carat. Set in a ring, it was then sold to Greek financier Dimitri Mavromatis before being bought back by Graff for \$8.6 million in 2014.

I would say a lot of 'craziness' happens when some incredibly rare pieces of gemstones turn up on the market. The rarer a stone, the more it will be desired during a possible resale. You have been warned!

So, as conclusion, investing in natural gemstones is worthwhile but not if you are expecting high, fast returns, buy a 'bargain' from an unverified source, don't have some basic knowledge about gemstones or do no research before buying.

And remember, it is very much a buyers' market out there so if you want to make a quick profit, you might not always be lucky.

Overall, it will be a worthwhile investment if efforts are made to do some research or surveys before investing.

For those with limited budgets, you can start by investing in natural coloured gemstones with 2-carat and above, and focus on the untreated ones.

If you find a particular gemstone that excites you and fits all the criteria outlined in this book, then just pick it up if the price is right and set it in your jewellery.

Even if the value does not rise up anytime soon, you will get immense satisfaction wearing a jewellery item with a beautiful piece of gemstone on it.

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7. TRENDS & FACTS

The future of coloured gemstones is as interesting and vibrant as the gemstones themselves. The trends and facts indicate the market will grow and grow for the next 10-15 years.

There seems to be no slowing down as far as consumption and demand is concerned. Several market research firms out there forecast that the coloured gemstones market is expected to witness growth of around 5.8% to 6.2% over the next five years.

Most major jewellers and gemstones dealers around the world predict the future is going to be on an uptrend as rapid urbanization, plus other factors, are spurring the growth of the coloured gemstones market.

From America to Africa, from India to China, from Europe to Asia, the sentiment among buyers, particularly the younger generation, is altered towards the growth of the market.

As people become more aware on the rarity and beauty of coloured gemstones and as more information gets out there, the consumption will not slow down. That's for sure!

Contrary to common belief that diamonds are more expensive, data from Sotheby's and Christie's auctions show per-carat prices for rubies, emerald and sapphires can far exceed white diamonds.

Many buyers today perceive white diamonds to be 'boring', particularly the younger generation. Unlike their parents or grandparents who looked at diamonds as the most precious type of gemstones, younger generation today have a totally different take and perspective on this.

The growing ‘millennial’ attention towards coloured gemstones across the globe acts as one of the major factors driving the growth of the coloured gemstones market.

The rise in popularity of numerous gemstones such as opals, topaz, alexandrite and tanzanite, and the increased use of other coloured gemstones in jewellery is accelerating market growth.

So I can confidently say that coloured gemstones will never go out of style. While the market might swing up and down as the economy, supply and other factors influence it, coloured gemstones will always have a place in the consumer’s hearts and will continue to do well.

The younger generation’s love for colours and their desire to find something that stands out while at the same time offering great value for money is something that will propel the demand for coloured gemstones as they are willing to experiment with new trends.

And then, there are these historical jewellery pieces worn by the British royal family that gave rise to coloured gemstones’ popularity in recent years.

The pieces donned by British royalty became instant inspirations for young couples across the globe. Just look at the buzz created by Kate Middleton’s blue sapphire ring, Princess Eugene’s padparadscha sapphire ring and Meghan Markle’s aquamarine ring!

Many countries have seen double-digit growth in demand and in some auctions, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires have surpassed the diamond’s value by an enormous margin, thanks to the surging fame brought by these royalties.

However, there are also other factors that could impact the growth such as corrupt labour practice and internal conflicts in mining countries, trade regulations and other types of regulatory issues but overall, these will have minimal impact on the growth.

And then, there is also the pricing concern which is why many synthetic gemstones companies have sprung up. Synthetic gemstones are significantly cheaper but natural is always natural.

I prefer to stand by the fact that if gemstone is natural, then there is a certain novelty and price premium to it – so just go for the naturals.

A major part of coloured gemstones' demands come from the Asia-Pacific region, particularly from India and China. The economic growth, increasing disposable income, and rising middle-class in these countries lead to this surge.

