

ABOVE: The Oppenheimer Blue became the world's most expensive jewel when it sold at Christie's for £34.7m earlier this year



BACKES AND STRAUSS
Piccadilly Princess Royal Colours watch in white gold set with 225 white and natural coloured diamonds, POA. backesandstrauss.com



HARRY WINSTON
Yellow diamond earrings, POA. harrywinston.com



BRILLIANT HUES

Diamonds may be pricey but not compared to their coloured cousins. **Avril Groom** enters a very rarefied world

Earlier this year the Oppenheimer Blue, the largest (14.62 carat) fancy vivid blue diamond ever sold at auction, became the world's most expensive jewel when Christie's sold it for £34.7m. With

large diamonds prized investments, those in the richest, rarest colours are the biggest treasures. Coloured diamonds make up only one in ten thousand gem-quality diamonds; the scarcest colours – blue or violet, deep pink or red, shades of green – are incomparably rarer, the result of a random input of trace elements or pressure during the stones' formation billions of years ago.

Some, mainly in the pink spectrum, form the annual Argyle Tender – cut and polished gems offered by bid to selected top jewellers by the Rio Tinto-owned Australian mine, which is a prime



BOUCHERON
18kt white gold, rock crystal, diamond Lys Radiant necklace with detachable brooch, POA. uk.boucheron.com



DE BEERS
Talisman high jewellery ring set in white gold, £60,000. debeers.co.uk



ANNOUSHKA
Dusty Diamonds
18kt rose gold and grey diamond bracelet, £3,900. annoushka.com



GRAFF
Pink and white diamond necklace, POA. graffdiamonds.com

MOUSSAIEFF
Natural Fancy Intense Pink diamond earrings in a pink diamond border, mounted in rose gold, POA. moussaieff.co.uk



DAVID MORRIS
18kt white and red gold Taj cocktail ring with round diamond and white, purple, pink mixed shape diamonds, POA. davidmorris.com



DE GRISOGONO
Frangé ring in pink gold with brown diamonds, £54,500. degrisogono.com

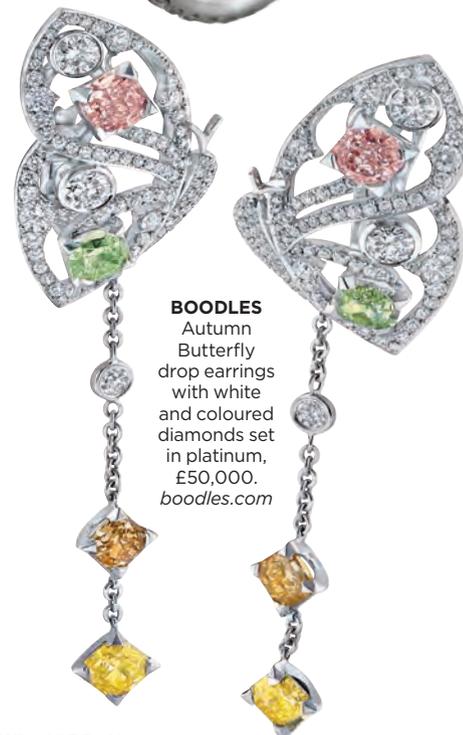


CALLEIJA
Armeria brilliant cut tender blue diamond ring with Argyle pink and white diamonds, £215,000. calleija.com.au



SAGQARA
18kt gold Stepping Stones ring, £7,850. saqqarajewels.com

BOGHOSSIAN
18kt white gold, fancy vivid yellow emerald-cut diamond and light yellow oval-shaped diamond kissing ring, POA. bogh-art.com



BOODLES
Autumn Butterfly drop earrings with white and coloured diamonds set in platinum, £50,000. boodles.com



ALEXIA JORDAN
18kt rose gold and brown diamonds ring, £1,125. alexiajordanjewellery.com

source of coloured diamonds and has helped popularise them. In the 1980s it made formerly inexpensive brown diamonds desirable, partly by calling them 'champagne' or 'cognac'. This year – the results of the Tender will be announced shortly – the 'hero' stone is the largest violet diamond ever marketed (2.83 carats) but pinks have been Argyle's great glory, though supplies and sizes are dwindling, so values are rising.

This may be partly why pink diamonds are in such demand. Graff, which made its name with slightly less rare yellow diamonds, added pinks from Argyle soon after production started in the mid-1980s and has beautiful examples. Three other London jewellers are now official Argyle ateliers – historic Boodles, Nirav Modi, who has just opened a Bond Street store, and Australian brand Calleija, a long-term Argyle partner, which has just expanded its Royal Arcade store to four floors, and mixes pink with other colours, such as pale violet, to great effect.

The Argyle mine supplies 90 per cent of the world's pink diamonds but there are other sources of coloured diamonds, from Africa and South America to Siberia. Some are smaller and paler, but they have great allure, especially when used in subtle colour combinations. Boodles' beautiful new collection is a typical example, as are De Beers' coloured items, and high design pieces like Boucheron's amazing diamond and rock crystal Lys Radiant brooch. Spectacular rings have unusual designs – Boghossian's 'kissing' yellow and white diamonds, de Grisogono's rose gold ring fringed with briolettes in a delicate pale brown or Nirav Modi's mix of soft yellows and pinks. Few pieces are more original than Backes and Strauss's Piccadilly Princess watch in a random mosaic of soft browns, oranges and yellows, many of a standalone size. The price is under wraps but it would undoubtedly make the all-white version look a bargain. ■