

# What's New in the Mineral World?



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As usual there's plenty to see on the web. And so, Christmas shoppers, let's check out some small part of—

## What's New Online

The Spanish dealership of *MCh Minerals* ([mchminerals.com](http://mchminerals.com)) has an October 2019 posting which features nine resplendent miniatures of **vivianite** from a late 2018/early 2019 discovery in the big open-pit Rosia Poieni copper mine, Mușca, Alba, Romania. Anton Watzl brought about 15 of these specimens to the 2019 Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show in June, and maybe a dozen dealers had the material again at the 2019 Munich Show in October, but Romanian vivianites were *not* evident at the Denver Show in September, implying that the material had not yet reached the New World. Well, probably it will show up in February at the Tucson Show, and everyone then will know that the best specimens seriously rival the best of the Bolivian vivianites that we've been seeing for years.

The thick prisms of sleek, lustrous, transparent sea-green vivianite from the Rosia Poieni mine either form jackstraw clusters, many with pale gray breccia fragments in randomly adhering bits, or else they have come out as loose, well terminated singles. The specimen shown immediately below, with the splayed end on the major crystal which somehow helps rather than harms the aesthetics, is marked "sold"...but wait! a couple of others just as fine or even finer are up for sale on the November 2019 *MCh Minerals* update, and one of these, priced at 340 Euros ( $\approx$  \$375) is also shown below.





**Vivianite, 5.5 cm, from the Rosia Poieni mine, Muşca, Alba, Romania. *MCh Minerals* specimen and photo.**



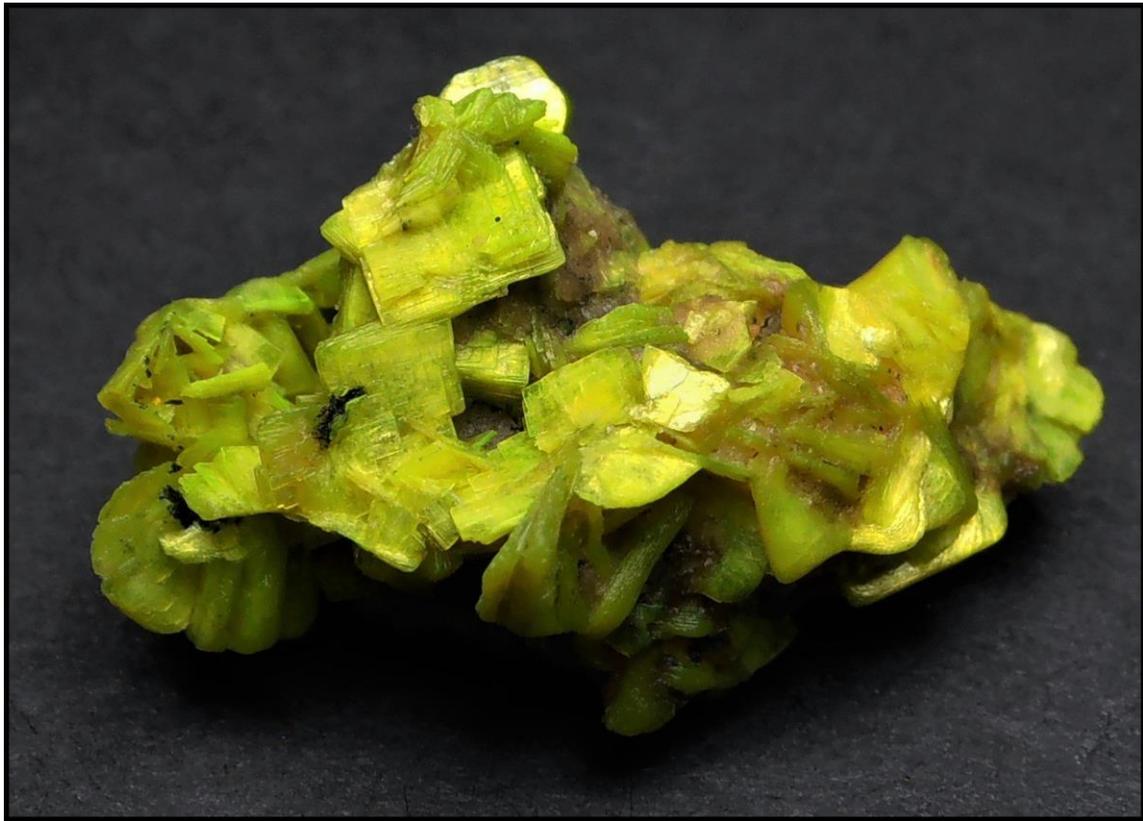
**Vivianite, 5 cm, from the Rosia Poieni mine, Muşca, Alba, Romania. *MCh Minerals* specimen and photo.**

