



Enamel and gold pendant by Falize set with amethyst, c.1880. (Photo: WL)

display of amethyst, citrine or other minerals greets your eye. Other delights are water agates, which have water locked into their cavities that is millions of years old. When cut correctly the water can be seen through the stone moving about. In rare instances it can even be heard when the stone is shaken.



Fire agate. (Photo: ATG/LAB)



Agate cabochon. (Photo: KW)

Crystalline (transparent) quartz:

Amethyst – this can range in colour from pale lilac to deep purple. The darker colours tend to be preferred and are consequently more expensive.

The main sources are Sri Lanka, the USA, Brazil, Russia and Madagascar (Malagasy Republic). Nearer to home, it

QUARTZ

Quartz is pure silica, which constitutes approximately 60% of the earth's crust: the sandy beach upon which we sit on holiday while the children build sand castles is quartz, as are the desert sands of the world.

Quartz is a large family consisting of two categories: crystalline and cryptocrystalline. The crystalline are those transparent gems that include amethyst, citrine, smoky quartz or Cairngorm and rock crystal. The category of cryptocrystalline includes all the many translucent and opaque stones that are impure forms of the mineral.

Quartz also provides us with the most beautiful crystal clusters. Geodes, which are like bubbles formed during volcanic eruptions, come in a variety of sizes. If you are lucky, when they are sliced in half a marvellous



Amethyst geode. (Photo: KW)