
What's New in the Mineral World?



Report #51
December 4, 2018

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Record
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Back in the summer, “guest columnist” Wendell Wilson borrowed this space and provided a juicy and erudite online report #50. His style differs in several respects from mine, but everyone—writers and readers alike—needs a change, or a break, now and then, so here’s thanking Wendell for affording me that little vacation, and here’s telling readers that, for better or worse, I’m returning now to point out a thing or two, as I like to do, concerning—

What’s New on the Web

A glance at just the first two pages of the recent *Quebul Fine Minerals* (quebulfineminerals.com) update reveals that Todor and/or Nadya, who run that dealership, made it in late October to the 2018 Munich Show, as excellent specimens from two new finds which debuted at that show appear on pages one and two (respectively) of the update. My print report on Munich 2018 will appear in our March-April 2019 issue, and I don’t want to telegraph it too much, but here is a specimen of the new Iranian **andradite** from page one of the *Quebul* site, to make up for the fact that we won’t be showing a similar photo with the print report. In these “melanite” specimens newly found at a locality given as Veshnoveh, Kashan County, Esfahan Province, Iran, very sharp, highly lustrous, brownish red to black andradite crystals form tight clusters on massive andradite, with individual dodecahedral crystals reaching 1 cm. A goodly lot of such specimens in a wide range of sizes was brought to Munich by a German dealership, and Todor and Nadya have several examples scattered about their site.



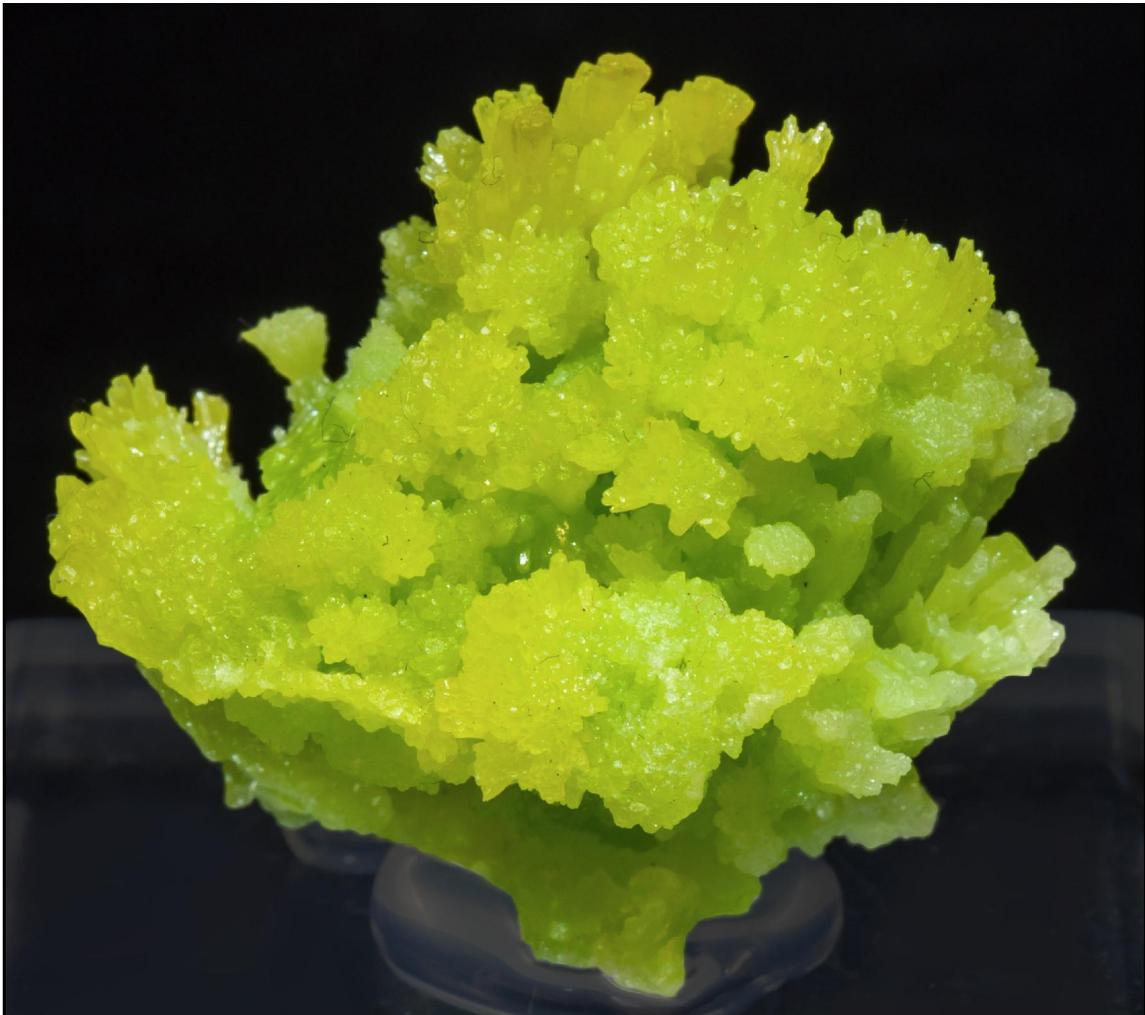
**Andradite (“melanite”), 5.4 cm, from Veshnoveh, Kashan County, Esfahan Province, Iran.
Quebul Fine Minerals specimen and photo.**