Another Spanish dealer, the redoubtable Jordi Fabre of *Fabre Minerals* (fabreminerals.com), has a “Post-Munich 2019 update” in which he offers five newly mined specimens of **eudidymite** from Mt. Malosa, Malawi. I can say “newly mined” because Jordi had the same specimens in a flat under his table at Munich, but he had *just* acquired them and hadn’t had time to clean them, and their sort of linty appearance evoked the way a slow-waker-upper feels in the early morning before the first cup of coffee. Now, though, the specimens have been rendered fairly attractive, with parallel groups of translucent milky white, doubly terminated, bladed eudidymite crystals to 3 cm—very large for this rare species—resting on tight sprays of lustrous black, thin-prismatic aegirine crystals. In size the specimens range from 2.9 to 6.6 cm; the 4.4-cm example here costs \$595.



**Eudidymite with Aegirine, 4.4 cm, from Mt. Malosa, Malawi. *Fabre Minerals* specimen and photo.**

The report on the 2019 Tucson Show (in May-June 2019) featured news of a little-known Chinese occurrence of **autunite**: the Nanjingqiao deposit near Pinjiang, Hunan Province, where “quartz vein-type uranium mineralization [occurs] in the contact zone of a granite intrusion.” The autunite specimens from this deposit are excellent, showing vivid yellow-green, foliated “books” in loose clusters, much like those from Washington and Brazil—but only one dealer at the 2019 Tucson Show had examples. Now, though, the website of *Boren and King Minerals* (borenandkingminerals.com) offers two fine thumbnails, the better of which, shown below, costs just \$30. We should be on the lookout for more autunite and other radioactive items from (watch that spelling!) Nanjingqiao.



