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Hsu et al.

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(54) **MAGNETIC RECORDING MEDIUM WITH A Ga_3Pt_5 STRUCTURED UNDERLAYER AND A COBALT-BASED MAGNETIC LAYER**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**⁷ **G11B 5/66**; G11B 5/70;
B05D 5/12; C23C 14/22; C23C 14/34

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **428/694 TS**; 428/611;
428/900; 427/131; 204/192.15; 204/192.2

(58) **Field of Search** 428/694 TS, 900,
428/611; 148/429; 420/460; 204/192.15,
192.2; 427/131

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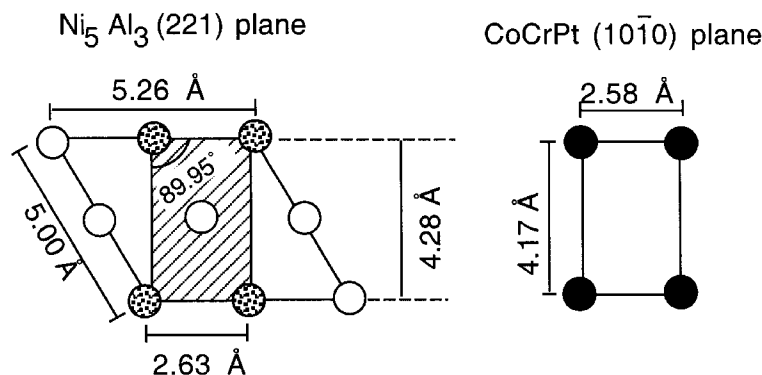
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention provides a longitudinal magnetic recording media having a substrate, a Co or Co alloy based magnetic layer and an underlayer disposed between the substrate and the magnetic layer. The underlayer is made of a material having a Ga_3Pt_5 crystalline structure, most preferably Ni_5Al_3 . Several intermediate layers, disposed between the underlayer and the magnetic layer may also be included.

46 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets



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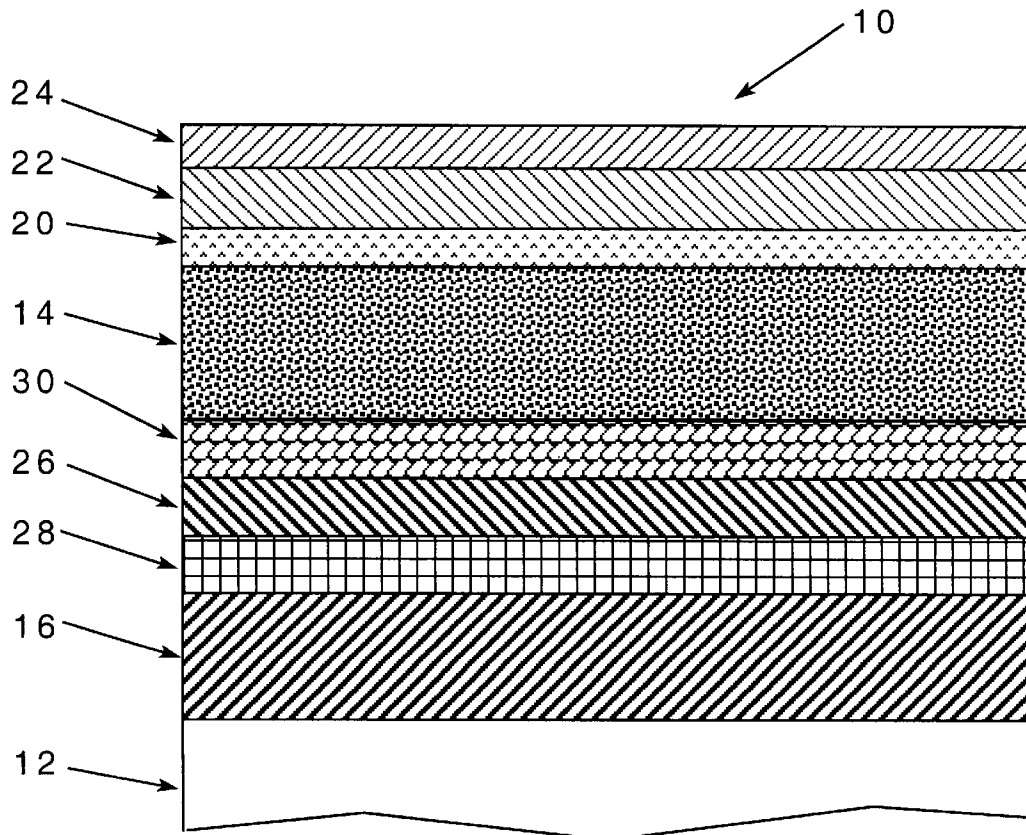


FIG. 1

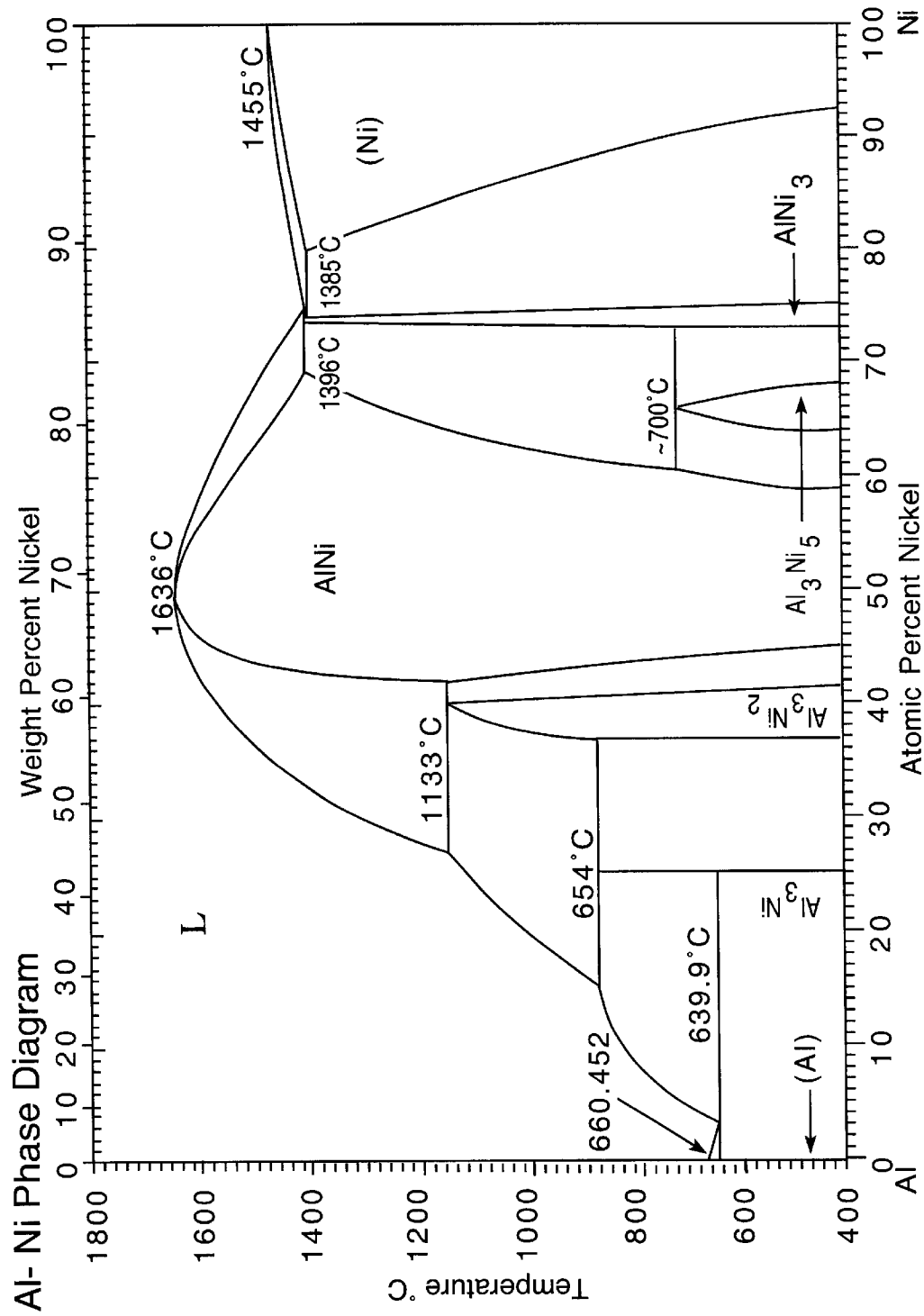


FIG. 2(a)

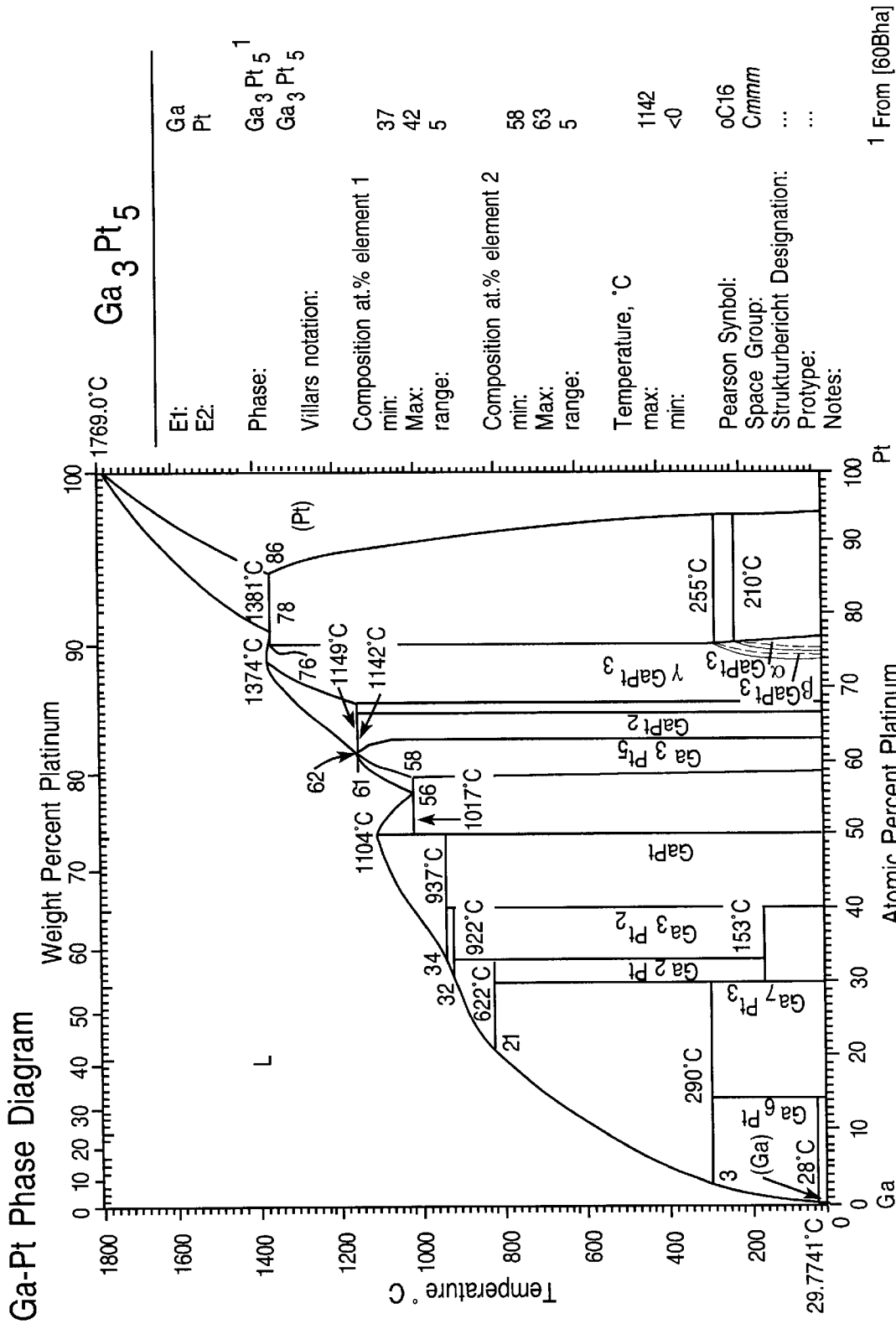


FIG. 2(b)

