

# Rainbow ice: Colored diamonds are the rarest of all

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SAMANTHA CRITCHELL  
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NEW YORK - Any diamond is rare and unusual. The Diamond Information Center says that all the diamonds in the world - engagement rings included - would fill only a single doubledecker bus.



**Associated Press** In this photo provided by the Diamond Information Center, all diamonds are crystalized carbon, but colored diamonds, such as this one from The Aurora Collection, usually are altered at the atomic level, according to the Gemological Institute of America.

"Over the years, I've come across an intense blue diamond that really knocked my socks off. Everyone has their own aesthetic. I also like a gorgeous bubble gum pink diamond," he says. "Also, within the last year I did a beautiful orange stone. I made a pear shape and I have done a heart shape on another. The pear was over 3 carats. Those are the pieces that I'll remember forever."

Anyone who has shopped for a diamond has probably heard about the 4Cs - color, cut, clarity and carat. The same factors should be considered when purchasing a colored diamond, but more weight should be given to color and cut, he says. Therapeutic powers

White diamonds are supposed to encourage love, balance and purity.

Black diamonds promote honesty to look within oneself.

Blue diamonds encourage better health, strength and willpower.

Pink diamonds foster creative expression.

Yellow diamonds make the wearer more thoughtful and considerate.

Source: The Diamond Information Center

Cutting colored diamonds is different from clear ones, Lieberman explains, because the ultimate goal is maximizing the color. "If the stone is cut with the same angles as white stone, you would end up diminishing the color. You have to balance color - you want even distribution, too - with brilliance. With a white stone you're most interested in brilliance."

All diamonds form the same way: as crystalized carbon. But, according to John King, laboratory projects officer at the

That makes colored diamonds the needles in an already small haystack.

The Mineralogy Department at London's Natural History Museum, currently staging the exhibit "Diamonds: The World's Most Dazzling Exhibition," estimates that one in every 500 to 10,000 gem-quality diamonds are colored.

As one can imagine, such rarity makes some colored diamonds very valuable.

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"Colored diamonds are not for 'regular' people," says Sally Morrison, director of the DIC, an organization that promotes the diamond industry. "They tend to be very expensive. The price depends on supply. The rarest is red - I've seen two of those in my life."

Red diamonds, including the 5.11-carat Moussaieff Red on display in London, are worth \$1 million or more per carat, according to Morrison.

For Harvey Lieberman, the rough diamond buyer at jeweler Louis Glick whose job includes selecting rough diamonds and overseeing cutting, has been blown over by a few pieces of ice.

Gemological Institute of America, colored diamonds usually are altered at the atomic level. An impurity in the lattice structure of the diamond creates the color, for example, if nitrogen is the invader, the diamond turns yellow, and boron would make a diamond blue.

Heat and pressure in the ground can affect a diamond's color, and so could a diamond's position in the earth, King says. A diamond formed next to a natural source of radiation would turn green, he explains.

Some colors can be traced to individual mines, others to specific regions, the DIC's Morrison says. Pinks and blues have been found in Australia and Africa, red diamonds in Brazil and the 195 carats of natural green diamonds Nicole Kidman wore around her neck to the Oscars in 2004 came from the Jwaneng mine in Botswana and was crafted by Bulgari.

Yellow diamonds, which mostly come from Africa, have been popularized by rap music stars. Jennifer Lopez is amassing a collection of colored diamonds, and Oprah Winfrey and Barbra Streisand also have many colored diamonds.

"Colored diamonds always have been treasured and valued because they're special," says Morrison. "They're exclusive and elitist, but there's been a recent interest in them by the general public because of Hollywood and the music industry."

Jennifer Phelps-Montgomery, designer for jeweler Michael Werdiger, says she has varying approaches to diamonds. "If I have a really special stone, I start from the stone, especially if it's an unusual color. I ask, 'What does this stone deserve?' When I'm making jewelry with white diamonds, I design first and then fill it with stones."

Bold colors are easier to work with because they'll shine in the simplest of settings, Phelps-Montgomery says. Still, there are some designs that are better suited to subtle or muted colors, such as amber or pale yellow, and those typically are less expensive.

"Consumers usually hear about the millions-of-dollars diamonds, like J.Lo's or the Hope Diamond, which are unattainable for most of us. But there are natural colored diamonds that the general public can afford," Phelps-Montgomery says.