
What's New in the Mineral World?



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Since late August, when I last climbed onto this cyber-platform to tell you about what's new on the web, I have taken several trips—including, of course, to the shows in Denver and Munich—and now I'm preparing to go to China to check out the big new international show in Chenzhou; expect a report in the print magazine. I have barely had time to notice the advent, at last, of cool weather in Tucson, and even of several periods of *rain*; how about *that?*—but here's saluting the seasonal change, as life in the Southwest returns to normal and healthier levels of general percolation. On some of the dealers' websites a few gleanings from the Denver and Munich Shows are being offered, as are, of course, other noteworthy things. In the report below, in the interests of blog-like timeliness, I will mention one or two Denver and Munich-sourced things without telegraphing too much, I hope, of the fuller print reports on those shows which are coming up in the January-February 2012 issue. And then there are those “other noteworthy things”...

On The Web

John Veevaert's *Trinity Minerals* site (www.trinityminerals.com) seldom disappoints the discriminating browser: in general, update after update, his specimen photos are good, text descriptions full, stock sophisticated, and prices earthbound. Later in this report I'll describe some intriguing items now to be seen in his well stocked “Africa Room,” but for now let's go to his “European Room” to admire his several superb miniatures of **torbernite** (all right, metatorbernite—but the pine-green crystals still look fresh and crisp despite partial dehydration) from the Margabal mine, Entraygues, Aveyron Department, France.



Torbernite, 5.3 cm, from the Margabal mine, Entraygues, Aveyron, France.
Trinity Minerals specimen and photo.

This small uranium mine, in a small deposit discovered during a survey by the French Atomic Energy Commission in the late 1950s, produced some world-class torbernite crystal groups in the early 1960s. By 1968, when Paul Desautels' *The Mineral Kingdom* was published, a picture therein of a Margabal torbernite was accompanied by Desautels' mournful remark that such specimens had become "unavailable to collectors." But at the 1990 Munich show I spotted a handful of excellent thumbnails showing sharp, blocky torbernite crystals to 1 cm aesthetically grouped on matrix; they had been dug by a couple of French collectors in 1989. I actually thought for a while that the specimen I purchased *had* to be one of the finest small torbernites in captivity...but soon (maybe you know the feeling) my presumptuous dream was shattered.

A renaissance of the locality began in June 1997 when, somewhere in the old mine, about 1,000 fine specimens were recovered, with torbernite crystals to 2 cm perched on smoky quartz. In August 1997, four more pockets were opened, and about 1,700 new specimens were taken out, some with crystals to 3.4 cm. The greatest piece is an incredible 47-cm stalactiform cluster of lush green torbernite crystals with a solution channel down the middle (see the photo on page 494 of the September-October 1998 issue). Thus for a while in the late 1990s and early 2000s, high-quality French torbernite specimens were almost common around the market—but that, needless to say, is no longer the case. You may find an occasional loner in a dealer's stock, but the hard fact is that these specimens are no longer "contemporary classics" but must be regarded rather as *classics*, and very important ones too, and you should snap up whatever stragglers you

find. You couldn't do better than one of John Veevaert's miniatures, especially at the prices he asks: the specimen pictured here costs just \$250.



Vanadinite, 2.3 cm, from the North Geronimo mine, La Paz County, Arizona. *Key's Minerals* specimen and photo (former Ralph Clark collection).

A somewhat similar story is that of the gorgeous **vanadinite** specimens from the North Geronimo (or "Pure Potential") mine, in the Trigo Mountains, quite near the famous Red Cloud and Hamburg mines, in La Paz County, Arizona. The mining claims in this area go back to the late 19th century, but this particular mine only came to the attention of collectors in the mid-1990s, when George Godas began collecting outstanding vanadinite (and a very few just-as-outstanding wulfenite) specimens in what he'd named the Pure Potential mine. Some of the vanadinites show bright orange-red, simple hexagonal crystals, seldom larger than 5 mm, covering matrix, but more spectacular are the loose aggregates of vanadinite crystals in parallel growth, with such deep hopping on the basal pinacoid as to reduce individual crystals to hollow shells near their tips, these hopped, stepped aggregates reaching small-miniature size. In 2005, Jim Ricker took out about 40 flats of the same material, but since then all has been quiet on the North Geronimo front, and specimens of the type just described are now well down the road to becoming Arizona *classics*. Kiyoshi Kiikuni of *Key's Minerals*

