

Exotix Jewellery Product Information

Only the highest quality materials are used in the manufacture of our Exotix designs. All of our jewellery pieces are hand crafted with care to detail and fine craftsmanship. In some instances, these designs are suited to casting and in others fabrication techniques are used, but in all cases the human touch and discerning eye of a craftsman is what gives Exotix Jewellery its distinction over machine-made products.

METALS

The principle metals used in jewellery making are gold and silver. In their purest form, both are too soft, and can not be used. When combined with other alloys - most commonly copper, nickel, lead or aluminium - this increases their hardness and durability.

SILVER

Our Sterling Silver has been imported from Italy and London, and is **hallmarked for authenticity** with the 92.5% stamp. Exotix is ranked the second largest importer of sterling silver jewellery in Australia. At Exotix, Sterling Silver is used in all instances, including for the wires on many of our necklaces. This wire has been specially treated with a fine plastic coating to prevent tarnishing. Matt silver is sterling silver which has been etched to give this special effect. It is not a coating, but like any texture will polish off if heavy-handed pressure is applied.

Silver Facts

Silver is a lustrous, white, malleable metal, valued for its beauty. As **a precious metal**, silver is still used as a commodity and medium of exchange. It is a rather rare element, ranking 63rd in order of abundance. The British monetary unit 'Pound' was originally equivalent in value to one pound (weight) of sterling silver. Silver is referenced in many idioms **reflecting high quality and value**: silver anniversary (25 years), silver tongue (eloquent), silver medal (second place), born with a silver spoon in your mouth (of wealthy heritage), handed on a silver platter (privileged). The **quality of silver** is expressed as parts of silver per thousand parts of total metal content. Pure silver is too soft and unsuitable for jewellery, with a measurement of 2.5 – 3 on Moh's hardness scale (a diamond is rated at 10), and is somewhat harder than gold. **Sterling silver** is silver made to the standard of quality prescribed and guaranteed to contain a minimum of 92.5% silver (usually 7.5% copper, to add hardness).

SILVER CARE

Sterling silver will naturally tarnish, as a result of the interaction between the metal and acids and oils in the skin of the wearer. It is because **the sterling silver is genuine** that it will tarnish. Perspiration, hormonal changes, and even medications can affect the tarnishing process, as will chlorine and salt water, therefore it is not recommended to wear your jewellery while swimming. Wipe your jewellery regularly with a specialised silver cleaning cloth to keep it looking like new. Store your silver jewellery in the organza bag provided – never keep silver in a leather pouch, as chemicals used in the leather tanning process will react with the silver. Wearing your silver jewellery often is the best way to prevent tarnish from building up, regular cleaning of all your silver items will prevent tarnish and keep your silver bright and sparkling.

GOLD PLATING

Gold plating is a method of depositing a thin layer of gold onto the surface of another metal, most often copper or silver, by chemical or electrochemical means. The method used by Exotix is electrochemical. All of our "gold" jewellery is sterling silver with **3 microns** of gold plating. It is not solid 9ct or 18ct gold, which would be much more expensive. Gold plating is very successful when applied to a sterling silver base. As we use the electrochemical method it is not recommended for oxidised silver or shell pieces.

Gold plating only available in Yellow Gold (Rose Gold not available)

Caring for your gold plating

Gold plating needs a little extra care. To pre long the life of gold plated items the following tips should be followed:

- Don't shower in your jewellery.
- Don't sleep in your jewellery.
- Don't do your housework in your jewellery (avoid harsh cleaners & detergents).
- Don't do your gardening in your jewellery.
- Avoid chlorine and chlorinated pools

CUBIC ZIRCONIA

- Not a natural crystal, but a man-made stone manufactured from a naturally occurring mineral
- Not to be confused with Swarovski crystals which are coloured or clear crystal glass

Cubic zirconia (or **CZ**) is zirconium oxide, a mineral that is extremely rare in nature but is widely synthesized for use as a simulated diamond. The synthesized material is hard, optically flawless and usually colorless, but may be made in a variety of different colors. It should not be confused with zircon. Cubic zirconia is relatively hard, at about 8.5 on the Moh's scale - nowhere near as hard as a diamond, but much harder than most natural gems.

