



## DESIGNING WITH PRECIOUS GEMSTONES

How Picchiotti Creates  
Luxury In Color

Clockwise from upper left – [PICCHIOTTI Xpandable™ Sapphired Masterpieces ring](#), [PICCHIOTTI Masterpieces Ruby ring](#), [PICCHIOTTI Hoops pendant necklace with Diamonds and Emerald](#), [PICCHIOTTI Essentially Color earrings featuring Blue and Pink Sapphires](#), [PICCHIOTTI one of a kind brooch with Pink Sapphires and Diamonds](#)

Designing fine jewelry is the ultimate creative challenge – taking the most precious materials the Earth has to offer and using them to craft beautiful, durable, and wearable works of art, almost in miniature. The PICCHIOTTI brand has carved a unique niche for itself in the global high jewelry marketplace by focusing much of its design magic around colored gemstones.

“Life without color is almost unimaginable to me,” says Giuseppe Picchiotti, founder and lead designer of the 55+ year-old heritage brand. “Color holds profound meaning for all of us, on a deeply personal level ... so much emotion, so much joy. Unlocking that treasure trove of mystery and delight is, for me, what designing fine jewelry is all about. I am lucky and incredibly honored to be able to play with some of the world’s most superlative gemstones. Their value and their immense beauty inspire me daily.”

As usual, this blog takes its cues from Giuseppe himself, so we decided to explore his color inspirations, taking a closer look at some of PICCHIOTTI’s special considerations when they design with colored gemstones. Color designs are less common in fine jewelry, more unique than diamond, pearl, or

gold/silver designs. It takes a connoisseur, or at least some training and education to be able to understand colored gems and to recognize their quality and value. For more information on gemstones, see our posts about rubies, emeralds, and sapphires. While diamonds may have a more universal appeal, colored gemstone lovers can often be more passionate and enthusiastic collectors.

The PICCHIOTTI family uses a wide variety of gems in their fine jewelry creations, but there are only four precious gemstones – diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and sapphires. Let's explore PICCHIOTTI's special ways of designing with the three colored precious gems (rubies, emeralds, sapphires). We can also expand to a broader view of other colorful gems, collectively known as semi-precious gemstones, and how they have become a part of the PICCHIOTTI legacy in recent years

## Design Inception & Process



Clockwise from Upper Right – PICCHIOTTI Fiocco (bow) brooch with Yellow Diamond center, closeup of master craftsman setting a sapphire into a ring, loose Sapphire, computer enhanced design, design etching with partially completed Fiocco (bow) ring

PICCHIOTTI's primary design inspirations come from nature and/or architecture. Often, when Giuseppe, Filippo, and Umberto Picchiotti travel the world in search of remarkable gemstones, they may already have specific designs in mind, inspired by something in nature or an architectural element they have seen recently. In this case they will look for specific stones along their journey to help bring the particular new design(s) to life.

Other times, the gentlemen may discover a special stone that strikes them as a “PICCHIOTTI gem” – exceptionally beautiful and valued for its intense color, its incredible clarity, or its exceptional cut. When this happens, they will purchase the gem even if they do not have a specific design in mind. When they bring it back to the atelier in Valenza, the PICCHIOTTI design team will collaborate with Giuseppe to envision new creations worthy of that particular stone (or group of stones – see discussion of layouts below). The whole family gets involved in the process as a new designed is honed and perfected.

Occasionally, the designers will also present a new collection that is approved by Giuseppe and the entire PICCHIOTTI family, and then the stones are sourced according to the designs. Very often, the gemstones have to be further trimmed to perfectly follow the shape of the new design or to frame and precisely follow a particular gem cut. For this reason, PICCHIOTTI has enduring relationships with master gem cutters in Valenza, not far from their factory.

## Color Accent & Signature Baguettes



Clockwise from upper right – PICCHIOTTI Masterpieces Sapphire and Baguette Diamond earrings, PICCHIOTTI Xpandable™ For the Love of Color rings, PICCHIOTTI Xpandable™ For the Love of Color stackable bracelets, Model wearing PICCHIOTTI For the Love of Color Xpandable™ rings and bracelets

“At PICCHIOTTI, we often use colored gemstones to define or enhance jewelry designs, achieving the famous ‘color accent’ that makes our jewelry recognizable worldwide,” says Giuseppe. “We also incorporate baguette diamonds into many of our jewelry designs. I love the way the baguette can be precisely re-cut to frame, accent, or elevate the sparkle or intensity of color in the gemstones.” For more on how the baguette became a signature of the brand, [click here](#).