(www.keysminerals.com) bought up a handful of examples not too long ago from Ralph Clark, and now has a few on his site. Except for one, all of these thumbnails (including the one pictured here) are already marked Sold—but, as in the case of the French torbernites, you should snap up any comparable ones you see. I am picturing here the Sold specimen by way of reminding you of the beauty of North Geronimo vanadinite—and also, I admit, by way of sending a scrap of good cheer to Kiyoshi, whose business, indeed the regime of whose whole life, were hit hard by the earthquake/tsunami/nuclear catastrophe in Japan. Now, to judge from his site's new spiffiness and abundance, Kiyoshi is back in the game—way to go.



Fresnoite, 2 cm, from the Junnila property, Clear Creek district, San Benito County, California. *Great Basin Minerals* specimen and photo.

Scott Kleine of *Great Basin Minerals* (www.greatbasinminerals.com) is the man who dug the only good specimen stock which has ever existed of the rare Ba-Ti silicate **fresnoite**—in summer 1998, at the Junnila property, Clear Creek district, San Benito County, California. Scott's small specimen-mining operation there yielded about 500 pieces showing sharp, tetragonal-tabular, butterscotch-yellow to (rarely) pink crystals of fresnoite from a few millimeters to 2.2 cm, with analcime crystals to 1 cm, a bit of benitoite, and tiny crystals of stilbite and natrolite. The mining project was followed by a short period of fee-collecting, but the locality went forever defunct when Scott backfilled the hole where the pocket zone had been. For the past 12 years or so he has brought fresnoite specimens, in a variety of sizes and qualities, to major shows, and there are excellent pieces *still* available on his website. Specifically, the site shows 33 fresnoite specimens which cost under \$100 apiece, 54 from \$100 to \$350, 16 from \$400 to \$850, and seven at more than \$1,000; the most striking are the thumbnails, but there are also

matrix pieces to small-cabinet size with buttery-looking little fresnoite crystals all over. If you haven't already done so, it's time you checked out this material...another American classic.



Ludlamite, 8.3 cm, from the Estaño Orcko mine, Cornelio Saavedra Province, Potosí Department, Bolivia. *Khyber Minerals* specimen and photo.

Ibrahim Jameel of *Khyber Minerals* (www.khyberminerals.com) has recently made a specimen-buying trip to Bolivia, returning with, among other good things, good **ludlamite** specimens, not from the well known Huanuni mine locality but rather from a pocket opened in June/July 2011 in the Estaño Orcko mine, Cornelio Saavedra Province, Potosí Department—the same mine as has recently turned out the world's best examples of the very rare phosphate scorzalite (see the picture in my December 2010 online report). Ibrahim's new ludlamite specimens, from 3.3 to 11.5 cm, show dull green, blocky, translucent crystals to more than 2 cm scattered and clustered on quartz/siderite matrix. They lack the bright luster to rival the best ludlamites from the Huanuni mine (or from Mexico or Idaho) but they represent a brand-new occurrence which, of course, bears watching. On the same trip Ibrahim garnered some fine small specimens of **valentinite** from a presently productive zone in the Colavi mine, Cornelio Saavedra, Potosí—take a look at the site, and hang on as well for my print report from the 2011 Denver Show, where the Kosnar brothers of *Mineral Classics* were offering valentinite specimens from the same occurrence.



Galena, 9.5 cm, from the Mayer quarry, Eschweiler-Hastenrath near Aachen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.