On page two of the *Quebul Fine Minerals* site is a sizzingly colorful 2-cm **rhodochrosite** crystal group from the N’Chwaning I mine, Kalahari Manganese Field, Northern Cape Province, South Africa. The specimen is of a style typical of a new lot which was unveiled in Munich by Paul Balayer, the expert French prospector who made the strike in September 2017, very near to the pocket zone where the fabulous rhodochrosite finds of the late 1970s in N’Chwaning I took place. However, crystals from the new find, while beautifully deep red, gemmy and lustrous, just like the old ones, are squat scalenohedrons instead of the 1970s “dogteeth,” and they are further distinguished by black spots of manganese oxides in light dustings over their surfaces. Todor and Nadya’s price for the small thumbnail shown here is \$1680.



Rhodochrosite, 2 cm, from the N’Chwaning I mine, Kalahari Manganese Field, Northern Cape Province, South Africa. Quebul Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

Jordi Fabre (fabreminerals.com) has a “post-Munich update” with five unusual-looking specimens of **pyromorphite** from one of Spain’s classic localities for the species: the San Andres mine, Espiel, Comarca Valle del Guadiato, Córdoba Province (misleadingly called “Villaviciosa de Cordoba” when specimens were first marketed in the 1980s). Most San Andres pyromorphite, as judged from its main market runs in the late 1980s and late 1990s, displays bright lime-green, typically barrel-shaped crystals with hexagonal outlines. But Jordi’s specimens—three thumbnails, one small miniature and one small cabinet-size piece, all from the Ignacio Gaspar collection—have long-prismatic crystals instead, aggregated in bundles which cluster and flare irregularly when brought together. But the pyromorphite remains bright lime-green anyway.



Pyromorphite, 3.1 cm, from the San Andres mine, Espiel, Comarca Valle del Guadiato, Córdoba Province, Spain. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.

At the 2018 Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show, Tom Gressman noted among Jordi Fabre's stock some **azurite** specimens from a new locality called El Fetch, Alnif, Er Rachidia Province, Morocco. But the 6-cm specimen pictured in that show report (in November-December 2018) is not as fine as the 7.4-cm piece shown here—one of three small-cabinet-size specimens of El Fetch azurite now being offered on Jordi's website. It seems that this locality gives birth to groups of lustrous, deep blue, lenticular azurite crystals to 2.5 cm individually, with green spots of malachite microcrystals sparsely distributed over the surfaces: here we have *another* source of excellent azurite specimens in Morocco.