In the more complex designs, octagonal cuts of colored gemstones are paired with a precise diamond baguette workmanship to accomplish a linear, geometric look that is quite distinguished and unique to PICCHIOTTI. The style is influenced by architecture and highlights the interplay between classicism and modernity. Such linear styles, typically in bracelets and collar necklaces, will often be created in only one color of gemstone per piece. The contrast of the diamonds with the colored gemstones creates even more sparkle.

The octagonal Xpandable™ bracelets are perfect for stacking, whether in uniformity of color or a lovely mix of colors within the stack. PICCHIOTTI loves to use octagonal stones for these bracelets as it gives the stack a beautiful architectural feeling.

## Central Focus – Color at the Core



Clockwise from upper right – [PICCHIOTTI Masterpieces Sapphire ring](#), [PICCHIOTTI Masterpieces Ruby Ring](#), [PICCHIOTTI Chandelier Ruby Ellipse earrings](#), [PICCHIOTTI Masterpieces Emerald earrings](#)

PICCHIOTTI often uses very special colored gems at the center, building an entire design around the superlative stone. This way, the colored gemstone becomes not only the center of the piece but also of the attention the piece attracts. It is like putting the gem on a pedestal for proper viewing. Using colored gemstones to design in this way prompts the creation of some truly exceptional pieces. Many of these are known as the PICCHIOTTI CLASSICS. For example, the very classic halo ring shown above becomes absolutely outstanding because of the unheated 14.79 carat intense blue cushion-cut sapphire at center, encircled by round diamonds for added brilliance. The Masterpieces Ruby ring features a large

oval-cut ruby center, framed by baguette diamonds, and flanked by half-moon diamonds, set in both yellow gold and platinum. The ruby is literally and figuratively elevated so that you can easily get lost in its extraordinary depth of color.

Centering the gemstone also works wonders in earrings and pendant necklaces (as shown below). The Emerald Masterpieces earrings shown above feature cushion-cut, deep green emeralds surrounded by round diamonds and framed by signature baguettes. Some of the popular Xpandable™ rings feature remarkable center gemstones in playful, comfortable cocktail rings that draw attention to your favorite color or favorite gemstone. Sometimes the PICCHIOTTI design team will combine a bold center stone on the lobe with a wonderful color drop as in the Ellipse Ruby Chandelier earrings. Diamonds surround a striking octagonal ruby on the ear with a large drop featuring oval rubies surrounded by white diamonds in an elegant geometric shape.

## Layouts & Trios



Clockwise from upper right – model wearing [PICCHIOTTI For the Love of Color Xpandable™ bracelet and rings](#), [PICCHIOTTI Sapphire and Diamond collar necklace](#), [PICCHIOTTI Xpandable Cocktail rings in Ruby, Sapphire, and Emerald](#), [PICCHIOTTI Xpandable Ruby bracelet](#)

Another way PICCHIOTTI designs with colored gemstones involves using layouts. Layouts are series of gemstones that match in color, quality, and cut. They can be very hard to find or put together. When Mr.Picchiotti and his sons come across a fabulous layout that a gem dealer has put together over years of collecting, they can use the layout to create something truly extraordinary. Very often the resulting

piece will be a collar necklace or statement bracelet. The Ruby Xpandable bracelet shown above is an exceptional bracelet with a unique layout of 29 unheated Mozambique “Pigeon’s Blood” oval rubies. The depth of color in the rubies is remarkable, and the precisely re-cut baguette diamonds that surround each ruby creates a fitting border for such incredible gems. Another example is the regal Sapphire collar necklace with a layout of 12 emerald-cut sapphires. Each intense blue sapphire is framed by baguette diamonds and an avenue of baguettes, framed by round diamonds, links the sapphire stations in a sophisticated style.

If they can source the stones, Mr. Picchiotti also likes to present a trio of sapphires, rubies, and emeralds. For example, some of the newest collections debuting in early 2023 include trio Xpandable™ rings in ruby, sapphire, and emerald. These rings feature three stones of the same color – a larger one in the middle flanked by two smaller ones – usually octagonal or cushion cut, and the stones are surrounded by a row of round diamonds that follow the setting or shape of the colored gemstones. Every colored gemstone is unique, a one -of-a-kind treasure. So to find three that match so perfectly in color is quite a feat! Such unique and splendid designs are made all the more special by the intensity of color and the genuine quality of the precious gemstones. They make the perfect way for you or your loved ones to wear their favorite color every day.

