

ROGER DERY GEM DESIGN



March 28, 2014

Merelani Mint

As a faceter I have the opportunity to facet truly rare and intriguing gemstones. Some of you will remember a 10.84 ct Merelani Mint Garnet pictured below which was one of our entries into the 2014 AGTA Cutting Edge competition. I certainly enjoyed faceting this stone, but finished it was mesmerizing.



Merelani Mint Garnets hold a special place in my heart after all my visits to Africa. Appropriately named, Merelani Mint Garnets are only found in one location, the Merelani Hills of Tanzania, near where Tanzanite is mined. This area is rugged and dry, a desolate area conquered only by the sun, animals, and sometimes miners. The closest "town" is down the red dirt "road" 2 1/2 hours by Land Rover about 45 km. (we're using the terms "town" and "road" rather loosely)



In the rough, the color alone of Merelani Mint is hypnotic and unique, drawing in even the most critical person. Shining a light through the rough only increases the color play and shows the dispersion or distribution of light within the rough not initially evident.



Faceting this Merelani Mint Garnet was exciting and challenging. When working with gem rough that is expensive and rare, patient precision is the name of the game.



This past week, June, a very discerning gem collector from the East Coast placed this gem in her personal collection at a Gemstone Roundtable hosted by Devon Fine Jewelry in Wyckoff, New Jersey. June has a distinctive perspective on gemstones, particularly those from Tanzania. June was one of the "Gem Hunters" who invested in the documentary film, "Sharing the Rough", and travelled to East Africa with us in January. She saw first-hand the labors of the miners, the harshness of the land, and the pride evident in each man's face.



Photo courtesy of Ernest Rodriguez Photography

The Merelani Mint Garnet is now in the hands of someone who truly appreciates what this gem represents - the toils of hundreds of miners in northern Tanzania. We're glad to know this special gem is in a great home - and that we'll be able to visit from time to time!

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