

The Story Behind the Stone: Chocolate Schmocolate, let's try Sherry (/columnists/diana-jarrett/2534-the-story-behind-the-stone-chocolate-schmocolate-lets-try-sherry)

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It's hard to imagine, but there was a time not that long ago when it was very difficult to sell brown diamonds. "Brownies" in all saturations and tones were relatively available, but were seen as inferior to the coveted colorless or "white" diamond. By all counts, brown diamonds are the most common of fancy colored diamonds.

And, as with any natural occurrence, they are not recent discoveries. The largest cut natural fancy brown is the Golden Jubilee. Weighing in at a hefty 546.67 carats, it was discovered in 1985. For a diamond, that's pretty recent, but it took another decade before delectable brand names for brownies penetrated the market and became household terms.



7.20 CARAT SHERRY ZIRCON SUPER TRILLION™ BY JOHN DYER.

Champagne, cognac, and chocolate are some of the more recognized monikers for these colorful sparklers.

But gem lovers are prone to overlook another highly dramatic jewel that makes a big impression and may also be discovered in tints with more nuance of color in the brown family than diamonds: the natural zircon. Its sophisticated color palette makes collectors squeal and designers effuse with creativity. Many zircons are produced in autumnal hues and one such dazzler is sherry zircon. Rich brown with a reddish back color, this stone is remarkable for its vitreous to adamantine luster.

While it carries the visual punch of a diamond with these attributes, the price per carat is certainly more appealing than its fancy color diamond counterpart. It's a glamorous and affordable central stone for an engagement ring. You might be surprised to learn just how appealing it is when you present this as an option to your customer.

Long gone are the days of misidentification of zircon for cubic zirconia, aren't they? If you think your customer may not understand the difference, you may want to make that clear at the top of your presentation.

Sherry, it's not just for after dinner anymore.

Award winning trade journalist and gemologist Diana Jarrett is a Registered Master Valuer Appraiser and a member of the Association of Independent Jewellery Valuers (AIJV). She's a popular speaker at conferences and trade shows. Jarrett writes for trade and consumer publications, online outlets, her blog: Color-n-Ice, and www.jewelrywebsitedesigners.com (<http://www.jewelrywebsitedesigners.com>). Contact her at info@dianajarrett.com (<mailto:info@dianajarrett.com>), visit her website at www.dianajarrett.com (<http://www.dianajarrett.com>), and follow her on Facebook and Twitter (Loupey).