CZs were initially created by scientists seeking a new and versatile material for use in lasers and other optical applications. Their evolution would eclipse earlier synthetics.

CZ versus Diamond

Cubic zirconia is so optically close to diamond that only a trained eye can easily differentiate the two. There are a few key features of CZ which distinguish it from diamond, some observable only under the microscope or loupe. For example: **Dispersion**. With a dispersive power greater than diamond (0.060 vs. 0.044) the more prismatic fire of CZ can be seen by even an untrained eye. (That is, CZs sparkle brighter than real diamonds).

- **Hardness.** CZ has an 8.5 to 9.0 on the Mohs' hardness scale vs. a rating of 10 for diamonds.
- **Specific gravity.** CZs are heavyweights in comparison to diamonds; a CZ will weigh about 1.7 times more than a diamond of equivalent size.
- **Flaws.** Contemporary production of cubic zirconia is virtually flawless, whereas most diamonds have some sort of defect, be it a feather, included crystal, or perhaps a remnant of an original crystal face (e.g. trigons).
- **Cut.** Under close inspection with a loupe, the facet shapes of some CZs appear different from diamonds.
- **Color.** More precisely, the lack of color: Only the rarest of diamonds are truly colorless, most having a tinge of yellow or brown to some extent. By comparison, CZ can be made in most cases entirely colorless: equivalent to a perfect "D" on diamond's color grading scale.

Thermal conductivity. CZs are thermal insulators whilst diamonds are among the most efficient thermal conductors, exceeding copper. This makes telling the difference between diamond and CZ quite easy for those with the right tools.

GEMSTONES

The term 'gemstone' refers to a **naturally occurring mineral** which is desirable for its beauty, valuable for its rarity, and sufficiently durable to give lasting pleasure. The rarer the gemstone, the more valuable it is considered. Rarity is defined by colour, size, quality and cut. Pearls and Mother of Pearl are regarded as organic gems, as they are of animal origin. Exotix uses natural mined stones, as well as some created stones. Our natural stones are sourced from around the world. Natural stones are **said to possess powers of healing and creativity**. Anything that is natural is said to help stimulate, calm and heal our senses. Different stones are attributed different powers of healing and stimulation.

GEMSTONE CARE

A gemstone's durability means that it can last for generations, but it must be handled with care. Never let one item rub against another, and store each item separately, as softer gemstones may be damaged by harder stones. Avoid contact with fragrance, moisturisers, sunscreens and hairsprays – *when dressing jewellery should be the last thing on and the first thing off*. Avoid contact with chemicals and excessive heat. Clean your gemstones with a damp, soft cloth. Avoid unnecessary damage by removing jewellery before exercising, bathing or going to bed.

AGATE

Agate is a member of chalcedony family. It occurs in masses in rocks such as volcanic lava. When split open they reveal a stone of a waxy soft appearance made up of microscopic crystals of quartz laid down in colourful bands. Agate is often dyed to enhance the natural colour.

AMETHYST

- Light to dark purple in colour
- Variety of quartz, coloured by iron
- For 8th wedding anniversary, and February birthstone
- Said to relieve the effects of stress, to enhance creativity and memory

Purple is considered a royal colour, and Amethysts have been much in demand throughout history. The British Crown Jewels are set with fine amethysts, and these were also a favourite of Catherine the Great. Leonardo Da Vinci wrote that amethyst was able to dissipate evil thoughts and quicken the intelligence. Because amethyst was thought to encourage celibacy and symbolize piety, amethyst was very important in the ornamentation of Catholic and other churches in the Middle Ages. It was, in particular, considered to be the stone of bishops and they still often wear amethyst rings. In Tibet, amethyst is considered to be sacred to Buddha and rosaries are often fashioned from it. The Greek word "amethystos" basically can be translated as "not drunken." Amethyst was considered to be a strong antidote against drunkenness, which is why wine goblets were often carved from it! The gemstone still symbolizes sobriety. Amethyst is mined in Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia and Argentina, as well as in Zambia, Namibia and other African countries.

