Aquamarine:- The birthstone for the month of March.

Latin for 'Seawater', with colours ranging from light to medium blue, sometimes with a greenish splash. Aquamarine is one of our most popular and well-known gemstones.

General Information

It is the birthstone for March and the anniversary gemstone for the 19th year of marriage. It is related to the emerald, both belonging to the beryl family. Because of its pale colour, aquamarine should have good clarity. It is found in large clean crystals and usually cut into large stones to retain depth of colour.

Legend and Lore

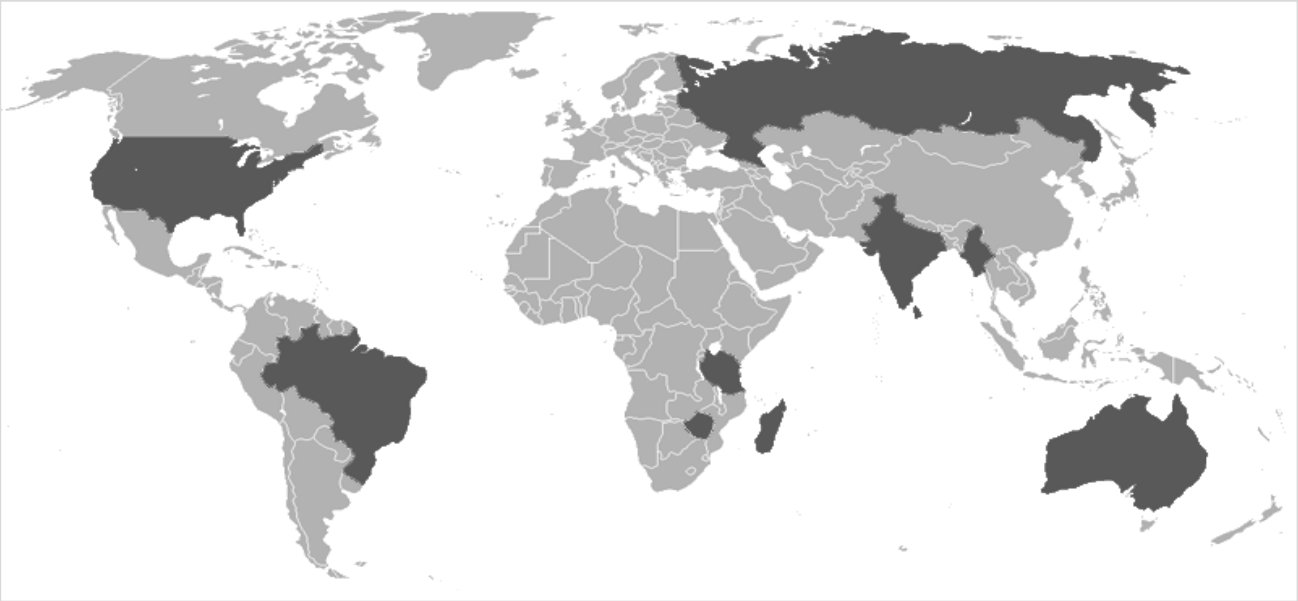
According to some legends, aquamarine is the treasure of the mermaids with the power to keep sailors safe at sea. It is said to be a particularly strong charm when immersed in water and also said to have a soothing influence on land, especially on married couples, helping husbands and wives work out their differences and ensure a long and happy marriage.

History

During the Roman period many fantastic jewellery designs appeared. Great care was taken to suit the gemstone colour to the subject and Aquamarine was used to represent marine Gods. Aquamarine became really popular in the 17th century and during Victorian times.

Location

Aquamarine is found in many countries around the world, including Afghanistan, Angola, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Sri-Lanka, Russia, Zambia and Zimbabwe but most of the gemstones available on the market today come from Brazil. Other mining sources are Tanzania, Burma, and India with occurrences in New Mexico, USA and Dowerin, Western Australia



Physical Properties

Mineral Special:	**A variety of the mineral beryl**
Crystal Structure:	Hexagonal crystal system
Specific Gravity:	2.68- 2.71
Hardness:	7½ - 8
Refractive Index:	(DR)1.560 – 1.600

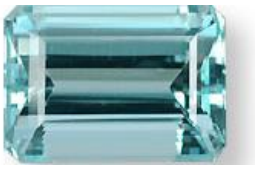
Durability

With a hardness of 7½ - 8, aquamarine is very durable and can stand up to everyday wear, however ultra-sonic cleaners should be avoided.

Enhancements

Practically all the lovely blue aquamarines seen in jewellery today are the result of heat-treatment of greenish-yellow and bluish-green stones. Standard practise is to cut the rough and heat the facetted stones to between 250º C and 700ºC.

As untreated stones become increasingly more desirable, greenish-blue aquamarines are increasingly being left untreated as it sets the stones apart from treated blue topaz.



Synthetics and Simulants

Hydrothermal synthetic aquamarine is produced in Russia but not on a commercial scale.
The most effective imitation is pale blue synthetic spinel coloured by cobalt. Pale blue glass can look realistic and the only natural gemstone resembling aquamarine is pale blue topaz.