



Star Ruby. (Photo: RH)



Madagascan Ruby, 1.88 ct.
(Photo: ATG/LAB)

The synthetic stones can be of such high quality that you may not mind whether you have a real ruby or not – after all, if you don't know whether the gem in your ring is real or synthetic, neither will your friends. The thing to avoid is paying the price of real for synthetic. If, however, you decide that only the real thing will do, then the only answer is to go to a reputable supplier. Inclusions and colour banding usually identify natural stones from synthetic, but of course this is the job of a qualified gemmologist. Glass filling of fractures is becoming more common, so, if a stone is being bought as an investment, then it is imperative to have it checked at a laboratory before purchase. The faking of natural rubies has been taken to a new level with synthetic ruby being purposely fractured by immersing a hot stone into very cold water and then filling these

fractures with glass, therefore giving the impression that the stones are natural. The glass filling of rubies has now reached dangerous proportions, with very many in the market. They can easily deceive, being extremely difficult to identify for the layperson. Extreme care is therefore needed when purchasing – only buy from a reliable source.

Other red-coloured natural gems are sometimes confused with ruby, such as spinels and red garnets, though both of these are singly refractive and not doubly refractive as is ruby.

Ruby has been misidentified for hundreds of years. The 170-ct Black Prince's 'ruby' originally set in the helmet of King Henry V and worn at the battle of Agincourt is, in fact, a spinel; it is now set in the Imperial State Crown.



Colour range of Greenland rubies, 0.22-0.77 ct. (Photo: TNG)