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Reading Recommendations

Book Reviews by NAJA Members for NAJA Members

Gem Identification Made Easy A Hands-On Guide to More Confident Buying and Selling

ANTOINETTE MATLINS, P.G. AND A.C.
BONANNO, F.G.A., A.S.A., M.G.A.
Third Edition, 2007, Gemstone Press,
Woodstock, VT, 330 pages, 66 black
and white photographs, 76 color photo-
graphs, 2 color illustrations, 26 line
drawings, 21 tables. Retail Price: \$36.95
Member's Price: \$29.50

Ms. Matlins' intended audience for this book includes treasure hunters and hobbyists seeking "information that was simple and practical, and tools that were inexpensive and portable." The third edition continues to "...keep it simple, affordable, relevant, and interesting, so anyone can identify most gems."

Her goal is to offer the aspiring gemologist an alternative to starting with thousands of dollars in gem identification equipment, stating "... for less than \$200, one can begin with just three 'pocket instruments': the loupe, Chelsea filter and dichroscope. Used together, these three simple, portable instruments can enable one to properly identify almost 80% of the colored gemstone ma-

terials encountered today as well as diamonds and most diamond look-alikes"

The book is organized around a variety of gem testing equipment, one per chapter, generally increasing in price and complexity, offering elementary instructions for its use and test results for selected gem materials. In addition to the three instruments above, the UV lamp, dichroscope, refractometer, microscope, spectroscope, polariscope, and electronic diamond tester are described and discussed.

The text is admittedly not aimed at working gemologists. The three-page explanation of how to use a loupe might be excessive, and the five pages on using a spectroscope insufficient. The informal presentation and anecdotal nature of test result reporting works for a hobbyist not looking for a formal, rigorous gem testing methodology

The photographs and illustrations are clear and useful. The tables and color plates offer aspiring gemologists quickly accessible summaries of test results discussed in the body of the text.

Readers are reminded that experience will be necessary to interpret findings, and to seek professional advice in unfamiliar areas, such as with fancy colored diamonds.

The book includes a discussion of diamond-type testing equipment (e.g. IIa vs. IIb), and a chapter on evaluating antique and estate jewelry.

Reviewed by Vincent Dillon, GG, CGA

GEM IDENTIFICATION MADE EASY, 3rd Edition: A Hands-On Guide to More Confident Buying and Selling (6 x 9, 372 pp., more than 150 photographs and illustrations, 75 in full color, ISBN 0-943763-34-7, Hardcover, \$36.95) and all of Antoinette Matlins' books are available from retail bookstores, amazon.com, GIA, Kassoy, Rubin, Grobet, and other jewelry supply houses, or directly from GemStone Press, P.O. Box 237, Woodstock, VT 05091. Tel: (802) 457-4000, Fax: (802) 457-4004, www.gemstonepress.com. For credit card orders, call (800) 962-4544. Add \$3.95 shipping and handling for the first book, \$2.00 each additional book.