GARNET

- Group name for silicate minerals
- Colours include yellow and green, with the most common being pink or red
- Birthstone for January and represents 11th wedding anniversary
- Stimulates the metabolism
- Said to bring success in business matters
- Excellent hardness of 7 to 7.5 on the Mohs' scale

Garnets have been widely known for thousands of years. Even Noah, it is reported, used a lantern of Garnet to safely steer his Ark through the darkness of the night. Garnets are found in jewellery from ancient the Egyptian, Greek and Roman eras.

MARCASITE

- Crafted from iron sulphide or iron pyrite
- Popular in Victorian times to imitate diamonds, especially during the Depression
- Brings to mind Art Deco designs and vintage looks
- Said to deflect harm and danger when worn around the neck
- Overcome inertia and feeling of inadequacy
- Rated 6 – 6.5 on the Moh's hardness scale

ONYX

- A chalcedony quartz with a fine texture and black colour. Some onyx also displays white bands or ribbons against a black background
- Colours can vary from black, grey, white & blue to yellow
- Onyx was very popular with the ancient Greeks and Romans. The name comes from the Greek word *onux*, which means fingernail. But in Ancient Greek times, almost all colours of chalcedony from white to dark brown and black were called onyx. Later, the Romans narrowed the term to refer to black and dark brown colours only.
- Found chiefly in India and South America
- Said to aid concentration, often found in rosaries

CATS EYE

This gem is really something special with its narrow, bright band of light on a shimmering golden background, which seems to glide magically across the surface when the stone is moved. (For your information: cat's eye effects can also occur in other gemstones, but these always have to be referred to more precisely by adding the name of the gemstone concerned: e. g. quartz cat's eye.)

TIGER EYE

- Fibrous quartz; the fibres reflect the light and create an effect similar to a cat's eye
- Colours vary across rich browns, creams and golds
- Symbolises the union of earth and sun
- Traditionally carried as a talisman against ill wishes
- Also said to promote courage
- Mined primarily in South Africa and Western Australia

TURQUOISE

A copper phosphate, turquoise is an opaque mineral that is rarely found in crystal form. It ranges in colour from sky blue to greyish green. Turquoise is relatively soft and has a waxy lustre. Its shining colour is one of the most popular trend colours in the world of jewellery and fashion.

CORAL

Coral is made up of the skeletal remains of marine animals called coral polyps. Most corals are made of calcium carbonate and red coral is the most valuable. Dull at first all coral has a lustre when polished but may fade with wear.

PEARLS

What is a pearl? A pearl is one of nature's greatest wonders. Produced primarily by oysters, it is a treasured gemstone that can take up to three years to cultivate. Formed from the same compound that creates mother of pearl. A pearl is formed when a tiny foreign object such as a parasite or grain of sand is deposited into the body mass of the mollusc.

- 2 varieties of pearl –
- **Freshwater**—Freshwater pearls are formed in freshwater mussels that live in ponds, rivers and lakes. Exotix uses freshwater pearls in their range with the exception of the Elizabethan, and glass pearl set which are porcelain and glass respectively.
- **Salt Water**—Saltwater pearls grow in oysters in the ocean. Cultured pearls are created by inserting a large bead into a mollusc, to be coated with nacre (this can take up to 4 years)
- Pearl is the birthstone for June, and represents the 1st and 35th wedding anniversaries
- Pearls are valued based on several factors, including shape, colour, size, surface and lustre (Lustre is the most important quality according to jewellers)
- Exotix uses only freshwater pearls, which come from freshwater mussels

Pearl necklaces each have unique names, based on length:

Collar sits directly against the throat and does not hang down at all

Choker nestles at the base of the neck

Princess comes down to or just below the collarbone

Matinee falls just above the breasts

Opera reaches the breastbone or sternum

Pearl Rope is any length that falls lower than an Opera

MOTHER OF PEARL

- Also known as Nacre
- The substance which forms the iridescent lining found in many shells, including the pearl oyster, freshwater pearl mussel and abalone
- Colour is dependent on the geographical location from which the shell is taken
- Iridescence is due to light being refracted at different viewing angles
- Shirt buttons were once made of MOP, and some companies (such as Lacoste) still use it

GLASS PEARLS

Exotix glass pearls are made from hand blown Italian glass beads.