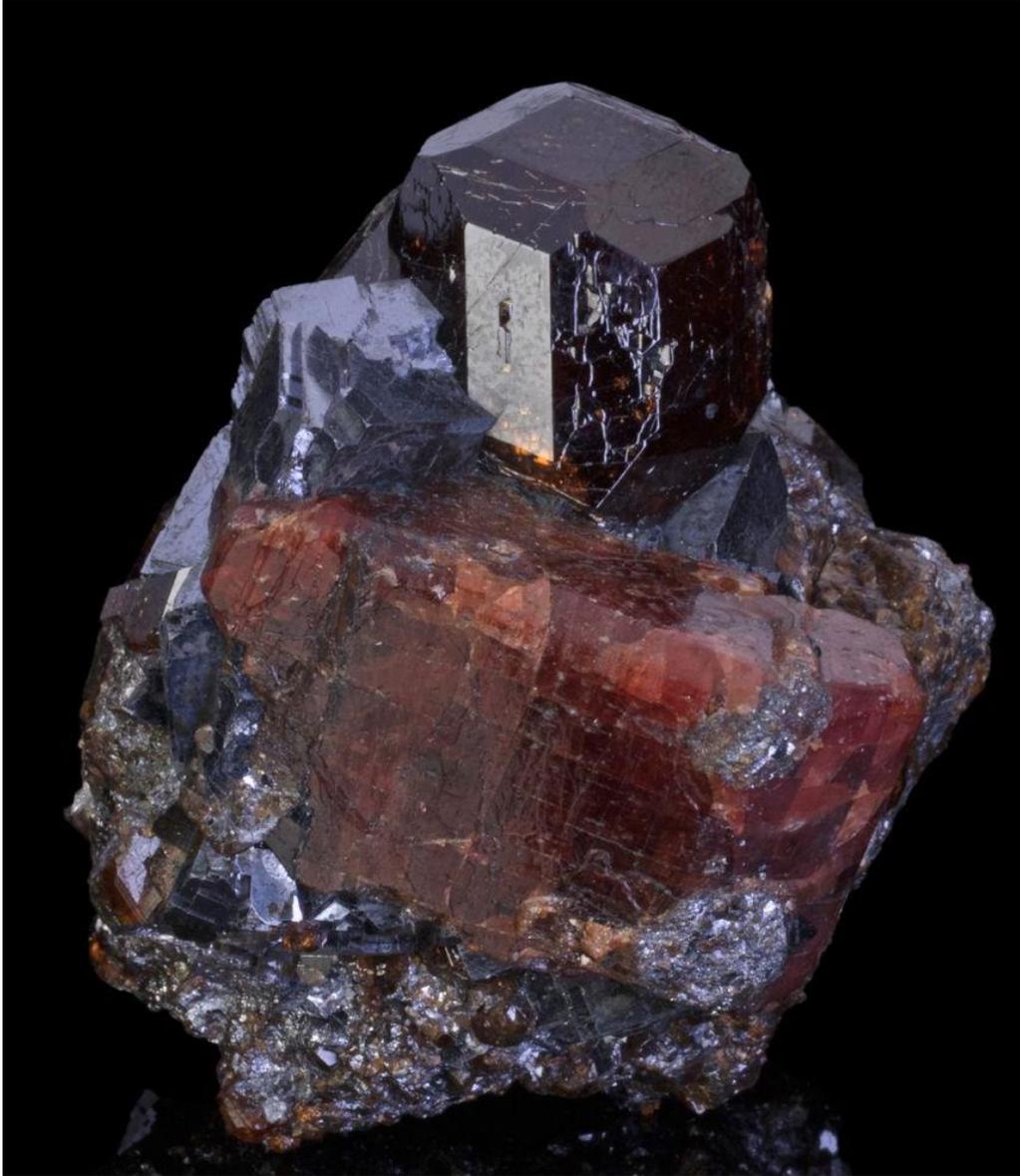
**Autunite, 2.6 cm, from the Nanjingqiao deposit, Pingjiang County, Yueyang, Hunan, China. *Boren and King Minerals* specimen and photo.**

In the November-December 2019 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, a short article by Len Pisciotta describes a June 2018 discovery of white to colorless **grossular** in clay-filled pockets in an outcrop of serpentine near the W.L. Stifle Claim, Georgetown, El Dorado County, California. The individual trapezohedral grossular crystals are small (between 1 and 5 mm), and they clump in lustrous white masses, lacking associated species, in sizes that reach 15 cm. Microprobe analyses have shown that this garnet is close to pure endmember grossular, and the specimens, lacking fluorescence-inhibiting iron, glow pink-orange under longwave ultraviolet light. Among the first web dealers to have latched onto this material is Mike Keim of *Marin Mineral* (marinmineral.com), who has a November 22 offering of 34 specimens, thumbnail to cabinet size, all of which are

simple, loose clusters of the white grossular crystals. The prettiest of them, I think, are the thumbnails, in which small contexts the individual 2 or 3-mm crystals don't seem so terribly small themselves. The 3-cm example shown here is already marked "sold," and its price was just \$40.



**Grossular, 3 cm, from the Stifle Memorial claim, Georgetown, El Dorado County, California. *Marin Mineral* specimen and photo.**



Spessartine and Rhodonite, 5.6 cm, from Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia. *The Arkenstone* specimen and photo.

Rob Lavinsky of *The Arkenstone* (irocks.com) has bought part of Rob Sielecki's private collection of classic old specimens from Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia, and now he has posted a page of typical to very unusual Broken Hill pieces of miniature through cabinet size. The sharp crystals of **spessartine** and **rhodonite** in the 5.6-cm group (\$3,000) might be called "typical" for the locality, but much less familiar-looking are the blocky to elongated, dark green crystals of **hedenbergite** in a 5.2-cm cluster (\$4,500) and the sharp metallic crystal of **löllingite** partially embedded in a 4.2-cm matrix (\$1,250). Will *more* such fine Broken Hill oldies from the Sielecki collection appear in a future *Arkenstone* update?



Hedenbergite, 5.2 cm, from Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia. *The Arkenstone* specimen and photo.



