

LUXURY



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on the art of adornment; and how
Dubai became a diamond hub**



PRETTIER IN
pink

From diamonds and sapphires to opals, rosy-hued gemstones are anything but saccharine, writes **Francesca Fearon**

Some may dismiss pink as a frivolous shade associated with the most feminine of girls, but in the jewellery world, the colour is regarded as anything but fluffy and saccharine.

Pink diamonds are a perfect example of how scarcity is driving up demand and, subsequently, price tags. It is hard to believe that in the early days, coloured diamonds were dismissed as being of less value – today, their rarity is reflected in the astonishing prices they fetch at auction.

In 1999, De Beers mined the Pink Star diamond in South Africa. It weighed 132.5 carats rough and took two years to cut into the 59.60-carat final product. It is the largest internally flawless, fancy vivid pink-graded diamond in the world, and it set a record in 2017 when sold at auction by Sotheby's Hong Kong for \$71.2m.

Last November, a flawless 14.83-carat, vivid purple-pink diamond named The Spirit of the Rose was sold at Sotheby's Geneva for \$26.6 million. The gemstone was unearthed at the Russian Alrosa diamond mine, which is one of the largest in the world.

Jewellers Graff and Harry Winston have also secured exceptional pink diamonds. Harry Winston paid \$50.3m for an 18.96-carat deep-pink diamond at Christie's two years ago, which it named the Winston Pink Legacy. It was incorporated into a ring that was ►



The Précieuse à Secret Rose watch by Dior, set with pink sapphires, tsavorites and diamonds
Left, The Spirit of the Rose, a flawless 14.83-carat, vivid purple-pink diamond



Above, Bulgari's Barocco Arabesque necklace
Left, pink diamond earrings by David Morris
Right, The Spirit of the Rose
Opposite page, the Pink Star is the largest internally flawless fancy vivid pink diamond in the world



► unveiled this year to mark the 125th anniversary of the “king of diamonds”.

Laurence Graff, meanwhile, purchased a 13.33-carat purplish-pink rough from the Letseng mine in South Africa’s Lesotho for \$8.75m, and the stone has so far yielded a gorgeous 5.63-carat pear-shaped ring. “This is the most vivid pink rough diamond I have ever seen, and is an exceptionally rare treasure,” says Graff.

Pink diamonds require deep pockets, but their popularity has also been fuelled by celebrities such as Beyoncé and Taylor Swift wearing them on the red carpet. Publicity has also grown around these scintillating gemstones because one of the world’s most reliable sources of pink diamonds closed at the end of last year. For the past 37 years, the Argyle diamond mine in Australia has been producing 90 per cent of the world’s supply. The gems are small, from one carat to 2.5 carats in size, but of unique brilliance, in saturated hues of purplish-tinged pink, violet and, rarest of all, red. They are sold in sealed-bid auctions to a select group of diamantaires and jewellers around the world, who fashion the gemstones into jewellery that bears the prestigious Argyle Pink Diamond seal.

These diamonds have investor and heirloom appeal. The number of high-quality cut and polished pink diamonds to be tendered for auction since 1984 would barely fill two champagne flutes. As Patrick Coppens, general manager of sales and marketing for Argyle mine-owner Rio Tinto’s diamond business, points out: “People who buy one of Argyle’s top-quality pink diamonds join one of the world’s most exclusive clubs.” Needless to say, bidding can be very intense.

David Morris is another jeweller heavily invested in these gemstones, having used them in its creations since the 1960s, to the extent that they have become a distinctive signature of the brand’s designs.

“They are absolutely timeless, while possessing a playfulness that as a jewellery designer is a joy to

■ Pink diamonds require deep pockets and celebrities fuel their popularity

work with, and offers a unique beauty that captivates our clients,” says Jeremy Morris, chief executive and creative director of the family business, which has its headquarters in London.

“Our clients in the Middle East have always had an eye for the rare and unusual, and in many respects the region has been a trend-leader in pink diamonds,” he says. “These gemstones are pretty and extremely collectible, but I believe their popularity among the jewellery connoisseurs of the Middle East owes more to the gemstone’s elegance as well as its individuality.”

Diamonds are not the only gemstone to be found in sweet tones of pink; there are fortunately others that don’t command such stratospheric prices. Consider the pink sapphire and padparadscha (a gorgeous salmon-pink sapphire) from Sri Lanka; tourmalines, a name derived from toramali, Sinhalese for “stone with mixed colours”; rubellite, which is a deep-pink tourmaline; spinels; kunzite and morganite, which has a very pale, delicate hue. Then there are the fabulously rare and expensive conch pearls and the very accessible pink opal. There is a pink gemstone to suit every taste, skin tone – and budget.

Fawaz Gruosi, the name behind de Grisogono until he left the brand in 2019, is particularly fond of pink sapphires and rubellites. “Pink sapphires for being soft, feminine, pastel and calming,” he says, “and rubellite for being very strong, deep, more provocative and contrasting.”

Gruosi, whose early career was spent in Saudi Arabia before establishing de Grisogono, which he sold in 2012, is launching a new jewellery business in London, where he now lives. He was famed for his



BVLGARI: DAVID MORRIS; SOTHEBY'S

black diamonds, but he actually uses a spectrum of gemstones to create bold, colour-saturated jewels that all but conceal the settings.

He has an eye for colour, playing with tones of pink, including a mix of rubellite and pink opal for a ring, or cascading earrings that use richly coloured pink sapphires and garnets. “For more defined juxtapositions, I like to put pink sapphires with blue sapphires and even add emeralds,” he says, producing uplifting combinations that appear in his high jewellery collections.

Padparadscha is the rarest of the sapphires, and the pretty name means “lotus blossom” in Sinhalese. “This highly unusual stone can be found in a spectrum of exquisite pink hues, from soft orange-pinks to warm rose-gold and the prettiest pastels,” says Morris. “Similar to pink diamonds, the incredible colour of the padparadscha really pops when paired with white diamonds and pearls, which is how I often use them in our high jewellery,” he explains. His brand’s rings make wondrous use of these lovely blossom-pink gemstones.

Some designers make the most use of pink gemstones as part of a vibrant colour palette. Lucia Silvestri at Bulgari and Victoire de Castellane at Dior share an artist’s eye for divine colour combinations, either balancing tones or creating eye-catching contrasts. The recently unveiled Rose Dior high jewellery collection makes flattering use of spinels and pink sapphires, which have become particularly popular in recent years. They’ve been pavé-set across necklaces, earrings and a secret watch shaped like Christian Dior’s favourite flower.

Meanwhile, pink tourmalines and rubellites glow prettily in Bulgari’s opulent Barocco high jewellery collection. “I love pink as it offers many different shades, giving me the possibility to experiment with a lot of colour combinations, so it is definitely a key colour in the Bulgari palette,” says Silvestri, the brand’s creative director who is, uniquely for a designer, also the gem-buyer.

“In nature, there are many pink stones and each pink featured is different from the others. So I am particularly attracted by this colour as it gives me the possibility to play with all the other colours depending on its shade.”

There are rainbow combinations in the Barocco collection, with pink tourmalines and rubellites at its heart. In her studio, Silvestri spreads out the different gemstones on her table and toys with groupings. “For pink, there are many I love. For example the tone on tone, pink and violet, or pink and a green emerald,” she says.

While pink may divide opinions, there is no doubting its power in her hands. “When I want to add a touch of femininity to a jewel,” says Silvestri, “a touch of pink is always a good idea.” ■