

Fit for a Princess...and You

Sapphires are on trend in the shining world of gemstones and jewels.

words KELLI WHITE

Cobalt. This bright blue hue is in. From handbags to hemlines, this color makes a royal statement that's not limited just to fashion—think brighter.

Sapphires are this season's sparkling addition to the color trend. Although recognized for their deep blue shade, sapphires come in virtually every color of the rainbow.

Brian Butler, general manager at Tivol, explains that even though blue is most common when it comes to sapphires, there's a wide spectrum from which to choose. "Women who are self-purchasing—now more than ever—can choose sapphires in every floral color except red. The popular blue sapphire can be worn with so many colors and are easy to tie into your existing wardrobe," he says.

Butler, who sold three sapphires recently in a matter of days, attributes sapphire popularity to fashion trends as well as to historic and current events.

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RUNWAY TO REAL WORLD

Butler says that high-profile jewelry designers like David Yurman push the envelope when it comes to their designs. "They treat jewelry like clothing in the fashion world," says Butler. "That is why customers see similarities in jewelry and runway fashion trends. So, because bright hues are in for clothing, colorful stones are trendy in the jewelry market."

According to Butler, because the media loop is so much faster today than in decades past, consumers are more likely to want what they see on celebrities and on the runways.

"Everyone sees fashion today," Butler says. "Things like social media and fashion blogs definitely speed up the popularity process."

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Another explanation for the sapphire trend is simply the cyclical nature of trends. Not only has color in fashion recycled from the 1980s, but the historical renewal of fashion icons like Princess Diana are often revisited and posthumously preserved in honorariums, tributes and exhibits like "Diana: A Celebration" that runs through June at Union Station.

"Sapphires, like other fashion and jewelry trends, have been in and out of style, but when Princess Di got her famous ring back in 1981, the jewels gained in popularity. She had such an influence on style," says Butler.



IN THE NEWS

The famous ring that once adorned Princess Di's hand now rests on the hand of Princess Kate. Events like the Royal Wedding spark media frenzy (and fashion interest) around the globe. You don't have to be British to be intrigued by what the Royal couple is doing or wearing. Since that sapphire ring now shines for all cameras to see, the public wants something similar.



READY TO WEAR

Sapphire prices can be affordable, Butler says, although you can spend as much as you may on diamonds.

"Generally," he adds, "you can get a bigger look with sapphire dollars than with diamond dollars, and you're not limited to sapphire engagement rings. Earrings and pendants showcase this gem beautifully."

Butler says that sapphires are the most wearable, meaning the most durable of the colored gems. "They rate a nine on the hardness scale versus a 10 for diamonds. Keep in mind, though, that small difference equates to 100 times the difference in stone strength."

Because jewelry and fashion go hand-in-hand and because they're easy to incorporate into a wardrobe, sapphires shine brightly when it comes to jewelry trends. ❖

