

GIA Revises Lab-Grown Diamond Reports

NIRUPA BHATT, *managing director of GIA India and Middle East, speaks to SOLITAIRE about the recent changes in terminology for GIA's laboratory-grown diamond reports.*



Nirupa Bhatt,
Managing Director of GIA
India and Middle East

Why did GIA feel the need to change its diamond grading report for lab-grown diamonds?

In 2007, GIA began offering the GIA Synthetic Diamond Grading Report. On March 29th this year, GIA announced that the name of the report would change to GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report, replacing 'synthetic' with 'laboratory-grown.' A statement will be added that laboratory-grown diamonds may be colour treated.

GIA used 'synthetic,' as well as 'laboratory-grown' and 'man-made,' in the reports because those were the terms approved by the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to describe man-made diamonds. The FTC changed the guidelines for approved terminology in July 2018, and GIA is following those guidelines.

The mission of the FTC is to protect consumers. GIA has worked with the FTC for many decades, both providing technical input and also following the guidelines.

Do you expect the terminology changes to have any negative impact on the volumes of lab-grown diamonds being submitted for grading?

As a mission-driven, public benefit institute, GIA believes in the absolute importance of disclosure. That's why the GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report will include this statement – *"This is a man-made diamond produced by CVD (Chemical Vapor Deposition) or HPHT (High Pressure High Temperature) growth processes and may include post-growth treatments to change the color."*

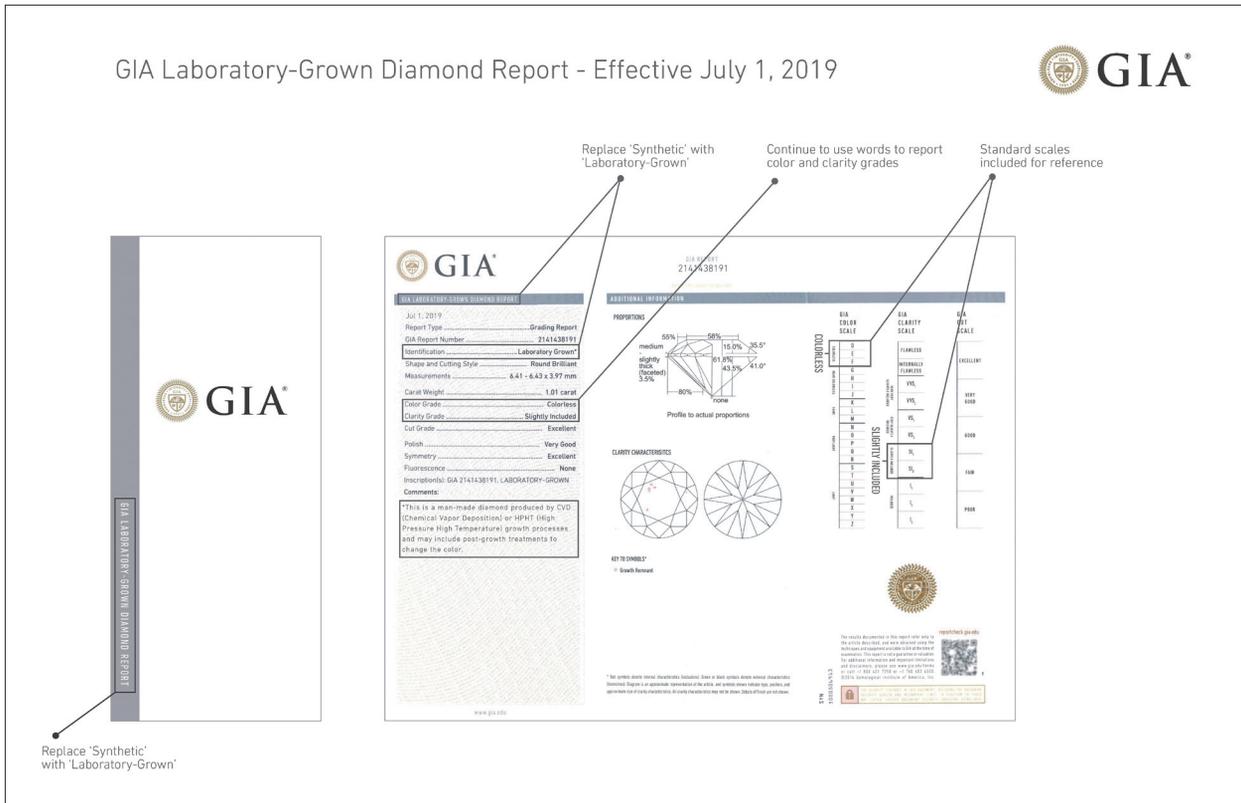
GIA's role is to provide accurate and unbiased analysis of stones submitted. It is for consumers to decide what they would like to buy.

Tell us about the separate grading scale (for colour and clarity) for lab-grown and natural diamonds.