Azurite, 7.4 cm, from El Fetch, Tarhbalt, Er Rachidia Province, Morocco. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.

Several online reports ago I described the unusual website of Mr. Weigang Chen, then called China-mineral-cn, which offered a plethora of Chinese minerals dug by Mr. Chen and his team—for, as is explained on his new site, “Searching and digging nice minerals from China is Mr. Chen’s life. He [has] the best team [and] they [have been] digging more than 13 years in China already, and now they are still working.” But (the explanation goes on) when the famous Tongbei, Fujian Province locality for spessartine, smoky quartz, orthoclase and fluorite “finished,” Mr. Chen switched his attention to wulfenite from the Kuruktag Mountains in Xinjiang, and when *that* source dried up in 2014 he moved on to still other projects. In 2013 the domain name China-mineral.cn was lost, but now you can find Mr. Chen and his wares at the simple address www.wulfenites.com; what will come up is a home page headed “Tc-Mineral-China.” The new site still has plenty of “rooms” full of Tongbei spessartine and Kuruktag wulfenite, but among what is offered as “new in 2018” are some excellent-looking specimens of transparent blue-purple **fluorite** from Xiayang, Yongchun County, Quanzhou Prefecture, Fujian Province. In my print report on the 2018 Tucson Show (in May-June 2018) I mentioned that this material was plentiful at that show, and yes, some of the finest pieces which made it to Tucson are of a richer, deeper blue-purple hue than Mr. Chen’s examples (at least as can be inferred from his online photos). But Mr. Chen’s pieces are nevertheless quite attractive, with dodecahedral and cubo-dodecahedral fluorite crystals perched smartly on white quartz.



Fluorite, 8.5 cm, from Xiayang, Yongchun County, Quanzhou Prefecture, Fujian Province, China.
Tc-Mineral-China specimen and photo.

Speaking of China, Jim Brown of *Hummingbird Minerals* (hummingbirdminerals.com) is now showing a splendid specimen of **arsenopyrite with ilvaite** from what, these days, should probably be called China's most interesting and most species-prolific locality, namely the Huanggang mine complex, Kèshikèténg Banner, Chifeng Prefecture, Inner Mongolia (see the articles in September-October 2012). This is one of many fine, aesthetic, cabinet-size specimens from the former Ed David collection which Jim has been feeding out to his website for some time now; it is to be seen on his update of October 25.



Arsenopyrite with Ilvaite, 9 cm, from the Huanggang mine complex, Kèshikèténg Banner, Chifeng Prefecture, Inner Mongolia, China. Ex Ed David collection. Hummingbird Minerals specimen and photo.

The collection of the late Ed David (1925-2017) consisted mostly of recent and contemporary material (as witness, on the same update, *another* fine arsenopyrite, this one from Panasqueira, Portugal), but I was pleased to find an Old Classic, too, in the group that Jim Brown has selected: a large **hemimorphite** from the Sterling Hill mine, Franklin district, Sussex County, New Jersey. Specimens of this “maggot ore,” as the old miners called it, began to emerge from the Noble and Passaic opencut workings at Sterling Hill around 1875, but sporadic finds kept occurring for more than a century thereafter...and so could this specimen have been taken out as late as February 1986, when, “just as the last ore recovery was ending at the Sterling Hill mine, white botryoidal masses of hemimorphite to cabinet size were recovered from the 1010 Top Slice stope, 15 feet below the mine’s 430-foot level” (to paraphrase from an old Lawrence Conklin price list)?