PEARL CARE

Pearls love to be worn. The warmth and moisture of your body will keep natural pearls in top condition. Pearls are soft and should be kept away from sharp objects to avoid damage. Also keep pearls away from alcohol (including perfume) and acids. Clean pearls by wiping them with a soft cloth after wear.

VENETIAN GLASS

Venetian glass is made in Venice, Italy and is world-renowned for being colourful, elaborate and skilfully made. Many of the important characteristics of these objects had been developed by the 13th century. Toward the end of that century, the centre of the Venetian glass industry moved to the island of Murano, about 1 mile north of the city, due to the risk of fire. Glass-makers were considered the leading citizens on the island, and soon their daughters were allowed to marry into Venice's blue-blood families. In the 15th century efforts were concentrated on the perfection of *cristallo* (clear glass that approximated rock crystal in appearance). By the 16th century, Venetian artisans had gained even greater control over the colour and transparency of their glass, and had mastered a variety of decorative techniques. These and other secrets were closely guarded, and defectors could be assassinated or worse, have their hands chopped off! What made Murano's glassmakers so special? For one thing, they were the only people in Europe who knew how to make mirrors. Their virtual monopoly on quality glass-making existed for centuries. But despite efforts to keep Venetian glassmaking techniques within Venice, Venetian-style glassware was later produced in other Italian cities and other countries of Europe.

MURANO GLASS

There are many different methods a Murano glass-master can employ in the creation of beads, depending upon the desired result. From variance in colour to method, the manufacture of these beads is a careful and delicate process. Murano bead-making begins with the production of colour canes, a task which, in itself presents a glassmaker with a significant challenge. The chemical compounds used in colour fabrication are extremely sensitive so they must be mixed with absolute accuracy. Where aquamarine is created through the use of copper and cobalt, ruby red is achieved through the use of a gold solution as a colouring agent. Other materials are used to create the other brilliant colours used in the manufacture of Murano's famous beads.

Lampworked, wound beads or Perle a Lume Venetian beads – The lamp-work method is the most time-consuming mode of glass bead-making, as each bead must be formed individually. Using a torch for heat, Murano glass canes and tubes are heated to a molten state and wrapped around a metal rod until the ideal shape is achieved. Several layers of different coloured glass as well as gold and silver leaf are used to produce the desired effect. After the bead is slowly cooled, it is removed from the rod, which produces a hole for eventual stringing.

Wedding Cake beads, decorated with glass overlays featuring roses, swirls and dots and **Venetian Foil beads**, with their fusion of colour and gold or silver foil are just two of the kinds of beads made using the lamp-work method.

Seedbeads or Conterie are small, round beads, produced when hollow tubes of colour are chopped and then re-fired for smoothness and shape.

Chevron or Roseffa beads – First produced in Murano at the end of the 14th century, these beads are made of a hollow cane and six layers of glass: white, blue, white, brick red, white and finally blue. After this layering of colour, these beads are ground to produce patterns of 5 concentric stars with 12 points. The canes are then chopped into individual beads. The Chevron bead is distinguished by a red, white and blue zig-zag pattern.

Millefiori ('Thousand Flowers') or Lace Beads - The vibrant and abstract Millefiori beads are created in a manner similar to that of Chevron or Roseffa beads with the exception that there is a wider use of colour and the cane is not hollow, but completely solid

Venetian Blown Beads – When the lamp-work flame was introduced, bead-makers discovered they could melt the canes and then blow the glass. Today this glassblowing is called the *Filigrana* or *Filigree* method. To produce these beads with stripes of colour and spirals, glass-makers lay canes of glass down then pick them up with a blow-pipe.

ENAMEL

Enamels are decorative colours often used to embellish jewellery products and therefore enamel jewellery is offered in a wide variety of hues and colours. Enamel jewellery is much safer than other jewellery because of its properties to prevail against harsh climatic conditions. Latest techniques are introduced regularly to reflect and enhance current fashion trends.

CRYSTAL

Glass has been used for many centuries to imitate gemstones. It can be made either transparent or opaque and like many gems has vitreous lustre. Chipped facets and internal swells are common. It can be usually detected by its warmer feel and by the evidence of wear and tear that results from its greater softness.

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