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Gemstones: Symbols of Beauty and Power

By Edward Gübelin and Franz-Xaver Erni, with photographic contributions by Erica and Harold Van Pelt, 240 pp., illus., publ. by Geoscience Press, Tucson, AZ, 2000. US\$49.95*

Whereas most coffee table books feature popular impressions of the subject, this attractive book combines factual information by probably the best-qualified living gemologist and an experienced scientific writer with photographic contributions by the famed team of Erica and Harold Van Pelt. To find a beautifully illustrated volume with such an erudite discussion of gemstones is remarkable.

This book, a German edition of which appeared in 1999, is intended for a broad audience. It aims to "guide the layperson . . . into one of nature's most fascinating puzzles without any need for a specialist's knowledge." The opening chapters, by Dr. Gübelin, cover such topics as gem characteristics, origin, extraction, and processing. The essence of the book, though, is a 100 page section on gemstones and portraits fashioned from ornamental gems. It is a welcome surprise that in addition to covering the important so-called precious stones, the authors have added many lesser-known species such as spodumene, charoite, rhodochrosite, rhodonite, and sugilite.

Famous jewels and the magical attributes popularly assigned to gems are described by Dr. Erni in another interesting section. Dr. Gübelin, the eminent figure in the study of gemstone inclusions for over 60 years, also contributes a chapter titled "The Fascination of Internal Life."

Altogether, *Gemstones* is a valuable and beautiful addition to the gemstone literature.

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The Jeweled Menagerie: The World of Animals in Gems

By Suzanne Tennenbaum and Janet Zapata, 216 pp., illus., publ. by Thames & Hudson, New York, 2001. US \$45.00*

The Jeweled Menagerie grew out of a passion for jewelry and a love of animals on the part of co-authors Suzanne Tennenbaum and Janet Zapata. The delightful result of combining these two widely divergent subjects is a book that layers text and photos like a luscious confection, delicious to the last bite.

Animals have long been subjects for jewelry, and their jeweled images have appeared in every culture from antiquity to the present day. In the introduction to *Jeweled Menagerie*, Ms. Zapata touches on the amuletic power of animal imagery in jewelry from Ancient Egypt to the Renaissance. The body of the book then focuses on the use of animals as subjects for jewelry during the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe and the U.S. Six chapters explain the prevalence of certain animal motifs during different eras, describe the popularity of various gem materials, and delineate the design styles that became fashionable during these time periods.

Chapter 1 looks at the 19th century, covering animal jewels in the Revivalist, Victorian, and Edwardian

styles. Subsequent chapters showcase Art Nouveau, Art Deco, the 1930s–40s, the 1950s–60s, and the 1970s to the present. This broad spectrum of history is deftly condensed into a few pages of insightful text at the beginning of each chapter, followed by a dazzling panoply of photos with captions that are packed with information, including the designer, gems used, and date of manufacture.

Richly diverse, the illustrations incorporate photos of actual pieces, design renderings, and jewelry advertisements in layouts that are innovative and amusing. While a few of the jewels are old friends—such as Lalique's dragon-fly corsage ornament, and Cartier's diamond and enameled snake necklace made for the Mexican actress Maria Felix—most of the pieces illustrated have not appeared previously in books on jewelry history.

Creative placement of the photos often brings these creatures alive: A tiger jewel crouching on the bottom of one page stalks a flying crane on another, while snakes and lizards slither and skitter across adjacent pages. Several jeweled animals are placed opposite their original design renderings or laid over their vintage advertisements. Large spreads show these precious creatures superimposed on photos of natural environments: five Sterlé birds perched in the spreading branches of a tree, two

**This book is available for purchase through the GIA Bookstore, 5345 Armada Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92008. Telephone: (800) 421-7250, ext. 4200; outside the U.S. (760) 603-4200. Fax: (760) 603-4266.*

Victorian spiders on a lichen-covered rock wall, or a pair of Cartier crocodiles in a lily pad-covered lake. Close-ups allow the reader to see details of how the pieces are fabricated and the gems are set.

The Jeweled Menagerie isn't comprehensive in terms of information about designers or jewelry history, but the authors never intended it to be. They have provided a good index to find references to the various animals, jewelers, and personalities covered, and there is an impressive bibliography for the reader who wants to go deeper. This book is, however, appealing, entertaining, informative, and a feast for the eyes.