**Hemimorphite, 9.5 cm, from the Sterling Hill mine, Franklin district, Sussex County, New Jersey.
Ex Ed David collection. Hummingbird Minerals specimen and photo.**

And now that hemimorphite is our topic, let's take note of Dave Bunk's November 9 update on his *davebunkminerals.com* website, which opens by dangling before us a great-looking **hemimorphite** miniature from Santa Eulalia, Chihuahua, Mexico—and from the Mildred (“Midge”) Leahy collection, which Dave has recently acquired. Dave regularly has updates highlighting a species, locality, chemical group, or former collection, as represented by specimens in his extensive stock, and this time it's Santa Eulalia, and the hemimorphite is followed apace by some big, clean, dignified-looking specimens of the brown “dogtooth” **calcite** for which the locality is well known, and by many other Santa Eulalia treasures—you can check up on all of them, of course, in Peter Megaw's huge monograph which was our January-February 2018 issue.



Hemimorphite, 3.7 cm, from Santa Eulalia, Chihuahua, Mexico. Ex Mildred Leahy collection. Dave Bunk Minerals specimen and photo.



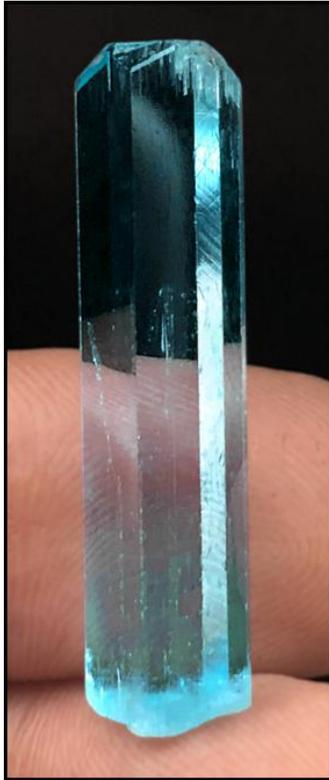
Calcite, 15.5 cm, from Santa Eulalia, Chihuahua, Mexico. Dave Bunk Minerals specimen and photo.

Dave Bunk also has a “latest update,” dated November 20 (and by the time you read this he’ll have a still later one...), with a page of eight superb thumbnails from Mont St.-Hilaire, Quebec. On all of them the major species is **serandite**, showing as very sharp, blocky crystals displaying the color of Arizona’s most gorgeous sunsets, associated with well crystallized aegirine and with a few St.-Hilaire exotica such as leucophanite and manganoneptunite. In my opinion the finest of these specimens is the one shown below, wherein a black aegirine crystal hangs onto the bottom of a sunset-orange serandite (price: \$350).



Serandite, 2 cm, from Mont St.-Hilaire, Québec, Canada. Dave Bunk Minerals specimen and photo.

Andy Seibel of *Andy Seibel Minerals* (andyseibel.com) has come onto 17 loose single crystals of **aquamarine** from the “Xuan Le mine,” Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam. These sharp, pellucid Vietnamese aquamarines have been out on the general market for a while now, but these of Andy’s look to be top-of-the-line. A locality correction is, however, in order: according to an authoritative 2011 article by L.T. Huong *et al.* in *Gems & Gemology*, the source of these crystals is a digging in profoundly weathered pegmatite called the Doi Ty mine, and Xuan Le is the name of a nearby village. Anyway, Andy’s crystals are all terminated on at least one end by large basal pinacoid and small pyramid faces, and some are doubly terminated; they show very minimal damage and are of a healthy, rich blue (Andy calls it “windex blue”), and are totally gemmy; some are thicker than others but all look clean and free of distracting damage. The smaller, thicker crystal shown below is priced at \$350, the longer, thinner, apparently quite flawless one at \$1200.



Aquamarine beryl, 3.5 cm, from the Doi Ty mine near Xuan Le village, Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam. Andy Seibel Minerals specimen and photo.



Aquamarine beryl, 1.8 cm, from the Doi Ty mine near Xuan Le village, Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam. Andy Seibel Minerals specimen and photo.

