

A dash of colour!

FROM FIERY RUBIES TO SOOTHING SAPPHIRES, ALL SORTS OF COLOURS FIND THEIR PLACE IN THE INDIAN JEWELLERY INDUSTRY TODAY. WHETHER IT'S A PASSING FAD OR A TREND THAT'S HERE TO STAY, IS YET TO BE SEEN, BUT FOR NOW, COLOURS ARE MOST DEFINITELY THE RAGE OF THE SEASON, FINDS SAVIA RAJAGOPAL

PHOTO COURTESY: EROS JEWELRY, SG JEWELLERY, AMRAPALI JEWELLS, JEWELS BY ANU



Glancing through history, the Greeks were amongst the earliest to use precious and semi-precious stones in their jewellery. Emeralds, rubies, agates, aquamarines, garnets were amongst the popular stones used. The Romans were the next to add colour to their jewellery. Cut to the 21st century, coloured stones have found their way back into the good books of jewellery designers the world over. Closer home to India, they are making their presence felt in every segment — be it rings, bracelets, necklaces, nose pieces, pendants and even kurta buttons! Whether this jewellery is worn for religious reasons or for personal adornment, it's hard to miss the tantalising hues on display.

Many jewellery manufacturers have designed collections revolving around colour and are getting more experimental in terms of design as well as materials used. Conventional is no longer 'in'. Commenting on current trends in the market, Surabhi Kasliwal, Senior Executive, Eros Jewelry, says, "Mughal designs consisting of floral

and geometric patterns with variety of coloured stones and diamonds are in vogue. High-end jewellery with delicate rose cut diamonds in Edwardian and art deco settings are the most coveted accessories for women this year. The patterns usually apply to chandelier earrings and long pendants. There is lots of jewellery inspired from nature, as in carved flowers and leaves, and also, heavy sets in combinations with pretty pinks, oranges and vivid reds." On why people have started buying more coloured stone jewellery, Vaibhav Goyal, Sales Manager, SG Jewellery, Jaipur states, "People have started spending a lot on their lifestyles, especially jewellery and are switching to coloured stone jewellery regardless of the resale value. They prefer buying some jewellery which is different from others and unique in every aspect." Observes Rajiv Arora, Amrapali Jewels, "The last few jewellery trends revolved around white and yellow gold, so there was bound to be a change! Moreover, people have become more fashion conscious. Buying jewellery as accessories to outfits has made all the difference."

It's not unusual to see unlikely colours being clubbed together to create dramatic and almost surreal designs. Nor is it bizarre to see materials as diverse as wood and coloured stones being used to create extraordinarily intricate jewellery. Many jewellery manufacturers are picking up on unusual and imaginative ideas to garner attention. At the recently concluded India International Jewellery Show (IJS), many jewellers showcased designs that made fascinating uses of colour. Although, plain gold jewellery is the traditional favourite in India, the market for coloured stone jewellery is surely but steadily picking up. There isn't much debate on the virtues of buying gold. For starters, gold jewellery had a definite resale value and is certainly a sound investment. Having said that, there is a fast growing market for precious and semi-precious stones, studded jewellery. Says jewellery designer, Anuradha Chhabra of Jewels by Anu, "There is definitely an intensive market. Coloured stone jewellery is in demand and so there is a great potential for these designs". Many design houses are picking on the consumer's desire to have unique and fashionable jewellery. Buying jewellery is no longer about just buying gold that can be saved for a rainy day. "More fashion awareness will bring more colour to jewellery," predicts Arora.

To talk about coloured stone jewellery and not mention Jaipur would be simply unfair! Jaipur has been a haven for the coloured stone industry. Recent up gradations in technology and technique have made this city a proud centre for India, and a serious contender in the global market. "Jaipur is one of the most important centres of cutting, polishing and testing of colour stones in the



world. More than 200,000 people are engaged in the colour stone business in Jaipur. All kinds of semi-precious stones and precious stones, especially like emeralds, are cut in Jaipur. Jaipur emeralds have been used for years by jewellers like Cartier, Bvlgari and Harry Winston," states Arora.

Amongst the most popular stones used these days are emeralds, rubies, multi-coloured sapphires, tourmalines, amethysts, blue topaz, citrines and other semi-precious stones. Larger emeralds have a deep colour, and are a beautiful addition to anyone's jewellery collection, but they should be worn with care. Ruby is considered the most valuable gemstone. Because of the hardness of the stone, ruby is an excellent choice for all types of jewellery. The most valuable gemstone in the quartz group is amethyst. Its hardness ensures good everyday wearability. Blue Topaz is a clear and bright gemstone, which gets its name from Sanskrit, meaning 'fire'. Topaz ranges in colour from white or clear, to pink, red, yellow and blue. Its popularity is due to its beautiful colour, affordability, and its strength. Tourmaline that is seen in most jewellery is usually pink or green. Because of its unusually bright shade of pink, tourmaline is a favourite among young girls. Arora states that peridot, amethyst, citrine and rainbow moonstone are popular in silver jewellery. He adds that coral and turquoise (which was one of the first gemstones ever used for jewellery) go very well with an ethnic ensemble.

There are a few things one should bear in mind while buying coloured stone jewellery. Sometimes coloured glass is used instead of authentic stones and only a practiced eye may be able to discern the difference. Says Chhabra, "As in any profession, there could be dubious jewellers and dealers. But, on the whole, they are highly ethical professionals and sleazy practices involving fraud are an exception rather than the norm." Advises Arora, "Buy only from reputed jewellers because many coloured stones are heated and treated for enhancing their colours. If buying an important or expensive coloured stone, it is advisable to get a certificate through a reputed gem testing laboratory."