Löllingite, 4.2 cm, from Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia. *The Arkenstone* specimen and photo.

In these online reports I've frequently had occasion to note the extensive website of *John Betts Fine Minerals* ([johnbetts-fineminerals.com](http://johnbetts-fineminerals.com)). John has recently spoken of his impending retirement from the mineral business, but as of now he still seems to be going strong, with weekly updates of "mixed" minerals (heavy on items from the northeastern U.S.), among which there are often pleasant surprises. From a December 3 update, one such surprise is a winning specimen of **wavellite** from what John calls a "rediscovered lost locality"—and, no, I've never heard of the locality with the rollicking name of Ballybunnion, in County Kerry, Republic of Ireland. Little spheres composed of radiating acicular crystals of bluish green wavellite are all over the matrix, the surfaces of the spheres glittering with reflections from terminal faces of the tiny crystals. You could pick up this rare example of Irish wavellite for \$325.



Wavellite, 4.5 cm, from Ballybunnion, County Kerry, Ireland. *John Betts Fine Minerals* specimen and photo.

John Betts also offers a 10-cm specimen of golden orange-yellow, twinned, silkily lustrous **calcite** from the Roosevelt Avenue quarry (also called the York Stone quarry) within the city limits of York, Pennsylvania. This beautiful brute of a calcite specimen was collected ca. 1992 by famous Pennsylvania collector Bryon Brookmyer (who won the Carnegie Award a few years ago); John asks \$500 for it, and currently there are more, almost as good, on his site.



**Calcite, 10 cm, from the Roosevelt Avenue quarry, York, Pennsylvania. *John Betts Fine Minerals* specimen and photo.**

Many Greek field collectors today are adept at digging whatever they can from the labyrinthine underground mine workings at Laurium, Attika, Greece—some of these workings being left over from ancient mining for silver, especially during the Greek “golden age” of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C., others being results of a period of French mining, ca. 1865 to 1975. Christos Spiromitrous of *Greek Rocks* (greekrocks.com) frequently offers new finds from Laurium, and in a November 21 posting he keeps up momentum with 27 mostly cabinet-size specimens of robin’s-egg-blue **smithsonite** taken “during the past decade” from the Sounion mines in the southern part of the district. The specimens are crusts of blue smithsonite over matrix, the best of them showing good botryoidal relief, good luster, and, naturally, appealing color. Prices are given in Euros, their dollar equivalents ranging from around \$300 to \$2,000; the 11.5-cm piece shown here, one of the biggest, costs 1,800 Euro (≈ \$2,000).



**Smithsonite, 11.5 cm, from the Sounion mines, Laurium, Attika, Greece. *Greek Rocks* specimen and photo.**

Jeff Fast of *Mineral Movies* (mineralmovies.com) likes **quartz**, and his dealership is so named because he also likes to show his quartz (and other) specimens slowly turning, all of their facets seductively flashing, on rotating stands. In a recent update he has some flashy miniatures recently dug from a site called Area 51, Diamond Acres, Fonda, New York, with individual Herkimer-type quartz crystals set lightly on beds of smaller (not quite small enough to be “drusy”) quartz crystals over matrix. The specimen shown here is priced at \$125: a great deal of beauty for not many bucks.



Quartz, 4.7 cm, from Area 51, Diamond Acres, Fonda, New York. *Mineral Movies* specimen and photo.

Below is a giant Chinese quartz specimen, beautiful also but in a quite different way—an elongated cluster of crystals with very heavy inclusions of hematite, the whole thing lustrous and deep red as blood or war, from Yuncheng, Shanxi Province, China, priced at \$450.



Quartz with Hematite inclusions, 22 cm, from Yuncheng, Shanxi, China. *Mineral Movies* specimen and photo.

A goodly number of new, miniature to cabinet-size specimens of **molybdenite** from the Pine Creek mine, Annex claims, Bishop district, Inyo County, California now inhabit the site of Jack Crowley's *The Crystal Mine* (crystal-mine.com). In general these specimens are massive mixtures of many minerals, the molybdenite forming lenses and veins in chowdery-looking lumps of andradite, epidote, quartz, powellite and no doubt

other species as well. In the better pieces the molybdenite comes nicely into its own, appearing as rosette-shaped aggregates of platy crystals to 2 cm which stand up and out, surrounded by smaller rosettes, from the many-hued masses.