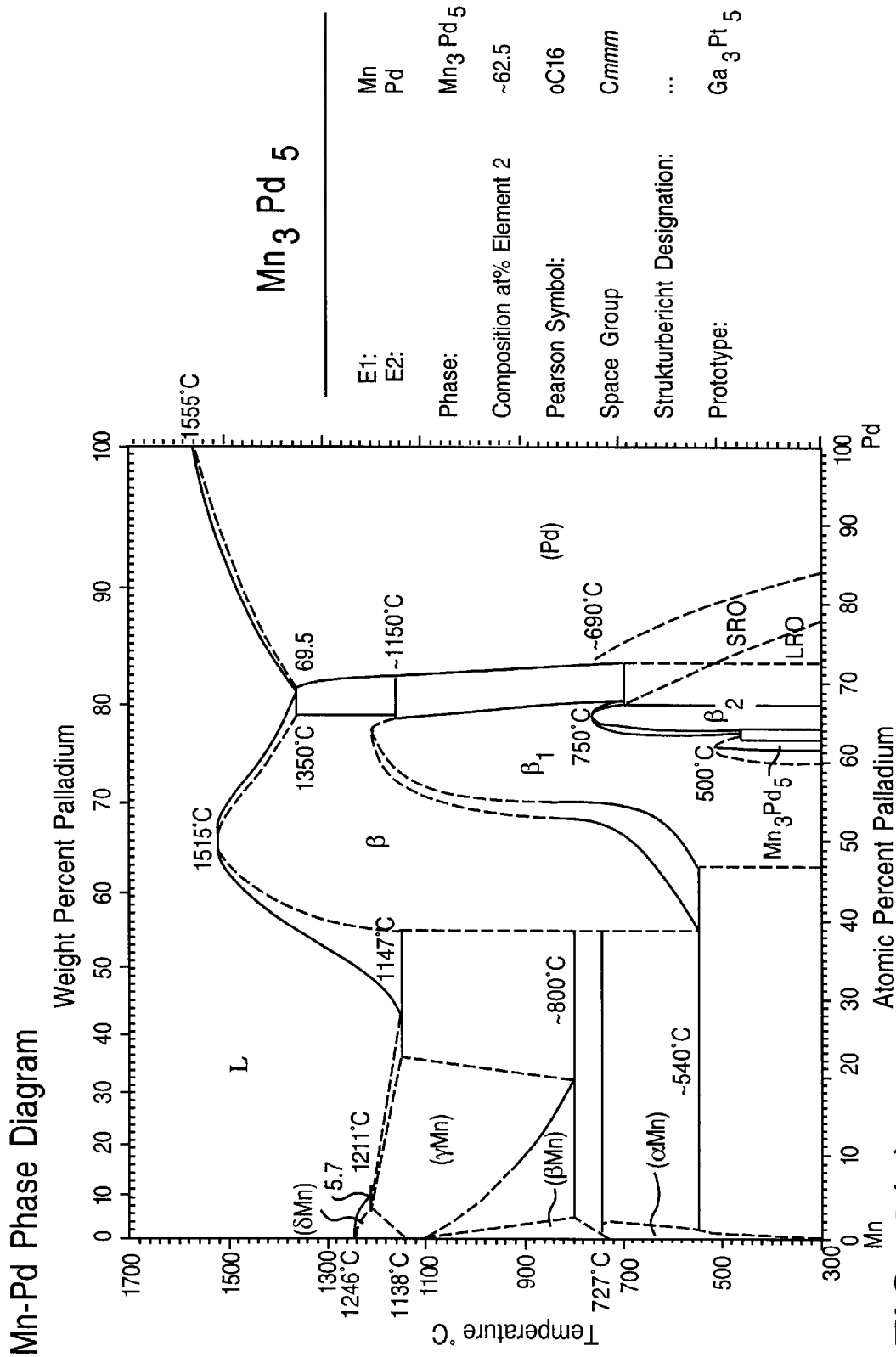


FIG. 2(c)

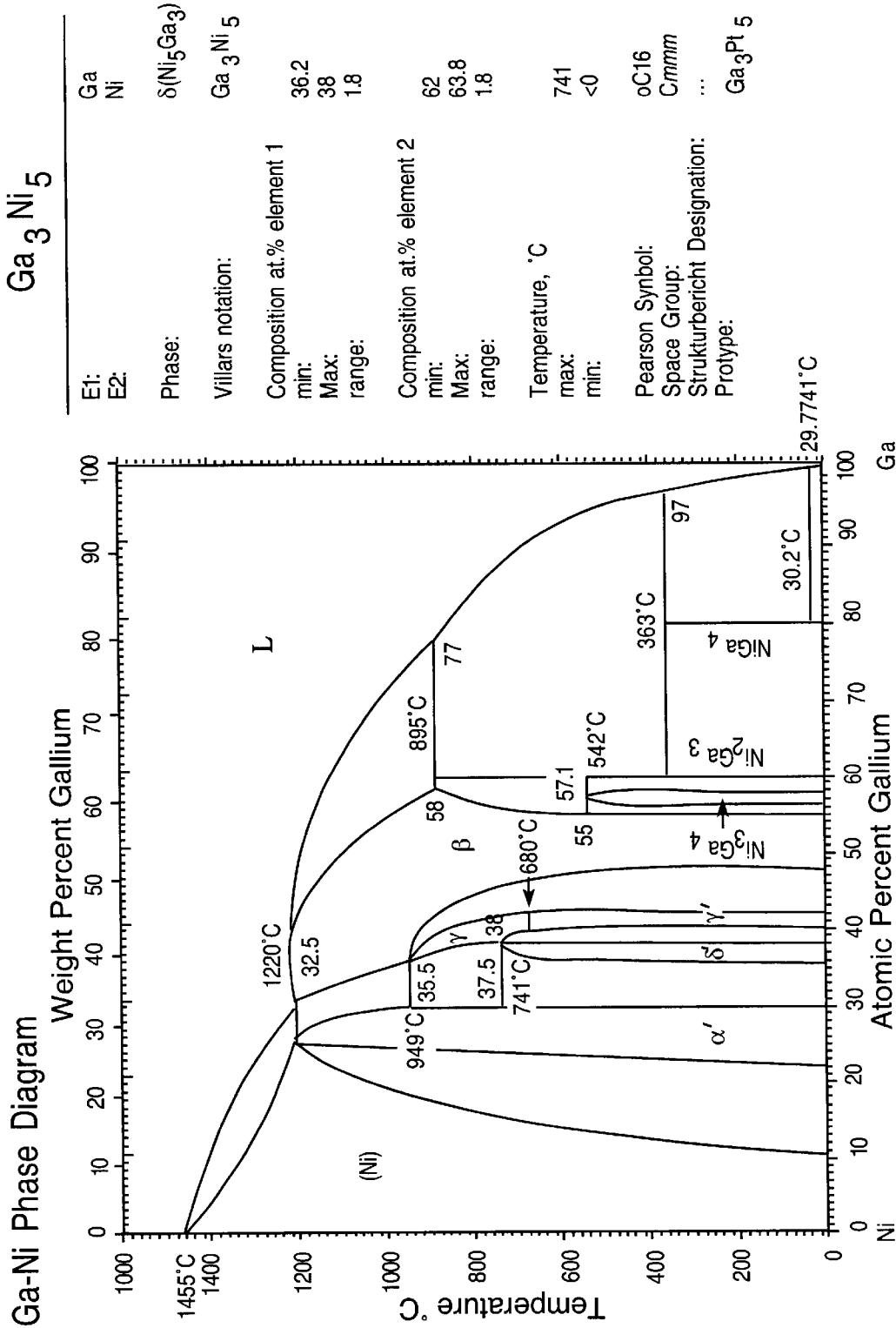


FIG. 2(d)

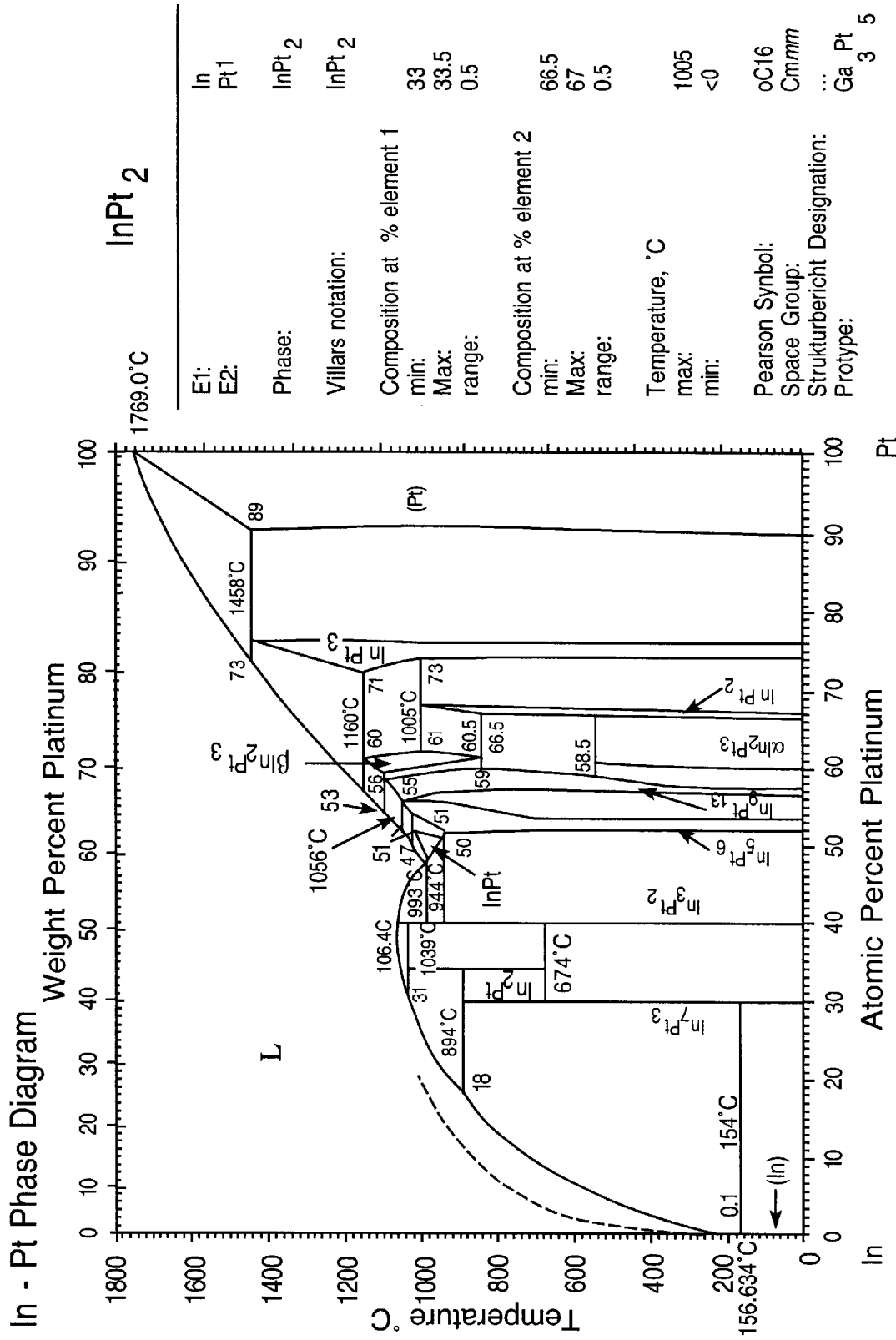


FIG. 2(e)

