



What's New in the Mineral World?



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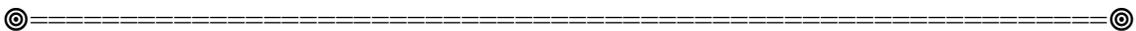
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Since doing Online Report #60 in May I have passed three quiet, indoor, Covid-avoiding months of working on new articles, watching Netflix, re-reading favorite novels, ordering takeout, and, from behind my streaming window, enjoying the storm-rich monsoon season which has come to render our parched Arizona earth life-giving at last (a herd of oryxes could pass unobserved through the weeds of my back yard right now). Soon it will be time for the Denver Show in September, and then for the Munich Show in October, and I'll be on the scene for both of these, just as in good old pre-Covid days. But currently there are generous helpings of mineral news, fresh and juicy, being served up on the Web... let me squelch the food metaphors at once before they get out of hand, and commence a short survey of—

What's New on the Web

The Mogok Stone Tract in northern Burma (Myanmar, if you prefer), has for centuries, famously, been the source of the world's finest ruby corundum crystals, as well as of fine gemmy crystals of red spinel, peridot, aquamarine, topaz, danburite, zircon, and other common species, as well as of rarities such as painite, sinhalite, pezzottaite, poudretteite, jeremejevite and yes even more. Well, what was probably the world's best private collection of minerals from the Mogok Stone Tract, indeed from all over Myanmar, was assembled by Bill Larson of *Pala Properties International* over about ten years and 35 personal visits to Burma, and now those thousands of specimens are in the hands of Rob Lavinsky of *The Arkenstone* (irocks.com). Rob's website



postings of specimens from the collection are only beginning (the job calls for much slow, careful sorting and pricing), but sales so far have been brisk, Rob says. Asking prices, even for most of the thumbnails, are seldom below the four-figure mark. The following four sample miniatures from *The Arkenstone's* late July "update #2" should be sufficiently dazzling:



Spinel compound octahedron, 4.5 cm, from the Pein-pyit zone of the Mogok Stone Tract, Mandalay Region, Myanmar. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.



Topaz, 3.5 cm, from Kume, Mandalay Region, Myanmar. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.



Elbaite “mushroom,” 4 cm, from the Palelni mine, Molo village, Momeik Township, Kyaukme District, Shan State, Myanmar. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.



Muscovite (Cs-rich), 4.8 cm, from the Mogok Valley zone, Mogok Stone Tract, Mandalay Region, Myanmar. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.

Is that enough of Myanmar? Okay, next let's visit the website of Luis Burillo of Zaragoza, Spain (luisburillominerales.com), whose stand at the big international shows always sparkles with layouts of excellent specimens of miscellaneous kinds (though tending to strength in Spanish, Portuguese and South American items). Exploring this website is almost as much fun as visiting Luis at shows, as the general specimen quality on the site is high and coverage is deep. Specifically, under "Minerals by Source" there are 19 geographical pages to look through, each one holding a surprise or two. The "Peru" and "Brazil" pages harbor some excellent things, but the "South America rest" page (for instance) has three knockout specimens, one cabinet-size and two miniatures,

of the rare **brochantite** of the Los Azules mine in Chile: spherical tufts of emerald-green fibrous crystals all over expanses of mottled brownish matrix.



Brochantite, 4.8 cm, from the Los Azules mine, Quebrada San Miguel, Copiapo Province, Atacama region, Chile. Luis Burillo Minerals specimen and photo.

Poking further around in the *Luis Burillo Minerales* website, I was pleased to discover that Luis has latched onto six of the brilliant little **gold** specimens lately found in what he calls the “Tiglit area” of Morocco. It will be recalled that in the last couple of what’s-new reports, one online and one in print, I passed on word that the new gold

specimens had been unearthed in early August 2020, and small lots had been acquired by the dealerships of Anton Watzl, Jordi Fabre and Tomasz Praszquier, the last-named of whom soon sold his lot to Scott Werschky of *Miners' Lunchbox*. But, you know, “good gold gets around” (if this isn’t yet an official cliché I now nominate it), and so here are six more superb examples of the Moroccan material. Luis asks from 460 to 1935 Euros (~ \$550 to \$2300) for the stalk-like aggregates, ranging from 1.4 to 2.4 cm tall, of extremely bright spinel-law-twinned crystals of gold. As I remarked in the March-April 2021 issue, these specimens look very much like early signs of a world-class occurrence of specimen gold—if, that is, further determined digging should turn up more like them or better.



