

GEMFIELDS



Courtesy of E. Billie Hughes/Lotus Gemology

Emeralds

LONDON, 03 MAY 2024

*Text attributed to: **Elena Basaglia, Head of Partnerships & Product - Downstream, Gemfields***

Emeralds have long been the currency of empires. Ever since Cleopatra made this vibrant green gemstone the signature of her kingdom, emeralds have been seducing the great and the good. They were used as a colourful display of wealth and show of force under the Roman emperor Julius Caesar, and as a symbol of peace and restoration under Augustus; they were an obsession for Napoleon, and a forbidden item for anyone other than the emperor Justinian and his wife Theodora in Byzantine times.

The human fascination with emeralds is a thread woven through our collective history. Early humans, captivated by the beauty of colour and the desire to possess enduring treasures, fell in love with this gemstone. In a world where everything else aged and withered, the unchanging

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beauty of emeralds was a source of awe, desire and admiration. The only logical explanation for their existence was that they were somehow divine, forever linked to the spiritual world.

It has always been widely held that green is a relaxing colour, and emeralds have been ascribed talismanic qualities; they are thought to symbolise good health, the green shoots of Spring, fertility and abundance. Although there are other green gemstones commonly used in jewellery – peridot, jade and tsavorite, for instance – scarcity is what sets emeralds apart.

Emeralds are formed from a rare combination of uncommon elements, namely chromium and beryllium, which are usually found at entirely different depths in the earth's crust. Chromium is found in minute amounts in the ultramafic rock that makes up a significant portion of the oceanic crust, while beryllium is usually embedded in much newer igneous rocks that form peaks and highlands. These igneous rocks, known as pegmatites, are formed on land by cooled molten magma.

In essence, beryllium and chromium are like the Romeo and Juliet of the elements, and the emeralds that form from their union are regarded as true scientific marvels.

As a gemmologist, I am fascinated by the science and romance of emerald: a royal gemstone with incredible beauty and history, the result of an impossible chemical love affair, formed under the most unlikely of circumstances.

Emeralds originating from different parts of the world present slightly different features. Historically, Colombia was the primary source of emeralds, dating back to when the Spanish conquistadores opened mines in Chivor, Muzo and other localities in the mid-1500s.

Emerald mining in East Africa is much newer and can be traced back to the 1970s, despite the fact that Zambian emeralds were formed more than 500 million years ago.

When an emerald is unearthed from the ground, the first ray of sunlight travelling directly through the gemstone gives it its glowing colour for the very first time. Zambian emeralds' colour results from chromium and iron contamination in their simple octagonal beryl structure. In Mother Nature's cookbook, iron is pivotal in bonding the elements tighter, making the crystal less fragmented and more wearable in everyday jewellery.

Zambian emeralds have a distinctive colour, which can be described as a sharp, evenly distributed green that glows with a tint of blue. Internally, microcosms of natural prodigies can be observed under the gemmological lens. Internal features are Mother Nature's fingerprint and a telltale sign

that the gemstone has travelled through time, environments and conditions that will remain in its memory forever.

The formation of each gem influences the decisions made by the lapidary, who unfolds magical sparkles from within each gem after it has been unearthed. Emerald cutting is still done using traditional methods and simple tools that have been perfected over time.

The first cut imposed on a rough gem ends one story and begins a new one. Most commonly, the cutter will opt for an emerald cut: a classical rectangular shape with bevelled corners that elegantly enhance light reflections, reduce stress and maximise weight retention in the rough-to-cut transformation. The cut emerald eventually chooses its setting and its new owner, as gemstones are believed to have the power to tap into the inherent human weakness for beautiful things.

- ENDS -

Please see link to advertising campaign, inclusion imagery and product shots [HERE](#)

For inclusion imagery please credit: *Courtesy of E. Billie Hughes/Lotus Gemology.*

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Gemfields

Gemfields is a world-leading responsible miner and marketer of coloured gemstones. The operator and 75% owner of both the Kagem emerald mine in Zambia (believed to be the world's single largest producing emerald mine) and the Montepuez ruby mine in Mozambique (one of the most significant recently discovered ruby deposits in the world), Gemfields believes that those who mine gemstones should do so with transparency, legitimacy and integrity.

Gemfields introduced a technologically advanced coloured gemstone sort house at its operation in Mozambique, with state-of-the-art equipment, like optical sorting machines. In addition, a proprietary grading system, a pioneering auction platform and an active marketing presence have all contributed to Gemfields playing a significant role in the rise of African gemstones. Underlying this achievement has been the strong belief that coloured gemstones should create a positive impact for the country and community from which they originate.

Responsible mining for Gemfields means implementing industry-leading policies and practices across operations, transparency in its auction sales process, an active role in working groups to modernise the sector, projects to improve health, education and livelihoods for the communities around its mines and conservation efforts (#conservationgemstones) to protect Africa's great wildlife and biodiversity.

Gemfields Foundation is the charitable arm of Gemfields, through which donors can contribute funding to directly support community and conservation projects in Africa, magnifying the scale of the work already carried out by Gemfields itself.

Fabergé – an iconic name with an exceptional heritage – is a member of the Gemfields Group. The beauty of Fabergé's designs and craftsmanship helps to raise consumer awareness of responsibly mined coloured gemstones.

As well as supplying a significant share of the world's rough rubies and emeralds, Gemfields initiates activations to build desire for coloured gemstones: for example, collaborations with international jewellery brands and other creative partners. Often surprising, unexpected and unique, these collaborations are chosen to promote consumer awareness and increase the appeal of coloured gemstones, raising their profile, and, in turn, providing greater benefit to their place of origin in Africa.

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