

BIRTHSTONES ~ RUBY (*July*)



Ruby - Ruby, "the King of Gems" and birthstone for July, gets its name because of its red color and is derived from the Latin word *Rubeus*, meaning red. It was discovered around 1800 that Ruby, as well as sapphire, belonged to the same mineral group, or species, called corundum. Prior to that date, both red spinel and garnet were thought to be, or were referred to, as Ruby. In fact, many of the most prominent red gemstones in England's Royal Jewels are magnificent red spinels which, for years, were thought have been rubies. The red color in Ruby is derived from chromium and historically, the most

desirable ruby color is denoted by the term "pigeons blood". The red color of Ruby will vary from deposit to deposit and it is, therefore, not possible to determine the source area of a Ruby based on its color. Ruby is mined throughout Southeast Asia and while the majority is found in Thailand and Myanmar (Burma), many exquisite gems also are found in Sri Lanka and Africa. The designation Burmese-ruby or Siam-ruby are trade names and refer more to color quality than to actual origin. Internal characteristics, or inclusions, are very common and while these inclusions are not necessarily indicative of lower quality, they may show the difference between natural and synthetic. Certain types of inclusions may also indicate the source area, or origin, of the gemstone.

Enhancements - As is the case with many colored gemstones, Rubies are routinely enhanced to improve their color and their clarity, the most notable being controlled heating. Many enhancement procedures are generally recognized and accepted throughout the jewelry industry and, in most cases, these enhancements are irreversible, permanent, and will produce a gemstone that is more beautiful. One should be leery, however, of enhancement techniques that are not permanent. If you intend to purchase any fine colored gemstone you should deal with a jeweler who is gemologically trained to explain the differences