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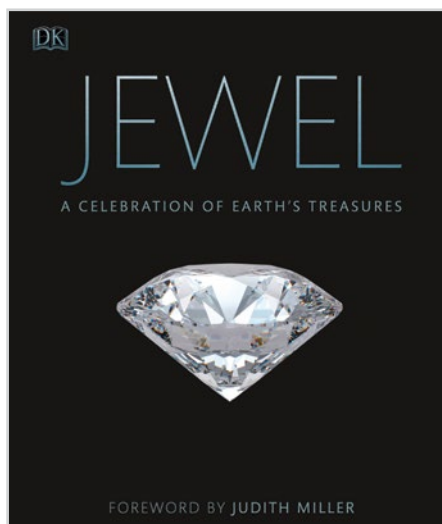
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Book reviews



Jewel: A celebration of Earth's treasures (UK/Australian edition)

Gem: The definitive visual guide (US edition)

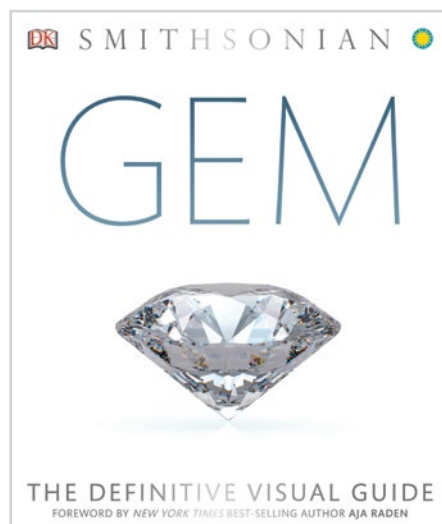
This book is being marketed under different titles in the United Kingdom/Australia and the United States. Both editions are identical in content except that the U.S. edition contains an additional rock and mineral directory, making the length of the book 440 pages. The U.S. edition lacks the velveteen cover of the U.K./Australian edition. The U.K./Australian edition is reviewed below.

Jewel: A celebration of Earth's treasures is a weighty, large format (260 mm x 310 mm) book of some 360 pages.

The book, bound in a velveteen cover, contains a collection of high quality images that guide the reader through those minerals and materials that have attracted humankind's attention from the Stone Age to the present. The colours of the selected gemstones are vibrant and many are enlarged as if viewed through a microscope. This exaggeration of scale delivers a clear impact that combines innate colour, diaphaneity, optical phenomena as well as details of fashioning of the gemstones.

A large number of minerals are shown, including many that are rare and usually fashioned specifically for their interest to collectors. The large format of this book allows for the display of images to be presented as a layout that doesn't crowd or distract from each image.

The minerals, rocks, crystals and gemstones are arranged in the systematic manner of many



well-known mineral textbooks and include a separate section for organic materials. This prompts the viewer to pause and read the boxed data found for each entry in which a summary of its chemistry, physical and optical properties and crystallography are described.

The introductory chapters define minerals, their physical and optical properties, the fundamentals of mineral atomic structure with the important links to mineral properties, occurrences worldwide and the special cutting and fashioning techniques of gemstones.

The first section begins with native elements including gold, silver and platinum with the diamonds section interspersed with stories of large and famous historical diamonds.

Following in section two are mineral chapters organised under the headings of oxides, halides, carbonates, phosphates, sulphates, tungstates, borates and silicate minerals, the largest chapter. Many entries are featured on one page only whilst others, particularly those with many colour variants, require more pages. The result makes research succinct with minimal reading, maximises the viewing of the images and also draws attention to gemstones that have more varieties.

Organic materials, grouped as section three, include pearls, shells, and items of mother-of-pearl, jet, copal and amber, coral, some fossils and "Peanut wood", an unusual type of silicified wood from Western Australia. The accompanying stories to this chapter include the history of the Amber room amongst others.

Section four, rock gems and rocks, describes naturally formed glasses together with limestones, sandstones, marbles and granite. An important sculptural work of limestone from the 2nd century CE in Palmyra is a reminder of world heritage artefacts housed in a war-torn country.

Throughout the book are vignettes with a wealth of subjects relevant to the mineral and materials featured describing events, jewellery, objects d'Art, significant people and history of items. Some of these mention the role of mineralogists and persons of note whilst other stories follow the often-convoluted events of gemstones of renown.

Following the main sections, section five is a gemstone colour guide displaying the most common colour variety of each mineral. This presents the important point that gems cannot be recognised strictly by their colour as many minerals are either colourless or have similar colours.

Gemstones commonly contain "inclusions", a term that encompasses guest minerals and growth features, which can be viewed in some images. These have been rightly treated as natural and not as defects. Many types of treatments can be applied to enhance gemstones for commercial reasons; some are used to disguise inclusions and others to alter the colours of gemstones. A sample of some of these treatments are described.

The large number of materials described in the book serves to show that there is no limit to the choice of minerals and ornamental rocks that can be crafted as objects d'art or cut and polished as a gemstone. The chrysoprase and diamond snuffbox of Frederick the Great, pictured on page 150, is one of the many fine examples of the combined skills of the photographer and the production designers of this book.

Generally, the editing is good; there are few rare typographical errors, although a few inconsistencies and some omissions such as no mention of the CITES convention.

This is not a technical book but one in which the reader will delight in this collection of the Earth's treasures and marvel at the skills of the artisans and craftsmen who have fashioned them throughout history.

Jewel: A celebration of Earth's treasures

Foreword by Judith Miller

Published by Dorling Kindersley Limited (DK), Great Britain.

ISBN 978-0-2412-2603-2.

Publication date: 17 October 2016

Gem: The Definitive Visual Guide

Foreword by Aja Raden

Publisher: Dorling Kindersley Limited (DK), New York.

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