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Diamond: A Journey to the Heart of an Obsession

By Matthew Hart, 276 pp., illus., publ. by Walker & Co., New York, 2001. US\$26.00

Matthew Hart, a Canadian journalist who contributes to the *Rapaport Diamond Report*, offers a lively read through various bits of diamond lore, intrigue, and history—recent and ancient. The work opens with the tale of a mysterious 81 ct pink diamond unearthed by two *garimpeiros* in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais that introduces many of the players who appear later in the book. In the second chapter, the scene shifts to outer space, where cosmic rivers of diamonds may be swirling through the universe. Later in the book, Hart moves far beneath the earth's crust, where the diamonds mined today were formed by intense heat and pressure before they were blasted to the surface through volcanic pipes.

In subsequent chapters, his tale shifts to diamond exploration, as he retells the story of the South African rush, describes newer methods of prospecting for diamonds, and provides a detailed discussion of Canadian Charles Fipke's trek through the

barren north that resulted in the discovery of the Ekati mine. The middle of the book describes De Beers and the company's recent evolution from a near-monopoly producer of rough diamonds to a competitive player with the likes of BHP Minerals, Rio Tinto, and other mining concerns, as well as how De Beers has built diamond demand through advertising. It also includes an account of the moral battles over illicit and conflict diamonds. Hart then uses the history of the giant firm Rosy Blue to trace the rise of India, and profiles a master diamond cutter with William Goldberg in New York.

Unfortunately the book's chief asset, Hart's engaging and accessible writing style, is also its chief liability, for the author often oversimplifies things, wrapping his story around a nucleus of a few interesting personalities, to the point of being wrong. For example, in the section on diamond exploration, the author strongly implies that South African geologist John Gurney was the first to identify garnet as an indicator mineral for diamond, when, in fact, a mantra of South African prospectors of the 1870s was "where garnets lie, you'll find diamonds." (Gurney narrowed the indicator mineral to a particular type of pyrope garnet.) And, in the chapter on Rosy Blue, the author appears to suggest that this billion-dollar company has carried India's diamond trade to its current world-class status on its coattails. Rosy Blue may be the largest Indian diamond firm, but it is hardly the only major player.

In general, the book has a hurried air about it, as if it were the biography of some important celebrity that had to make the bookstores before the limelight dimmed. Yet there's nothing so urgent here to justify the lack of proper editing (like any good storyteller, Hart has to be reined in from time to time, but the editors at Walker & Co. have not done so) and the clumsy, obvious typos that distract throughout the book.

In the past 20 years, the diamond industry has been besieged by books and documentaries attempting to

debunk the value of these gems (notably Edward J. Epstein's *The Rise and Fall of Diamonds* in 1981) or associate them with wars and furtive conspiracies. There is a need for an honest, objective story about diamonds, but unfortunately Hart fails to deliver his promised journey.

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Barren Lands: An Epic Search for Diamonds in the North American Arctic

By Kevin Krajick, 442 pp., illus., publ. by Times Books (Henry Holt and Co.), New York, 2001. US\$26.00

"Barren Lands" is the name given to the vast (roughly 500,000 sq. mi. [1.3 million km²]), bleak, and remote areas of northern Canada beyond the tree line. The region is characterized by bare rocks and lakes, as well as extreme cold in the winter. Yet it also hosts the major discoveries of diamond-bearing kimberlite that have propelled Canada into the spotlight as a significant source of diamonds. This four-part book documents in vivid detail the search by two indefatigable (and lucky!) maverick geologists, Charles E. Fipke and Stewart L. Blusson, that eventually resulted in the discovery of kimberlites despite almost impossible odds.

Part I is a brief history of the Barren Lands, beginning with Jacques Cartier's initial exploration in 1534 and continuing with the exploits of Martin Frobisher, Samuel Hearne, and Sir John Franklin over the next ~300 years. It also describes the inhospitable characteristics of the area, which made geologic exploration essentially impossible, except along the shorelines and main rivers, until after World War II, when float planes and helicopters became reliable. Part II is a history of diamond finds in North America, starting with the discovery of diamonds in the 1830s in the Appalachian Mountains

of the United States. The section continues with their discovery in the glacial tills of the Great Lakes states, which led Prof. W. H. Hobbs to suggest (in 1899) that primary diamond deposits would be found in Canada; the discovery of diamonds in Arkansas (1906); and the initial exploration by De Beers in the 1960s, primarily in Ontario. An added bonus is an interesting summary of the role played by Dr. George F. Kunz in the early history of diamonds in America. Although the discussion is peripheral to the main theme of the book, to my knowledge this is the only publication where these topics are assembled in one place.

