Studio 44 Jewelry

Guide to Understanding
Gemstones: Natural, Synthetic, or Imitaton?

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Gem

naturally occurring mineral
considered to have beauty, rarity, and durability
•
gemological testing is usually required
to accurately identify the specific gem and
to distinguish natural from lab-grown synthetics or imitations

Natural

created by nature without human intervention
•
valued for beauty and rarity

Untreated

color and clarity
are entirely natural

Enhanced

treatments such as
heating, irradiating,
oiling, resin-filling, or
color coating are
used to improve
the color and clarity
of the gem
•
when treatments are
not permanent
(e.g. oiling emeralds,
require special handling
(e.g. color coating),
or affect the value of
the gem, they must
legally be disclosed
to customer

Lab-Grown

entirely man-made
•
significantly less expensive than natural gems

Synthetic

a man-made version
of a natural gem
•
must have the same
chemical, physical, and
optical properties as the
real gem
•
not all gemstones can
be successfully
re-created in a lab
•
legally, seller must label
the stone as
“lab grown,”
“manufacturer created,”
“synthetic” in order
to clearly disclose
it is not a natural product

Imitation

mimics the color
of a natural gem, but
does not have the same
chemical, physical, or
optical properties as a real
gem - just a “look-alike”
•
examples inlcude
cubic zirconia (aka CZ),
glass,
Swarovski crystals
•
legally, seller must label
the stone as
“imitation,”
“simulated,”
“lab grown,”
in order
to clearly disclose
the nature of the product

Cultured Pearl

created by an oyster
or other mollusc, but
with human
intervention
•
the bead nucleus
to start the pearl
is implanted, then
the mollusc is
returned to the water
to grow the pearl