Another consideration for colored gemstones is the shape. Certain cuts can be more ideal for the particular geological elements of certain gems. For example, the cut of an emerald can maximize its desirable green color. Emeralds are a natural variety of the mineral beryl, and beryl naturally forms in hexagonal crystals. The cut that works best for bringing out the true beauty of an emerald is an elongated, rectangular shape with step-cut facets, known as the “emerald cut.” Both the shape and the facets help to brighten the stone with sparkle and minimize the visibility of inclusions or fissures within the emerald. Rubies are often cut in rounds, ovals, and pair shapes specifically centered where the stone has the greatest depth of color.

## Essentially Color – Designing with Semi-Precious Gems & Colorful Sapphires

PICCHIOTTI recently added semi-precious gems to its repertoire of incredible jewels. But if PICCHIOTTI is going to do semi-precious stones, you can bet they will be superlative or special in some unique way – either with an exceptional intensity of color or just being a truly all-natural remarkable stone (meaning never having been heated or treated to enhance its color). The Essentially Color collection was launched about five years ago with a broad array of designs with spectacular semi-precious gems or colorful sapphires. Here, the color of the gems themselves influence the design. A stunning cushion-cut pink tourmaline, reminiscent of “Magenta” the Pantone Color of the Year for 2023, is surrounded by round diamonds and carrè-cut diamonds in a regal pendant befitting a princess on an 18K White Gold chain. The color is so unique and intense that it deserves its own pedestal. Similarly, a gorgeous green tourmaline is placed at the center of a cocktail ring to highlight its stunning color and clarity. Flanked by amethysts and white diamonds, the green beckons the eye and creates a statement ring for green lovers. For green-eyed beauties, perhaps the green tourmaline drop earrings might be perfect. The rectangular shape of the emerald-cut tourmalines create longevity at the base of a drop earring, surrounded by diamonds to enhance both stones’ natural beauty.



Clockwise from Upper Right – [PICCHIOTTI Xpandable Purple Sapphire Cocktail ring](#), [PICCHIOTTI Essentially Color Diamond and Green Blue Tourmaline drop earrings](#), [PICCHIOTTI Essentially Color Green Tourmaline and Amethyst Statement ring](#), [PICCHIOTTI Essentially Color Pink Tourmaline and Diamond pendant necklace](#)

Sapphires also come in a wide array of appealing colors. They are a form of the naturally occurring mineral corundum, which is a crystalline form of aluminum oxide. Corundum is naturally transparent, but it can have different colors depending on its trace mineral content. Traces of titanium will create the blue color that sapphires are best known for, but traces of chromium will produce pink sapphires. In fact, sapphires occur naturally in all colors of the spectrum except red – red corundum is ruby. The nice thing about designing jewelry with colorful sapphires is that they are precious gems and have a hardness rating on the Mohs hardness scale just below that of diamonds. So, they are very durable and long-lasting gems. After all, jewelry is meant to be worn, making hard, durable gems like sapphires and diamonds ideal. A nice example is the emerald cut purple sapphire Xpandable ring. This gorgeous cocktail ring features a 5.00 carat unheated vivid purple Sapphire from Madagascar.... perfect for fans of violet or lavender hues or sapphire lovers who want other color options besides blue.

Matching colorful sapphires can be a challenging task because each is unique. So, when PICCHIOTTI finds layouts or pairs of matching sapphires in hues beyond the normal blue, the entire family gets excited and finds a way to create jewels that color lovers will appreciate. As an example, two unheated, bright pink sapphires are paired with diamonds and two unheated intense blue sapphires to create lovely pair of PICCHIOTTI chandelier earrings. Or a fantastic grouping of deep pink sapphires creates



the core of a sophisticated one-of-a-kind PICCHIOTTI floral brooch (shown in feature image above) surrounded by white diamond petals. Such a statement brooch can be worn on a traditional lapel or for a more contemporary style – in the hair, on a belt, or even on a designer clutch.

There are so many ways to design with colored gemstones that the possibilities are endless. PICCHIOTTI always imbues its designs with a classic aesthetic to avoid being trendy or ephemeral. Precious gemstones survive the intense conditions within the Earth's crust, so they are meant to endure. PICCHIOTTI celebrates the value, the beauty, and the distinctiveness of each and every gemstone they procure. They create truly lasting treasure and wearable works of art so that all of us can relish the depth of their color and their delightful sparkle for many years to come.