In 2007 a new German locality for **galena** joined the long list of *classic* venerables of the kind, when the Mayer limestone quarry, 15 km east of the old Carolingian capital city of Aachen, in Nordrhein-Westfalen, produced about 2,500 galena crystal groups from a big, pockety sulfide zone on the quarry's floor. The specimens all look much alike, but it is a *good* way to look: they are tight clusters of metallic gray and highly lustrous, octahedral to cuboctahedral galena crystals to 3 cm individually. The specimens have no matrix or visible associated species, and they reach mid-cabinet size. Mayer quarry galena has gotten scarce during the past few years, but now Jordi Fabre (www.fabreminerals.com) has 10 excellent examples, large-miniature to small-cabinet size, on his site. And for an aesthetic change of pace, see also Jordi's five fine miniatures of that favorite of young and old, **brazilianite**, in bright yellow, gemmy, lustrous, wedge-terminated blades to 4 cm, with crystals of muscovite and orthoclase. Jordi gives the locality for these pretty pieces only as Linópolis, Divino de Larenjeiras, Minas Gerais—but experience suggests that their specific source can only be the Marcel Telirio mine.



Brazilianite, 5.3 cm, from the Telirio mine, Linópolis, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.



Pyromorphite, 5 cm, from the Lavarock Hall vein, Leadhills, Scotland. *Dakota Matrix Minerals* specimen and photo.

An alluring spread of colorful old-time specimens of **pyromorphite** can be found in a November 10 posting called “Pyromorphite Special Edition” on Tom Loomis’s *Dakota Matrix Minerals* site (www.dakotamatrix.com). A few of the specimens come from long-gone German localities but the majority come from equally venerable places in the United Kingdom, e.g. Caldbeck Fells, Cumbria, England; the Force Crag mine, Cumbria, England; the Pengenna mine, St. Teath, Cornwall, England; the Bwlch Glas mine, Dyfed, Wales; the East Stayvoyage vein, Leadhills, Scotland; and more. They all show druses of microcrystals in vugs in what look uniformly like siliceous-gossany matrix. The specimens are all bright, bristly and clean-looking, and you won’t easily find their likes elsewhere.

From time to time in this space I’ve mentioned a dealership devoted exclusively to the minerals of mysterious Myanmar (Burma): *Crystal Treasure* (www.crystal-treasure.com). Here, strange little crystals, many wholly or partially gemmy, are offered, the species including (to name just a few of them) baddeleyite, chondrodite, diaspore, enstatite, hibonite, jeremejevite, petalite, poudretteite, serendibite, and taaffeite. This site, like a similar dealership which I encountered in person at the Munich Show, can lead one to wonder anew about the geology of the famous “Mogok Stone Tract,” wherefrom most of these oddities come. The *Crystal Treasure* site also features a few non-gem species of interest: for instance, there are many sharp, loose crystals and little clusters of radioactive minerals such as zirconolite, ekanite, fergusonite and thorite. The last-named, $(\text{Th,U})\text{SiO}_4$, is a hot item most familiar as crude, brick-red, tabular crystals from calcite

vein-dikes in Ontario, but **thorite** from Myanmar comes as very sharp, short-prismatic, terminated black crystals to 2 centimeters long. The crystals are found in alluvium at Ohn Bin Yee Hywet, Le-Oo, northeast of Mogok, but according to *Crystal Treasure* their “primary source” (perhaps a uraniferous pegmatite?) might be Oh Saung Taung, Le-Oo. I will mention as well the site’s interesting specimens of mica-group species, including pale brown, gemmy crystals of **phlogopite** embedded in white calcite, and **botryoidal muscovite** as miniature-size, smooth-surfaced, silvery spheres composed of curved plates layered over each other—these said simply to be from “Mogok.”



Thorite, 1.8 cm, from Ohn Bin Yee Hywet, Le-Oo, Mogok, Mandalay Division, Myanmar. *Crystal Treasure* specimen and photo.



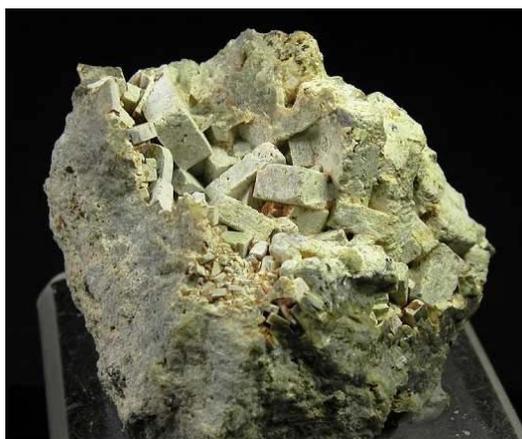
Muscovite, 3.3 cm, from Mogok, Mandalay Division, Myanmar. *Crystal Treasure* specimen and photo.