E1:	In
E2:	Pt 1
Phase:	InPt ₂
Villars notation:	InPt ₂
Composition at % element 1	
min:	33
Max:	33.5
range:	0.5
Composition at % element 2	
min:	66.5
Max:	67
range:	0.5
Temperature, °C	
max:	1005
min:	<0
Pearson Symbol:	oC16
Space Group:	Cm \bar{m} m
Strukturbericht Designation:	...
Prototype:	Ga ₃ Pt ₅

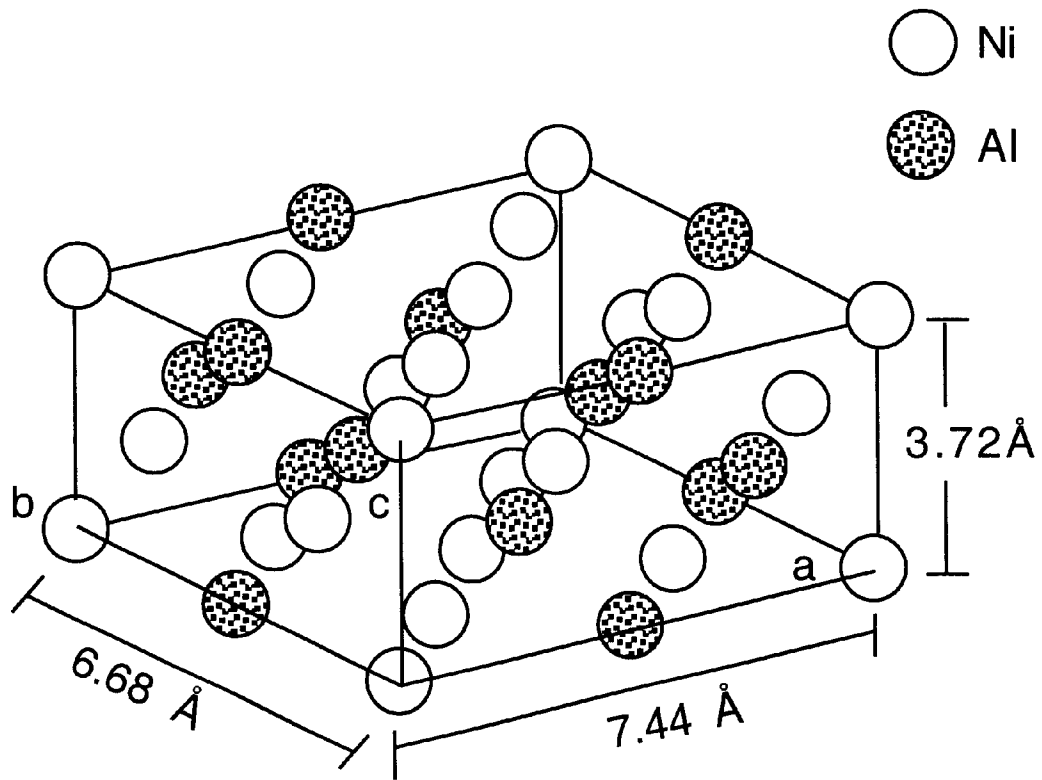


FIG. 3

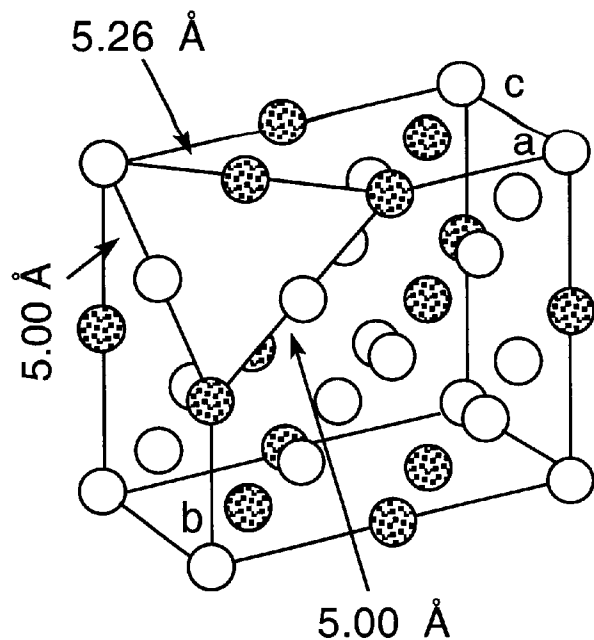


FIG. 4(a)

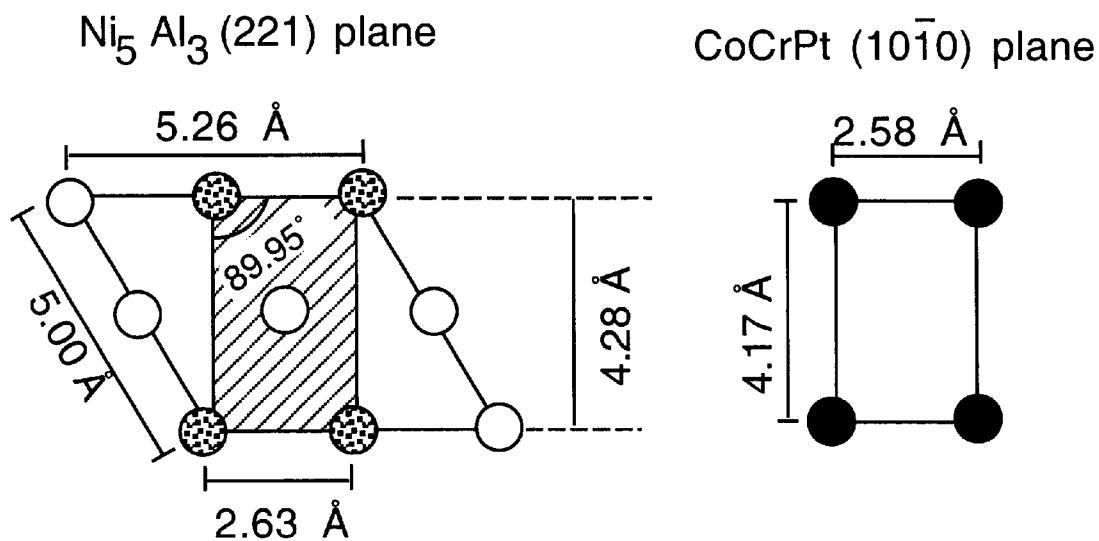


FIG. 4(b)

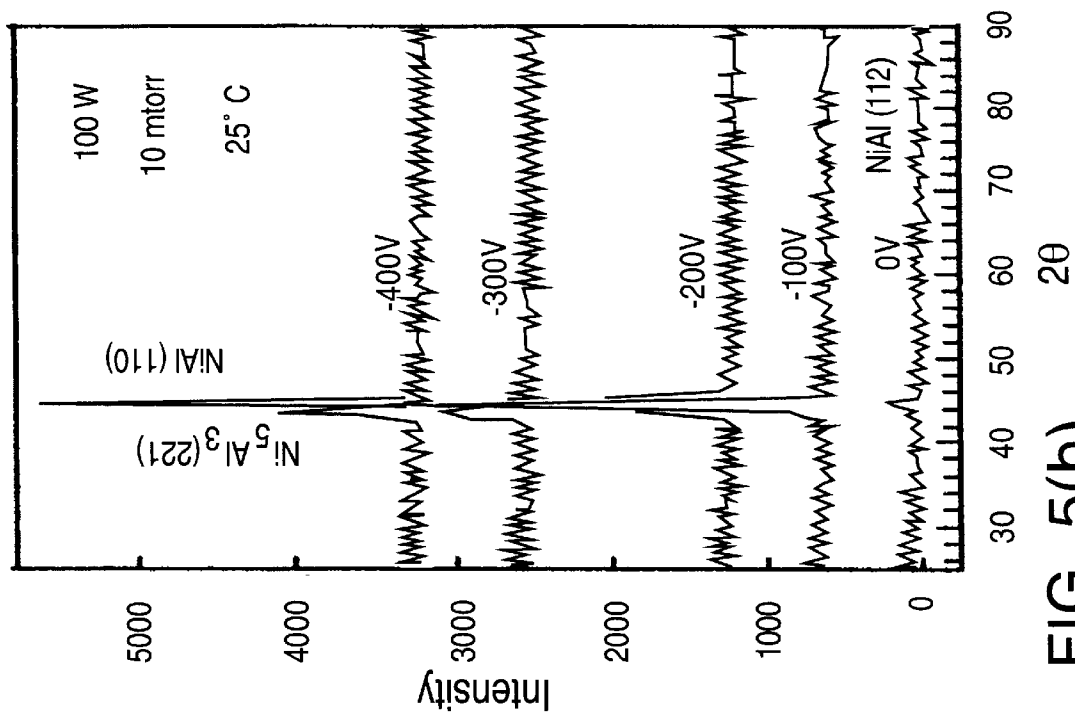


FIG. 5(b)

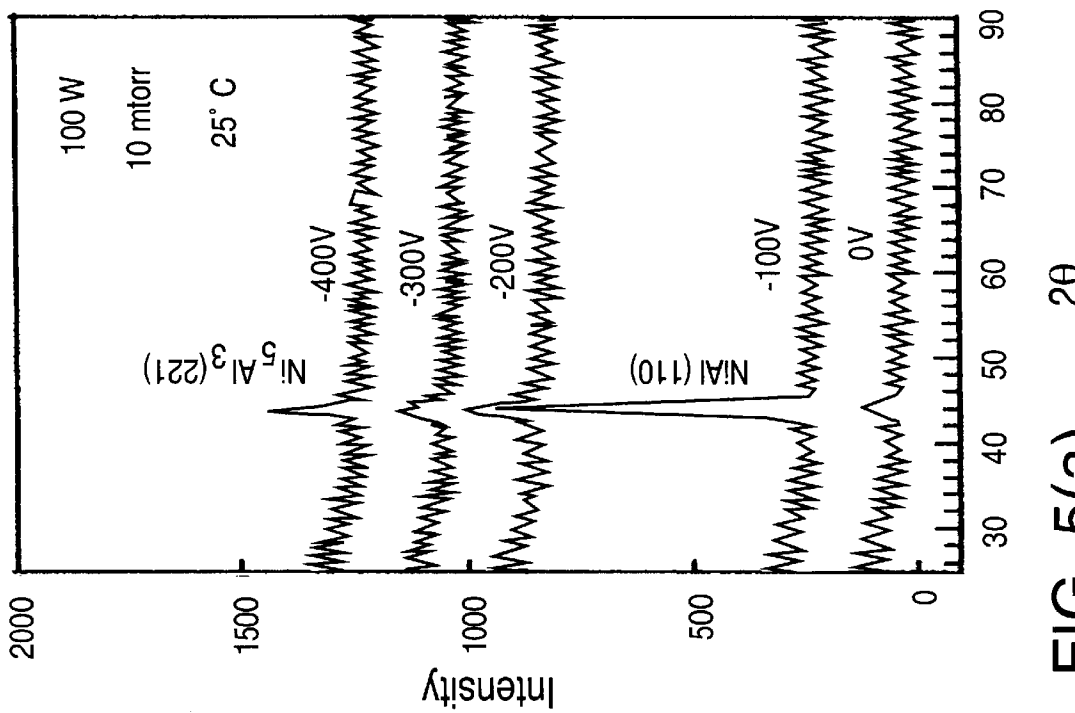


FIG. 5(a)

