

# THE GEMSTONES

This section describes most of the gemstones to be found in the high street jewellers or offered on television shopping channels or over the internet. Some will only be available from specialist dealers. (A separate section deals with Minor Gemstones).

## ANDALUSITE

An attractive gemstone, the andalusite takes its name from Andalusia in Spain, where it was first discovered. It has since also been found in Sri Lanka and Brazil.

Andalusite has a hardness of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  on the Mohs scale, so is very suitable for a ringstone. It is extremely pleochroic: it shows different colours in different directions – yellow, green and red. If you are after something distinctive, this stone will fit the bill.

Similar shades of tourmaline are sometimes passed off as andalusite, but they lack the pleochroism.



*Andalusite; note the pleochroism. (Photo: MM)*

**Chiastolite**, an impure opaque variety of andalusite, is found in the Pyrenees. The carboniferous inclusions form a cross, hence its other name: 'Cross Stone'. It also occurs in several other locations around the world.

Andalusite has two associated gems, termed polymorphs: **Sillimanite** and **Kyanite**, which are occasionally cut and used in jewellery. Although hard, they are somewhat fragile, so the choice of mount is important.

Sillimanite occurs in many countries. Rarely transparent, suitable stones for mounting are an attractive pale or violet blue.



*Chiastolite.  
(Photo: KW)*



*Kyanite. (Photo: ATG/LAB)*

Kyanite occurs in blade-like crystals in colours approaching the blue of sapphire. Kyanite also occurs in