In an earlier online report I passed on word that John Betts of New York City and of *John Betts Fine Minerals* was soon to retire from the mineral business...but there he was at the Munich Show talking about a “somewhat delayed” retirement, and here he still is on his excellent website (johnbetts-fineminerals-com), where minerals from the northeastern United States are most prominent among his offerings. John has now begun a new page on his site to market specimens of natrolite, apophyllite, datolite, pectolite, prehnite and other zeolite and zeolite-associated minerals from the Millington quarry, Bernards Township, Somerset County, New Jersey. Millington is a basalt quarry on northern New Jersey’s Third Watchung Mountain which, unlike other and similar quarries nearby, did not produce significant mineral specimens until a period of major expansion began in the late 1980s. But work at the quarry ceased in 2010, and Millington specimens are very sparse on the market today. The rosette-shaped aggregate of **apophyllite** shown here comes from the Frank Imbriacco III collection; it was collected in December 2005 and is priced very affordably at \$38. The big specimen of **pectolite** (with minor associations of apophyllite and pyrite) is typical Millington quarry material and is priced at \$225. For a good account of the locality, see the article by Breck P. Kent and Bill Butkowski in the September-October 2000 issue of our magazine.



Apophyllite, 3.5 cm, from the Millington quarry, Bernards Township, Somerset County, New Jersey. Ex Frank Imbriacco III collection. John Betts Fine Minerals specimen and photo.



Pectolite, 15 cm, from the Millington quarry, Bernards Township, Somerset County, New Jersey. John Betts Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

The Webmineralshop (www.webmineralshop.com) is an Italian dealership now debuting specimens from a very recent find of **fluorite** on Monte San Calógero, Sicily, Italy. This small mountain is in western Sicily and near the northern coast, and the views from its peak are said to be grand, but so far I haven't learned whether the fluorite specimens come from a mine on the mountain or simply from an outcrop, or what the geologic setting may be, but it *is* clear that the fluorite is fairly attractive, occurring as translucent to transparent, pale blue-gray to deep blue cubic crystals to 4 cm on edge. *The Webmineralshop* has posted ten miniature to small-cabinet-size crystal groups.



Fluorite, 8 cm, from Monte San Calógero, Sicily, Italy. The Webmineralshop specimen and photo.

The hydrated copper sulfate **kobyashevite**, a member of the devilline group, occurs solely as greenish microcrystals and encrustations on other minerals; specimens found recently in the Ojuela mine, Mapimí, Durango, Mexico were at first misidentified as atacamite. But another, even more recent find in the same mine—probably in October 2018—produced interesting-looking specimens of this unpromising mineral, and Isaias Casanova of *IC Minerals* (icminerals.com) has latched onto the best 20 or so of the total haul of about 70 pieces. The kobyashevite forms jungle-green to turquoise-blue crusts on scalenohedral crystals of calcite, and the secret of these specimens’ aesthetic success is that they show ethereal coatings of tiny, delicate, colorless, prismatic gypsum crystals over the kobyashevite. Isaias is not showing his kobyashevite/gypsum specimens on his website, since he is unwilling to try to ship such delicate items, but here is a picture of one of his finest and prettiest—just so you know.



Kobyashevite on calcite with gypsum, 6 cm, from the Ojuela mine, Mapimí, Durango, Mexico. IC Minerals specimen; Isaias Casanova photo.

Rob Lavinsky’s *The Arkenstone* (irocks.com) has an October 10 “Mixed Minerals” update with plenty on it to attract the attention of the discerning. For one thing, there are three thumbnails of **stolzite** from what probably can be called the world’s best locality for the rare lead tungstate: the Ste.-Lucie mine, St. Léger-de-Peyre, Lozère, France (see the relevant article, with stories of collecting by teams of adventurous Frenchmen, in

January-February 2011). The Ste.-Lucie mine is now hopelessly closed to collecting, and its stolzite specimens thus can only go from rare to even rarer. Rob's three groups of bladed, caramel-colored crystals (resembling wulfenite) come from finds in the 1990s and were once in the Paul Zerfass collection; for the one shown here, Rob asks \$1200.



