

Treasures Of The Earth Gem & Jewelry Shows

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Larimar - Jewel of the Caribbean

Larimar is an extremely rare precious stone that has only been found at a single location on the planet: on the island of Hispanola in a mountainous, relatively inaccessible region of the Dominican Republic overlooking the Caribbean Sea. This gemstone was first discovered in 1974 by an American Peace Corp worker and a Dominican geologist, although the inhabitants and their ancestors at the location were long aware of the stone. They had once traveled upstream until they came up against a rock formation that seemed to be the source of this blue precious stone, and subsequently gathered the stones on the beach for decades.

The name “**Larimar**” was given to the stone by the Dominican geologist, Miguel Mendez, combining his daughter’s name **LARI**ssa and **MAR** the Spanish word for sea. The stone is also called the **Atlantis Stone**, since a wise prophet once claimed that the Dominican Republic was part of the lost continent of Atlantis, a connection that has been affirmed by various spiritual and metaphysical authorities.

Until now this valuable new discovery remained available only to those who visited the Caribbean. Presently, increased interest and scarcity have made this gem very desirable and extremely valuable!

A museum, The Larimar Museum, is located in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Mineralogical Characteristics

Larimar has been tentatively identified as **pectolite** ($\text{NaCa}_2[\text{Si}_3\text{O}_8\text{OH}]$), but doubt remains among several mineralogists about this determination. Since the material is of volcanic origin, and it is often a replacement mineral, great variability exists in its composition. Undoubtedly there is some pectolite, but chemical analysis indicates minimal amounts of sodium. Some needle growth within the blue areas has high aluminum content, which is suggestive of natrolite.

Much of the material is calcium silicate with occasional native copper flecks. Recent finds include “scenic” pieces with red plumes (iron) on a blue background and white “clouds”. Other samples contain pieces resembling thomsonites, some talc and several microminerals.

The deposit where it is found is clearly volcanic, and gas pockets are filled with various minerals, with Larimar being most abundant filler. It exists in several shades of blue and green, from translucent to dark.

Much of the highest-quality Larimar appears to fill pockets created by the volatilization of trees burned by volcanic activity. Naturally, this was a variable process, and some trees were more rapidly and completely burned than others. As a result, there are some pieces of carbon, some with partial larimar replacement, and some with no indication of their organic origin.

Like diamond and emerald only 3% of all the stones mined are of gem quality. Hardness varies, but most material is from 5 to 7 on the Mohs’ scale. The diamond is 10, 10 being the hardest. The color sometimes produces reticulate patterns of blue and white and there is often a pronounced silky area. Its beautiful blue and green comes from traces of copper.