

GIA's Policy on HPHT-Processed Diamonds

By WILLIAM E. BOYAJIAN, PRESIDENT

Since the formal introduction and declaration of HPHT-processed diamonds by General Electric (GE) and Lazare Kaplan International (LKI) in the spring of 1999, GIA's policy toward identification and disclosure of these items has not changed. We view these diamonds as legitimate products in the marketplace, provided they are properly identified and disclosed at every point in the diamond pipeline, up to and including the consuming public. The jewelry industry must recognize that sophisticated technology to enhance the appearance of gem materials is here to stay. To deny the existence and continuing development of technology — and its inevitable impact on the gemstone market — would be folly.

From the outset, we felt that cooperation with GE was paramount to discovery of reliable identification criteria. The risks to consumer confidence in the diamond industry were simply too great to pursue any other course of action. We feel that because HPHT annealing produces results that are stable in normal conditions of wear and care, it is appropriate to first clearly identify the process on a GIA Report and then to grade the diamond on request. This policy is in the best interests of the trade and the consumer, as it addresses the critical need for the disclosure of the process and provides a comprehensive analysis of the diamond's quality.

Analyzing and grading these diamonds has provided another important benefit: It has allowed us to research and characterize thousands of HPHT-processed diamonds and to establish the world's most comprehensive database on the subject. With this information, we have been able to collaborate with many researchers in the field and to publish landmark studies in *Gems & Gemology*; updates in our electronic newsletter, *GIA Insider*; and contributions to other journals, thereby educating and informing everyone in the trade. We believe our efforts and these publications have been vital to securing consumer confidence in all diamonds, not just HPHT-processed goods.

The willingness of General Electric to share information and have their diamonds graded and laser inscribed by GIA has been the most important element in our current state of understanding about the product. Now, with oth-

ers in the HPHT market, we expect, and frankly deserve, the same kind of cooperation from them.

This is not an issue of simply doing the right thing. It is one of self-preservation for the diamond industry. Everyone must support honorable disclosure. In turn, everyone must deny entry of nondisclosed products into the market and censure the people who promote and sell them.

Fortunately, our identification criteria for HPHT-processed diamonds are sufficient to identify the vast majority of diamonds that are submitted to GIA's laboratory. But the work is only beginning. New variations of the process are stretching our already overburdened resources. More time, energy and money are needed to keep up with the demands of increasingly sophisticated technology. Where will all this lead? No one really knows. But with the industry's support and cooperation, we are confident of our ability to stay on top of this critical issue. ♦



GIA cert indicating HPHT treatment.