But, it isn't something new, especially in India and China where gemstones have been deeply rooted into ancient traditions such as astrology, numerology and healing practices.

Another growing market for coloured gemstones are people investing in tangible assets like coloured gems through online networks. These buyers look at coloured gemstones as investments assets and are very knowledgeable as to what to buy and how much to buy it for.

Nowadays, coloured gemstones have even started to flood fashion runways and fashion magazines, which is further proof of their rising popularity.

Choosing coloured gemstones reflects the younger generation's unique and unconventional take on life and relationships. Since these gemstones are available in a variety of hues and tones, they can suit the personality of those who wear them.

And then, the media publicity on blood diamonds have also propelled the younger generation of buyers to be inclined on buying coloured gemstones that are ethically-mined. News from social media influences their buying habits.

So what does the future hold for coloured gemstones? Well, people all over the world have traditionally preferred coloured gemstones for protection, fortune, good health, and love. So this trend will continue in the future too!

At the same time, synthetic coloured gemstones (and imitations) are trying to slink into this growing market. But they will not do very well as they have no sustenance due to the sheer lack of natural beauty, elegance, properties and enigma of precious, natural gemstones.

Coloured gemstones have the trump card because they make practical accessories that people can use every day. Unlike diamonds, they are far more affordable but just as beautiful and durable. They are also versatile and can be used as fashion accessories or as add-ons in fine jewellery and as lucky charms.

Social media impact, rising middle-class desires for a luxurious lifestyle and an ever-improving standard of living are among these reasons which will bolster the demand for coloured gemstones.

Other important factors to take into consideration based on the trend and fact is that one has to 'buy right'. Paying the right price is the single largest determining factor in whether you'll generate a good return on investment or not. As with any investment, this requires you to be knowledgeable and exercise a good deal of caution and common sense.

You can't pay retail for a gemstone and expect to sell it for a profit in a few years. Buying low means seeking out wholesale sources. Do your homework. Your best prices will come from the primary, first tier dealers, those who mine and cut the stones themselves.

Secondary dealers buy from other wholesalers (usually primary dealers) and resell them, still well below retail. In addition, you'll get better prices by purchasing in bulk rather than single gemstones.

You can also develop a network of jewellers who wish to sell or otherwise liquidate coloured gemstones in their possession. Sometimes, you can find gemstones considerably below current market values from these sources.

But the fact is, you must have the expertise to identify gemstones by your own or with an expert, and distinguish between natural and synthetic stones. You must be prepared to do a lot of legwork. For those who love the ‘the thrill of the hunt’, you will enjoy this endeavour and experience.

In my experience, I have come across some rare pieces due to birefringence which is a phenomenon exhibited by certain materials in which light is split into two rays – ordinary rays and extraordinary rays. It is basically an optical property of material having a refractive index.

So the valuable stone thought to be one type of gemstone turned out to be another type altogether, because of the correct refractive index.

These are part of the thrills of the hunt!

Another fact is that with an investment of labour, a lapidary (gem-cutter) can turn low-value rough gemstone into high-value finished gems. Taking a gemstone from rough form to cut form is the most direct means of adding value to your gems.

An experienced lapidary can recut an existing gem and often improve its optical properties and, therefore, its desirability.

To summarize, the trend is definitely for investors to go for natural coloured gemstones and the fact is you can’t go wrong if you make the right decisions in investing, aided by knowledge and expert guidance.

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8. CONCLUSION

When I started out to write this book, the simple idea was to educate the average person to look at investing in natural coloured gemstones because of a variety of factors.

Firstly because there is so much beauty and significance in the gemstones found in the earth's crust after having formed millions of years ago.

Secondly, you are investing in tangible, physical assets which you can use in your jewellery or hold on it for your future generations.

Thirdly, you can stand to profit handsomely by investing in the right type of gemstones.

The world of gemstones investing is far too interesting. As mentioned earlier, it's simple yet difficult and requires some hard work, effort and dedication to be put in if one wishes to acquire sufficient knowledge.

I have stayed away from talking about diamonds because I believe the way of the future is paved in colored gemstones.