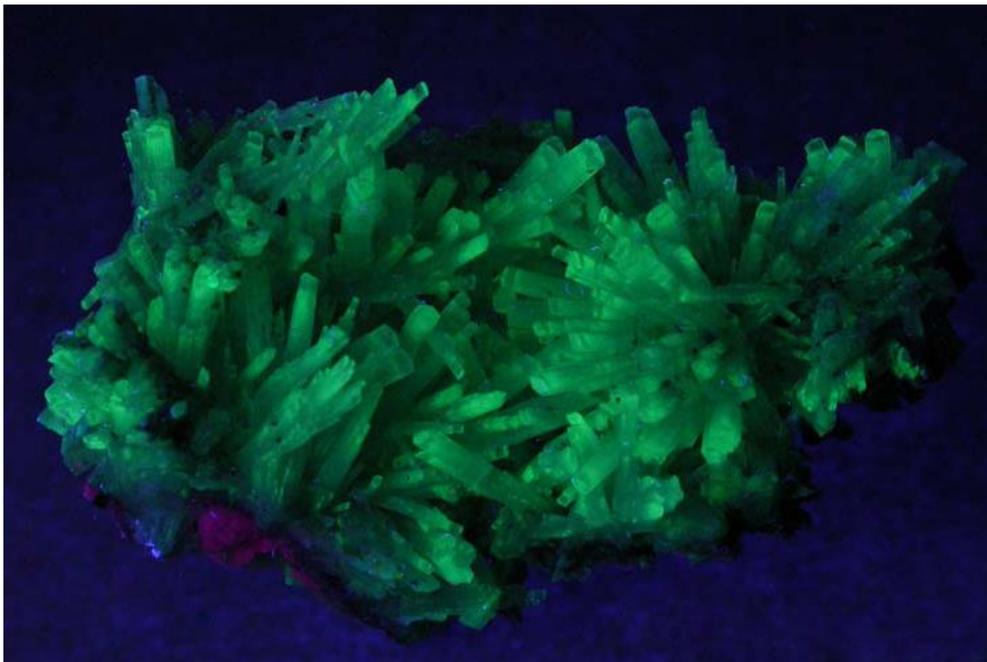
**Molybdenite, 4 cm, from the Pine Creek mine, Annex claims, Bishop district, Inyo County, California. *The Crystal Mine* specimen and photo.**

What would a What's-New report be without something new from Mont St.-Hilaire, Quebec? Well, according to a note by Ray McDougall on the *McDougall Minerals* site ([mcdougallminerals.com](http://mcdougallminerals.com)), "For a long period dating back over 10 years, MSH was completely closed to collecting, and although it remains closed to general collecting (with only limited controlled access), happily, the company is [now] actively coordinating to allow the preservation of specimens once again." And some first-rate new **natrolite** specimens, Ray goes on, "are from one such recent collecting effort," and Ray has shared the spoils from that effort with David K. Joyce ([davidkjoyceminerals.com](http://davidkjoyceminerals.com)). Natrolite from St.-Hilaire is not new, but these specimens, available on both websites just mentioned, may well represent the best of the species yet found in the St.-Hilaire quarries. Translucent to transparent white, lustrous, long-prismatic natrolite crystals make sprays approaching 5 cm long, some of the specimens being single, loose sprays while

other, bigger examples are jackstraw groups of such sprays. This natrolite is highly fluorescent, glowing ghostly green in shortwave ultraviolet light. The David K. Joyce specimen shown here (twice: in sunlight and in ultraviolet) is the largest that either dealer offers; David asks \$160 for it.



**Natrolite, 7.8 cm, from Mont St.-Hilaire, Quebec.  
*David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.***



**Same specimen as above, in shortwave ultraviolet light.**

Kevin Ward's *Exceptional Minerals* website ([exceptionalminerals.com](http://exceptionalminerals.com)) is always delightful to browse through, as it offers big, sharp, gorgeous photos of mostly—yes—*exceptional* mineral specimens. His favorites are native elements and silver species, but nevertheless the site typically offers quite “mixed” selections, with pieces from odd localities, many antique classics, many species showing unusual habits and/or associations, and gem-crystal treats aplenty.

