

A is for Aquamarine

A is for Aquamarine - the stone for those born in March.

The beautiful blue color of this gemstone has lead people to believe it has its origin in the treasure chests of mermaids. It is also thought to have the power to keep sailors safe at sea, and is suppose to be the gem that guarantees a happy marriage.

But what is Aquamarine really?

Aquamarine is a member of the beryl family, a gem family that also includes the emerald.



Aquamarine naturally comes in the green-blue to blue colours of sea-water, and is often confused with blue topaz, another gem that can be found in similar colours. However, aquamarine is more rare and more valuable than topaz, but, not so rare and valuable as its brother, the emerald.

It is the iron content in an aquamarine that gives it that beautiful blue colour. In smaller gems the colour tends to be a pale pastel blue, but in larger gems the colour can be quite vivid. The more vivid and clear blue this colour, the more valuable the gem.

Light coloured aquamarine can be heat treated, or at times irradiated, to enhance its natural body colour into the desirable blue. Such treatment is permanent and does not require special care. However, it stands to reason that if the aquamarine has a natural vivid blue colour and is untreated, it is more rare and therefore more expensive.

Another difference between the two beryl brothers, is that an emerald is known to have numerous inclusions, whereas an aquamarine is normally free of inclusions, also known as being an 'eye-clean' stone.

Manufacturing jewelers enjoy working with aquamarine, as its hardness of 7.5 makes it a robust gemstone to work with and a gem that does not scratch easily. The clear blue colour and strong brilliance are often the reasons this gem is chosen for stunning center pieces in designer jewellery. This gem also lends itself to being carved easily. Two prominent gemstone cutters have won many awards with their aquamarine designs. They are [John Dyer](#) from the USA and the [Muntsteiner](#) family from Germany. The blue color of this gem is also the reason aquamarine looks its absolute best when set in white metal such as platinum, palladium, or white gold.