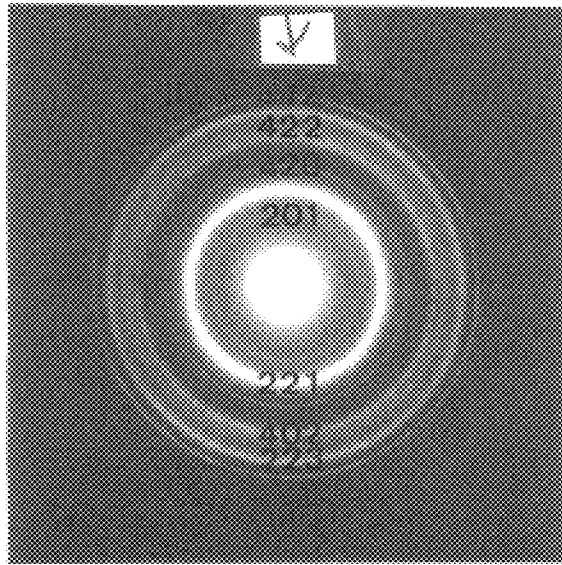


FIG. 6(a)

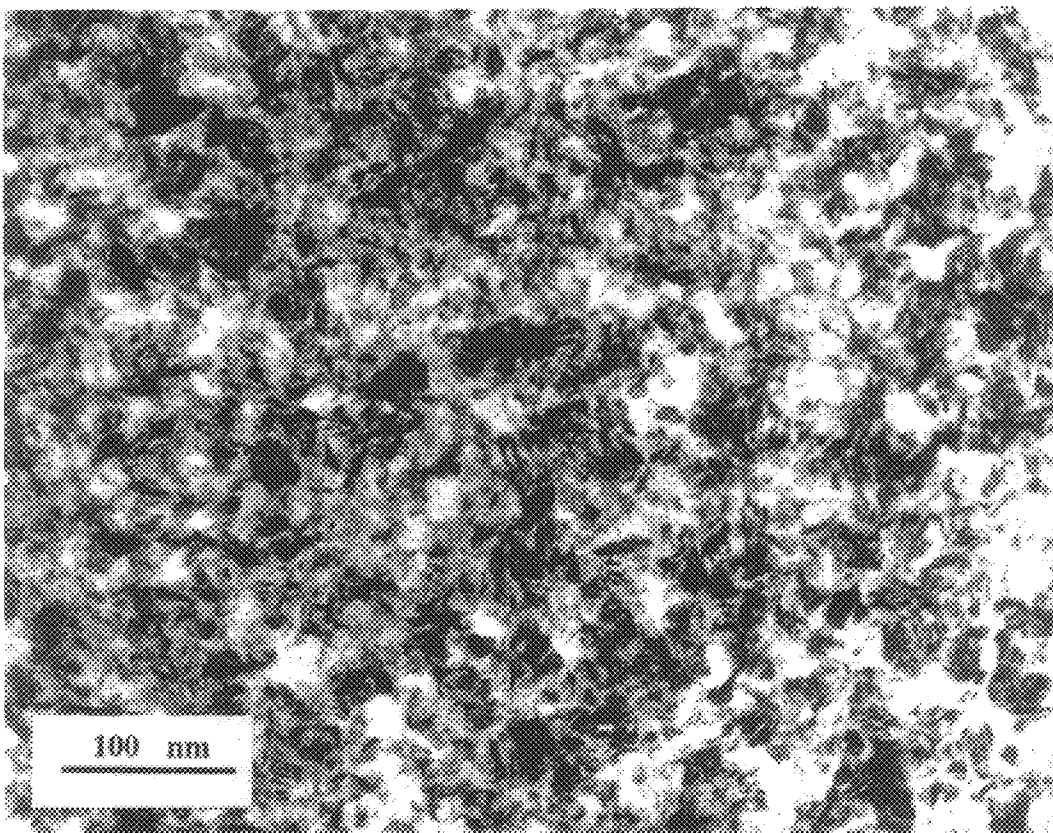
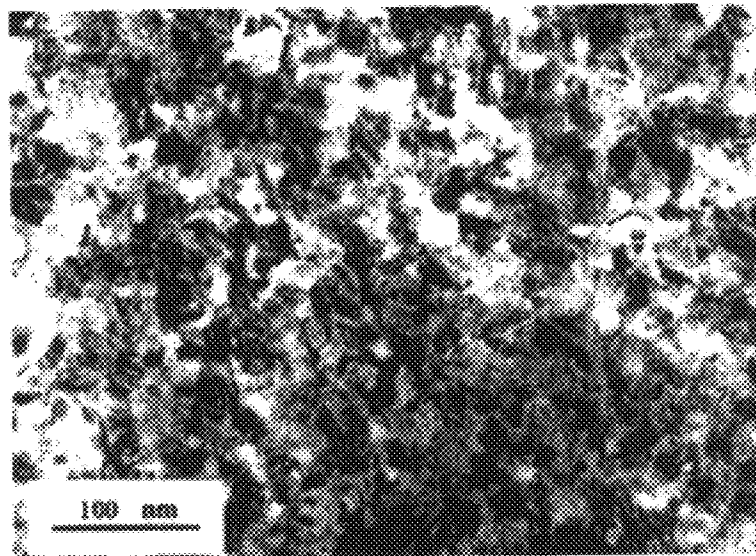
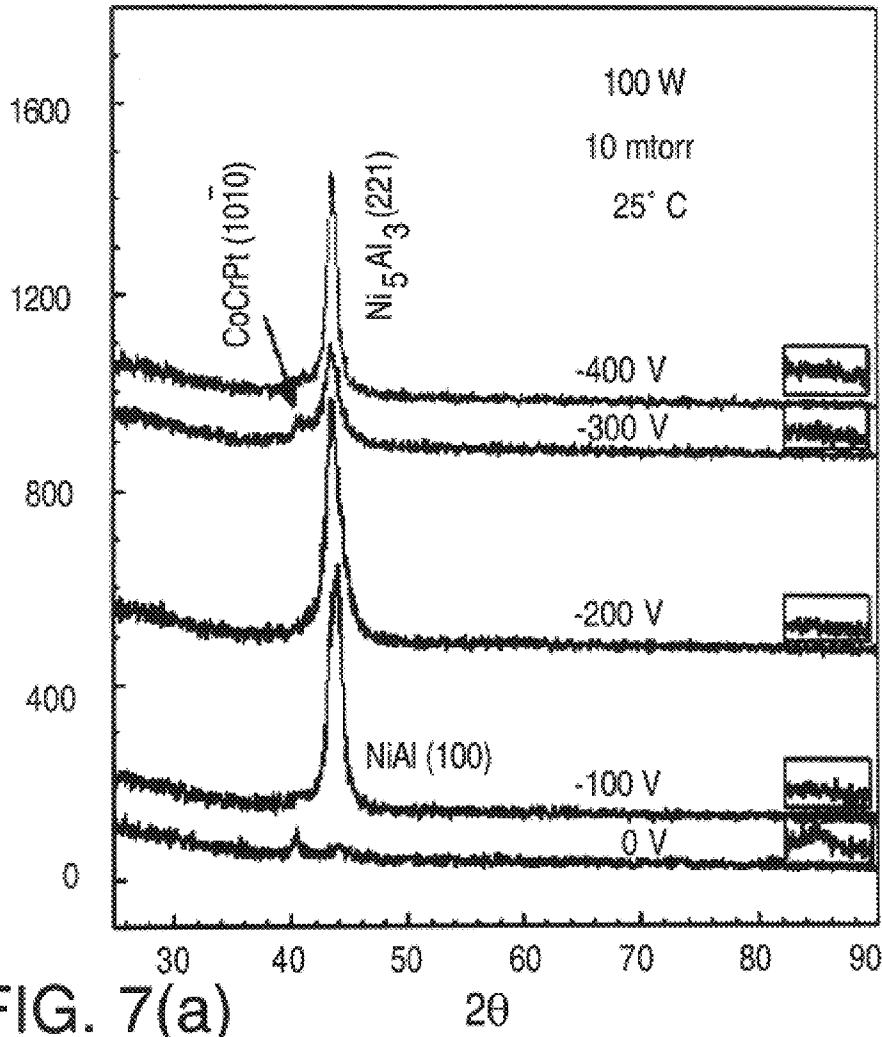


FIG. 6(b)