Yes, diamond is very strong, expensive and everything, but it was a hard sell by diamond companies that swayed a lot of minds to think that it is the ultimate gemstone. Diamonds have long been in the debt of marketing geniuses.

Until the 1940s diamonds were not a popular choice for engagement rings. Then in 1947, in a stroke of brilliance from De Beers marketing campaign, the slogan 'A Diamond is Forever' became a hit.

The market transformed after the successful campaign by De Beers and that is how diamonds became popular as a symbol of love, luxury and the darling of high end jewellery.

I think ultimately it was the aggressive marketing strategy of the diamond companies that has placed diamond on top of the league.

Yes, I admit, some diamonds are beautiful and breathtaking but some top notched coloured gemstones are on a league of their own.

When it comes to coloured gemstones, the mesmerizing beauty of the different hues of colours and shades the way it is in each stones is something you have to hold and experience personally to understand what I am talking about.

The mesmerizing beauty of natural coloured gemstones is what got me excited and enthusiastic to learn the trade from my late grandfather in the first place.

So for those who want to start investing, first things first, always go for natural colored gemstones. Don't bother on lab grown gemstones.

I have nothing personal against lab grown gemstones but I personally feel that they might not be an ethical alternative.

Many top companies which switched to lab grown gems and this generated positive headlines as they promoted the concept of 'ethical stand against mined gemstones'.

Other companies claim their lab grown gemstones as 100% ethical and conflict free and say it is a great choice to promote the idea to consumers on the important of ethical consumption.

But in reality, I would say this is more complicated. Switching entirely to lab grown gems may have some valid reasons but it could

disenfranchise communities that the very same consumers are 'concerned' for.

If you start growing gemstones in a lab, you are taking away jobs and entire communities that depend on them. You are shutting out their livelihood and families.

This is particularly a bad scenario for small-scale miners and the families that depend on this income.

Some companies have made billions from mining. How much percentage of that have they given back to the poor communities? Very minimal, I would say based on my experience visiting dozens of mines around the world.

There is a lot of hypocrisy when it comes to companies promoting lab grown gemstones. Lab grown gems consume a lot of energy too. You need a high-heat, high pressure chambers for the gasses and this is all drives high-energy consumption.

Then is the question if they are using renewable energy or fossil fuel to create this high energy for them to grow these gems in laboratories.

As consumer demand grows, the need to create more gems in labs will grow and so will the consumption of energy be very high in the process. I would say the carbon footprint could be higher for lab grown ones than those mined.

What I personally detest is the fact that lab grown gemstones give rise to fraudulent activities where dealers or sellers try to pass off the stones as natural to consumers.

Everyday someone is cheated of their hard earned money buying a synthetic gemstone which they were told are natural ones. Everything about lab grown gemstones is 'inferior' and not similar to natural gemstones. And it's a terrible pity when someone buys for

astrological purpose and returns home with a synthetic one after having been duped by the seller claiming it's a natural.

So once it clear that you need to go for natural gemstones, the next thing to note is that you need to find the untreated ones.

Natural colored, untreated gemstones will hold up better value for you investment in years to come.

Then you have to know the four Cs – colour, clarity, cut and carat.

As explained in the fourth chapter, the four Cs will be your guide and reference when choosing the right gemstones. You will never go wrong by following the conditions of the four Cs.

You can always refer to gemstones experts for extra opinion and information. Always don't forget to do your research and I wish you all the best investing in natural coloured gemstones.

