

can also be found in the china clay pits of Cornwall, together with smoky quartz, but not of gem quality.

Even though supplies of natural amethyst are plentiful it is being synthesized. It can be very difficult to

distinguish the new synthetics from the natural and, in fact, little effort is taken to sort the synthetic from the natural, due to its low value. A standard method to identify was to look for the 'thumbprint' inclusion that is diagnostic, but not all amethyst displays



Amethyst, crystal cluster.
(Photo: KW)

this. It looks, as it says, like a thumbprint or tiger stripes under the loupe.

Amethyst occurs in huge crystal-filled vugs or crevices, which are cut out for display. Some have legs and glass tops added to turn them into coffee tables.

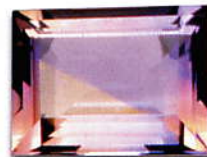
A rather strange stone has recently become available – green amethyst. While it is possible for this to occur in nature, it is rare. This 'green amethyst' – which has been named 'prasiolite' – is, in fact, heat-treated amethyst. To call it 'green amethyst', to the author's



Green quartz. (Photo: ATG/LAB)

mind, is a contradiction in terms, as amethyst is an accepted colour in its own right; this treated green version should only ever be called 'prasiolite', 'green quartz' or 'vermarine'.

Ametrine – this is where amethyst and citrine have blended together to produce a single bi-coloured gem. They are moderately priced but very attractive.



Ametrine. (Photo: DU)

Brown quartz:

Smoky quartz and Cairngorm – Brown quartz is a transparent variety ranging in colour from pale to dark brown. Cairngorm gets its name from the Scottish mountain region where it was found; it was widely used in Celtic jewellery. This source is now exhausted and today's 'Cairngorm' is actually heat-treated amethyst from Brazil, similar to 'burnt amethyst'. The term 'smoky' is loosely



'Burnt Amethyst'.
(Photo: KW)



Cairngorm. (Photo: KW)

applied to stones having a slightly cloudy look, although much brown quartz is still termed smoky. The sources are worldwide and the material is faceted in a range of styles as ring stones or beads.