



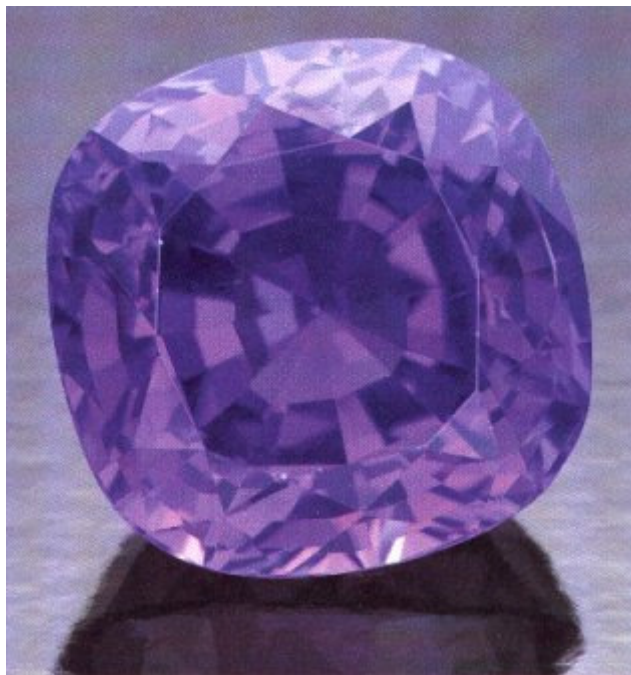
MSG JEWELERS

Gem Talk

by Michael S. George

*MSG Jewelers helps you buy diamonds with confidence . .
.GUARANTEED!*

Tanzanite: The Marvelous Blue-Violet Gemstone



In this article we will be discussing the ever-popular tanzanite gemstone. Tanzanite is a new stone in the marketplace, having been discovered in 1967 in the country of Tanzania. This marvelous blue-violet colored gemstone was named by Tiffany's in 1969 in honor of its only known source. Its color can range from very pale purple to a majestic royal blue with a purple flash. The more intense the color, the more valuable the stone. Large, intense colored tanzanites of 25 carats or more can easily sell for \$50,000.00 or more.

Tanzanite is a soft stone, therefore it is rather fragile and will crack if it is exposed to extreme temperatures or sudden changes in temperature. It is not recommended to use an ultrasonic cleaner on this gemstone due to its low tolerance of ultrasonic vibrations.

The color is obtained by heat treatment of the rough stone. This is a process that is rather common today in our industry. The raw uncut tanzanite is put in a furnace or oven and brought near its melting point, then held there at that temperature for a period of time, inducing the stone to darken in color as it would in the earth if left to its own. This process may sound simple, but it is far from being an easy or foolproof technique. It is quite possible in this heat treatment process to have the tanzanite melt or overcook, leaving you

with a worthless pile of rubble.

When purchasing a tanzanite, it is important to know what to look for and to be familiar with price. This is a gemstone that has taken the market by storm and in a bull market, mistakes can easily be made due to inaccurate information or assumptions being made by inexperienced consumers. As a rule of thumb, when purchasing any gemstone, not just tanzanite, it is imperative that the stone is well cut. A well cut stone will radiate with brilliance and life from within the stone in most lighting conditions. Stay away from dull, lifeless gems. Look for well proportioned stones that are pleasing to the eye, remembering that if it is beautiful to you it will be beautiful to others also. You will want to work with a well educated jeweler who has a reputation for honesty and integrity as well as the desire to educate you. This will enhance the chances of you receiving a good value at the time of purchase. Look through a wide selection of qualities of tanzanite to assure yourself of the best opportunity of choice based upon variety. By doing this you will forego the bad experience others have had of choosing a stone from a small selection, then soon after finding one that is more fitting to their taste and budget. Remember that your opinion is the most important one at this time because you are the one who will wear the tanzanite, not to mention the person paying for it, so make yourself happy with this purchase using all the information that is available to you in your decision making process.

Tanzanite is generally available with only minor inclusions that are not visible to the naked eye. Please keep in mind that color is the most important value factor in the purchase of this gemstone, so you want the emphasis to be on intense color and brilliance.

When purchasing fine quality gemstones try to keep the focus on the characteristics you most like in a stone and not just on the technical aspects, which can sidetrack you from what you really want.

© Copyright 1997 by Michael S. George
Do not reprint without author's permission.