Part III is the backbone of the book. Here we follow the exploits of Fipke and Blusson during the 1980s, in their decade-long quest for diamonds across roughly 1,000 km of desolate northern Canada, from the Mackenzie Mountains in the west to the Lac de Gras region in the middle of the Barren Lands. We experience the great physical, emotional, and financial stresses these two geologists faced, and follow the logic of their changing geologic concepts (e.g., the sampling of eskers for "G10" pyrope garnets and other indicator minerals), which were clearly ahead of their time. During this entire period they were competing with—and only one step ahead of—other well-financed diamond exploration programs, mainly that of De Beers. Krajick masterfully portrays the multitude of personalities (e.g., eccentric, ruthless, paranoid, deceptive) evident in several individuals who were prominent in the search. Part IV covers the period after the discovery of diamonds in the Lac de Gras area was announced in late 1991 until the opening of the Ekati mine in October 1998. Emphasis is on the greatest staking rush the world has ever seen for any (solid) mineral and the rapid discovery of hundreds of kimberlite pipes.

To reconstruct the history of diamond exploration in the Barren Lands since the early 1980s, Krajick interviewed at least a dozen major personalities; this alone was an achieve-

ment, as those involved in diamond exploration are notoriously secretive. Since many of these individuals are reaching retirement age or otherwise dispersing, it is unlikely that an account of such depth and quality will ever be possible again. Further, an extensive list of references—some with annotations that make for interesting reading in themselves—adds credibility and utility for the researcher. My only disappointment is that the book contains only two illustrations (both of which are maps). It lacks any illustrations or photographs of the landscape, important geologic features, exploration parties, mines, diamonds, and (especially) Fipke, Blusson, and other key individuals.

Nevertheless, this book is extremely well written, and it is clearly the most authoritative single source on the history of the discovery of diamonds in Canada for both the layperson and the professional.

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Pearls: A Natural History

*By Neil H. Landman, Paula M. Mikkelsen, Rudiger Bieler, and Bennet Bronson, 232 pp., illus., publ. by Harry N. Abrams, New York, in association with The American Museum of Natural History and The Field Museum, 2001. US\$49.50**

If you are a pearl aficionado, then this is a book for all seasons. For the novice especially, this is a splendid educational experience that weaves science, history, literature, and magnificent jewelry into the story of pearls, both natural and cultured.

As a pearl importer and wholesaler, I am ever searching for a book to recommend on this subject. *Pearls* not only has captivated my attention, but it also has expanded my information cache both visually and intellectually. I particularly appreciate how the science is consistent with GIA's *Pearls* course, and that *Ge&G* articles are

acknowledged in the "Notes," an informative collection of footnotes on many subjects.

This book supplies a vast compilation of pearl arcana. If you are interested in archeology, the chapter on "Non-European Traditions" will tantalize you with sites where pearl and mother-of-pearl usage was evidenced. As you read poetic allusions to pearls from classic literary sources from the first millennium B.C., you will learn that a very high value was placed on pearls even then. From the Neolithic period to the rise of the Persian Empire in the sixth century, the authors chronicle the recognition of pearls as status symbols.

Woodcuts, photos, charts, and paintings all lavishly illustrate and clearly document how pearls have been a part of human history. Portraits of pearl-laden queens and kings abound. Parures of seed pearl jewelry, coronals and headdresses, and a pearl diadem worn by Princess Diana are but a few items of provenance that will engage the antique collector's interest.

Sprinkled throughout the full text are satisfying tidbits of information that are self-contained on one or two pages. For example, "Pearls in Medicine and Cosmetics" will enlighten you to the marvels of the gem's many purported medicinal properties, both curative and beautifying.

Although there is no glossary, the index is so thorough that you can personalize and construct your own definitions. References abound if one wants to explore any topic further.

Last but not least, should you be even the least bit curious about what the visuals in the book look like in three dimensions, go see the *Pearls* exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The show is on exhibit there until April 14, after which it travels to the Field Museum in Chicago. At this exhibition you will experience firsthand the essence of what the book is all about.