Chalcostibite coated by azurite, 3.2 cm, from Gar Al Anz, Morocco. *Christopher J. Stefano Fine Minerals* specimen and photo.

Now that we are onto “rare oddities” (\approx “odd rarities”; either way you have to love them), consider the ten large-miniature-size specimens of **chalcostibite** from Gar Al Anz, Morocco, now being offered by *Christopher J. Stefano Fine Minerals* (www.stefanmineralstore.com). Chalcostibite, CuSbS_2 , is black and metallic, but at this little copper deposit—mined in the 1920s and 1930s and only occasionally productive of mineral specimens since then—it occurs as crude crystals which are solidly coated or partially replaced by azurite, rendering them an attractive dark blue. It is very unusual to see as many as ten chalcostibite specimens from Morocco in one place at one time.

And then there is **gehlinite**, a rare Ca-Al silicate characteristically found in high-temperature skarn environments. The Italian dealership called *The Webmineralshop* (www.webmineralshop.com) has latched onto two cabinet-size pieces from a “new find” at Hunedoara, Romania, with sharp, chalk-white, short-prismatic crystals to 2 cm lining a cavity in massive gehlinite.



Gehlinite, 6 cm, from Hunedoara, Hunedoara County, Transylvania, Romania. *The Webmineralshop* specimen and photo.

I said that we would return in due course to John Veevaert's *Trinity Minerals* site and visit the "African Room"—and now here we are. John is currently offering some excellent specimens of "**amazonite**" **microcline** from Kenticha, Negele area, Sidamo Province, Ethiopia—in good, well colored, blocky crystals from 6 to 12 cm across, some on white granitic matrix, some with associated quartz crystals. Also he has fine specimens of **gersdorffite** from a strike two years ago in the Ait Ahmane mine, Bou Azzer, Morocco, with sleek metallic gray, octahedral crystals to 1.5 cm in clusters embedded in calcite (more examples of this material surfaced at the 2011 Munich Show). And, most remarkably, he has five thumbnail-size groups of richly cinnamon-colored, partially gemmy, modified-octahedral crystals of **microlite** from Macoa, Alto Ligonha, Mozambique, with sharp individual crystals to 1 cm. A group of juicy-looking microlite thumbnails from this find was offered at the 2007 Munich Show, the specimens at that time bearing prices about 500% higher than those which John is asking right now...he's a good shopper, all right, and we can all profit by that fact when we visit his site, especially just after he's back from the big hunts in Munich, Denver and Tucson.



Microcline ("amazonite"), 6.5 cm, from Kenticha, Negele area, Sidamo Province, Ethiopia. *Trinity Minerals* specimen and photo.



Gersdorffite, 4.1 cm, from the Ait Ahmane mine, Bou Azzer, Morocco. *Trinity Minerals* specimen and photo.



Microlite, 2.5 cm, from Macoa, Alto Ligonha, Zambezia Province, Mozambique. *Trinity Minerals* specimen and photo.

Finally, John Veevaert and the aforementioned Ibrahim Jameel now seem to be the two Western dealers who have the best online stocks of specimens of several species, common and rare, plain and fancy, thumbnail to large-cabinet-size, but all brand-new, from the Huanggangliang iron mine, Chifeng Prefecture, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. This is the locality which was being vaguely called “Baotao League” as late as the 2011 Tucson Show (see the report in May-June 2011): it is an enormous skarn surrounding an orebody where mining is now going on, productive, for starters, of world-class specimens of ilvaite, arsenopyrite, andradite, hedenbergite and hedenbergite-included quartz. You will also read about things from the Huangganliang mine in my upcoming 2011 Denver and Munich reports (to appear in January-February 2012), so here I will merely provide a little pictorial tour of some items *not* on the list just given. All but one of the photos come from the *Khyber Minerals* site; the datolite photo comes from a Chinese site, *Chen Xiao Jun China Minerals* (www.chenxiaojun.com) which also has (as seems only proper) good offerings of Huanggangliang material. This mine, or district, shows every sign of developing into a major contemporary locality, not just in a Chinese but in a world context. Just since February, when only Huanggangliang arsenopyrite, ilvaite and hedenbergite-included quartz were reaching the Western mineral market, I have seen perhaps a dozen more species in fine specimens from the place. And here’s what some of them look like:



Fluorite with genthelvite crystals, 17.4 cm matrix, from the Huanggangliang mine, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. *Khyber Minerals* specimen and photo.



