

Opal in French jewellery

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LGM

<http://www.gemlabmarseille.com/>

Unlucky gemstone in France



When Louis XI's goldsmith broke a royal opal during a setting, the furious King ordered his hands be amputated. Opal then became for long time an object of dread and was associated with the death of the victim. In reality, the bad reputation is probably due to early jewellers mishandling of the brittle and fragile opal. The broken opals were giving simply a bad luck to the jeweller's valet only.

This belief of unlucky gemstone disappeared in other countries , but it seems to have lasted in France.

Opal used as an accent stone in work of René Lalique beginning of 20 century



In the twentieth century, opals regained some of their popularity as accent stones in Art nouveau jewellery, art jewellery in work of René Lalique.



René Lalique

Pendant

René-Jules Lalique
(1860–1945)

French (Paris)

Gold, enamel, opal,
pearl, diamonds



René Lalique

Diadem 1897-98.
Antique bronze,
emeralds, sculpted opal.



René Lalique

Gold and enamel opal ring, the shoulders decorated with green enamel expanding to grip the opal bezel, secured by claws at the front and back. Paris c. 1900 , René Lalique (1860-1943).



René Lalique

Broche with white
opal cabochons,
natural pearls,
yellow gold

(auction 69 933 €, 2009)

http://www.artcurial.com/fr/departements/bijoux_et_montres/

French Haute Joaillerie brings back opal to the market in 2010

- Today, thanks to Victoire de Castellane of Dior Joaillerie, the opal is back on the French Fine jewellery market.
- On the Biennale des Antiquaires in Paris in 2010, the high jewellery houses as Cartier, Dior, Van Cleef & Arpels, etc. propose fine quality art jewellery with opals.
- <http://www.sna-france.com/>

Types of opals used and how it is used

- The French jewellers do not use necessarily the most expensive opals (in regards of the classification) in their jewellery creations. The choice of opal is very subjective.
- If on the Australian market, the top quality opals are the black , with strong bright colours including red, on the French market in the 20 - 21 century, the white precious opal still dominates.
- Few houses start to use the black opal, with mostly the blue and green play of colour.
- The opal jewellery is set in white gold or platinum (preferred way)
- Opal is used always in combination with other gemstones to create very sophisticated jewellery.



© Dior Joaillerie

“Opal is particularly hard to work with, because it’s very fragile. In my opinion, the opal is magical, because it contains all colours. I love the fact that it is alive and full of water. There is a superstition around this stone that originated from a time when people in the workshops had to pay for these very fragile stones when they were broken. So they gave the opal a bad reputation in order to avoid working with them!” Victoire de Castellane says with a laugh.

http://www.diorjoaillerie.com/fr/jewelry_fr.html

Dior Joaillerie

VICTOIRE DE CASTELLANE

Ring « Pond flower » frog is hidden in the flowers around the pond represented by an opal.





Dior Joaillerie

VICTOIRE DE CASTELLANE

Broche Jellyfish : in yellow gold, diamonds, sapphires, opals, tourmalines and peridots.

So nice and friendly
jellyfish can exist only in
the imagination of Victoire !

© Dior Joaillerie

Dior Joaillerie

VICTOIRE DE CASTELLANE



Frog and lilly pad ring.
In the world of this jewellery
designer, the frogs are the
princesses living around
magical ponds.

The lilly pad is in jade and
yellow gold, flower in pink
sapphire, dragonfly in diamonds
and drops of water in opal. The
nature is so delightful !



Dior Joaillerie

**VICTOIRE DE
CASTELLANE**

Dragon du Ciel – Dragon from
the sky : necklace in white
gold, diamonds, violet
sapphires, rubies, Australian
black opal and lacquer

trends.com.cn



© Dior Joaillerie

Dior Joaillerie

VICTOIRE DE CASTELLANE

« Idylle à La Baie d'Along » dragon in diamonds and orange sapphires clutching onto a white opal framed by amethysts and demantoid garnets.

<http://www.diorjoaillerie.com/>

Dior Joaillerie

VICTOIRE DE CASTELLANE

Bracelet « Oulan-Bator »
in yellow and grey gold, silver,
ammolites, Ethiopian opal,
emeralds, lacquer and
diamonds.