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Diamonds: Famous & Fatal

By Leo P. Kendall, 236 pp., illus., publ. by Barricade Books, Fort Lee, NJ, 2001. US\$30.00

The author clearly states in his preface that you will not find “information about the technical or geological aspects of the diamond” in this book. Rather, the book is a compilation of the known history, as well as the lore and legend, of many famous diamonds and the people associated with them. Of particular interest is the detailed chapter on Jean-Baptiste Tavernier’s fascinating life and travels. In other chapters, the author recounts the tales of the famous robbery of the French Crown Jewels in 1792 and of the amazing Peacock Throne of the Persians. In keeping with the title of the book, Kendall also relates legends of bad fortune connected with the Hope diamond, the Koh-i-Noor, and others. Are these diamonds cursed? Readers are left to decide for themselves.

Also discussed are historical references to diamonds, such as in the Bible and in Pliny’s writings. Kendall does a fine job of describing the evolution of diamond cutting and historical diamond sources. The book is quite enjoyable to those who admire diamond. There are a few typographical errors and some questionable statements. (For example, I have trouble agreeing with the assertion that, “it is one of the most common of all gemstones.”) Overall, though, this book is recommended reading for any diamond enthusiast.

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OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED

Proceedings of the International Workshop on Material Characterization by Solid State Spectroscopy: Gems and Minerals of Vietnam, edited by Wolfgang Hofmeister, Nguyen Quy Dao, and Vu Xuan Quang, 334 pp., illus., publ. by Vien Khoa hoc Vat lieu, Hanoi, US\$20.00 [e-mail:

quangvx@hn.vnn.vn]. This book represents the published proceedings of an international scientific conference held in Hanoi, Vietnam, April 4–10, 2001. The conference brought together researchers interested in applying various spectroscopic and other analytical techniques to characterize gem materials. The meeting was organized by the Institute of Materials Science, Laboratory of Applied Spectroscopy and Gemmology of the National Centre of Science and Technology in Hanoi, among others. This volume contains 34 short articles, many of which focus on gems of Vietnamese origin. Characterization techniques include optical spectroscopy, thermoluminescence, particle-induced X-ray emission (PIXE) spectroscopy, photoluminescence, X-ray powder diffraction analysis, cathodoluminescence, electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) spectroscopy, and inductively coupled plasma-atomic emission spectroscopy (ICP-AES). Data—including gemological properties, chemical compositions, and visible and Raman spectra—are presented for Vietnamese ruby, sapphire, spinel, topaz, aquamarine, tourmaline, peridot, zircon, quartz, feldspar (orthoclase), and pyroxene (diopside). Articles on more general topics discuss geologic environments of gemstone formation or occurrence, heat treatment of corundum, cultured pearl identification, irradiated topaz, gem corundum from Madagascar, and gem deposits of Sri Lanka, as well as types of gem deposits in Vietnam. This volume provides an important compilation of data on Vietnamese gems and gem localities.

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Shinju no Kagaku [Science of the Pearl], by Koji Wada, 339 pp., illus., publ. by Shinju Shinbunsaya (Pearl News Press), Tokyo, 1999 [in Japanese], ¥8,500. Those who begin to learn about pearls—both natural and cultured—soon encounter many ques-

tions. How is pearl formed in an oyster? Why do pearls have so many different colors? How are surface imperfections produced? How does one learn about the quality and care of pearls? *Science of the Pearl* provides most of the answers. It consists of 11 chapters on such topics as the function of the piece of mantle tissue and the pearl sac in the culturing procedure, the calcification process of shell and pearl, pearl processing, imitation pearls, pearl identification, the pearl culturing industry, and pearls in jewelry. Dr. Koji Wada, a world-famous biomineral researcher, provides revealing insight on all of these topics and more.

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Minding the Store, by Stanley Marcus, 383 pp., illus., publ. by University of North Texas Press, Denton, TX, paperback edition 2001, US\$19.95. Founded in Dallas, Texas, in 1907, Neiman Marcus became famous as a retail store specializing in upscale apparel, accessories, and jewelry. Leading the way for much of the 20th century was Stanley Marcus, who joined the family firm in 1926 and guided its growth until he retired in 1977. With his memoir *Minding the Store*—first published in 1974 and now available for the first time in paperback—Marcus shares decades of retail wisdom as he recounts the Neiman Marcus success story.

In Marcus’s companion book *Quest for the Best* (227 pp., illus., paperback, University of North Texas Press, 2001, US\$14.95), the legendary retailer outlines his standards of quality in luxury goods and services. He describes how consumers can develop a taste for and locate “the finer things,” including jewelry (pp. 120–123), fashion, food and wine, accommodations, fragrances, and more. Originally published in 1979, this revised edition offers an updated “Best Things List.”

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