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Black diamonds from outer space: Gemologists

Were formed in hydrogen-rich environment like interstellar space

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Author: Diamond World News Service

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GEOLOGISTS from the National Science Foundation (NSF), a federal agency that allocates research grants to universities, said that Earth's so-called black diamonds were formed in interstellar space, according to a press release.

In a paper published online on December 20, 2006, scientists Jozsef Garai and Stephen Haggerty of Florida International University, along with Case Western Reserve University researchers Sandeep Rekhi and Mark Chance, claim an extraterrestrial origin for the unique black diamonds, also called carbonado diamonds.

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The diamonds were tested with infrared synchrotron radiation and were found to contain trace elements of nitrogen and hydrogen, indicating an extraterrestrial origin in a hydrogen-rich environment such as interstellar space, said the scientists. The new data support earlier research by Haggerty showing that carbonado diamonds formed in stellar supernovae explosions. Black diamonds were once the size of asteroids, a kilometre or more in diameter when they first landed on Earth.

The term carbonado was coined by the Portuguese in Brazil in the mid-18th century and is derived from its visual similarity to porous charcoal. Black diamonds are found only in Brazil and the Central African Republic.

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