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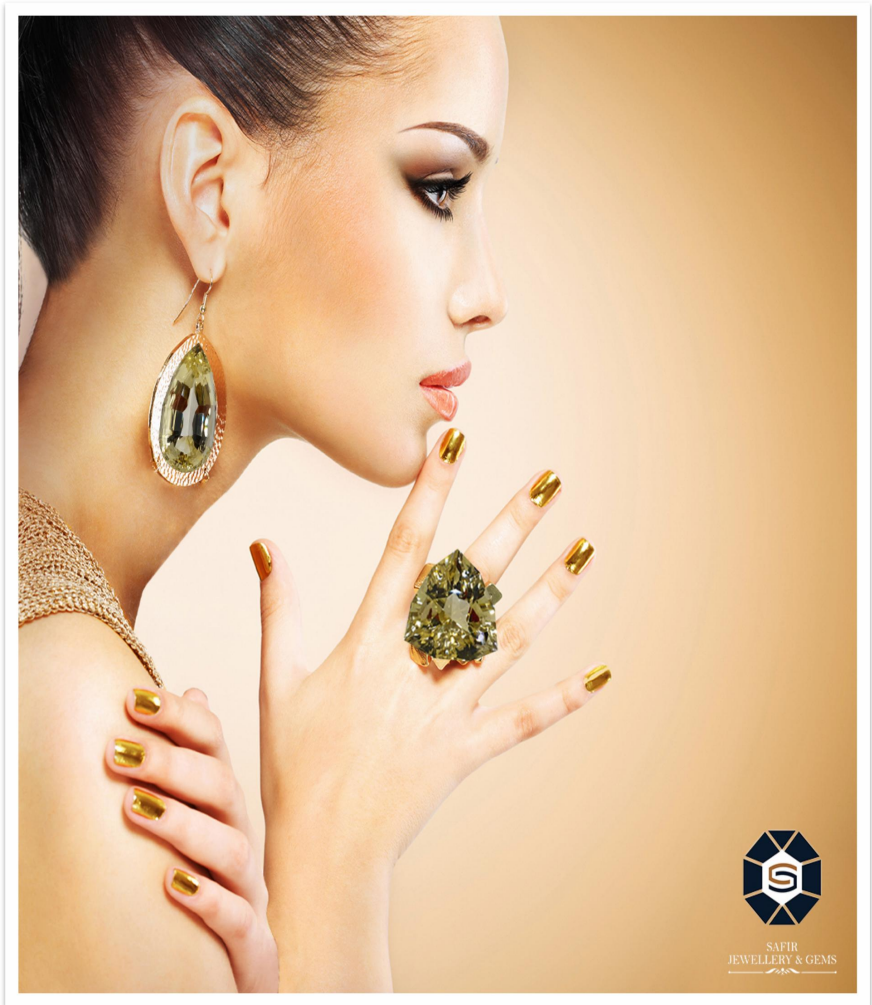
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JEWELLERY & GEMS



A ring adorned with a beautiful Chrysoberyl gemstones from Sri Lanka.



The beauty of Amethyst gemstones from Rwanda is simply stunning.



A pair of earrings and ring adorned with beautiful Beryl gemstones.



The colour, hue and shades in a Brazilian Topaz are very captivating to the eyes.



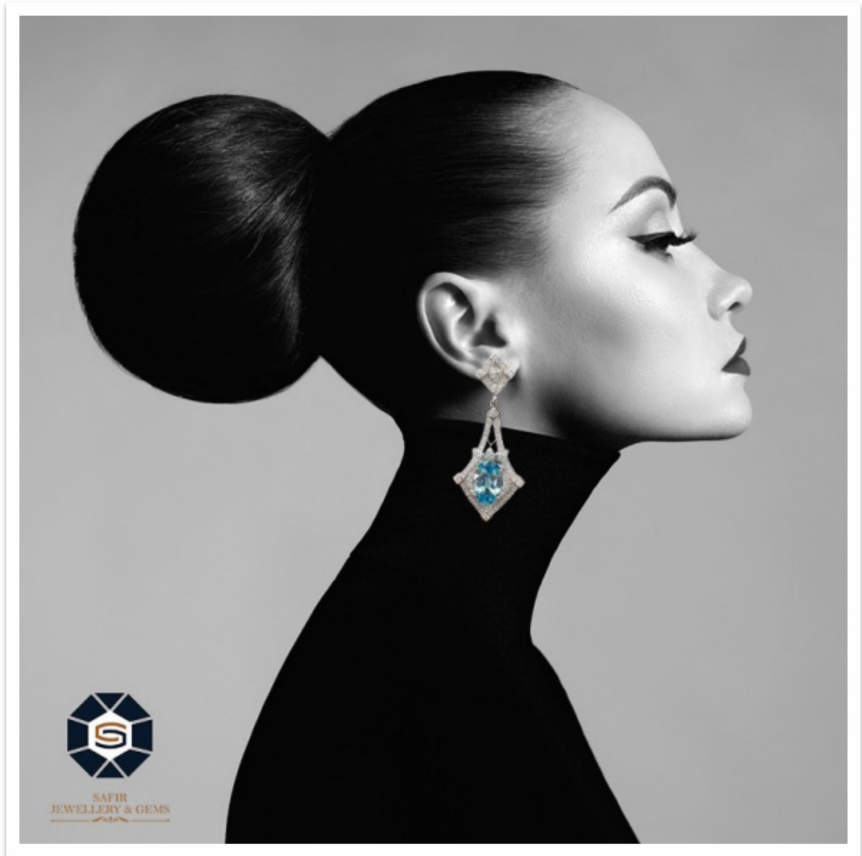
Topaz gemstones set in a sword as an ornament.