We like chimaeras, the
fantastic non existing animals
in between the chinese
dragons and monsters of japan
manga from 80. They are a
favorite theme in high jewellery.
Ammolite shell is also first time
used in high jewelery of the
Place Vendôme.



© Dior Joaillerie



Cartier

Cartier is known as 'the king of jewellers and the jeweller of kings'. Since it was founded in Paris in the 19th century, the House of Cartier has created masterpieces of jewellery that continue to seduce royals and celebrities worldwide. Luxury jewellery by Cartier symbolises elegance and a love of the irresistibly beautiful.

<http://www.cartier.com/en/jeweler-watchmaker/cartier-jewelry-prices#>

Necklace with white precious opal of 40,67 ct set with sapphires and diamonds



Cartier

Design of Décor de Paon.
The jewellery with black
opal in the centre with
blue and green play of
colour, so precious four
Louis Cartier.



Cartier

Necklace with black opal of 35,52 ct, cabochon of sapphire, yellow briolette cut diamonds, white opale beads, white diamonds, emerald beads.

The colour of this opal is so deep and changing, that we have to move around, from the back to the front, from one side to other side to appreciate its beauty.

Biennale des antiquaires Paris 2010



Cartier

Detail of necklace



Cartier

Earrings with cabochon cut sapphire, diamonds, opal beads, emerald carved beads.



Cartier

Necklace with yellow sapphire of 11 ct, opal of 26,04 ct, yellow diamond, emeralds and white diamonds.



Van Cleef & Arpels

Neclace « Astre » from the collection Les voyages extraordinaires »

Van Cleef & Arpels is inspired by Jules Verne. Opal of 24,94ct, sapphires, diamonds.

www.vancleef-arpels.com



The Van Cleef & Arpels stand at the Biennale des Antiquaries in Paris



Van Cleef & Arpels

Clip with white opal,
diamonds and pearls.



Van Cleef & Arpels

Collection « California
Rêverie »

The Californian sun in
Ethiopian opal, the sea with
sapphires and palm tree with
diamonds.

www.vancleef-arpels.com



Lydia Courteille

Calls her jewellery as conversation pieces . Her collection is blooming with roses, pumpkins, orchids and fruit, frogs; all exquisitely hand crafted out of spellbinding jewels and precious metals. She likes the black opal from Australia , with predominate blue and green play of colour.

www.lydiacourteille.com



The cabochon cut is the best to show the mosaic colours of opals says Lydia.

