

THE
DESIGN
MAGAZINE

No. 4 ■ of the BEVERLY HILLS COURIER and the SAN MARINO TRIBUNE ■ \$4.95

The Bridal Issue

March 2007

A close-up photograph of two champagne flutes filled with sparkling wine. The glasses are positioned side-by-side, with their stems extending downwards. The liquid is a golden color, and numerous fine bubbles are visible rising through it. The background is dark and out of focus.

Over the Rainbow

Engage in Natural Colored Diamonds

By Dawn Moore

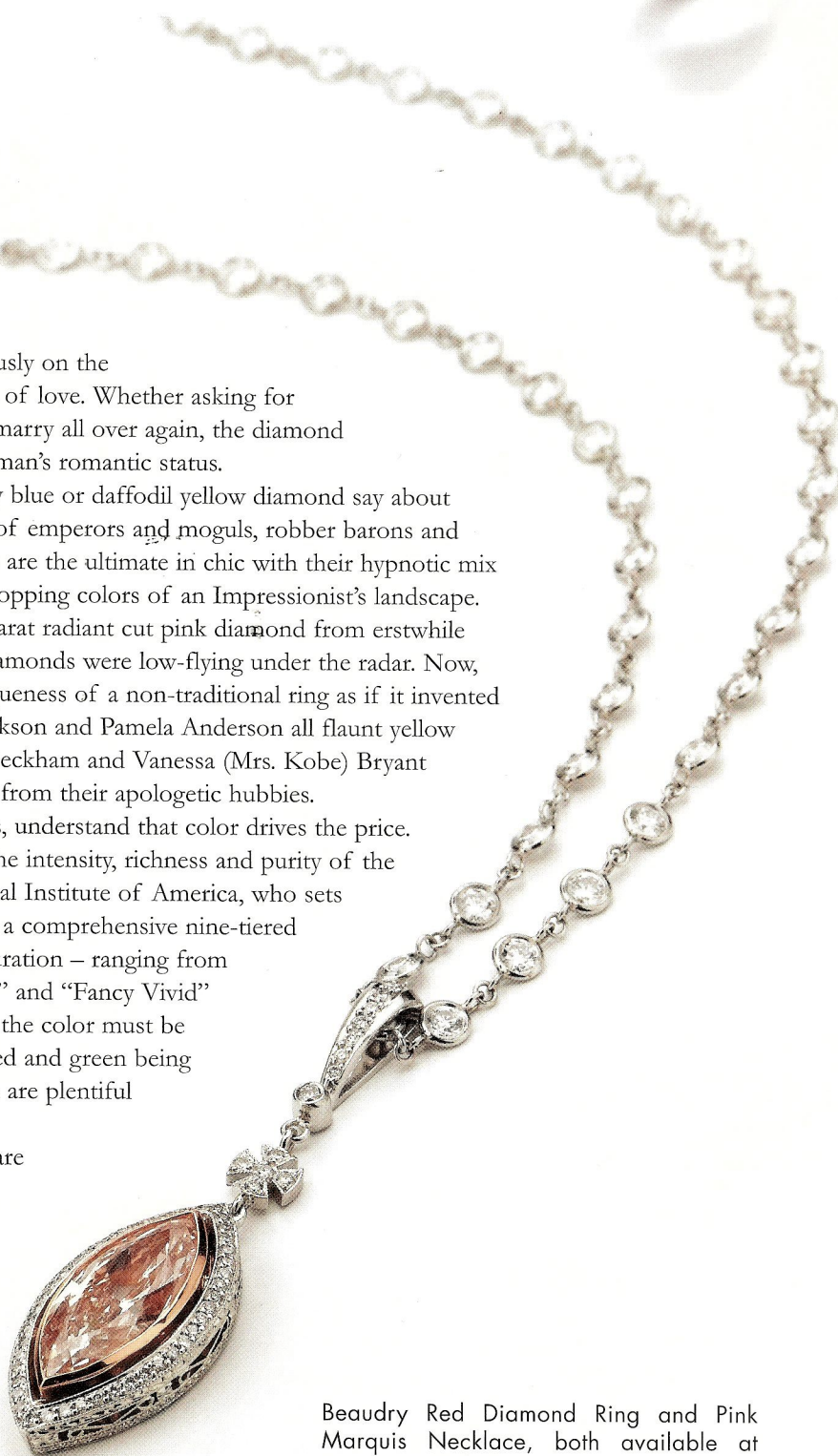
A solitary diamond perched ceremoniously on the ring finger instantly conjures grand gestures of love. Whether asking for one's hand, asking forgiveness or asking to marry all over again, the diamond solitaire is never a subtle statement of a woman's romantic status.

But what does a bubblegum pink, steely blue or daffodil yellow diamond say about the wearer? Long the exclusive provenance of emperors and moguls, robber barons and movie stars, natural fancy colored diamonds are the ultimate in chic with their hypnotic mix of a diamond's internal fire and the heart-stopping colors of an Impressionist's landscape.

Until Jennifer Lopez received that 6.1 carat radiant cut pink diamond from erstwhile fiancé Ben Affleck, natural fancy colored diamonds were low-flying under the radar. Now, however, Hollywood has embraced the uniqueness of a non-traditional ring as if it invented the very concept. Rebecca Romijn, Janet Jackson and Pamela Anderson all flaunt yellow rocks from their betrothed, while Victoria Beckham and Vanessa (Mrs. Kobe) Bryant sport pink and purple sparklers respectively from their apologetic hubbies.