Gold, 2.4 cm, from the Tigit area, Guelmin Province, Guelmin-Qued Noun Region, Morocco. Luis Burillo Minerals specimen and photo.

Before leaving the Burillo website I can't resist showing you a single thumbnail from the "Europe rest" page of that site: a bright, aesthetically irreproachable, classic combination of gemmy **diopside and grossular** crystals from some rodingite vein tapped long ago in a valley of the Italian Piedmont. Hurry and buy it before I fold and buy it myself: its cost is a reasonable (for a piece with such "classic" attributes) 470 Euros (~ \$560).



Diopside on Grossular, 2.7 cm, from Alpe Della Frasse, Val di Susa, Piedmont, Italy. Luis Burillo Minerals specimen and photo.

We can't sojourn for long in the realm of Spanish mineral dealers without looking in on Jordi Fabre of *Fabre Minerals* (fabreminerals.com). Besides mounting a nostalgic "Virtual Ste.-Marie" update marking the empty space of the 2021 Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show, which had to be cancelled again this year, Jordi has a generous "Summer 2021" update with several interesting new discoveries. There are, for instance, just two unusual

specimens of **bornite pseudomorphous after chalcocite** from the Las Cruces mine near Seville in southern Spain: you'll perhaps recall that Jordi brought excellent, newly recovered chalcocite specimens from that mine to the 2020 Tucson Show (see the show report in the May-June 2020 issue). He now writes in the website's update that a "definitive closure of open-pit mining" of this copper deposit has occurred, so it could be that the bornite pseudomorphs will be the last good things to emerge from this short-lived locality. One of the specimens (shown here) is a thumbnail, the other a 7.8-cm example; in both, the pseudo-hexagonal chalcocite crystal forms are coated—it's not clear to what degree they are *replaced*—by iridescent blue-gold bornite.



Bornite after chalcocite, 2.5 cm, from the Las Cruces mine, Gerena-Guillena-Salteras, Comarca Sierra Norte, Seville, Andalucía, Spain. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.

Jordi Fabre's Summer 2021 update also boasts a handful of newly collected **chalcocite** specimens from one of the small mines around the village of M'passa, Mindouli District, Pool Department, Republic of the Congo (formerly the French Congo). On the Mindat page for M'passa, Demetrius Pohl writes that in the zinc-copper ores of these mines, "some spectacular chalcocite crystals to 2-3 cm in diameter and in groups to 15 cm across" were once found, and Jordi chimes in on his website that "With the cessation of exploitation in the 1980s [the] glory was lost, but fortunately it has now returned..." The specimens in question are clusters of black, platy, medium-lustrous

chalcocite crystals to an impressive 3 cm or so across individually, as well as *green* specimens wherein the chalcocite crystals are partially to completely coated by malachite. The uncoated 6.6-cm specimen shown here is priced (in U.S. dollar equivalents worked out by Jordi) at \$2243; the mostly green 3.1-cm specimen also shown here costs \$271.



Chalcocite, 6.6 cm, from the M'Passa mines, Mindouli District, Pool Department, Republic of the Congo. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.



Chalcocite coated by malachite, 3.1 cm, from the M'Passa mines, Mindouli District, Pool Department, Republic of the Congo. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.

Dan Weinrich is a busy man these days: he is *not* going to set up at shows anymore, but instead is adding slews of new specimens every week (including “specials” at discounted prices on Wednesdays) to his extensive website (weinrichmineralsinc.com). Dan has lately acquired several hundred utterly gorgeous new **calcite** specimens lately collected at an already well known locality—the giant open-pit Tonglushan copper-iron mine in the Daye District, just south of the city of Daye, Huangshi Prefecture, Hubei Province, China. The specimens, in a range of sizes from medium-miniature to large-cabinet, show roughly lens-shaped, complex, highly lustrous, wholly transparent calcite crystals to several centimeters across; the crystals are mostly colorless but to different degrees they are tinted rust-red, especially around their edges, by finely divided iron oxides. Most of the specimens are loose groups but in a minority of them the calcite crystals rest lightly on reddish, hematitic-looking matrix. The dozens of specimens on Dan’s website are priced from around \$100 up through the neighborhood of the \$4050 he asks for the 11-cm example shown here:



**Calcite, 11 cm, Tonglushan mine, Daye District, Hubei Province, China.
Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.**

To the Tonglushan calcite scoop I will add that *Donald K. Olson and Associates* has picked up some of these specimens too, and Don was excited enough about them to send me the shot of the 15-cm showboat below. I pass on the shot even though Don and Gloria are merely stowaways in this report, since, gasp, their company *does not have a website*. To contact them use the e-mail address: donaldkolson@netscape.com.