www.lydiacourteille.com





Ring with black gold,
beryls, sapphires,
diamonds and Australian
black opal by

Lydia Courteille



Lydia Courteille

231 rue St Honoré
75001 PARIS

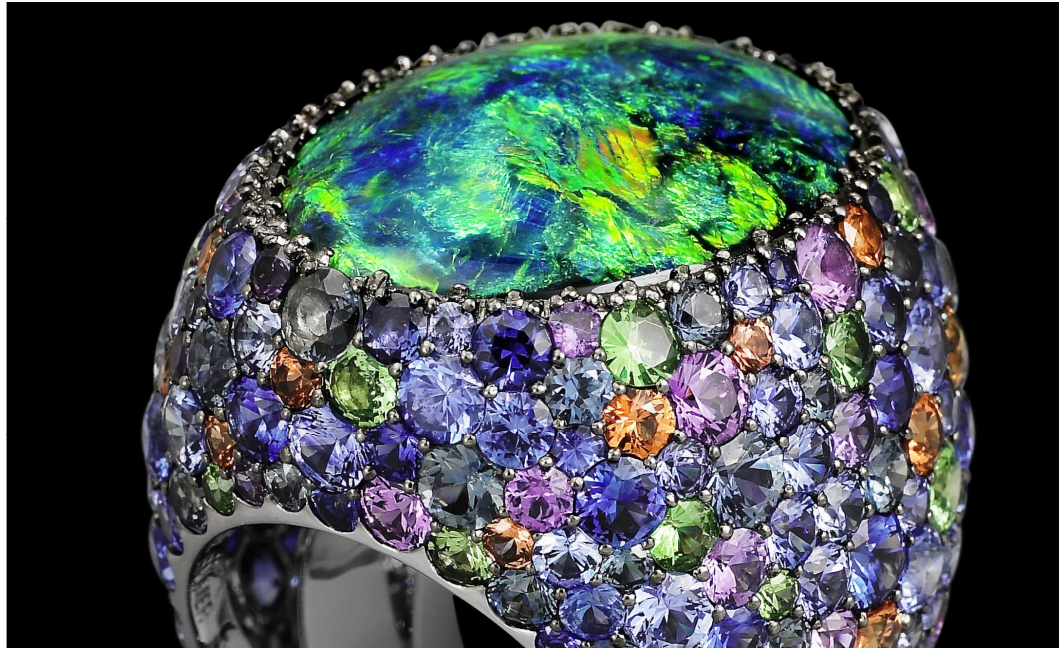
contact@lydiacourteille.com

www.lydiacourteille.com

Tel 01 42 61 11 71

Fax 01 42 61 11 71





Lorenz Bäumer Cardinal
ring with black opal,
sapphires.

L. Baumer is the Artistic
Director at Louis
Vuitton's Fine Jewellery

DREAMS Jan/ Fev 2011

Sylvain Gallier



Eyvia Gioielli



Thierry Vendome



Jean Christophe



Eric Humbert



Philippe Comoy



Young Designers

Young French designers follow the fine jewellery houses; they use the white, the black opal and boulder opal from Australia.

http://www.joailliers-createurs.com/collection_premonition.html

Frank Jaïs pour Terre de Pierre



Eric Humbert

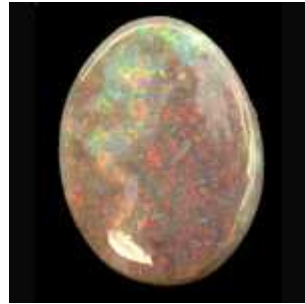
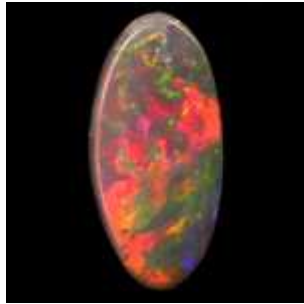
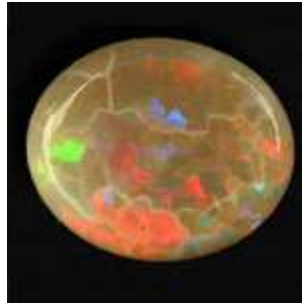


Ethiopian Opal

The Ethiopian brown opal is also very popular among young French jewellery designers.

The prices of brown ethiopian opal are affordable.



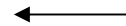
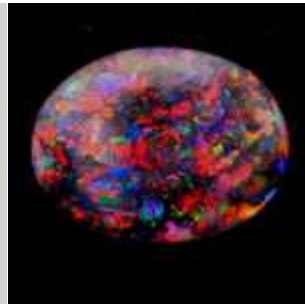


I like them, like the pastel colours

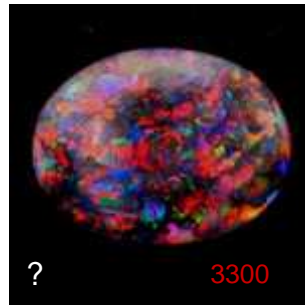
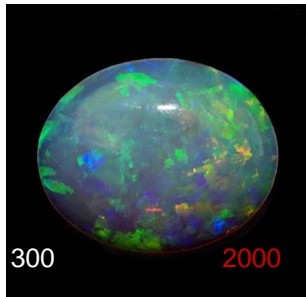
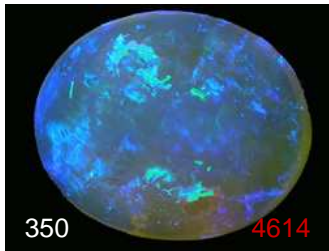
Survey

We were asking few jewellery designers which type of black opal they prefer to use in jewellery.

