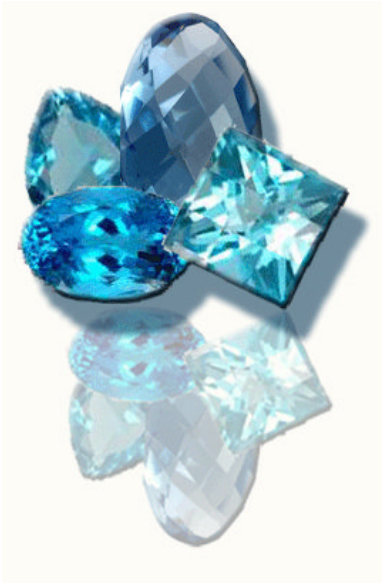


## BIRTHSTONES~ TOPAZ (*November*)



Topaz - The name topaz was probably derived from the ancient island of Topazios in the Red Sea. In ancient times all yellow, brown, and sometimes green gemstones were called "topaz". Even through modern times, the brownish gemstone commonly referred to as Smokey Topaz is not topaz at all. Thanks to the adoption of Federal Trade laws, which have been successful in eliminating most of the misrepresentation of colored gemstones, the proper gem variety name, Smokey Quartz, is now used to describe these gems. The quartz variety citrine and yellow heat-treated amethyst have at times been falsely called "golden topaz" in the jewelry trade, which lead to real topaz being referred to as "precious topaz". Commonly, one of the orangey or golden colors of topaz is worn as the traditional birthstone for November. Topaz, however, can be found in a rich rainbow of colors with the most valuable being

"Imperial" topaz and pink topaz. Imperial topaz derived its name after the Russian Czars of the 1800's, and has a magnificent orange body color, with pinkish-red undertones. In addition to these two, topaz can be found naturally in yellow, reddish-brown, light blue, pinky-red, pale green and colorless. Due the abundance of blue topaz, along with its captivating beauty and low price, it has become an ideal replacement option for aquamarine as the birthstone for March.

Enhancements - Most topaz is commonly subjected to enhancement by heat and/or radiation as a normal part of the fashioning process to improve its color. Irradiation is used sometimes to change colorless topaz to a brown or brownish green as a first step in producing treated blue topaz. The prevalence is common, is very stable and is virtually undetectable.