Calcite, 15 cm, Tonglushan mine, Daye District, Hubei Province, China. Don and Gloria Olson Minerals specimen and photo.

It remains to say about Dan Weinrich that he's still selling off many highly desirable thumbnails from the former collection of Martin Jensen—at a teasing rate of just a few new ones with each new update. Many of these little killers were collected by Martin himself around the American West, especially around Nevada, but many others are classics from old European localities. Here, see a splendid example of each: a furiously

red Getchell mine, Nevada **realgar** with fresh-looking, large, sharp (for the locality) crystals, and a gleaming, unusually spiky-looking **manganite** cluster on matrix from what's still the world's best locality for the species, the former diggings for manganese ore near Ilfeld in the Lower Harz Mountains of Germany, where the last mining ceased in 1922 (see my article on the place in November-December 2010).



Realgar, 3 cm, from the Getchell mine, Potosi District, Humboldt County, Nevada. Ex Martin Jensen collection. Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.



Manganite, 2.5 cm, from Ilfeld, Thuringia, Germany. Ex Martin Jensen collection. Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.

Ibrahim Jameel of *Khyber Minerals* (khyberminerals.com) has about a dozen miniature-size examples of the new Chinese calcite described above, and you will find them on his August 2 “Mixed Minerals” update, with many other “nice” things. (No snarky irony is intended by the quotation marks; it’s just that Ibrahim uses “nice” a lot in describing his specimens, and it’s jarring only because the word is a gross *understatement* in many cases).

Other items from new occurrences which may be seen on that same August 2 “Mixed Minerals” update of Ibrahim’s are excellent (much more than just “nice”) miniature to cabinet-size specimens of **ferberite** and **pink fluorapatite** from “recent finds near” Llallagua, Rafael Bustillo Province, Potosi Department, Bolivia. The specimens strongly resemble ferberite/pink fluorapatite specimens spotted in the *Collector’s Edge* room in Mineral City at the April 2021 Tucson Show (see the report in July-August 2021)—except that the *Collector’s Edge* specimens are said to have come from mines in Cochabamba Department whereas Ibrahim’s specimens are assigned to places in neighboring Potosi Department (indeed the ferberites, though not the fluorapatites, are attributed quite specifically to “Minas de Simon Patino” in Potosi).

In both the *Collector’s Edge* and *Khyber Minerals* lots, ferberite is seen as sharp, black, thick-tabular crystals to 2 or 3 cm across, with a luster described by Ibrahim as “a cross between matte and metallic.” In the *Khyber* pieces the ferberite crystals are associated with marcasite and arsenopyrite, whereas in the *Collector’s Edge* pieces the ferberite crystals nestle among long-prismatic quartz crystals with patches of sphalerite. In both lots, sharp, semi-gemmy pink tabular crystals of fluorapatite to a couple of centimeters across occur with the ferberite and with quartz, but only the *Khyber* fluorapatites feature small yellow-brown siderite rhombs.

In these tallyings of associations I might have talked myself out of believing that the *Collector’s Edge* and the *Khyber Minerals* specimens are from the same occurrence; inconclusively, Bryan Lees says that the former lot was collected two years ago, while Ibrahim merely says that his lot is “recent.” Well, the mid-Bolivian Andes are thick with tin and tungsten occurrences and with mines of these metals, and the town of Llallagua lies close to the Potosi/Cochabamba border, so in ambiguous cases we might just put “Llallagua” on labels and manage to feel conscientious. But of course it would be a good idea, too, to peruse the Jaroslav Hyršl/Alfredo Petrov article on Llallagua in the March-April 2006 *Mineralogical Record*.



Fluorapatite with siderite and quartz, 4.8 cm, from Llallagua, Rafael Bustillo Province, Potosi Department, Bolivia. Khyber Fine Minerals specimen and photo.