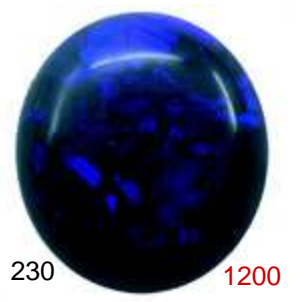
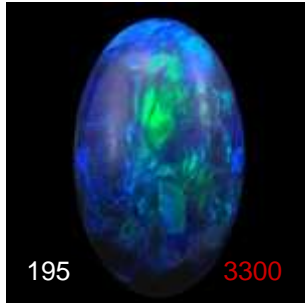
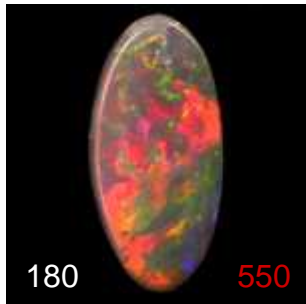
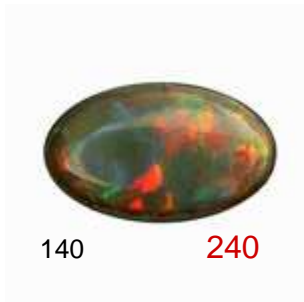
They are gemmologists, they work for jewellery houses, or as independent jewellers. All opals are from Australia.



Nice, but I do not like them, they are too bright



I like them, but I can not pay the market prices

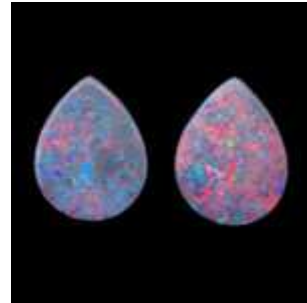
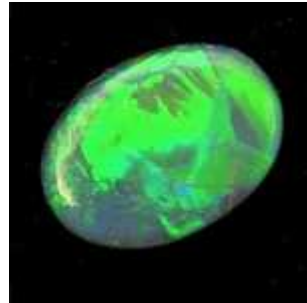
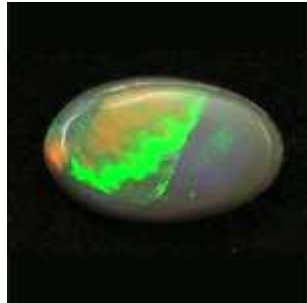


Nice, but I do not like them too much and the market prices is very high

Prices of Opal

We were asking them to price them.

On the left side of the picture is the price they are ready to pay, on the right side is the market price



Less Popular Opals

I don't like them at all, the green colours are not very popular.

Conclusion

- Fine jewellery houses introduced the opal on the French market
- Australian opals dominate on this market, but Ethiopian, Mexican, Indonesian are also used
- Prices of precious opal from Australia are very high in France, because of lack of wholesales prices
- Presence of cheaper opal sources on the market - Ethiopia, Mexico, Indonesia ... but, this opal is less stable
- Lack of knowledge about prices and quality
- Young designers follow the « Haute Joaillerie » ,but they can not pay the same prices
- Difficult to sell expensive jewellery in France without well known label

The value

The black opal with red play of colors is considered as the most expensive because it is rare (in regards of the classification)

In reality the choice of opal is very subjective. We fall in love with one stone. We are attracted by the colors, the image ...

We imagine our very personal jewellery where opal is only a part ... could represent sunset, pond, drops of water, body of insect...

Where to buy & sell opals

Jewellery exhibitions in France

- <http://www.printor.fr/> in Paris and Lyon
- <http://www.kara-expo.com/> in Paris
- <http://www.bijorhca.com/> in Paris
- <http://www.mineralexpoparis.com/> Charenton in Paris
- <http://www.euromineral.fr/> Sainte Marie aux Mines

Where to buy opal in France

Dealers ... just few of them

- <http://www.frediani.fr/fr/index.html>
- <http://www.gems-plus.com/>
- <http://www.opales-mineraux.com/>
- <http://www.planete-cristal.net/index.php>
- <http://www.gemfrance.com/-Accueil-?>
- <http://www.lataillerie.com/>
- <http://fr.opalinda.com/> Opal from Ethiopia