

Aquamarine

Thought to enhance the happiness of marriages.

The name “aquamarine” is derived from two Latin words: aqua, meaning “water,” and marina, meaning “of the sea.” It has been said that the mineral beryl gives the wearer protection against foes in battle or litigation. It makes the wearer unconquerable and amiable, and also quickens the intellect. Today, the gemstone’s hardness, transparency and availability of large stones make it popular with designers, artists and carvers.

Color

Aquamarine is the light green-blue to blue variety of the mineral beryl. It is generally light to medium in tone. Aquamarine’s most valuable color is a vibrant, medium blue to slightly greenish blue.

Clarity

Aquamarine may occur as large well-formed crystals that are relatively clean, making them particularly valuable to collectors of mineral specimens. Some crystals might contain liquid inclusions, but clarity characteristics are few or absent in most finished gems.



Aquamarine’s preferred color is a medium blue to slightly greenish blue.



As a result of its large crystal size and good clarity, aquamarine is an ideal gem material for carvings and fantasy cuts.

Sources

Brazil has been the main source of gem-quality aquamarine since 1811. Most aquamarine mines are located in northeast Minas Gerais, Brazil. The largest aquamarine found in that region was discovered in 1910 and it weighed 244 lbs (110 kg). Another significant producer of aquamarine is Pakistan.

Treatments

It is standard practice to cut the rough and then heat the fashioned stones. Heat treatment of aquamarine removes the green component and leaves a purer blue color. Nearly all blue aquamarine found in jewelry results from heat treatment of bluish green, greenish yellow or even brownish yellow beryl.



Major Sources

Brazil, Pakistan, United States, Uruguay, Zambia

Mineral

Beryl

Mohs Hardness

7.5 to 8

Toughness

Good

Color

Greenish blue to blue

Birthstone

March

Care and Cleaning

Cleaning by ultrasonic and steam cleaners is usually safe unless the stone has liquid inclusions or fractures. Rarely, aquamarine might be fracture filled. These stones should only be cleaned with warm, soapy water.

Images courtesy: Neal Litman Company; Silverhorn, Santa Barbara, California