Go to the website, and one of the first things you'll see will be a box marked "The Mineral Gallery and Exceptional Minerals...50% off...Best Offer Showroom." Yes, half-prices apply ("or nearly half-prices for golds and silvers") to everything in the three pages of this Showroom. Kevin provides updates every two weeks—taking out what's been sold, putting in what's new—and thus the Showroom is worth frequent visits, as much, I'd say, for the beautiful photos as for the keystone bargains and "best offer" opportunities. Here I show you four specimens currently in the Showroom, to give you some sense of the medley of fine, often unusual things you can find there.



**Sulfur, 5.7 cm, from Enna (Castrogiovanni), Sicily, Italy. *Exceptional Minerals* specimen and photo.**



**Galena/Sphalerite/Chalcopyrite, 7.7 cm, from the Commodore mine, Creede, Mineral County, Colorado. *Exceptional Minerals* specimen and photo.**



**Copper, 5.7 cm, from the Mountain City mine, Elko County, Nevada. *Exceptional Minerals* specimen and photo.**



**Forsterite variety Peridot, 6 cm, from Sapat Gali, Kohistan district, North West Frontier Provinces, Pakistan. *Exceptional Minerals* specimen and photo.**

Note that the Sicilian **sulfur** crystals are all of *tabular* habit (ever seen that before?); that the Commodore mine **galena/sphalerite/chalcopyrite** is a remarkable stunner for what it is; that the **native copper**, which Kevin says “came out several decades ago,” is from a mine in Nevada (fine crystallized copper from Nevada??); and that the Pakistani **peridot** specimen is a *group* of crystals *on matrix*, as opposed to the loose, partial single crystals we’re used to seeing from this occurrence.

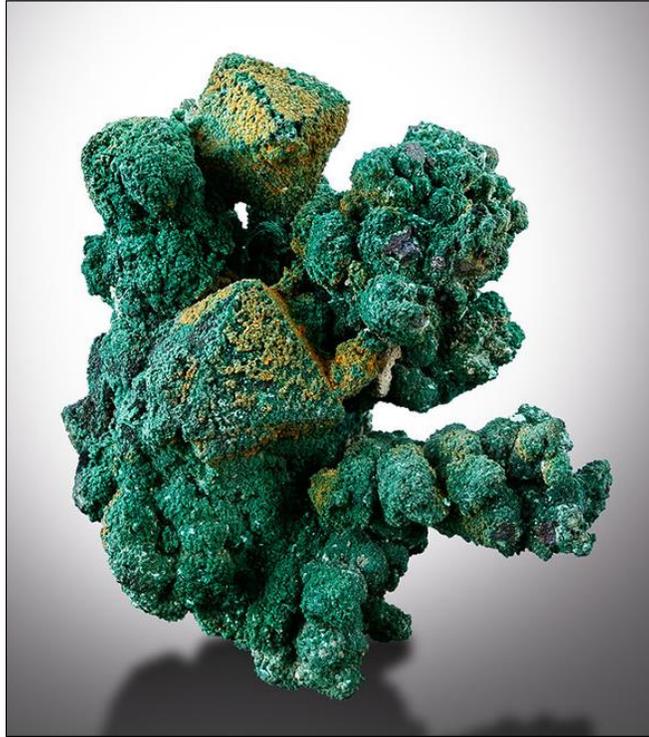
I planned this report to conclude with *three* groups of miscellaneous killers, and here is the second. Two Austrians, Martin Grüll and Robert Kunze, are in charge of *Via Mineralia* ([viamineralia.com](http://viamineralia.com)), and so it's not surprising that when you click on the "Austria" menu on this site you find first-rate things—sixteen in all. For me the most winning is a 7-cm floater **epidote** specimen from the great classic locality of Knappenwand, Untersulzbachtal, in the Hohe Tauern region of Salzburg state, with sturdy prismatic epidote crystals in parallel growth. This specimen shows more spectacular pleochroism than I'd have thought epidote crystals this large could be capable of...but, you see, the crystals despite their thickness are transparent, so even a static shot taken with normal illumination shows yellow-green and red-brown colors traversing the whole in shimmering shafts. This amazing specimen is priced at 6,000 Euros ( $\approx$  \$6,600).



