



A few of the garnet family including hessonite and tsavorite. (Photo: AJ)

GARNET

Garnets consist of a complex range of varieties of similar chemical composition and come in a great range of colours. Since Victorian times the garnet normally met with was the deep red, ruby-like stone, but today there is a very wide selection of colours from which to choose.

They all have certain properties in common; namely, they are all members of the cubic crystal form and therefore are all singly refractive, with a hardness between 6.6 and 7.5. The simplest way to classify the very many types is to list them in the various colour groups.

Red – sometimes called ‘carbuncles’ in the past when cut as recess backed cabochons. The most prominent of the red garnets is the fiery **pyrope** usually in small sizes. **Almandine** is also a red, but is available in larger



Rope of garnets. (Photo: KW)

stones and other colours. ‘Mozambique Garnet’ is a deep red and a mix of pyrope and almandine.

Rhodolite is a more violet red. A variety called ‘Raspberry Rhodolite’ was discovered in 1987 in Tanzania, ‘Cherry Rhodolite’ is found in the same area. ‘Cranberry Rhodolite’, a pinkish red, has been discovered in Nigeria. Another pinkish-red garnet – known to the trade as ‘Grape Garnet’ – has been found in India, Tanzania, Madagascar and South America.

A deep red garnet with orange flashes from Tanzania has been marketed as ‘Crimson Garnet’.



Rhodolite garnet.
(Photo: RH)

Yellowish-orange to brownish-red – **Hessonite** falls into this group and is sometimes called ‘Cinnamon Stone’.

Spessartine (spessartite) is an orangey red. An impressive variety of the group was found in Namibia a few years ago and was christened ‘Mandarin Garnet’. A similar find was subsequently made in Nigeria. This is one of the more pricey garnets.



Spessartine Garnet 796 pt.
(Photo: ATG/LAB)