

World Class Fire Opals Mined Near Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Opal is the lucky stone of those born under the Aries sign and the birthstone of Libras. For those of us fortunate retirees in Vallarta that happen to be Libras, we're able to obtain these spectacular birthstones virtually in our "back yard".

Sept. 17, 2008 - [PRLog](#) -- By: Jim Scherrer

We all know that Puerto Vallarta, Mexico is a world famous resort destination and retirement haven. We also know that just about all of the Mexican Riviera cruise ships make Vallarta a normal port of entry providing the visitors with numerous fun and exciting things to do, sights to be seen, side tours to be taken, beautiful beaches to enjoy, etc., but few tourists ever really get to know the area, customs, and local history.

Puerto Vallarta is located in the state of Jalisco; the third largest state in Mexico with the Capital of Guadalajara which is the second largest city in Mexico. The greater metropolitan area of Guadalajara (including Zapopan, Tonalá, and Tlaquepaque), has a population of approximately 4,000,000 residents, thus making it about the same size as Los Angeles, the second largest city in the US. Puerto Vallarta is the second largest city in Jalisco with a population of 350,000 people, nestled in the Sierra Madre foot hills along the shoreline of Banderas Bay on the Pacific Ocean.

At 3,000 feet deep, Banderas Bay is one of the deepest natural bays in the world with the Sierra Madre Occidentals to the north, the Sierra Madre Del Sur to the south, and the Trans National Volcanic Axis Range to the east. All three of these substantial mountain ranges converge at Banderas Bay, where more than 60 million years ago when dinosaurs roamed the Earth, these mountain ranges were formed as the planet's crust changed forever. Much more recently, only about a million years ago during the Pleistocene age, volcanoes erupted in the region exposing a land rich in mineral wealth containing vast deposits of gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, tin, and hundreds of other minerals. As a result, Mexico became the world's leading producer of silver for centuries and has only recently fallen to second position in the world. A great portion of the Mexican silver has been mined in this region within a 100 miles of Vallarta.

Due to the rich volcanic soil, all tequila in the world comes from this area in Jalisco. With plenty of tequila, there was also a mood for music and dancing! Consequently, in this area within 100 miles of Vallarta, Mariachi music evolved (a symbol of the Mexican Revolution) as did the Mexican Hat dance (the Mexican national dance).

Much of the rich soil in the Vallarta region is also ideal for farming and with the location being on the same latitude as Maui, Hawaii, the climate is perfect for growing many fruits and vegetables. One example being mangos, where Mexico is the third largest exporter of mangos in the world.

Now that we know the area around Vallarta is rich with mineral and agricultural wealth, let's take it a step further. It just so happens that approximately a dozen distinct classifications of minerals with hundreds of varieties exist in Mexico. As an example, the silicates class alone, contains more than 60 different minerals such as jadeite, zircon, topaz, and quartz, a subgroup of which includes amethyst. The carbonates class consists of bismutite, calcite, magnetite, dolomite, etc. while the sulfates class has gypsum, barite, cuprotungstite, etc.; many of these minerals being used for industrial applications. Finally, the mineraloids class which contains amber, obsidian, and opal; minerals that are frequently carved, ground, cut, and polished for objects of art, jewelry, etc.

Many of these minerals, including most opals, were formed during the Cretaceous period and brought to the

Earth's surface during the Pleistocene age. Of the 25 or so varieties of opals, the fire opal is the only naturally faceted opal and the most significant fire opal deposits are found in Mexico. One of the two largest sites for mining the Mexican fire opal, which just so happens to be the "national gemstone of Mexico", is located near Magdalena, Jalisco; a small city located approximately 100 miles east of Vallarta that can be visited from PV during one of the ten hour day tours. Magdalena is in a region laden with igneous rocks, obsidian, volcanic lava, and more than 300 opal mines.

Mexican fire opals consist of silicon dioxide or silica spheres arranged in an orderly pattern with iron oxide dispersed throughout. It's the iron oxide that gives the Mexican fire opal its distinctive brilliant flame-like colors of yellow, orange, and red. The three most important attributes of the fire opal are body colors, transparency, and play of color (differing colors when viewed from various angles). The greater the play of color, the more precious the gemstone. Because most opals are not faceted, they are generally displayed in the cabochon form. However, since fire opals are often found naturally faceted, they can be cut, polished, and mounted as cabochons or faceted stones.

The word opal was derived from the Roman word opalus (to see a change of color) as they popularized the opal around 100 BC and prized this gemstone above all other precious stones believing the holder to be charmed with good fortune. The Mexican fire opal, sometimes referred to as cherry opal, precious fire opal, sun opal, girasol (Spanish for sunflower), and Quetzalitzlipyllitli (gemstone of the bird of paradise) by the Aztecs, was used by the Mayas and Aztecs during the past millennium for ritualistic purposes and in various mosaics. Today, connoisseurs say that fire opals bestow courage, stamina, will-power and energy on the wearer; the warm, fiery orange-red colors are said to have a positive effect on the psyche and convey a profound sensation of warmth, peace and harmony.

Opal is the lucky stone of those born under the Aries sign and it is the birthstone of Libras. For those of us fortunate retirees in Vallarta that happen to be Libras, we're able to obtain these spectacular birthstones virtually in our "back yard". For those of you visiting Vallarta and just want to possess one of these prized gemstones, there are numerous fine jewelry stores in town; a number of which specialize in Mexican fire opals.

Now that you have a better appreciation for fire opals and where they come from, you'll have one more reason for visiting and or retiring in Puerto Vallarta; the most magnificent resort destination on the Mexican Riviera, where brilliant fiery sunsets and opals abound.

Jim Scherrer has owned property in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico for 25 years and resided there for the past eleven years. The mission of his series of 46 articles pertaining to retirement in Puerto Vallarta is to reveal the recent changes that have occurred in Vallarta while dispelling the misconceptions about living conditions in Mexico. For the full series of articles regarding travel to and retirement in Vallarta as well as pertinent Puerto Vallarta links, please visit us at <http://www.pvreba.com> and click on ARTICLES.

###

For additional articles by Jim Scherrer pertaining to Retirement in Puerto Vallarta, please go to <http://www.pvreba.com> and click on ARTICLES. PVREBA is a Real Estate Agency in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico exclusively representing buyers.

--- End ---

Source Jim Scherrer
Country Mexico

Industry [Travel](#), [Real Estate](#), [Tourism](#)

Tags [Puerto Vallarta](#), [Mexico](#), [Real Estate](#), [Buyers Agent](#), [Retirement](#), [Villas](#), [Homes](#), [Condos](#), [Travel](#),
[Golf](#), [Deep Sea Fishing](#)

Link <https://prlog.org/10118552>



Scan this QR Code with your SmartPhone to-

- * Read this news online
- * Contact author
- * Bookmark or share online