

## Garnet

### Making gemstone jewelry affordable to all

Red was likely the first known color of garnet and is still the most prevalent. While its discovery is shrouded in the mists of time, it is believed the name for the most common red garnet, almandine, comes from a small city in Asia Minor called Alabanda. Located inland a few miles off the west coast of modern-day Turkey, Alabanda was referenced in historic literature as both a gem site and as a gem cutting center. Some excavation was performed on the site in 1905, but no hard evidence has yet been uncovered of the gem cutting activity. Sounds like a great opportunity for someone interested in both archaeology and gemstones!

The term garnet actually refers to a group of related minerals. Most gemstones are classified as a species, all of which have the same mineral formula. For example corundum gemstones (ruby, blue sapphire, yellow sapphire) are all  $AlO_2$  even though they have different colors. The group of garnets however, has several different chemical formulas. All of the formulas can be expressed as some version of  $A_3B_2C_3$  where A can be magnesium, manganese, iron, or calcium with B and C being an assortment of other chemicals. The two red varieties of garnet, pyrope and almandine, are both aluminum silicates ( $Al_2SiO_5$ ) with the A part of the formula being magnesium

for pyrope and iron for almandine. It is not uncommon for a specific gemstone to contain a mix of the two.

In fact rhodolite, a trade name for pinkish-purple garnet is always a mix of pyrope and almandine.

Red garnet (usually almandine) is recognized by most as the birthstone for January, signifying eternal friendship and trust. It is also traditionally given as

a second anniversary present. It is one of the most abundant and inexpensive gemstones in small sizes, but it can be difficult to find large red garnets that are not overly dark.

As with many aspects of garnet, the hardness of the gem varies depending upon the individual chemical makeup of each garnet. The hardness of garnets can range anywhere from 6.5 to 7.5 on the Mohs scale. They also have extremely high luster and durability making them excellent choices for all types of jewelry including rings. Almandine was used in the creation of garnet glass doublets during the 17th and 18th century. A thin garnet cap was put on any color of glass before faceting to protect the softer glass and provide a high luster. It is truly amazing to see the dark red garnet become virtually invisible as the composite stone takes on the color of the glass below. These composite stones disappeared with the discovery of synthetics in the last century, but can still show up from time to time in antique jewelry. They can usually be detected with magnification by looking for the glue seam or uneven wear if the garnet cap didn't fully cover the crown. If immersed in liquid the different colors of the glass and garnet usually becomes apparent.

Designers love garnet since it is relatively inexpensive and available in a variety of sizes and shapes. It allows the designer to focus on the total design without worrying about price of the stones. However, garnets look their best in sizes up to about two carats. Larger garnets tend to be too dark for the fiery red color to show without strong light, especially when faceted.

**Garnet and champagne diamonds in gold and silver earrings \$1500**

**Garnet and diamonds in rose and 18KT gold ring \$1700**

**22mm coin pearl with garnet and diamonds in gold pendant \$1600**

**Silver twisted wire cuff with garnet, diamond and 22KT gold accents \$550**

# Fall Bead Sale!

October 5-8

All strands of beads and pearls  
including new strands from our trip to Asia

**50% OFF**

the single strand price regardless of quantity!

*Buy 5 strands at once, anytime before  
the sale and get 40% OFF!*



## **CROCHETED BRACELET 10/6 - 5:30PM \$45**

You don't need to know how to crochet to learn how to make this whimsical, highly adaptable, downright FUN bracelet/necklace. These make GREAT gifts because they are one-size-fit-just-about-everyone! No prerequisites.

## **PEARL KNOTTING 10/5 - 5:30 \$35**

This technique lends itself not only to pearls, but to all bead types! We will be teaching this technique with a simple set of tweezers. It makes knotting a project that's easy to pack and take with you anywhere. No prerequisites.



## **BEGINNING WIREWORK 10/5 - 5:30 \$35**

Use wire linking to make bracelets, necklaces, earrings, pendants and more- no previous experience necessary! Get a feel for forming wire and learn how to use the tools to best advantage. No prerequisites.

# Bead classes!

These classes were scheduled during the bead sale so you can take advantage of the sale prices on beads for the class!

(And for using your new skills to make great Christmas gifts)

# Featured Jewelry



## **Biggs Jasper Pendant**

Biggs jasper and blue sapphire  
in 14KT gold pendant - \$800

## **1/2ct Princess Diamond**

GIA cert - 0.58ct, 4.69mm  
D, VS2 - \$2400



## **Aquamarine Ring**

Aquamarine cab in sterling  
cuttlefish cast ring - \$475