Ferberite with arsenopyrite, 5.3 cm, from Minas de Simon Patino, Llallagua, Bustillo Province, Potosi Department, Bolivia. Khyber Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

Speaking of ferberite, the *Khyber Minerals* website also offers specimens of that species, and of scheelite, from a locality little heard of since the 1970s: the Taewha molybdenum and tungsten mine, Neungam-ri, Chungju City, North Chungcheong Province, South Korea. While the mine was being worked between 1902 and 1973 it was known to collectors for its superb scheelite crystals in shades of yellow and brown, and to a lesser extent for its sharp black bladed ferberite crystals. The “Mixed Minerals” update on *Khyber Minerals* has some appealing miniatures of both of these, as well as something much less common even in the Taewha mine’s heyday: **cassiterite**, as fat, isolated brown crystals clinging to prism faces of colorless, transparent quartz. For the example shown here Ibrahim asks \$300, and similar prices apply for similar miniatures wherein the fat crystal clinging onto the quartz is a sharp scheelite pseudo-octahedron.



Cassiterite on quartz, 4.8 cm, from the Taewha mine, Neungam-ri, Chungju City, North Chungcheong Province, South Korea. Khyber Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

Jack Lowell is the genial fellow who runs the website of the *Colorado Gem & Mineral Company* (coloradogem.com), and his selection of minerals from recent and contemporary finds in Iran is more than sufficiently fine to earn him his first mention in one of these online reports. Jack has, for one thing, a good supply of miniature matrix specimens showing bright grass-green crystals of **andradite variety “demantoid”** over a fine-grained gray matrix rock. For about seven years now we’ve known of this occurrence on Belqeys Mountain, Takab, West Azerbaijan Province, Iran; the unusual garnet specimens were briefly almost common around the market but now are considerably less so. The highly lustrous “demantoid” crystals, with dodecahedral and trapezohedral faces in roughly equal proportion, can measure up to 1.5 cm individually, and matrix plates populated thickly with the vivid green crystals (like the 5-cm example shown here) can be quite dramatic.



Andradite variety demantoid, 5 cm, from Belqeys Mountain, Takab, West Azerbaijan Province, Iran. Colorado Gem & Mineral Company specimen; Jack Lowell photo.

Coming even more recently from Iran are the world’s finest crystals of the rare aluminum silicate-hydroxyl-fluoride-chloride **zunyite**, found in smooth-faced, brown to rust-red tetrahedrons to 2 cm with beveled edges to represent the cube form. Some matrix specimens have also emerged, but most of these machined-looking (but really natural!) zunyite crystals are perfect floaters further distinguished by bright pepperings of black hematite. Reportedly the crystals are found “floating” in salt domes in Hormozgan Province, along Iran’s Persian Gulf coast; their debut on the Western market occurred at the 2018 Munich Show (see that report in March-April 2019). Since then, Iranian zunyites have appeared with more dealers in several varieties of appearance: below, see a few of Jack’s examples. And Jack is proud of a loose, roughly equant, 5.2-cm twin which he says is the biggest known euhedral zunyite crystal from Iran or from anywhere else. For this dull brown giant he asks \$3,000, but you can pick up one of his other, thumbnail-size zunyite floaters, or pick up a miniature-size matrix piece, for a price in the low three figures.



Zunyite crystals, various habits, from the Qalat-e-Bala salt dome, Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan, Iran. Colorado Gem & Mineral Company specimens; Jack Lowell photo.



Zunyite, 5.2 cm, from the Qalat-e-Payeen salt dome, Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan, Iran. Colorado Gem & Mineral Company specimen; Jack Lowell photo.

In my last online report of May 2020 I wrote enthusiastically of the newly much-enhanced website of *Tyson's Fine Minerals* (tysonsfineminerals.com), run by master Canadian field collectors Rod and Helen Tyson, now relocated from western Canada to a fine-looking big white house (pictured on the site) in Parrsboro, Nova Scotia. As before, specimens from all over Canada and in price categories from “up to \$25” to “over \$500” are offered, and now I’ll commend this intriguing website again by showing you an essentially random selection of drooly Canadian pieces found thereon. Rod and Helen can sell you things ranging through the fine cabinet specimen of Nova Scotia stilbite (\$150), to the thumbnail-size skutterudite from the uranium-mining region of the Northwest Territories (a real rarity for just \$50), to the pale green cabinet-size fluorite from the long-gone locality of Madoc, Ontario (\$175), to the cluster of wonderfully gemmy orange grossular crystals from the Jeffrey mine, Quebec (\$2,500):



**Stilbite, 11.7 cm, from Hall’s Harbor, Nova Scotia, Canada. Tyson’s Fine Minerals specimen;
Helen Tyson photo.**



Skutterudite, 3 cm, from Port Radium, Northwest Territories, Canada. Tyson's Fine Minerals specimen' Helen Tyson photo.