A necklace adorned with Blue Sapphire gemstones.



Yellow Sapphire gemstones from Sri Lanka never fails to mesmerize the beholder.



Blue Zircon gemstones from Cambodia in a pair of earrings.



A Green Paraiba gemstone on a ring.



Tourmaline comes in several colours such as red, pink, yellow, brown, black, green, blue or violet.



Yellow Zircon from Madagascar.



It took millions of years for natural coloured gemstones to form under the earth's crust. Every gemstone has its time & significance.



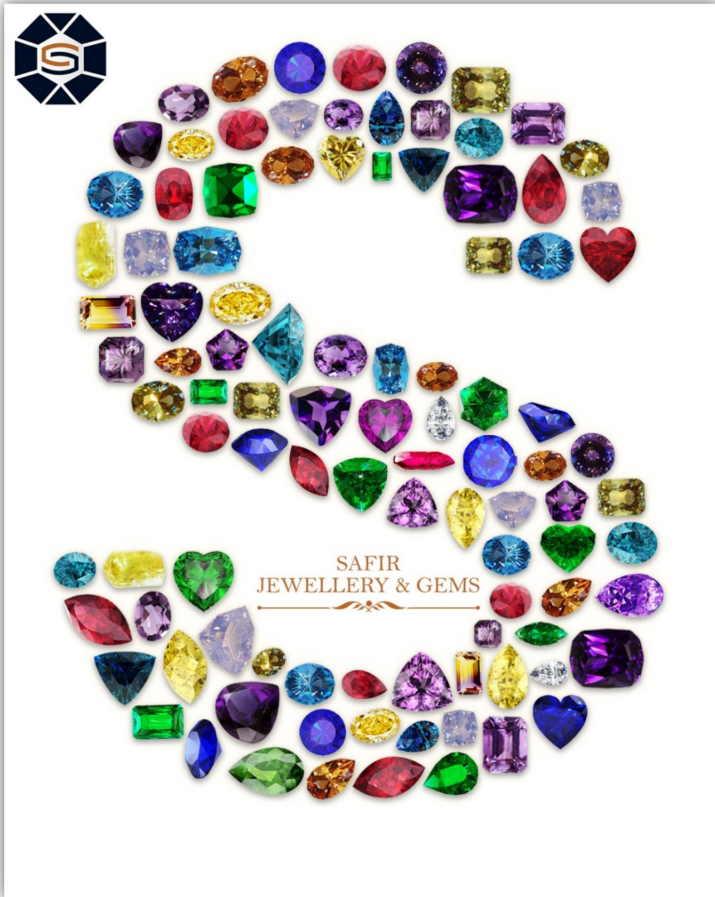
Emeralds have been used in making jewellery since 4,000 years ago.



Tourmaline necklace with South Sea Pearls (top picture) and earrings made of Blue Sapphire.



Topaz can be used in necklaces, earrings, pendants, rings & bracelets.



You can always rely on Safir Jewellery & Gems to provide you with the best advice when it comes to investing in natural coloured gemstones.