Stolzite, 3 cm, from the Ste.-Lucie mine, St. Léger-de-Peyre, Lozère Department, France. Ex Paul Zerfass collection. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.

Another standout on Arkenstone’s “Mixed Minerals” update is an old Charlie Key specimen of the purple variety of tremolite which has long been called “**hexagonite**” and which has been found only in the Gouverneur Talc Company mine, Fowler, St. Lawrence County, New York. This beautiful specimen shows a single, translucent to transparent, deep lavender crystal of “hexagonite” standing straight up on a matrix of pale lavender tremolite schist, the specimen as a whole measuring more than 15 cm. Rob writes that “We do not know of a comparable USA specimen” of the material—and, for what it’s worth, neither do I; this is a wonderful Old Classic, priced at \$10,000.



Tremolite, variety hexagonite, 15.4 cm, from the Gouverneur Talc Company mine, Fowler, St. Lawrence County, New York. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.

Not to be outdone in the “attract the attention of the discerning” department, Kevin Downey of *Well Arranged Molecules* (wellarrangedmolecules.com) has posted a “Late Summer 2018” update showing 118 specimens—15 pages—including both snazzy contemporary material and fine Old Classics. One contemporary piece, typifying the intricate, interesting aesthetics of so much of Kevin’s stock, is this **stibnite/calcite** from the Xikuangshan mine, Lengshuijian Prefecture, Hunan Province, China. Chinese (and other) dealers of late have been offering small, i.e. mostly thumbnail-size, specimens wherein pale yellow, flattened rhombohedrons of calcite are impaled by sprays of acicular crystals of stibnite, but this miniature shows both species on matrix, both with thicker crystals which largely stay out of each other’s ways, for a fine “combination” effect.



Stibnite and Calcite, 4.3 cm, from the Xikuangshan mine, Lengshuijian Prefecture, Hunan Province, China. Well-Arranged Molecules specimen and photo.

In the Old Classic category is this cabinet specimen of **inesite** from the Hale Creek mine, Mad River Rock, Trinity County, California: the specimen once belonged to the William Hladysz and Ara Dildillian collections, and Kevin opines that it is “by far the best California inesite I have seen for sale in 20 years.”



Inesite, 8.1 cm, from the Hale Creek mine, Mad River Rock, Trinity County, California. Well-Arranged Molecules specimen and photo.

And in Kevin Downey's "Late Summer 2018" update he even has a well composed—almost pretty—specimen of **richterite with magnetite** from the hallowed old iron and manganese mine at Långban, Värmland, Sweden, one of the world's most species-rich localities. Lustrous red-brown, bladed crystals of richterite to 1.6 cm compete for space in a shallow open vug with subhedral black crystals of magnetite. John Marshall acquired the specimen in 1992, but of course the piece is likely to be much older than that—and when was the last time you saw a well-crystallized and almost pretty example of *anything* from Långban?



Richterite with Magnetite, 7.2 cm, from Långban, Värmland, Sweden. Well-Arranged Molecules specimen and photo.

Here it comes: the 2019 Tucson Show

The 2019 edition of the world's biggest mineral show will be starting up soon enough, and of course the enormity of the event can be intimidating to mineral collectors: granting that such enlightened folk will lack time or much motivation to visit the 40+ shows around town devoted to gem, lapidary, fossil and you'd-be-surprised-what-other enthusiasms, they'll still want to know where the *minerals* are. Well, fortunately, there are only a few shows in Tucson which might be said to *demand* the time and attention of serious mineral collectors (as well as of hard-working show reporters). A brief listing of them is offered here, in chronological order by starting dates:

The Arizona Mineral & Fossil Show: January 31 – February 13. Formerly run by Marty Zinn and now run by Laura Delano of LLD Productions, Inc., this is the ever-popular “InnSuites” Show at 475 N. Granada Avenue at St. Mary’s. (The former InnSuites hotel has been called the Hotel Tucson City Center for some years now, and of course everyone goes on happily calling it the InnSuites.) Under the same management as this show are two other sub-shows with miscellaneous wares, but by far the main event is the convocation of mineral dealers in rooms around the hotel courtyard with its orange trees, volleyball court, swimming pool, and umbrageous dinosaur models. The ballroom at the hotel will open its doors to showgoers on January 31; official show hours are 10 – 6 daily; admission and parking are free. See the full-page ad in November-December 2018.

