

What are the chances an alexandrite purchased in the 50s is natural?

Although Russian alexandrites have the most historical value, fine stones are occasionally available from deposits in Brazil, India, Tanzania, Madagascar, and Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, there has been little production of alexandrites from any deposit in recent years. Some alexandrites are still unearthed in India, and some are discovered in the alluvial gravels of Africa but few stones are ever available. The Brazilian mines are reported to be operational but few stones are appearing on the market. Top stones are extremely rare but every deposit seems to produce some exceptional stones from time to time.

People always talk about the quality of Russian stones, but there is no current commercial production of stones from Russia at all. Overall the best alexandrites are probably from Brazil, but exceptional stones can also be found in India, Tanzania and Madagascar.

Brazilian stones are known for their distinctive color change that looks great under any kind of light. Brazilian stones typically show the best reds under incandescent light but Indian stones are well known for their superior bluish green daylight colors. Tanzania and Madagascar seem to produce the largest stones and some of these stones are of excellent quality.

India is still producing the bulk of today's alexandrite production but serious mining is being prevented as a result of political conflicts. The major deposits are in Andhra Pradesh province, near the city of Vishakhapatnam in the towns of Narsipattnam and Araku. The Narsipattnam deposit was discovered and opened in 2005 but now only three years later, production has dwindled and only lower quality stones are available.

Like the bulk of the production at every alexandrite deposit, most of the Indian stones are not clean and do not display a strong color change. However, there are exceptions and some stones are very clean with vivid colors that show an excellent color change that rivals the best alexandrites from any deposit.

See Alexandrite Tsarstone collectors guide, I have an alexandrite ring that my parents purchased in the 50s, what are the chances the stone is a genuine natural alexandrite?, <http://www.alexandrite.net/viewpage.html?id=GG-0133> (It is very unlikely that even an old alexandrite ring could contain a natural alexandrite. Natural alexandrites, especially large clean stones are extremely rare and almost never available at any price. Most old inherited alexandrite rings are actually synthetic corundum laced with vanadium to produce the color change. This Alexandrite like sapphire material has been around for almost 100 years and large quantities of stones were polished and sold. The material shows a characteristic purple-mauve color change which although attractive, doesn't really look like alexandrite because there is never any green. The stones are very clean and may be available in large sizes.) (as of).