



FANCY THAT

COLORED DIAMONDS ARE DOMINATING JEWELRY AUCTIONS AND ATTRACTING INVESTORS.

For every 10,000 carats of diamonds mined each year only one carat will possess a color. Merely a smattering of these natural colored diamonds will carry the deeper, more valuable hues, “fancy intense” and “fancy vivid.” Just a smidgen will exceed one carat, and at five or 10 carats ... well let’s just say the major auction houses like Christie’s and Sotheby’s will find that stone and offer to sell it.

Fetching upwards of \$1 million per carat at auction, the finest natural colored diamonds are outshining the more commercially popular white diamond by astonishing measure. The scarcity of colored stones is a matter of geology, of nature’s decision to limit altruistic beauty, thereby anointing them the rarest and highest value of all diamonds.

Richard Eiseman, president and CEO of Eiseman Jewels, tells us, “Awareness of colored diamonds has grown with wealth accumulation.” The luxury jeweler began studying colored gems in 1982. “They have also become more popular as a hard asset investment because they are easily transportable.”

At a Sotheby’s Switzerland auction in November, the “Pink Star,” a 59.60-carat internally flawless pink diamond, was sold for a record-breaking \$83 million to New York diamond cutter Isaac Wolf, who renamed the rarity “The Pink Dream.” The pre-sale estimate had the pink rock at \$61 million and was hotly bandied about in top collecting and industry circles. The diamond is mounted in a ring and features an oval cut that highlights the plum-sized stone. David Bennett, Sotheby’s chairman of the auction house’s jewelry division in Europe and the Middle East, referred to the piece as “one of the most remarkable ever to appear at auction.”

Though the top bid was scored by an American, there were two volleys from Asia. He adds, “Auctions have brought great attention worldwide exposing rare stones regardless of size with emphasis on rareness of color. The savviest consumer is trying to find the source prior to auction to avoid paying the buyer’s premium.” An average carat for a white diamond sells at wholesale between \$5,000 and \$6,000, while a colored diamond starts at \$10,000 per carat for a yellow diamond (the most widely purchased) to upwards of \$1 million for a red, purple, or orange diamond, the rarest. Brown, grey, and black, though fashionable, are at the least-rare end of the spectrum.

Terms like “light,” “fancy,” “intense,” and “vivid,” bestow the color intensity value. These terms may be confusing, so dealing in colored diamonds certainly takes the advice of an expert when investing in this extremely rare commodity. “Out of the 20 years I’ve known Richard (Eiseman), he’s truly one of the best at it,” imparts Jeff Post, who owns Gem Platinum and serves as President of the Natural Colored Diamond Association.

Finding a pair of matching colored diamonds is even more extraordinary and nearly impossible. “They are mostly cut from the same piece of rough,” advises Post. Eiseman owns a pair of matching blue diamond earrings valued at \$2.2 million at present, but at auction in a year or so they will fetch \$2.5 million plus the buyer’s premium. These top-tier intense blue stones are identical in color and size at three carats total. One is flawless and one is VS clarity. Interested? Unfortunately, Richard is not so keen on selling this remarkable pair. “Once you have an identical pair you’re not sure you want to let go of them because you can’t replace them.” **P**

Above: Very fine fancy intense yellow radiant cut diamond, 5.31 carats, in a custom-made setting with graduated radiant cut diamonds (2.25 carats), matched with fancy intense blue-and-white diamond earrings, 3 carats total weight. Both at Eiseman Jewels