

## Rare and Collectible Gems

For those who say they already have one of everything

I've always been a collector – agates or stamps or left over pieces of plywood! One of my favorite parts of going on overseas buying trips is the chance to look for something totally different. This winter, while in Thailand, someone stopped by with some small plastic bags containing a few faceted stones that looked like Paraiba tourmaline. At first I thought they identified it as “granite” or “garnet” but after much back and forth discussion and some research, it turned out to be grandidierite – a rare mineral that seldom occurs in facet grade material. We agreed on a price and the next day he came back with rough (to show that he was indeed the cutter) and a baggie full of cabochons. The nice thing about grandidierite is its hardness of 7-7.5, which makes it suitable for all types of jewelry. Discovered in 1902 in the cliffs of southern Madagascar, grandidierite has been available sporadically as mineral specimens, but in the last few years two additional deposits have been discovered in Madagascar and a small percentage of the new material is facetable. Enjoy this material while it's available!

Grandidierite is one of several rare stones we have available including color change diaspore, moldavite, danburite, scapolite, amblygonite, axinite, petalite and sphalerite. Some of these we have several pieces available, and others just one or two. They range from gems too soft to use for mainstream jewelry such as sphalerite up to stones with a hardness of 7. Many of these are common as mineral specimens but rarely clean enough to cut as gemstones.

A decade or two back, there was a big marketing splash in the jewelry

world over a stone called Zultanite. Zultanite was marketed as a single source stone from Turkey and was untreated at a time when the gem world was reeling from several new treatments of corundum. Zultanite is actually high end color change diaspore from a single location in Turkey owned by a bauxite mining company. When the name didn't catch on it was changed to Csarite, so Zultanite and Csarite are trademarked names for color change diaspore from a specific location in Turkey. Whatever the name, this is another unusual gemstone that has lovely pastel hues and changes color depending on the light source much like alexandrite. It has a hardness of 6-1/2 to 7 so can be used in all types of jewelry but probably not ideal for a ring to wear every day.

Looking for an inexpensive, unusual rare stone? Try moldavite, an unusual green gemstone from German Bohemia. This naturally formed green glass is commonly available for a few hundred dollars even in relatively large sizes. Moldavite is a tektite believed to form when a meteorite strikes the earth. In this case, the impact of a giant meteorite in the present-day Nördlinger Ries crater. Surface material that was melted by the impact cooled while airborne resulting in some fantastic specimen pieces. Moldavites are a transparent olive green color and have a hardness of about 6. The hardness can vary widely since this gem is a natural glass and not a specific mineral.

The last unusual gem we have room for today is scapolite. Scapolite is available as both faceted gems which are usually yellow and as cat's eye cabochons which are typically darker colors. Neither version is too expensive but the hardness is only 5-1/2 to 6 so these stones are usually bought by collectors and just kept as specimens or mounted as earrings or pendants to avoid excessive wear. That's all we have room for, but come in and browse the complete selection of gemstones – I'm confident there will be some you've never seen before!

**0.36ct grandidierite with 0.57ctw diamonds in 18KT white gold \$3790**

**0.34ct grandidierite and diamonds in 14KT and 18KT gold necklace \$1750**

**Grandidierite cab with color change garnets in oxidized silver ring \$600**

**1.25ct Zultanite (color change diaspore) with 0.30ctw diamonds in 18KT yellow gold pictured in incandescent and fluorescent light \$1900**

**2.87ct moldavite with .09ct diamond in 14KT rose gold \$800**

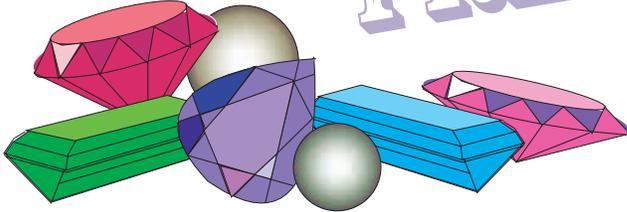


# Veberod Gem Mine

Thursday, May 10 through Saturday May 19

Pick out your **FREE** cup of sand guaranteed to hold one gemstone ready to set!

**FREE GEMSTONE!**



Any time during May, have your free gemstone set for

**30% OFF**



## Grandidierite Cabs

Hand selected in Thailand, these rare grandidierite cabs are both beautiful and durable!

\$40 & up

## Featured Jewelry

### Pietersite Bracelet

Silver and leather  
\$750



### Gray Spinel Studs

2.09ctw in white gold  
\$480



**1.27ct Alexandrite**  
0.75ctw VS diamonds in  
18KT gold ring \$4900