Fluorite, 6.3 cm, from Highway #7 road cut, Madoc, Ontario, Canada. Tyson's Fine Minerals specimen; Helen Tyson photo.



Grossular, 4.8 cm, from the Jeffrey mine, Asbestos (now Val-des-Sources), Quebec, Canada. Tyson's Fine Minerals specimen; Helen Tyson photo.

Another Canadian dealer I've noted before is David K. Joyce, who also has a newly refurbished, much-improved site (davidkjoyceminerals.com) chock-full of good things in a wide range of prices and degrees of sophistication. David also favors Canadian minerals, but he has recently acquired from Professor Robert ("Bob") Downs of the University of Arizona a mix of specimens, most of which are from Arizona and many of which were field-collected by Downs himself. Especially appealing are a fuzzy-looking small miniature showing bright green, well individualized spheres of fibrous **malachite** crystals from Tiger, and a lustrous group of dark brown (perhaps internally green),

unusually platy crystals of **sphalerite** from the Iron Cap mine in Graham County. Both of these Arizona classics—and most of the others offered by David—are priced at less than \$100.



Malachite, 3.2 cm, from the Tiger Cut, Tiger, Arizona. Ex Robert T. Downs collection. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.



Sphalerite, 3.3 cm, from the Iron Cap mine, Graham County, Arizona. Ex Robert T. Downs collection. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.

While on the topic of *very low-priced* but nevertheless desirable mineral specimens (“HQLP” specimens, as I call them in show reports in the print magazine), I wish to commend Steve Hardinger’s *Dragon Minerals* dealership, whose website (dragon-minerals.com) shows off numerous good, mostly large-miniature and small-cabinet-size specimens for prices way, way *too low*, it would seem, for their qualities. Dispersed fairly liberally through the selection are truly rare and/or aesthetically fine specimens bearing prices *amazingly* low. No matter what sort of collector you are, have a surf on this site and you’ll come on such serendipities as the lovely 5.7-cm plate of **wulfenite** crystals from the Rowley mine, Theba, Arizona for **\$22**; the snow-white sphere of jagged little crystals of the very rare zeolite **goosecreekite** from (where else but) Maharashtra State, India for **\$30**; and the cabinet-size plate of sharp crystals of **barite** turned gray by inclusions of filiform jamesonite from Baia Sprie, Maramures, Romania for **\$24**.



Wulfenite, 5.7 cm, from the Rowley mine, Theba, Maricopa County, Arizona. Dragon Minerals specimen; Steve Hardinger photo.



**Goosecreekite, 4.7 cm, from the Nasik District, Maharashtra, India. Dragon Minerals specimen;
Steve Hardinger photo.**



Barite with filiform jamesonite inclusions, 6.2 cm, from Baia Sprie, Maramures, Romania. Dragon Minerals specimen; Steve Hardinger photo.

Herewith to maintain my custom of ending an online report with a picture and celebration of a single, exceptional, world-beating specimen, I show you a thumbnail-size **copper** from an undisclosed mine in the Michigan Copper Country. This amazing cluster of sharp simple cubic crystals (the simple cube is a very rare habit for native copper), appears, unaccompanied by any caption or sign of an asking price, on the home page of the website of Daniel Trinchillo's *Fine Minerals International* (finemineral.com). Once, years ago, the then-owner of this specimen, Richard Bideaux (1935–2004), placed it onto my trembling palm, and effortlessly we agreed that it's

likely the finest small specimen of native copper on the face of the earth. The specimen then passed at some point to Lawrence H. Conklin (1933-2016), and thence to Daniel Trinchillo; now there it is on a far edge of the unannotated spread of great specimens that you see when you call up the *Fine Minerals International* site. I would guess that Daniel does not intend ever to sell off this treasure...however, a casual web surfer can look at it, marvel at it, and learn from it too, can he not - ?



Copper, 2 cm, from Michigan. Fine Minerals International specimen and photo.

Cheers to all from monsooning Tucson!

Tom Moore