GIA has always used different terminology to report the colour and clarity grades for laboratory-grown diamonds: *Colorless, Near Colorless, Faint, Very Light* and *Light* to report colour grades on laboratory-grown diamonds, not D-Z; and *Flawless, Internally Flawless, Very Very Slightly Included, Very Slightly Included, Slightly Included* and *Included* to report clarity for laboratory-grown diamonds.

The approach for grading natural and laboratory-grown diamonds is the same, but with broader nomenclature for laboratory-grown diamonds.

On the new reports, to avoid confusion, laboratory-grown colour grades (*Colorless, Near Colorless, etc.*) will be listed alongside the D-Z scale so consumers can see, for example, that



Example of a GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report.

a *Near-Colorless* laboratory-grown diamond is in the range G to J colour grade of a natural diamond.

In the interest of strengthening the demarcation of the two diamond pipelines – natural and lab-grown – is the GIA working with other major gemmological labs to standardise the terminology used across the industry?

GIA established the International Diamond Grading System, based on the 4Cs (Colour, Cut, Clarity and Carat Weight), a standardised way of evaluating diamonds. This is now the globally accepted standard for diamond quality.

As a part of our mission to ensure public trust in gems and

jewellery, GIA is continuously investing in research to identify new gem materials coming into the market. As a result of decades of gemmological research, GIA has been developing instruments and services to identify and screen undisclosed laboratory-grown diamonds to help give the trade and consumers confidence in their purchase.

In India and the Middle East, GIA is working with the trade body associations at the national, regional and local levels to spread awareness about laboratory-grown diamonds regarding detection and disclosure, and sharing knowledge on segregating and maintaining two separate pipelines for natural and laboratory-grown diamonds. ■

GIA Lab-Grown Diamond Report Nomenclature Changes Explained

On March 29th 2019, Gemological Institute of America (GIA) announced changes to its laboratory-grown diamond grading report to align the report with recent revisions to the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Jewelry Guides.

Effective July 1st 2019, GIA will discontinue the GIA Synthetic Diamond Grading Report™, introduced in January 2007, and introduce the GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report™.

- The GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report will include the standard GIA colour, clarity and cut grading scales for reference purposes.
- The GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report will continue to use *Colorless*, *Near Colorless*, *Faint*, *Very Faint* and *Faint* to report the colour grades for laboratory-grown diamonds, rather than the letters used to report the colour grades for natural diamonds.
 - o The standard GIA colour grading scales will be included on the report for reference, for example:

Colorless for D, E and F; *Near Colorless* for G, H, I and J; and *Faint* for K, L and M.

- The GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report will continue to use *Flawless*, *Internally Flawless*, *Very Very Slightly Included*, *Very Slightly Included*, *Slightly Included* and *Included* to report the clarity grades for laboratory-grown diamonds, rather than VVS1 and VVS2; VS1 and VS2; SI1 and SI2; and I1, I2 and I3 used to report the clarity grades for natural diamonds.
 - o The standard GIA clarity grading scales will be included on the report for reference, for example *Slightly Included* for SI1 and SI2.
- The GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report will use 'laboratory-grown' in the identification line of the report; 'synthetic' will not be used in the report.
- The GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report includes the following statement: *This is a man-made diamond produced by CVD (Chemical Vapor Deposition) or HPHT (High Pressure High Temperature) growth processes*

and may include post-growth treatments to change the color.

- All detected clarity treatments will be disclosed.
- The QR code on the GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report will link to GIA's online Report Check Service which can be used to confirm that the information on a report matches what is in the GIA report database. The Report Check record for each GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report will include educational material about the CVD and HPHT methods for growing laboratory-grown diamonds to help educate consumers and fulfil GIA's mission of ensuring the public trust in gems and jewellery.
- GIA specifies 'natural diamond' on its grading reports for natural diamonds – the GIA Diamond Grading Report™ and the GIA Diamond Dossier™.
- Any GIA Synthetic Diamond Grading Report issued since January 1st 2018, may be returned and exchanged for the GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Report at no cost. ■

WFDB Welcomes GIA's Changes

In a statement, Ernie Blom, president of the World Federation of Diamond Bourses (WFDB), said he was pleased with the changes in the reports for lab-grown diamonds announced by the GIA.

Blom stated, "As I have often said in the past, we have nothing against the lab-grown diamond sector. We only ask that such stones be fully disclosed so that consumers are aware of what they are being offered. These are different products with their own niche market and there is no need for ill-feeling or for dubious claims and advertising to be used against diamonds, such as the claims that lab-grown are eco-friendly and that diamonds are not. We must have fair marketing that does not denigrate other products.

"The global diamond industry made its views known to the GIA during its decision-making process, and I am pleased that this very important global institution gave weight to the industry's concerns. I call on the other labs to follow suit to ensure that their reports are clearly differentiated for lab-grown stones because this is a vital issue for the diamond trade."