

Morganite

What's in a name?

A few months ago we focused on the beginning of George F Kunz's career as a gemologist when he sold a green tourmaline from Maine to Tiffany Jewelers. While working at Tiffany, one of Mr. Kunz's best customers was the famously wealthy John Pierpont Morgan, and one of JP Morgan's hobbies was the collecting of gems and minerals. He purchased a large collection in 1900 from Clarence Bement and donated it to the American Museum of Natural History. Subsequently, he engaged Mr. Kunz and Tiffany to be on the lookout for new gems to add to the collection. Many of the specimens on exhibit in the museum today result from the collaborative effort of these two gentlemen.

It was common practice then for new minerals to be named after those responsible for their discovery. Since JP was financing most of Mr. Kunz's adventures, it is said he became a little disgruntled when a new discovery of pink spodumene was named Kunzite in 1903. Apparently he felt the honor should be his instead! When Mr. Kunz came across yet another new pink gem eight years later, he was finally able to rectify the situation and suggested the name morganite for the pink to salmon variety of beryl.

Accounts differ as to whether the first morganites were found in California or Madagascar. Since morganite is found in pegmatites, a geological formation that has been known

for centuries to contain gems like aquamarine and tourmaline, it seems highly unlikely that no one had seen one before!

Today, the primary source of morganite is the pegmatites of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Other sources include Madagascar, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Namibia and

the United States. Like many minerals, it is often a byproduct of mining for metals and therefore production can vary depending on the profitability of the metal.

Morganite is commonly treated to slightly alter its color using both heat and irradiation. Heat is used to remove the yellow component much like with aquamarine and irradiation is used to try and intensify the color somewhat. Neither treatment is identifiable and both are permanent so it is assumed most morganite on the market has been treated.

There has been a surge in popularity of morganite the last few years. Some attribute its new found popularity to an increased awareness of pink stones in general traced back to the six-plus carat pink diamond engagement ring of Jennifer Lopez in 2002 (sadly, returned in 2004). No one knows for sure what drives the market, but it is undeniable that morganite has been cresting a wave of fashion lately. Most jewelry and fashion magazines have featured one or more pieces in the last year. Designers have fallen in love with its soft pink hue and often pair it with rose gold and either white or black diamonds.

Morganite is a beryl whose cousins are emerald, aquamarine and golden beryl or heliodor. All of these gems have the same mineral properties and crystal structure, with the difference being the inclusion of different ions in the lattice. Pure beryl, also called goshenite, is clear. Iron ions can produce blue aquamarine. Chromium or vanadium ions create the vibrant green of an emerald, while manganese is the source of morganite and the extremely rare red beryl.

Morganite has a hardness of 7.5 and no significant cleavage planes making it a durable gemstone suitable for rings and all other types of jewelry.



Morganite and raw black diamonds in rose gold \$1600



Morganite in blackened silver with 22KT accent. \$650



Morganite and blue diamonds in 18KT yellow and 14KT white gold earrings \$2100



Morganite with red jasper and black onyx in pierced 18KT gold \$1700

Winter Bead Sale

February 17-20

All strands of beads and pearls will be

50% OFF

the single strand price regardless of quantity!

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



New Cabs!

Tourmaline in Quartz

These beautiful new cabs are formed when tourmaline crystals grow first and are later encased by quartz crystals. The resulting mix is cut to feature the bright green tourmaline on a snowy white background.

Reminds us of the first signs of spring!

Featured Jewelry

Yellow Sapphire Ring

1.34ct yellow sapphire set in 14KT cast gold ring - \$965



Catseye Earrings

Catseye chrysoberyls in 14KT 4mm prong earrings - \$165



Agate Ring

Agate bezel set in squared off sterling silver ring shank - \$320