Magnetite, 21.7 cm, from the Huanggangliang mine, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. *Khyber Minerals* specimen and photo.



Aquamarine beryl, 5.8 cm, from the Huanggangliang mine, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. *Khyber Minerals* specimen and photo.



Genthelvite, 6.2 cm, from the Huanggangliang mine, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. *Khyber Minerals* specimen and photo.



Apophyllite, 2.6 cm, from the Huanggangliang mine, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. *Khyber Minerals* specimen and photo.



Datolite, 3.2 cm, from the Huanggangliang mine, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. *Chen Xiao Jun China Minerals* specimen and photo.

Two Shows

(1) California

Several days ago I received an e-mail notice of a show to be held in March 2012 in Turlock, California, featuring 40 dealers, 80 exhibits, demonstrations of gold panning techniques and equipment, kids' activities, and other fun things. It doesn't sound oriented toward "serious" mineral collectors but you can't stay serious all of the time; for the sake of the future of our enterprise you need to get the kids out and looking at "earthy" materials, right? Here's the scoop as it appears in the e-mail:

The 46th Annual Jewelry & Rock Show is March 10 & 11, 2012

By: The Mother Lode Mineral Society of California
Stanislaus County Fairgrounds, 900 N. Broadway, Turlock, CA
Saturday & Sunday 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Admission \$6 adult, 12 and under free with paid adult

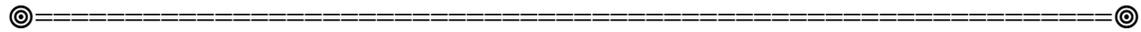
Contact: Bud & Terry McMillin 209-524-3494

Email: bud.mcmillin.b7yj@statefarm.com

www.turlockgemshow.com

(2) New York City

The first edition of a show with aspirations to becoming "major" is to be held in mid-May 2012 at the Meadowlands Expo Center, 355 Plaza Drive, Secaucus, New Jersey—just four miles from downtown Manhattan via the Lincoln Tunnel. It is called the 2012 New York City Metro Show, and it is being put on by Lowell Carhart's "Eons



Expositions,” the organization which also runs the Denver Coliseum and Tucson 22nd Street shows each year. The NYC Metro Show will be open to wholesale buyers on Thursday May 10, and to everyone from Friday May 11 to Sunday May 13, from 9:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. (4:00 P.M. on Sunday). The website (www.nycmetroshow.com) states that 200 international exhibitors will appear in a venue measuring 61,000 square feet, and that there will be free parking, and that immediately surrounding the show site the Meadowlands offers hotels, restaurants, theaters and shops galore. Inside the show there will be a “Fine Mineral & Gem Gallery” (with wine bar!) for high-end dealers, and mineral museum exhibits including one from the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum in Tucson. The show theme (to be highlighted by the museum exhibits) will be “Mexican Minerals,” and two speakers on that theme will hold forth. Bob Jones will talk on the Naica gypsum cave, on Mexican azurite, and on mineral collecting in Mexico; and your present correspondent will hold forth on the history, geology and minerals of the Ojuela mine, Mapimí, Durango. I’ve given this talk before and I have it knocked, if I do say so (but warning: it’s almost two hours long).

The NYC Metro Show fills a long-standing need. Except for the show at Springfield, Massachusetts, which is nowhere near as strategically well located as this one, the Northeast has not to this date had a mineral show of major importance, and that’s not right: there are 15 million people living within an hour’s commute of the Meadowlands Expo Center. I look forward to doing my bit to help make the venture in May 2012 a big success.

May your holiday time be a happy one, and richly mineralized.