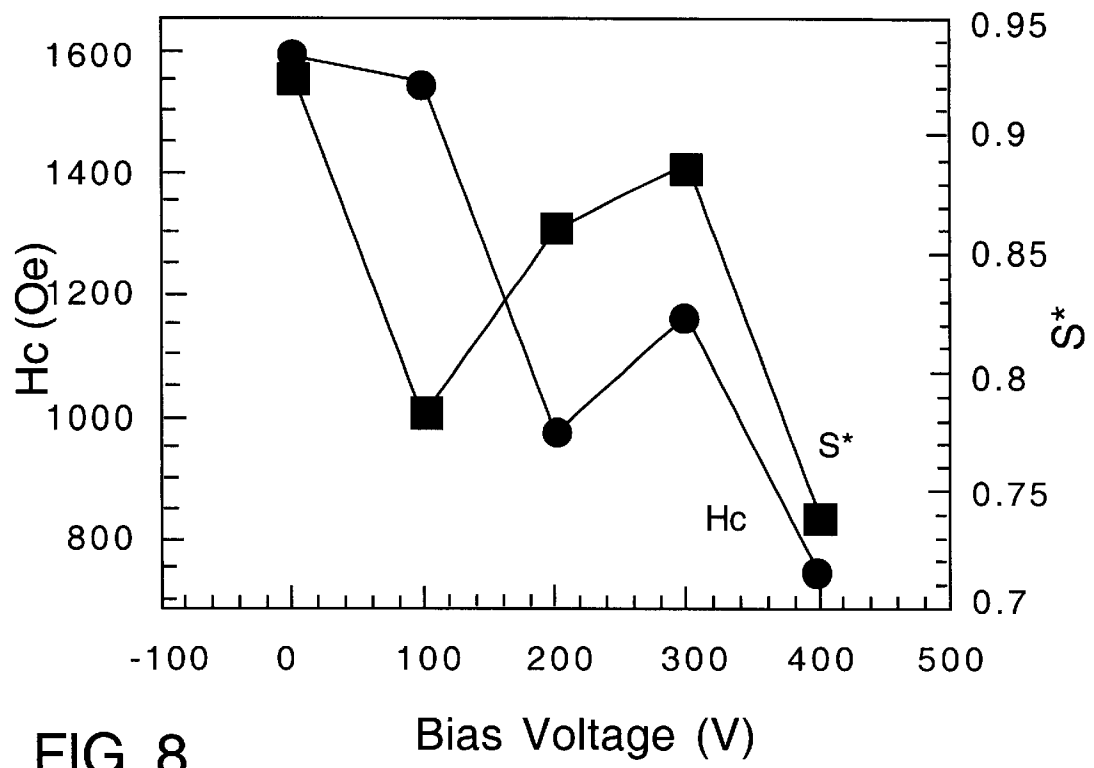


FIG. 8

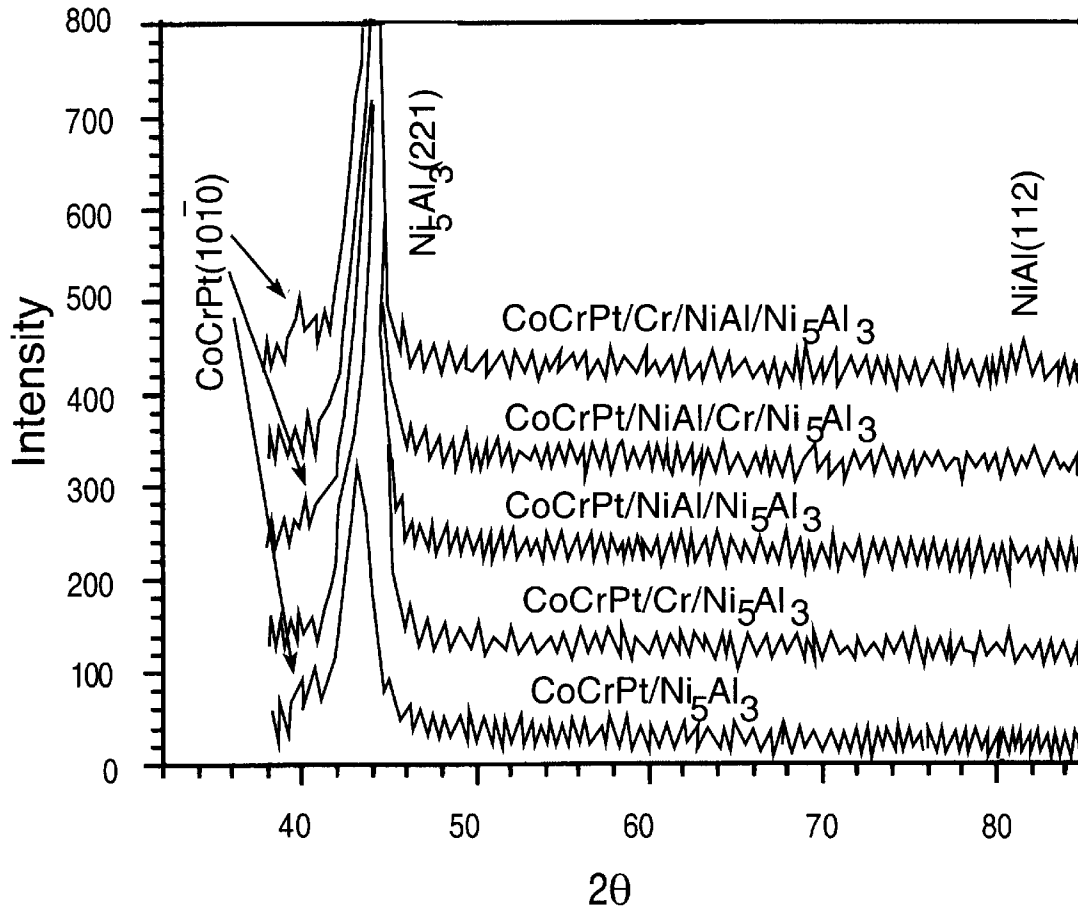


FIG. 9

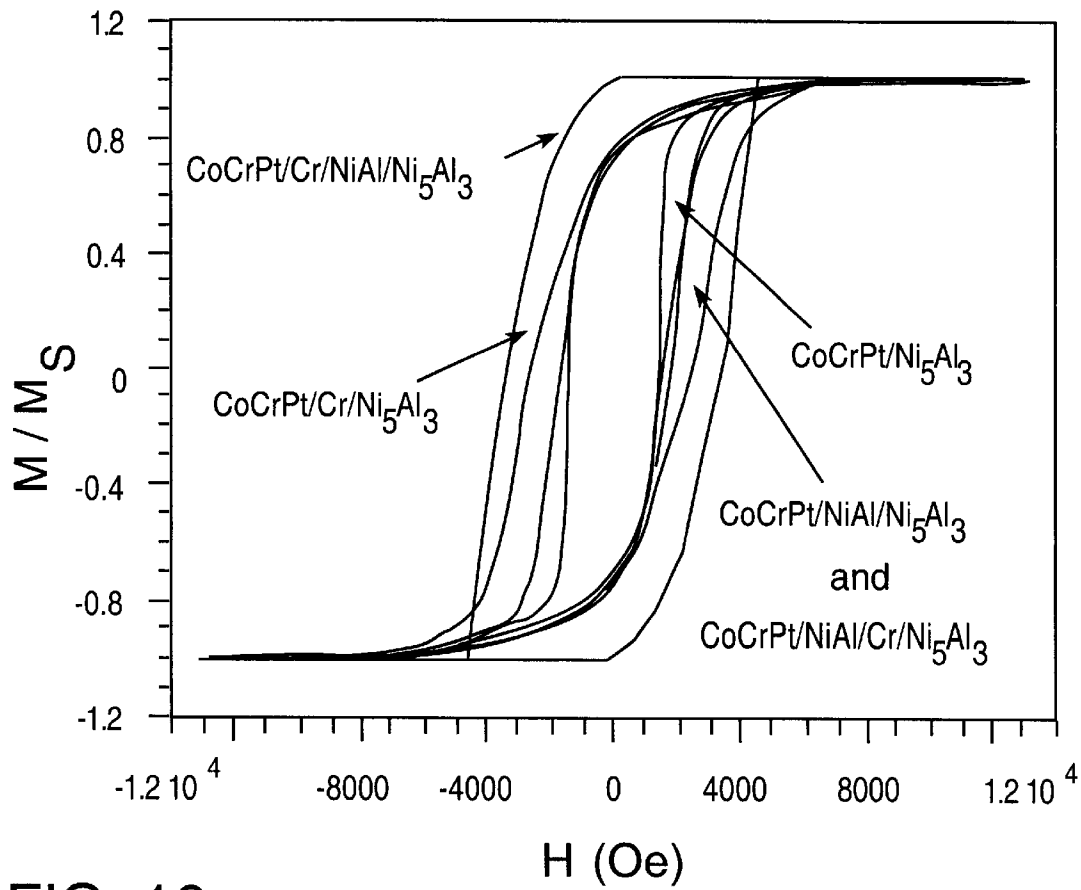


FIG. 10

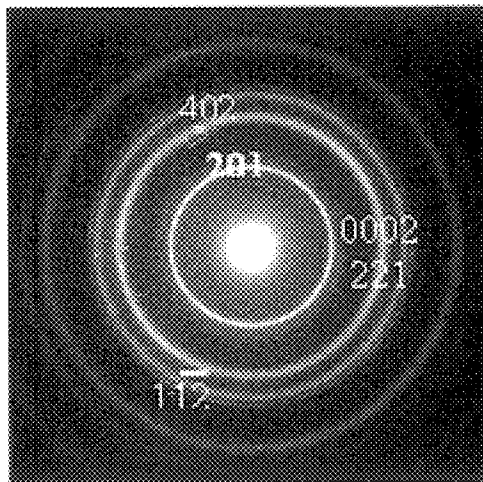


FIG. 11(a)

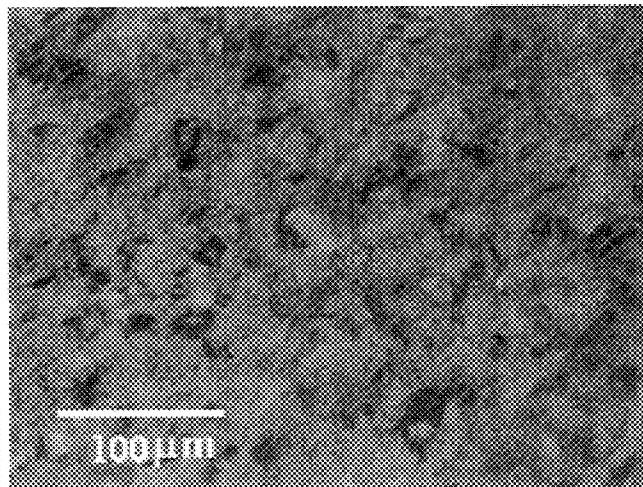


FIG. 11(b)

**MAGNETIC RECORDING MEDIUM WITH A
Ga₃Pt₅ STRUCTURED UNDERLAYER AND
A COBALT-BASED MAGNETIC LAYER**

**CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATION**

Not Applicable.

**STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY
SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT**

Not Applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a magnetic thin film for a magnetic recording medium, and more particularly, to Ga₃Pt₅ structured underlayers for use with a cobalt or cobalt based magnetic layer.

2. Description of the Invention Background

In recent years there has been an ever-increasing demand for computers with greater data storage capacity. This demand has been met by the development of computer discs, both flexible and rigid, that contain magnetic recording media with a greater magnetic recording density. Data on the discs is stored in circular tracks and divided into segments within the tracks. Disc drives typically employ one or more discs rotated on a central axis. A magnetic head is positioned over the disc surface to either access or add to the stored information. The heads for disc drives are mounted on a movable arm that carries the head in very close proximity to the disc over the various tracks and segments. The structure of disc drives is well known.

Presently, the dominant type of disk is a thin-film disk comprised of a multilayer structure that includes a substrate at the base covered by an underlayer structure, a magnetic layer structure and optionally, an overlayer at the top. The overlayer is commonly coated with an overcoat and an organic lubricant. Sometimes an intermediate layer will be placed between the underlayer structure and the magnetic layer and in addition sometimes a seed layer will be placed between the substrate and the underlayer structure. Data, in the form of magnetic bits, is stored on the magnetic layer. The magnetic layer is typically comprised of cobalt or a cobalt based alloy with a hexagonal closed packed ("HCP") structure, such as CoCrTa, CoCrPt, CoCrPtB, CoCrPtTa, and CoNiCrPt.

The microstructure of the magnetic layer is critical to achieving a high magnetic recording density. For thin film longitudinal magnetic recording media, the desired crystalline structure of the Co or Co alloy is HCP with uniaxial crystalline anisotropy and a magnetization easy direction along the c-axis, which is in the plane of the film. The better the in-plane c-axis crystallographic texture, the more suitable the Co alloy thin film is for use in longitudinal recording.

To achieve a high magnetic recording density, the magnetic layer must consist of small and isolated grains that reduce media noise. In addition, a key to increasing media recording density is to reduce transition length, which can be achieved by increasing media coercivity. High coercivity is achieved by obtaining Co grains of such crystalline perfection that the Co magneto-crystalline anisotropy is maximized and not compromised by lattice strains and defects. It is well known that, by obtaining a good Co crystallographic

texture, the alignment of the Co easy axis in the film plane increases the coercivity of the media. There are two crystallographic textures that align the Co easy axis in the thin film plane, Co (1120) and Co (1010).

- 5 The desired microstructure of the magnetic layer can be achieved by manipulating the deposition process, by grooving the substrate surface, or, most commonly, by using an underlayer. It is well known that an underlayer can be used to control the texture and grain size of the magnetic layer.
- 10 Various materials have been employed for use as an underlayer. In particular, for longitudinal media, NiAl, NiP, Cr and Cr alloys containing such elements as Mn, Ru, Ti, W, Mo or V have been used, although, among these materials, pure Cr and Cr alloys have been the most widely used. A Cr
- 15 underlayer develops a Cr (002) texture when deposited at elevated temperatures, e.g., about 150 or 200° C., which enables epitaxial growth of the Co (1120) textured thin film.

U.S. Pat. No. 5,693,426 to Lee et al., teaches the use of a material having a B2-ordered crystalline structure, and a combined layer structure of a B2 followed by a Cr or Cr alloy, as an underlayer structure. These B2 materials include NiAl, AlCo, FeAl, FeTi, CoFe, CoTi, CoHf, CoZr, NiTi, CuBe, CuZn, AlMn, AlRe, AgMg, and Al₂FeMn₂. The most preferable material is NiAl. The NiAl underlayer is preferable to the Cr underlayer because the unique NiAl (112) texture can be used to induce the uni-crystal Co layer of the Co (1010) texture. In addition, the NiAl underlayer induces smaller Co grains and a "tighter" grain size distribution than can be achieved with the Cr underlayer. Both of these factors

25 are essential to reduce media noise.