The “Showcase” building at the 22nd Street Show, I-10 and 22nd Street: January 31 – February 17. Experience the main part of Lowell Carhart’s 22nd Street Show in its quarter-mile-long white tent all you like, but a separate, smaller, higher-end shopping experience will be available in another tent (with yellow gables), where a few serious mineral dealers will share the wall-to-wall-carpeted space with equally serious gem, jewelry and fossil dealers. Admission is free but parking costs \$3 on weekdays and \$5 on weekends. See the full-page ad in November-December 2018.

The Mineral City Show: February 1 – 11. This show, organized by Graham Sutton, is having its debut in 2019; it will happen at 516 W. Lester Street. I can’t offer comments on it because I haven’t yet seen it, because it’s brand-new, but, as the full-page ad in November-December 2018 makes clear, its 19 dealerships include some well-known heavyweights. Daily hours will be 10 – 6, and the ad assures us that there will be “ample parking.”

The Just Minerals Show: February 3 – 5. This small but exciting show will happen, as in previous years, at Elks Lodge 385, 1800 North Oracle Road. As its name is careful to specify, the show hosts *only* mineral dealers—about eight well-known ones, reliably loaded with fine minerals in nearly all price categories. Admission and parking are free, but the small parking lot will be jammed, as will be, in fact, the whole space of the show, during the first few hours of the first day of the three-day run. But what you find with the dealers could easily make up for any agoraphobia, and there’s a bar and snack area to retreat to.

The Tucson New Mineral Show: February 5 – 11. This will be Marcus Origlieri’s third year staging this show, which will take place where it did last year (but not in its first year): 1102 West Grant Road. Marcus has put together a rather eclectic collection of dealerships (including his own), and, in my experience, many good bargains and out-of-the-way items are to be found in the small complex of adjoining tents. Admission is free; daily hours are 10 – 5.

The Fine Mineral Show at Westward Look: February 8 – 11. Dave Waisman continues to run this Tucson incarnation of his Fine Mineral Show gatherings of high-end



dealers, offering fabulous things to sophisticated, mostly well-heeled collectors. The site is the Westward Look Resort at 245 East Ina Road, on the northern edge of the city, amid lovely desert prospects. And don't forget the Saturday morning display of a major collection, or part of one, in the main lobby; and consider attending, too, the Sunday evening "social hour" and guest lectures. I might also point out that the *Mineralogical Record* will have its only non-TGMS space at this show, so be sure to drop in for a chat and see what rare issues may have turned up via recent donations and warehouse discoveries.

The 65th Annual Tucson Gem and Mineral Show: February 14 – 17. This is, of course, the historical Big Daddy, the Grand Culmination, the Climactic Pinnacle, the (...well, you get the idea) of all the rest: the "Main Show" at the Tucson Convention Center—see the ad in November-December 2018. The show is a multiplex giant, with about 250 retail dealers, lectures, a microminerals room, programs for kids, and (making it unique among Tucson's various shows) the country's most prestigious display competitions, and a vastness of world-class non-competitive exhibits devoted in large part to a prevailing theme. This year's theme, likely to be of special interest to Arizonans, is "Wulfenite is Loved" (did you know that the state legislature recently made wulfenite the State Mineral?). Neither admission to the Main Show nor parking in its big lot is free.

Here's wishing everyone a happy holiday season.

Tom Moore