When shopping for natural fancy colors, understand that color drives the price. Unlike colorless – or “white” – diamonds, the intensity, richness and purity of the color is the prized attribute. The Gemological Institute of America, who sets the worldwide grading standards, developed a comprehensive nine-tiered system to consistently evaluate a stone's saturation – ranging from “Faint” and “Very Light” to “Fancy Intense” and “Fancy Vivid” with several stops in between. The rarity of the color must be factored into the calculations as well, with red and green being at the top of the list, while brown and black are plentiful and affordable.

Yellow diamonds, on the other hand, are fairly abundant but more coveted as the hue deepens: The term “canary” technically refers only to the saturation level of “fancy intense.” GIA's color grading system for white diamonds ranges from “D” for completely colorless to “Z,” which is actually a light yellow and, essentially, where “fancy” yellows begin. Prices drop the further you wonder



Beaudry Red Diamond Ring and Pink Marquis Necklace, both available at Geary's Beverly Hills.



from “D” and starts to wind its way back up as the “fancy” designation takes hold. David Lee at Le Bijou remarks – all else being equal – a one carat white diamond can range from \$25,000 for “D” color to \$7,000 for “I,” while a yellow ranges from \$5,000 for “fancy light” to \$25,000 for “fancy vivid.” Compare that to pink, whose range is from \$25,000 for “fancy light” to \$250,000 for “fancy vivid” and you get the picture.

The 4 C’s of diamond grading – carat, cut, color, and clarity – take on an entirely different perspective with natural fancy colors. Clearly color is key, but is dramatically affected by the cut; one wrong cleave and the stone’s hue can be lost. In the late ’70s cutters learned to maximize a fancy colored diamond’s hue by devising new faceting patterns, rather than trying to maximize the white light return held as the ideal for white diamonds. Thus the Radiant was born. While cushions, pears, hearts, and marquise are all considered 58 facet modified brilliants (or round), only the rectangular Radiant proved to bring the unique depths of each diamond’s color to the fore by morphing the step cut (or emerald cut) with the brilliant. Enhancing the color is so important, master cutters almost always opt to lose carat weight in favor of bringing out the stone’s vibrancy.

Above: (Top) From left, cushion-cut pink diamond with diamond trapezoids, cushion-cut yellow diamond in diamond-encrusted setting from the Tiffany Legacy Collection, and pear-shape blue diamond ring with diamond baguettes. Photo : Tiffany & Co. Bottom: Beaudry 3.05 carat pink diamond ring available at Geary’s Beverly Hills.



When it comes to rare colors, carat weight is generally small, equalling a carat or less. So know that when you see an icy blue dazzler the size of a walnut, some serious money was involved. If you think the price of white diamonds climbs exponentially, get out of the way when natural fancies creep over a carat; so rare are these sizes that record prices per carat are set each time an important stone lands at auction.

Sotheby’s Senior V.P. of International Jewels Lisa Hubbard notes, “The smaller size of fancy colored diamonds coupled with their true rarity makes them the perfect fashion accessory – subtle, yet a confirmation of connoisseurship. Those who know, know; and those who don’t, don’t. Just to put price in perspective, in 1995 Sotheby’s sold a 100.10-carat “D” Flawless diamond at auction for a world record price of \$16,548,750 – equalling \$165,322 per carat for a perfect white stone. That same year Sotheby’s also sold a 7.37-carat pink diamond for \$6,011,894, or \$815,725 per carat.



Above: (Top) Chopard’s 6.20 carat pear-cut orange diamond set is mounted on a diamond-set 18-carat white gold ring. Bottom: From left, Saidapur ring from Van Cleef & Arpels’ Pierres de Caractère collection. 2.00 carat round pink diamond set in 18 kt white gold with 31 round diamonds. Narcisse ring from the same collection. 2.86 carat emerald-cut fancy yellow diamond set in 18 kt white gold with 13 baguette and 13 round diamonds.



Clarity, the fourth "C", plays the smallest role in the appreciation of fancy colors. Inclusions in colorless diamonds shatter the refraction of light, therefore interrupting the stone's scintillation or sparkle. Sometimes inclusions can be seen by the naked eye and, well you know the feelings brought about by any blemish – whether it be on your cheek or in your diamond. The stone's color generally masks imperfections and, as the diamond is cut to enhance the color more than the refraction of light, the remaining inclusions rarely affect the stone's beauty. The lack of inclusions, however, will affect your bank balance.

All this technical jargon is fascinating, but let's face it ... holding a pale pink diamond that once danced in the powdered tresses of Marie Antoinette's up-do is intoxicating. The first non-noble to wear a cut diamond – and a pink one at that – was 15th century Agnes Sorel, the official mistress of Charles VII.

Yellow sparklers have been seen on fans as diverse as Hillary Clinton and Donatella Versace, but did you know the first diamond ever to be authenticated in Africa is the 10.70-carat light yellow "Eureka"? Perhaps the most famous diamond in the world – fancy colored or not – is the 45.52-carat fancy deep blue "Hope": Its journey from France's Louis XVI to eccentric American heiress Evelyn Walsh McLean to Harry Winston to its final home in the Smithsonian Institution has for centuries intrigued diamond divas and the bourgeois alike.

Indeed, diamonds are forever, but natural colored diamonds are the stuff of legends.



Above: (From left) Beaudry's yellow pear-shaped diamond necklace available at Geary's Beverly Hills.

Jean Schlumberger's "Bird on a Rock," showcasing the 128.54-carat Tiffany Diamond, is on permanent view on the first floor of Tiffany's New York flagship store. Photo by Craig Cutler. Left: Beaudry's pastel-colored diamond bracelet available at Geary's Beverly Hills.