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Color Market Reports

# Australian co. introduces opal grading system



Under Opal Horizon Ltd.'s recently introduced grading system, gem opals, such as the one pictured here, that are of exceptional quality with a high visual impact and full spectral play of color are graded "exceptional."

JUN 13, 2011

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Carlsbad, Calif.--Opal Horizon Ltd., a Brisbane, Australia-based opal mining, sales and marketing company, presented a new, comprehensive system for grading gem quality opals on at the Gemological Institute of America's 2011 Symposium.

According to the company, the new grading system is designed to foster confidence and transparency and give jewelers and opal owners a foundation for determining market value. The launch marks the first step in a worldwide marketing and communications push by Opal Horizon designed to raise the profile of the gemstone.

Opal Horizon's new opal grading system applies only to natural precious opal. It is based upon three quantifiable grading criteria: category, color and cut.

Category describes the opal as one of three types, each defined by the presence and degree of host rock in the opal. Color relates to the opal face, body tone, play of color, brightness, pattern, directionality and special attributes of the opal. Cut means the quality of the opal's finish and polish, its symmetry/balance and exclusion of defects.

Each "C" is graded individually on a scale with a maximum score of 100. The three scores then are added together and result in a final comprehensive quality score.

The opal is then classified in one of five quality grade categories:

- Exceptional gem opal: score of 300 to 285;
- Fine gem opal: 284 to 240;
- Gem opal: 239 to 180;
- Commercial opal: 179 to 90;
- Promotional opal: less than 90.

All gem opals sold through Opal Horizon will be evaluated using this new grading system and a report will accompany each gemstone that describes it and provides a quality grade. The new grading system also will serve as the guide for the company's wholesale pricing structure.

Opal Horizon said it is planning to headquarter its sales and marketing operations in North America as it continues its marketing campaign for opals.

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