Notwithstanding the benefits achieved by the use of materials having a B2-ordered crystalline structure as an underlayer, and NiAl in particular, the NiAl (112) plane is not the lowest surface-energy plane. There is a need for recording media having even greater storage density and improved texture of NiAl.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides an improved recording media. The recording media of the invention may be used for incorporation in a disc drive having a rotatable disc for operation in conjunction with magnetic transducing heads for the recording and reading of magnetic data. It may also be used with storage devices such as flexible magnetic discs or tapes using known flexible substrates or x-y addressable storage systems that might use ridge substrates. The novel recording media comprises a flexible or rigid substrate, a magnetic layer, preferably formed from a Co or Co alloy film, and an underlayer comprised of a material having a Ga₃Pt₅ structure disposed between the substrate and the magnetic layer. As used herein, Ga₃Pt₅ structure means a material having a crystal symmetry like that of Ga₃Pt₅. The Ga₃Pt₅ structure has orthorhombic symmetry. Materials having a Ga₃Pt₅ structure include Ga₃Pt₅, Mn₃Pd₅, δGa₃Ni₅, InPt₂, and Ni₅Al₃. Ni₅Al₃, the most studied of the Ga₃Pt₅ materials, is a crystallographic derivative of the face-centered cubic ("FCC") structure. The underlayer may be formed in multiple layers wherein each layer is a different one of the foregoing FCC derivative materials, or wherein the layers alternate between a different one of the foregoing FCC derivative materials and a body-centered cubic ("BCC") derivative material. The Co or Co alloy magnetic layer has a HCP structure deposited with its magnetic easy axis substantially parallel to the plane of the magnetic layer.

An overlayer that, in turn, may be covered by an overcoat may cover the magnetic layer. An organic lubricant is preferably added over the overcoat.

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The recording medium may also include a first intermediate layer interposed between the magnetic layer and the underlayer. The first intermediate layer may be used to promote epitaxial crystalline growth of the magnetic layer. The first intermediate layer, if used, can consist of Cr, a Cr alloy, or a material having a BCC derivative crystalline structure, such as a material having a B2, DO₃, or L₂₁ crystalline structure. Cr has a BCC crystalline structure. A derivative structure of a basic structure is one in which one or more symmetry elements of the basic, or "parent", structure (translational or orientational) is (are) suppressed. The basic periodicity and position of the atoms remains the same but the specific atomic occupancies change. BCC structures have many derivative structures, including but not limited to B2, DO₃, or L₂₁. The BCC structure has two atoms in its unit cell. The occupancy of the atom at (000) and that at (½, ½, ½) is the same. The same can be seen to be true for the other examples of derivative structures. The degree of atomic order increases: for each crystal structure in the sequence of crystal structures from BCC to B2 to DO₃ to L₂₁. Examples of suitable materials for the first intermediate layer include NiAl, AlCo, FeAl, FeTi, CoFe, CoTi, CoHf, CoZr, NiTi, CuBe, CuZn, AlMn, AlRe, AgMg, Mn₃Si and Al₂FeMn₂. When NiAl is used as the material of the first intermediate layer, a strong NiAl (112) crystalline texture may be induced, thereby promoting an improved Co (1010) texture in the magnetic layer.

The recording medium may also include a second intermediate layer disposed between the first intermediate layer and the underlayer. The second intermediate layer may also be used to promote epitaxial crystalline growth of the magnetic layer. The second intermediate layer, if used, preferably consists of a material having a BCC derivative structure. When the material of the second intermediate layer consists of NiAl and the material of the first intermediate layer consists of Cr or a Cr alloy, a particularly strong Co (1010) texture may be induced on the magnetic layer by inducing a stronger NiAl (112) texture.

Yet a third intermediate layer may be placed in contact with the magnetic layer and the first intermediate layer. This layer may preferably consist of a non-magnetic HCP crystal structure such as a Co—Cr alloy, and is especially advantageous for providing a transition in lattice constant values from the BCC to the magnetic layer when the magnetic layer contains the larger atomic sized Pt element.

The novel underlayers of the present invention are FCC derivative structures. Their "natural" texture is the one with their close packed planes parallel to the plane of the film surface. These planes are the (221) planes of the Ga₃Pt₅ structure. These planes yield a very good match with the NiAl (112) on Cr (112) planes. Therefore, these new underlayers yield stronger (112) textures of the intermediate layers and, as a result, of the magnetic layers.

The novel underlayer of the recording medium of the present invention may be produced by a variety of methods. First, a bias voltage of about -300V may be applied to the substrate while a material with a B2 phase is deposited on the substrate. The bias voltage may be used to form the phases with the novel Ga₃Pt₅ structured underlayer of the present invention because of preferential sputtering of, for example, Ni from the NiAl target. The Co or Co alloy magnetic layer may then be grown on the underlayer. Second, and more preferably, the novel underlayer having a Ga₃Pt₅ structure may be deposited directly on the substrate from at least one target material or more, such as a target material having the 3:5 composition. The Co or Co alloy magnetic layer may then be grown on the underlayer, with or without the use of intermediate layer(s).

The invention also includes the target material for use in a sputter deposition process wherein the target material is sputtered onto a substrate to form the underlayer for the magnetic recording media of the present invention. The target material is made of a material that will form the Ga₃Pt₅ structure when deposited, and is preferably NiAl, wherein the atomic percentage of Ni is in the range of about 62 to 69% and the atomic percentage of Al is within the range of about 31 to 38%.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The advantages of the present invention can be better understood by reference to the drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of a multilayer structure of the recording media of the present invention;

FIGS. 2(a)–(e) are the phase diagrams of various materials having the Ga₃Pt₅ crystalline structure, wherein FIG. 2(a) is the Ni—Al phase diagram, FIG. 2(b) is the Ga—Pt phase diagram, FIG. 2(c) is the Mn—Pd phase diagram, FIG. 2(d) is the Ga—Ni phase diagram, and FIG. 2(e) is the In—Pt phase diagram;

FIG. 3 is a schematic illustration of the Ni₅Al₃ unit cell;

FIGS. 4(a) and (b) show schematic illustrations of the Ni₅Al₃ (221) plane along with the epitaxial relationship between the Ni₅Al₃ (221) plane and the Co (1010) plane, respectively;

FIGS. 5(a) and (b) respectively show the x-ray diffraction spectra of 100 nm NiAl films and 400 nm NiAl films deposited at various substrate bias voltages on smooth glass substrates to form an Ni₅Al₃ underlayer;

FIGS. 6(a) and (b) respectively show the bright field TEM micrograph and corresponding electron diffraction of a 100 nm NiAl film sputtered at a substrate bias voltage of -300V to form an Ni₅Al₃ underlayer;

FIGS. 7(a) and (b) show the x-ray diffraction spectra of 40 nm CoCrPt/100 nm NiAl films on glass substrates deposited at various substrate bias voltages to form an Ni₅Al₃ underlayer, and the TEM micrograph of the 40 nm CoCrPt/100 nm NiAl films deposited at a substrate bias voltage of -300 V to form an Ni₅Al₃ underlayer, respectively;

FIG. 8 plots the in-plane coercivity and squareness of the 40 nm CoCrPt films on the 100 nm Ni₅Al₃ underlayers deposited at various substrate bias voltages to form an Ni₅Al₃ underlayer;

FIG. 9 shows the x-ray diffraction spectra of the CoCrPt films using different intermediate layers and a Ni₅Al₃ underlayer;

FIG. 10 shows the in-plane hysteresis loops of the 40 nm CoCrPt films using different intermediate layers and a Ni₅Al₃ underlayer;

FIGS. 11(a) and (b) show the bright field TEM micrograph and corresponding electron diffraction pattern of a 40 nm CoCrPt magnetic layer/100 nm Ni₅Al₃ underlayer thin film disc, respectively.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The recording media of the present invention may be a rigid magnetic disc rotatable about an axis that is incorporated into a disc drive (not shown). Typically, the disc drive includes a magnetic transducing head, or slider, which is supported on a movable arm that is in turn part of a suspension assembly for moving the head over the surface of

the disc. The transducing head, when moving over the surface of the media during normal operation, is maintained in a spaced parallel relationship relative to the surface of the media, in close proximity to the media. A typical distance is 10 μm or less. Disc drives such as this are standard equipment in the industry. See, Mee, C. D. and Daniel, E. D., MAGNETIC RECORDING, Vols. I-III (McGraw-Hill pub. 1987); F. Jorgenson, The Complete Handbook of Magnetic Recording, Chapter 16 (3rd. ed. 1988), and U.S. Pat. No. 5,062,021, the relevant disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference. The magnetic recording media of the present invention may also be used with storage devices such as flexible magnetic discs or tapes using known flexible substrates or x-y addressable storage systems that might use ridge substrates.

Referring to FIG. 1, it is seen that the preferred embodiment of the magnetic recording medium **10** of the present invention is comprised of a flexible or rigid substrate **12** in disc or tape form, an underlayer **16**, and a magnetic layer **14**. In addition, there may be an overlayer **20**, an overcoat **22**, and an organic lubricant **24** positioned above the magnetic layer as shown. Further, a first intermediate layer **26** may optionally be disposed between the magnetic layer **14** and the underlayer **16**. If a first intermediate layer **26** is included, then a second intermediate layer **28** may be disposed between the first intermediate layer **26** and the underlayer **16**. Finally, a third intermediate layer **30** may be positioned between the first intermediate layer **26** and the magnetic layer **14**.

In the preferred embodiment, the substrate **12** is a disc formed of glass, glass ceramic, silicon or an aluminum alloy coated with NiP. Alternative materials such as canasite, or SiC may also be used. The substrate **12** may also be in the form of a tape.

The magnetic layer **14**, is deposited with the longitudinal magnetic easy axis thereof substantially parallel to the plane of such magnetic layer **14** and preferably comprises Co or a Co alloy such as CoCr, SmCo, CoP, CoPt, CoNiCr, CoNiPt, CoCrTaSi, CoCrPtB, CoCrPtTa, CoCrPt, or other known Co alloy magnetic films.

The underlayer **16** consists of a material having the Ga_3Pt_5 crystalline structure, which has orthorhombic symmetry. The underlayer is most preferably Ni_5Al_3 . The NiAl phase diagram is shown in FIG. 2(a). As can be seen, the single phase region of Ni_5Al_3 extends from about 64 at % to 68 at % of Ni and 38 at % to 32 at % of Al below 700° C. Because the Ni_5Al_3 phase is stable at a low temperature, it is expected that the Ni_5Al_3 phase should be easy to obtain by various known vacuum deposition methods. Referring now to FIG. 3, the Ga_3Pt_5 crystalline structure of the Ni_5Al_3 underlayer **16** is shown. As is apparent, Ni_5Al_3 is a crystallographic derivative of the FCC crystalline structure. The lattice parameters of the Ni_5Al_3 phase are $a=7.44 \text{ \AA}$, $b=6.68 \text{ \AA}$, and $c=3.72 \text{ \AA}$, respectively. Note that lattice parameters a and b are about twice as large as c . By referring to FIG. 4(a), it can also be seen that the Ni_5Al_3 close-packed planes are its (221) planes, hence the Ni_5Al_3 (221) planes are the lowest energy planes for Ni_5Al_3 . This means that the Ni_5Al_3 (221) texture can be obtained right from the beginning of the Ni_5Al_3 deposition. FIG. 4(b) illustrates that the Ni_5Al_3 (221) planes have a very small misfit with the Co alloy (1010) planes. Consequently, the Ni_5Al_3 (221) texture is expected to be very strong, thereby inducing a strong Co (1010) texture with small Co grains on the magnetic layer.

Other Ga_3Pt_5 structured materials that may be used for the underlayer **16** include Ga_3Pt_5 , Mn_3Pd_5 , $\delta\text{Ga}_3\text{Ni}_5$, and InPt_2 .

Like Ni_5Al_3 , these materials are crystallographic derivative FCC crystalline structure. As can be seen by referring to Table I below, the a and b lattice parameters for these materials, like Ni_5Al_3 , are approximately twice as large as the c lattice parameter, therefore it is expected that they should provide the same advantages as the Ni_5Al_3 underlayer. Mn_3Pd_5 and $\delta\text{Ga}_3\text{Ni}_5$, like Ni_5Al_3 , have a B2 structure at elevated temperatures.