**Epidote, 7 cm, from Knappenwand, Untersulzbachtal, Salzburg, Austria. *Via Mineralia* specimen and photo.**

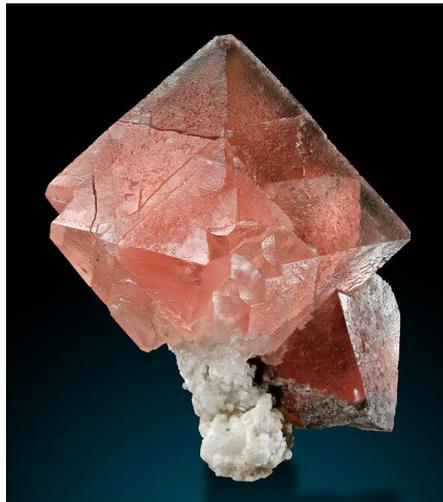
On *Via Mineralia* there is also a very well stocked "Europe" selection, in which we find a quite classy miniature of **malachite after cuprite** from Rudabánya, Borsod-Abauj-Zemplen County, Hungary (for a thorough article on this locality see the March-April 2001 issue). A first generation of malachite makes crude, fuzzy memories of former

cuprite crystals, but a second malachite wave does a much better job of preserving two large cuprite octahedrons. This specimen costs 1,500 Euros ( $\approx$  \$1,650).



**Malachite after Cuprite, 4.5 cm, from Rudabánya, Borsod-Abauj-Zemplén County, Hungary. Via *Mineralia* specimen and photo.**

To top off the *Via Mineralia* tasting, here's a small miniature of Alpine **pink fluorite**, a 3.4-cm matrix specimen from the Göscheneralp, Uri, Switzerland with a fine pink octahedral fluorite crystal about 2.5 cm on edge perched just right on a shard of white feldspar: price 1,140 Euros ( $\approx$  \$1,250).



**Fluorite, 3.4 cm, from Göscheneralp, Uri, Switzerland. Via *Mineralia* specimen and photo.**

Finally I come to Athos Locatelli's unusual *Minservice* website ([mins-service.com](http://mins-service.com)), really a group undertaking by a consortium of Italian dealers—from this single site you can shop from *Minservice* itself or from *GMineral*, *Rolando Minerals*, *Silvia's Crystals*, *Ferrero's Minerals*, *Cultminerals* [!] and *RMF* ["Rolando Mineral Friends"] *Minerals*. Upon a recent visit I found myself most impressed by the offerings of *Ferrero's Minerals*, a dealership run by Fabrizio and Luca Ferrero, who, they explain, have been collecting minerals since 1984 and dealing in them since 2000, "but each of us has his own collection." The three pages of a September *Ferrero's* update lays its heaviest emphases on Italian classics and on very rare species (and of course on rare species which *also* are Italian classics), but minerals from elsewhere in Europe are well represented, and there's a sprinkling of contemporary worldwide material. Many of these items are remarkably fine, and most of their prices (I'd say) remarkably low. Not all of the Italian classics are even one-of-a-kind; for instance, the Ferreros recently came into what they call a "small stash" of seven old matrix **anglesite** specimens from Monteponi, Sardinia, with sharp, lustrous, cloudy white anglesite crystals to 1 cm on massive galena matrix; the 8.7-cm example shown here costs just 200 Euros (≈ \$240).



Anglesite on Galena, 8.7 cm, from Monteponi, Sardinia, Italy. *Ferrero's Minerals* specimen and photo.

...and we'd be lucky to find a loose 3-cm crystal of Monteponi **phosgenite** as good as this one for a price comparable to the Ferreros' 370 Euros ( $\approx$  \$410).



**Phosgenite, 3 cm, from Monteponi, Sardinia, Italy. Ferrero's Minerals specimen and photo.**

The long-gone Destrucella mine, Raddusa, Sicily once produced the loose, dull black octahedral floater crystals of **hauerite** which the site justly calls "great classics of Italian mineralogy," and the 1.5-cm example that the Ferreros offer for 330 Euros ( $\approx$  \$365) is a very sharp octahedron with little cube faces slicing off all the points.



