

20-carat Okavango Blue diamond unveiled

The biggest blue diamond discovery ever made in Botswana has been unveiled to the world by Okavango Diamond Company (ODC).

The oval-shaped stone weighs over 20 carats and has been graded as a Type IIb Fancy Deep Blue. The Gemological Institute of America (GIA), has graded the diamond as an oval brilliant cut, VVS2 clarity, making it one of the highest polished colour classifications attainable for any blue diamond.

The diamond was discovered at the Orapa mine as a 41.11 carat rough stone. Its unique and vibrant blue colour, is created by the molecular inclusion of the rare mineral boron which between 1-3 billion years ago was present in the rocks of ancient oceans during diamond forming volcanic activity.

“From the first moment we saw the diamond, it was clear we had something very special. Everyone who has viewed the 20-carat polished diamond has marvelled at its unique colouration which many see as unlike any blue stone they have seen before. It is incredibly unusual for a stone of this colour and nature to have come from Botswana – a once-in-lifetime find, which is about as rare as a star in the Milky Way,” says Marcus ter Haar, MD of Okavango Diamond Company.

“At ODC we have access to 15% of Debswana's run-of-mine production and feel extremely fortunate to be involved in such a singular find. “Only a handful of similar blue stones have come to market during the last decade, of which the Okavango Blue rightfully takes its place as one of the most significant,” he said.

Ethically sourced

Diamonds are a key natural resource for Botswana, accounting for approximately half of government revenue and contribute to the economic growth and well-being of the entire country through employment creation, the funding of schools and hospitals and other critical infrastructure.

“We are conscious of how important ethically-sourced natural diamonds are to the public and are therefore fortunate that our diamond resources are managed responsibly,” Lipalesa Makepe, ODC’s chief financial officer, says.

The polished stone is named The Okavango Blue in recognition of Botswana’s own environmental natural treasure and World Heritage site the Okavango Delta. It is further a symbol of Okavango Diamond Company, the diamond sales and marketing arm of the Botswana government.

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