TABLE I

Lattice Parameters Of Materials With The Ga_3Pt_5 Crystalline Structure			
Material	$a(\text{\AA})$	$b(\text{\AA})$	$c(\text{\AA})$
Ga_3Pt_5	8.031	7.440	3.948
Mn_3Pd_5	8.072	7.279	4.044
$\delta\text{Ga}_3\text{Ni}_5$	7.510	6.708	3.753
InPt_2	8.180	7.810	4.080
Ni_5Al_3	7.440	6.680	3.720

It is anticipated that an underlayer **16** comprised of two or more layers wherein each layer is a different one of the foregoing FCC derivative materials may be used. For example, it is believed that a multiple layered underlayer **16** having a first layer of Ni_5Al_3 and a second layer of Ga_3Pt_5 , Mn_3Pd_5 , $\delta\text{Ga}_3\text{Ni}_5$, or InPt_2 may be used. Also, the underlayer **16** may comprise two or more layers wherein the layers alternate between one of the foregoing FCC derivative materials and a BCC derivative material.

Referring again to FIG. 1, an overlayer **20** for preventing corrosion may be provided adjacent to and preferably in contact with the magnetic layer **14**. The overlayer **20** is 1–10 nm (10–100 \AA) thick and maybe made of W, Ta, Zr, Ti, Y, Pt, Cr or any combination thereof. An overcoat **22** may also be provided external to the overlayer **20**, so that the overlayer **20** is positioned between the magnetic layer **14** and the overcoat **22**. The overcoat **22** provides a mechanical wear layer and is typically 2.5–30 nm (25–300 \AA) thick. It is preferably made of a ceramic material or diamond like carbon such as SiO_2 , SiC, CN, ZrO_2 , or C. An organic lubricant **24** maybe disposed on the overcoat **22**. The lubricant is about 1–30 nm (10–300 \AA) thick and is preferably a fluoro-chlorocarbon or a perfluoroether. Examples include $\text{CCl}_2\text{FCClF}_2$, $\text{CF}_3(\text{CF}_2)_4\text{CF}_3$, $\text{CF}_3(\text{CF}_2)_5\text{CF}_3$, $\text{CF}_3(\text{CF}_2)_{10}\text{CF}_3$, and $\text{CF}_3(\text{CF}_2)_{16}\text{CF}_3$.

FIG. 1 also illustrates that the magnetic recording medium **10** of the present invention may also include a first intermediate layer **26** disposed between the magnetic layer **14** and the underlayer **16**. The first intermediate layer **26** is preferably made of Cr, a Cr alloy, or a material having a BCC derivative structure, which is the structure of Cr. Materials with the B2, DO_3 and L2_1 structures are examples of ordered structural derivatives of the BCC structure. Good candidates for the first intermediate layer **26** include NiAl, AlCo, FeAl, FeTi, CoFe, CoTi, CoHf, CoZr, NiTi, CuBe, CuZn, AlMn, AlRe, AgMg, Mn_3Si , and Al_2FeMn_2 .

Still referring to FIG. 1, it is seen that a second intermediate layer **28** may also be included in the magnetic recording medium **10** of the present invention. When used, the second intermediate layer is disposed between the first intermediate layer **26** and the underlayer **16**. The second intermediate layer **28** is preferably made of a material having a BCC derivative structure, such as, for example, B2, DO_3 , or L2_1 .

A third intermediate layer **30** may be positioned between the first intermediate layer **26** and the magnetic layer **14**. When included, the third intermediate layer **30** may consist

of a non-magnetic HCP crystalline structured material, such as a Co—Cr alloy. The third intermediate layer **30** may be advantageous for providing a transition in lattice constant values from the BCC of the first intermediate layer **26** to the magnetic layer **14** when the magnetic layer **14** contains the larger atomic sized Pt element, such as when, CoPt, CoNiPt, CoCrPtB, CoCrPtTa, or CoCrPt is used.

The target used in the sputtering process to form the recording media is made of a material that will form the Ga_3Pt_5 structure when deposited. The Ni_5Al_3 underlayer, for example, is formed using a target material having an atomic percentage of Ni within the range of about 63 to 69% and an atomic percentage of Al within the range of about 31 to 37%. Referring to FIG. 2(a), the phase diagram shows the atomic percentage of Ni in Ni_5Al_3 to be within the range of 64–68%. Those skilled in the art will recognize, however, that some variation from the precision shown in the phase diagrams is exhibited from time to time in actual practice.

To compare the in-plane magnetic properties of various embodiments of the magnetic recording medium **10** of the present invention, CoCrPt films were sputter-deposited on glass substrates by RF diode sputtering in an LH Z-400 system. The base pressure was 5×10^{-7} mtorr. The target diameter was about 75 mm. The CoCrPt films were deposited at room temperature with a fixed argon pressure of 10 mtorr, RF power of 2.3 W/cm² and –100 V substrate bias voltage. The CoCrPt films were 40 nm thick. Characterization of the CoCrPt/NiAl thin films was carried out using a Rigaku X-ray diffractometer with Cu K α radiation to determine texture. A Phillips Em 420T transmission electron microscope (“TEM”) was used to observe microstructure. A vibrating sample magnetometry (“VSM”) with field up to 10 kOe and an Alternating Gradient Force Magnetometer (“AGM”) with fields up to 13 kOe were used to measure the magnetic properties.

A Ni_5Al_3 underlayer **16** can be deposited from a NiAl target by applying a substrate bias voltage during deposition of the Ni_5Al_3 underlayer. To achieve the Ni_5Al_3 underlayer by this method, NiAl was deposited at various substrate bias voltages at 10 mtorr, 2.3 W/cm² and room temperature. Because the B2 (112) texture was more easily observed by x-ray diffraction in thicker B2 films, NiAl was also deposited to a thickness of 400 nm while varying bias voltages.

Referring to FIGS. 5(a) and 5(b), the x-ray diffraction spectra of 100 nm and 400 nm thick NiAl films sputter-deposited at various bias voltages are shown, respectively. As is apparent, these films show very strong NiAl (110) peaks when sputter-deposited at a substrate bias of –100V. Negative substrate bias voltage attracts some positive argon ions to bombard the substrate surface. The atoms that are loosely bound to neighbors can be easily removed from the depositing thin film by bombarding with the argon ions, which occurs when a negative bias voltage is applied. Consequently, the NiAl thin film becomes more close-packed with fewer defects when a substrate bias voltage is applied. Therefore, it is consistent that the most pronounced x-ray diffraction peak of the NiAl films with –100V bias is the NiAl (110) peak, because the NiAl (110) plane is the closest-packed plane for the B2 structure. As is also apparent, the intensity of the NiAl (110) peak is strongest at a –100V substrate bias and becomes weaker with increasing substrate bias voltages. The position of this peak also shifts 1° to the left in the x-ray diffraction spectra of the 100 nm and 400 nm thick NiAl films as the magnetic of negative substrate bias voltage is increased. This peak position shift implies a lattice parameter change due either to the occurrence of a new phase or stress resulting from the substrate bias voltage.

Now referring to FIG. 6(a), it is seen that the TEM selected-area diffraction pattern of the 100 nm NiAl thin film deposited at a substrate bias of –300V shows a ring pattern of the Ni_5Al_3 phase. As is seen by again referring to FIG. 5, the 2 θ of the Ni_5Al_3 x-ray diffraction peak is at 43°, which is 1° off from the NiAl (110) peak. As a result, the peak shift in the x-ray diffraction spectra can be explained by the formation of the Ni_5Al_3 phase at the –300V bias. The appearance of the Ni_5Al_3 phase may result from the Al atoms being more easily taken off by the bombardment of argon ions on the substrate than Ni atoms as substrate bias voltage is applied. Thus, applying a substrate bias voltage of about –300V while sputter depositing NiAl onto a substrate can form the Ni_5Al_3 underlayer.

Referring next to FIG. 7, the x-ray diffraction spectra of the 40 nm CoCrPt/100 nm NiAl thin film at various substrate bias voltages during deposition of the NiAl films are shown. As can be seen, the CoCrPt (1010) peaks appear by deposition onto the underlayers prepared with a substrate bias voltage of 0V and –300V. When no substrate bias is applied, the NiAl (112) texture is obtained which, in turn, induces the CoCrPt (1010) texture. At the substrate bias voltage of –300V, it is the Ni_5Al_3 (221) texture that induces the CoCrPt (1010) texture due to the small mismatch of the Ni_5Al_3 (221) plane and the CoCrPt (1010) plane as illustrated in FIG. 4(b).

The grain size of the NiAl 100 nm thick film with the Ga_3Pt_5 crystal structure which was sputtered at a substrate bias of –300V from a NiAl target and the 40 nm CoCrPt/100 nm Ni_5Al_3 (deposition at a substrate bias of –300V) films are shown on the TEM bright field images in FIGS. 6(b) and 7(b), respectively. The grain size is about 30 nm in both instances. The large grain size in the 100 nm Ni_5Al_3 thin film sputtered at the –300V bias may be due to the high substrate bias voltage and may be eliminated by sputtering Ni_5Al_3 films directly from the Ni_5Al_3 targets, as is described below.

Referring now to FIG. 8, the magnetic properties of the 40 nm CoCrPt/100 nm Ni_5Al_3 thin films with various substrate bias voltages are shown. As can be seen, the coercivity (Hc) and the coercive squareness (S*), which are crucial to the recording performance of a Co alloy thin film for a fixed composition, are highest at zero bias voltage and decrease at a relatively low bias voltage (i.e., –100V) due to the presence of a strong NiAl (110) texture. However, both Hc and S* increase again at a bias voltage of –300V because of the reappearance of the CoCrPt (1010) texture induced as a result of the appearance of the Ni_5Al_3 (221) texture.

The novel underlayer **16** of the present invention can more preferably be obtained by direct deposit from at least one target material. When direct depositing from a single target material, the target material composition should be near the desired layer composition, i.e., the target material should be an alloy having an atomic composition ratio within the ranges substantially as shown in FIGS. 2(a) through 2(e) to achieve, upon sputtering, a Ga_3Pt_5 structured underlayer **16**. Of course, those skilled in the art will appreciate that some variation of composition occurs during the deposition process and that a single target material with a composition within the range of the 3:5 phase field of the Ga_3Pt_5 structure is adequate. For example, referring to FIG. 2(a), a target material containing approximately 64 at %Ni to 68 at %Ni at approximately temperatures below 400° C. could be used as a single target material to achieve the Ni_5Al_3 underlayer **16**. Similarly, at lower temperatures, a Ga_3Pt_5 underlayer **16** can be achieved from a single target containing about 58 at %Pt to 63 at %Pt (FIG. 2(b)), a Mn_3Pd_5 underlayer **16** can be achieved from a single target

containing about 61.5 at %Pd to 63 at %Pd (FIG. 2(c)), a $\delta\text{Ga}_3\text{Ni}_5$ underlayer 16 can be achieved from a single target containing about 36 at %Ga to 38 at %Ga (FIG. 2(d)), and a InPt_2 underlayer 16 can be achieved from a single target containing about 66.5 at %Pt to 67 at %Pt (FIG. 2(e)).

Direct sputter deposition from multiple targets may also be employed. In this case, each target material may comprise a pure element. For example, direct sputter deposition of an Ni_5Al_3 underlayer 16 can be achieved from two target materials, one being pure Ni and the other being pure Al. Also, each target may comprise an alloy of the desired elements at various atomic compositions. For example, referring to FIG. 2(a), multiple NiAl targets in the composition range of about 45 at %Ni to about 73 at %Ni could be employed. Similarly, the novel underlayer 16 of the present invention could be acquired from multiple target materials of various compositions by referring to the phase diagrams set forth in FIGS. 2(b)–(e).

