



American Gemological Laboratories™

Defining Quality for Over 30 Years

580 Fifth Avenue, Suite 706 • New York, NY 10036 • 212.704.0727 • agl@aglgemlab.com •

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# AGL Will Not Be Classifying New Ruby Treatment As Composite Ruby

**3 May 2010: NEW YORK** – American Gemological Laboratories (AGL) has concluded its initial investigations into a new ruby treatment which has been entering the market. Over the past year, another “new” ruby treatment has been coming out of Thailand and is offering a lowcost alternative to more traditionally heated ruby ([figure 1](#)). “The conundrum for the trade has been how to deal with these new stones and what kinds of disclosures need to be made.” indicated Christopher P. Smith, President of AGL.



This new ruby treatment has been developed in Thailand and is reportedly a modification of the leadglass or Composite Ruby treatment (see [AGL modifies its disclosure policy on leadglass filled rubies: November 2007](#)). For this treatment, AGL has been informed that a selection of the rough material suitable for the Composite Ruby treatment is made and treated using various chemicals or fluxing agents, similar to the more traditional heating of ruby that results in fissure healing and heating residues (see [American Gemological Laboratories \(AGL\) modifies its disclosure wording on heated rubies: June 2009](#)).

“With the introduction of this new treatment, it was unclear as to whether these stones would fall under the classification of Composite Ruby by AGL, the more traditional format of fissure healing involving the quantification of heating residues, or yet another new form of disclosure.” Smith explained.

During AGL’s investigations, it became evident that in some samples fissure healing was taking place, whereas in others there was less healing taking place but open fissures were still being in-filled with a glasslike material however no lead or bismuth was detected as would be expected of a typical Composite Ruby.

It is the decision of AGL not to classify this new treatment as Composite Ruby, nor to develop another new classification for disclosure of this treatment as a consideration of several factors (see [frequently asked questions](#)). In the lab’s opinion this treatment is more similar to the “glassfilled” rubies that were prevalent during the early to mid 1990’s than the more recent Composite Ruby. “At that time, the discussions of glassfilled rubies revolved primarily around rough of Mong Hsu ruby that was being treated, with significant amounts of glasslike heating residues that were remaining.” Smith indicated “Today, the material we are discussing is coming mainly from Mozambique, but the issues involved are quite similar.”

AGL will expand the disclosure information for those stones that possess a combination of fissure healing and infilling, to better represent the dual nature of what is taking place as a result of this treatment process. For those stones where the majority of what is taking place involves the healing of fissures, the traditional disclosure nomenclature addressing the quantity of heating residues will be applied (figure 2). For those stones where a significant extent of what is taking place involves the infilling of fissures in combination with fissure healing, the disclosure wording will address both heating residues and infilling, with an expanded description under the comments section (figure 3).

Initial durability studies were also carried out and these stones were found to have less special care requirements than Composite Ruby. AGL cautions that all gems should be properly cared for however these stones were most similar to the more traditionally heated rubies possessing heating residues when exposed to conditions in a jeweler's workshop or with commercial household products.

"It is our opinion that the wording policy we have put in place for this material provide a practical approach for the industry and labs to address these stones and maintain that adequate disclosures are being made available to consumers." Smith concluded.

### **Background**

In 2003, the leadglass filled ruby treatment began flooding the international gemstone market. This product was later classified as "Composite Ruby" by the AGL (AGL modifies its disclosure policy on leadglass filled rubies: November 2007). "In our opinion, those stones are an amalgam of natural ruby and a high lead content glass, which intrinsically carry a variety of special care considerations." Smith explained. Composite Rubies have been controversial ever since they first began proliferating in the market and proper disclosure nomenclature and practices have received a lot of attention.

American Gemological Laboratories (AGL) is the United States' most widely known and respected colored stone gem identification and quality grading laboratory. It was founded in 1977 and became the first gemological laboratory in the US to provide quality grading as well as country of origin determinations for colored stones. AGL has become an iconic brand for uncompromised standards and excellence in gemstone reporting and is regularly featured by the auction houses of Christie's and Sotheby's for important colored stones they are offering for sale.

**Contact: Christopher  
P. Smith 1212704-  
0727**

AGL



American Gemological Laboratories™

Defining Quality for Over 30 Years

580 Fifth Avenue, Suite 706 • New York, NY 10036 • 212.704.0727 • agl@aglgemlab.com •