

Consumer Corner

Gemstones: Expressing The Real You

(NAPSA)—Across time and cultures, a glittering truth is that people have adorned themselves with colored gemstones to express themselves. That custom continues today, as we let ourselves be known through the gemstones we choose to wear. Since buying colored gemstone jewelry is such a personal choice, it's important to select what you consider to be beautiful. These facts from the experts at Jewelers of America (JA) will help:

Tone and Hue

Because of subtle differences in tone and hue, it is best to look at several samples of whichever colored gemstones you are considering. Some jewelers offer loose colored gemstones and are able to help you create a personal mounting. Some jewelers offer finished jewelry pieces. Be sure to discuss how you see yourself wearing the piece so that your jeweler can help you select the gemstones and mountings consistent with your taste.

Color and Beauty

A few gemstones are treated in some way (such as heat) to further enhance their color and beauty. You have the right to know whether the gemstone's color is enhanced or natural. Many jewelers will provide written notice of any enhancement at the time of purchase.

Care and Cleaning

Once you've made your purchase, proper care and cleaning will extend the life of your jewelry. Different gemstones have different specific requirements for care and cleaning, so be sure to ask your jeweler. In general, you should always put on jewelry after apply-



Wearing colored gemstone jewelry is a form of personal expression.

ing makeup, perfume or cologne. At night, after removing your jewelry, wipe it gently with a soft cloth and store all items in a jewelry case so that they do not touch each other. It is recommended that you take your colored gemstone jewelry to your jeweler for a professional cleaning every six months.

Choose a jewelry retailer who has an established reputation in your community. Ask if the jeweler is a member of Jewelers of America, the national association for retail jewelers. Or, look for the "J" logo on their door. To find the JA retailer nearest you, visit the JA website, www.jewelers.org. All JA jewelry retailers annually sign a Code of Ethics pledge, so you can buy with confidence from your local JA jeweler.