By way of illustration, a Ni_5Al_3 underlayer 16 was obtained by direct sputter deposit from a single Ni_5Al_3 target material. Referring to FIG. 9, the x-ray diffraction spectra of the resultant CoCrPt/ Ni_5Al_3 thin film is shown. As can be seen, a strong (221) Ni_5Al_3 peak is observed since the Ni_5Al_3 is the lowest surface energy plane. The CoCrPt (1010) peak is also observed, thereby indicating that the Ni_5Al_3 texture induces the CoCrPt (1010) texture. The in-plane coercivity of the CoCrPt/ Ni_5Al_3 thin film is shown in FIG. 10. As is apparent, the in-plane coercivity is about 1444 Oe. The grain size of the CoCrPt layer, as shown by the bright field TEM micrograph shown in FIG. 11, is 10–20 nm.

In the embodiment of the present invention wherein a 100 nm first intermediate layer 26 made of Cr is added between the CoCrPt magnetic layer 14 and the Ni_5Al_3 underlayer 16, the CoCrPt texture is decreased a bit, as shown in FIG. 9. However, the coercivity increases from 1444 Oe to 2528 Oe as shown in FIG. 10. As is apparent, the peak δM value for the CoCrPt/ Ni_5Al_3 thin film is 0.4 while for the CoCrPt/Cr/ Ni_5Al_3 thin film it is 0.17. The exchange coupling is thus reduced after adding the Cr first intermediate layer 26. A reduced peak δM value is indicative of reduced grain to grain exchange coupling and, therefore, of a reduced media noise. The increase in the in-plane coercivity is due to the greater degree of texture, but may also be due in part to the reduction of the exchange coupling between the Co grains caused by the presence of Cr at the grain boundaries.

In another embodiment of the present invention, the magnetic recording medium 10 includes a first intermediate layer 26 made of a material having a BCC structure or a derivative thereof, such as NiAl. Adding a 100 nm NiAl film between the CoCrPt magnetic layer 14 and the Ni_5Al_3 underlayer 16 can induce a strong NiAl (112) texture and hence an improved CoCrPt (1010) texture. This is shown in FIG. 9. Referring to FIG. 10, it is seen that the CoCrPt/NiAl/ Ni_5Al_3 thin film has an in-plane coercivity of about 1785 Oe. Also, the δM peak intensity is about 0.22, thus indicating a stronger exchange coupling than that of the CoCrPt/Cr/ Ni_5Al_3 thin film described earlier.

In the most preferred embodiment of the magnetic recording medium 10 of the present invention, a second intermediate layer 28 made of NiAl is added between the first intermediate layer 26 described above and the Ni_5Al_3 underlayer 16. For example, where the first intermediate layer is made of Cr, the resultant CoCrPt/Cr/NiAl/ Ni_5Al_3 thin film yields strong CoCrPt (1010) and NiAl (112) peaks as is shown in FIG. 9. The in-plane coercivity is also very high,

about 3382 Oe and the δM is about 0.12, as is shown in FIG. 10. These results indicate that the Ni_5Al_3 (221) texture can induce the NiAl (112) texture. The high coercivity may be due to not only the good texture but also the low exchange coupling as indicated by the δM peak value.

By way of comparison, a CoCrPt/NiAl/Cr/ Ni_5Al_3 thin film does not show the CoCrPt (1010) and NiAl (112) peaks, as can be seen in FIG. 9. This indicates that the Cr layer does not grow result in as good an epitaxial growth onto the Ni_5Al_3 layer. As is seen in FIG. 10, the in-plane coercivity is about 1654 Oe and the δM peak intensity is about 0.2.

Having thus described particular embodiments of the present invention, those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that many modifications and variations of the present invention may be implemented without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as expressed in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A magnetic recording medium comprising:

a substrate;

a Co or Co alloy film forming a magnetic layer; and

an underlayer comprised of a material having a Ga_3Pt_5 structure positioned between said substrate and said film.

2. The recording medium of claim 1 wherein said underlayer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of Ga_3Pt_5 , Mn_3Pd_5 , $\delta\text{Ga}_3\text{Ni}_5$, InPt_2 , and Ni_5Al_3 .

3. The recording medium of claim 1 wherein said underlayer is comprised of at least two layers of said material having a Ga_3Pt_5 structure.

4. The recording medium of claim 1 wherein said underlayer is comprised of at least two layers and wherein each layer alternates between one of said material having a Ga_3Pt_5 structure and a material having a body centered cubic derivative structure.

5. The recording medium of claim 1 further comprising an overlayer disposed on said film, such that said film lies between said underlayer and said overlayer.

6. The recording medium of claim 5 further comprising an overcoat disposed on said overlayer.

7. The recording medium of claim 6 further comprising an organic lubricant disposed on said overcoat such that said overcoat lies between said lubricant and said overlayer.

8. The recording medium of claim 1 further, comprising a first intermediate layer interposed between said magnetic layer and said underlayer, wherein said first intermediate layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of chromium, a chromium alloy and a material having a body centered cubic derivative crystalline structure.

9. The recording medium of claim 8 wherein said first intermediate layer material comprises a material selected from the group consisting of materials having a B2, DO_3 and L_2 crystalline structure.

10. The recording medium of claim 8 wherein said first intermediate layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of NiAl, AlCo, FeAl, FeTi, CoFe, CoTi, CoHf, CoZr, NiTi, CuBe, CuZn, AlMn, AlRe, AgMg, Mn_3Si and Al_2FeMn_2 .

11. The recording medium of claim 8 further comprising a second intermediate layer interposed between said first intermediate layer and said underlayer, wherein said second intermediate layer comprises a material having a body centered cubic derivative crystalline structure.

12. The recording medium of claim 8 further comprising a third intermediate layer interposed between said first intermediate layer and said magnetic layer, wherein said

third intermediate layer comprises a material having a non-magnetic hexagonal closed packed crystalline structure.

13. The recording medium of claim 8 wherein said underlayer promotes the epitaxial growth of said first intermediate layer.

14. The recording medium of claim 1 wherein said underlayer promotes the epitaxial growth of said magnetic layer.

15. The recording medium of claim 1 further comprising a first intermediate layer interposed between said magnetic layer and said underlayer to promote epitaxial crystalline growth of said magnetic layer.

16. The recording medium of claim 15 further comprising a second intermediate layer interposed between said first intermediate layer and said underlayer to promote epitaxial crystalline growth of said magnetic layer.

17. The recording medium of claim 15 further comprising a third intermediate layer interposed between said first intermediate layer and said magnetic layer to provide a transition in lattice constant values from the first intermediate layer to the magnetic layer.

18. The recording medium of claim 1 wherein said underlayer is formed from direct deposition from at least one target material.

19. The recording medium of claim 18 wherein said at least one target material comprises a single target material comprising an alloy having a 3:5 atomic composition ratio.

20. The recording medium of claim 18 wherein said at least one target material comprises a plurality of target materials comprising a material selected from the group consisting of pure elements and alloys containing elements comprising said Ga_3Pt_5 structured underlayer.

21. In a magnetic recording medium having a substrate, an underlayer and a Co or Co alloy magnetic layer, the improvement comprising an underlayer comprised of a material having a Ga_3Pt_5 structure positioned between said substrate and said magnetic layer.

22. The improvement recited in claim 21 wherein said underlayer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of Ga_3Pt_5 , Mn_3Pd_5 , $\delta\text{Ga}_3\text{Ni}_5$, InPt_2 , and Ni_5Al_3 .

23. The improvement recited in claim 21 further comprising a first intermediate layer interposed between said magnetic layer and said underlayer, wherein said first intermediate layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of chromium, a chromium alloy and a material having a body centered cubic derivative structure.

24. The improvement recited in claim 23 further comprising a second intermediate layer interposed between said first intermediate layer and said underlayer, wherein said second intermediate layer comprises a material having a body centered cubic derivative crystalline structure.

25. The improvement recited in claim 23 further comprising a third intermediate layer interposed between said first intermediate layer and said magnetic layer, wherein said third intermediate layer comprises a material having a non-magnetic hexagonal closed packed crystalline structure.

26. The improvement recited in claim 21 wherein said underlayer is formed from direct deposition from at least one target material.

27. The improvement recited in claim 26 wherein said at least one target material comprises a single target material comprising an alloy having a 3:5 atomic composition ratio.

28. The improvement recited in claim 26 wherein said at least one target material comprises a plurality of target materials comprising a material selected from the group consisting of pure elements and alloys containing elements comprising said Ga_3Pt_5 structured underlayer.

29. An apparatus for data storage comprising:

a recording media comprising;

a substrate,

a Co or Co alloy film forming a magnetic layer, and an underlayer comprised of a material having a Ga_3Pt_5 structure disposed between said substrate and said magnetic layer; and

a magnetic transducer positioned in close proximity to said recording media.

30. The apparatus of claim 29 wherein said material is selected from the group consisting of Ga_3Pt_5 , Mn_3Pd_5 , $\delta\text{Ga}_3\text{Ni}_5$, InPt_2 , and Ni_5Al_3 .

31. The apparatus of claim 29 wherein said recording media further comprises a first intermediate layer interposed between said magnetic layer and said underlayer, wherein said first intermediate layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of chromium, a chromium alloy and a material having a body centered cubic derivative crystalline structure.

32. The apparatus of claim 31 wherein said recording media further comprises a second intermediate layer interposed between said first intermediate layer and said underlayer, wherein said second intermediate layer comprises a material having a body centered cubic derivative crystalline structure.

33. The apparatus of claim 31 wherein said recording media further comprises a third intermediate layer interposed between said first intermediate layer and said magnetic layer, wherein said third intermediate layer comprises a material having a non-magnetic hexagonal closed packed crystalline structure.

34. The apparatus of claim 29 wherein said underlayer is formed from direct deposition from at least one target material.

35. The apparatus of claim 34 wherein said at least one target material comprises a single target material comprising an alloy having a 3:5 atomic composition ratio.

36. The apparatus of claim 34 wherein said at least one target material comprises a plurality of target materials comprising a material selected from the group consisting of pure elements and alloys containing elements comprising said Ga_3Pt_5 structured underlayer.

37. A method of producing an epitaxial crystalline Co or Co alloy magnetic layer on a recording substrate, said method comprising:

applying a bias voltage of about -300V to said substrate while depositing from a target material having a body centered cubic derivative crystalline structure on said substrate to form a layer having a Ga_3Pt_5 crystalline structure; and

growing said Co or Co alloy magnetic layer on said material.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein said target material comprises NiAl.

39. The method of claim 37 wherein said Ga_3Pt_5 structured underlayer is selected from the group consisting of Ga_3Pt_5 , Mn_3Pd_5 , $\delta\text{Ga}_3\text{Ni}_5$, InPt_2 , and Ni_5Al_3 .

40. A method of producing an epitaxial crystalline Co or Co alloy magnetic layer on a recording substrate, said method comprising:

depositing, from at least one target material, an underlayer comprising a material having a Ga_3Pt_5 structure on said substrate; and

growing said Co or Co alloy magnetic layer on said Ga_3Pt_5 structure.

41. The method of claim 40 wherein said underlayer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of Ga_3Pt_5 , Mn_3Pd_5 , $\delta\text{Ga}_3\text{Ni}_5$, InPt_2 , and Ni_5Al_3 .

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42. The method of claim **40** further comprising the step of interposing a first intermediate layer between said underlayer and said magnetic layer, wherein said first intermediate layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of chromium, a chromium alloy and a material having a body centered cubic derivative crystalline structure. 5

43. The method of claim **42** further comprising the step of interposing a second intermediate layer between said first intermediate layer and said underlayer, wherein said second intermediate layer comprises NiAl. 10

44. The method of claim **42** further comprising the step of interposing a third intermediate layer between said first intermediate layer and said magnetic layer, wherein said

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third intermediate layer comprises a material having a non-magnetic hexagonal closed packed crystalline structure.

45. The method of claim **40** wherein said at least one target material comprises a single target material comprising an alloy having a 3:5 atomic composition ratio.

46. The method of claim **40** wherein said at least one target material comprises a plurality of target materials comprising a material selected from the group consisting of pure elements and alloys containing elements comprising said Ga_3Pt_5 structured underlayer.

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