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An Interstellar Origin for 'Black Diamonds'?

Carbonados, also known as 'black diamonds,' are a far cry from the kind of diamonds that adorn a wedding ring. They're gray to black in color, lack the beautiful crystalline structure of standard diamonds, and usually wind up being used in industrial settings for their abrasive qualities. And now we're learning why these somewhat nondescript objects aren't found in the usual places for diamond mining. Their origin may lie not within the Earth but in interstellar space.

Or so say Jozsef Garai and Stephen Haggerty (Florida International University) in a recently published paper. Working with researchers from Case Western, the team used infrared synchrotron radiation at Brookhaven National Laboratory to analyze carbonado samples, finding enough hydrogen to indicate an origin in hydrogen-rich interstellar space. Haggerty has, in fact, conducted earlier research showing that these diamonds are the result of supernovae explosions, and that they arrived on Earth as objects originally a kilometer or more in diameter.

The paper is Garai et al., "Infrared Absorption Investigations Confirm the Extraterrestrial Origin of Carbonado Diamonds," *Astrophysical Journal* 653: L153-156 (20 December 2006), with abstract [here](#).

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