**Hauerite, 1.5 cm, from the Destrucella mine, Raddusa, Sicily, Italy. Ferrero's Minerals specimen and photo.**

One more. The single most expensive specimen in the Ferreros' listing—at 1,700 Euros ( $\approx$  \$1,900), and withal a *bargain*—is a miniature of the Pb-Sb-Au telluride **nagyágite**, which is for all practical purposes a one-locality species, and that a very old, extinct locality too—Sacarîmb, Hunedoara County, Romania. I'm pretty sure that this nagyágite specimen is the best I have ever seen: Romanian nagyágite crystals are typically leafy and millimetric, but here we have thick, solid-looking, platy crystals to 1.1 cm filling most of a matrix of just the right size, with just the right margins around the crystal areas—and with quartz crystals on there too. Yes, all right, nagyágite is dull gray, and this specimen wouldn't impress your sweet old great aunt too much, but it's a splendid thing nevertheless, and makes for a good concluding image for this survey.



Nagyágite, 4.5 cm, from Sacarîmb, Hunedoara County, Romania. *Ferrero's Minerals* specimen and photo.

**Here comes Tucson!**

In 2020 the *Mineralogical Record* will observe its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the oversized (272 pages!) January-February issue will be entirely devoted to Arizona mineral localities and Arizona mineral-collecting history. As a free bonus, subscribers will also receive a second Arizona Collectors Supplement, devoted, like the first one, to collectors and collections in this very mineral-rich and mineral-friendly state—watch your mailbox. *Mineralogical Record* staff members therefore may be feeling more than usually boisterous as we look in on the many venues of the upcoming “Tucson Gem, Mineral and Fossil Showcase”—known more familiarly to the mineral-minded as “the Tucson Show.”

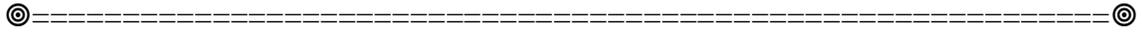
As veteran showgoers are well aware, there’s an almost dizzying number of places around town where mineral specimens may be shopped for during the last days of January and the first half of February; for example there are (and the list is by no means exhaustive) the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Show, the Pueblo Show, the Just Minerals Show, and perhaps even the Executive Inn Show of yore, which last year showed promising signs of rebirth. Here, though, I’ll direct your attention specifically to what could be called the Big Four:

*The Arizona Mineral & Fossil Show* at the Hotel City Center (still called the InnSuites Show by just about everybody) will run from February 1 to February 15 at 475 North Granada Avenue. But this will be the *last* year when this very popular show will be held at that address: note the ads which will run in our magazine in 2020 describing the spiffy new site where the old “InnSuites” gathering will relocate starting in 2021.

*The Fine Mineral Show* is at the Westward Look Resort at 245 East Ina Road, on the northern fringe of the city. Dave Waisman will stage his event between Friday February 7 and Monday February 10. This “elite” show will make its usual, special appeal to high-end shoppers, but everyone else will also be welcome, of course, to spend part of a weekend ogling the many fantastic minerals which Dave’s small but faithful gaggle of dealers will bring to town.

*The 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Tucson Gem and Mineral Show* at the Tucson Convention Center, presented by the Tucson Gem and Mineral Society, will be open to the public from Thursday February 13 through Sunday February 16. This is the accustomed grand climax to the entirety of the “Showcase,” and the best venue in which to take in lectures and to see superb displays put in by museums and private collectors from all over the world. The show’s two themes in 2020 will be “world-class minerals” (surely *that* opens up possibilities!) and the *Mineralogical Record*’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

I have saved for last a quick note about a very *new* mineral show that, after a somewhat muddy, under-construction beginning in 2019, will have greatly expanded in 2020, bidding fair to become a major magnet for mineral collectors: the *Mineral City Show* at 516 West Lester Street, open from January 31 to February 15. In its first year this show had only about a dozen dealers in a single building, and some of the rooms in *that* building were not yet ready for occupancy. But the year 2020 will see a *Mineral City area* on West Lester Street, with three finished buildings, plenty of parking space, and 54 dealers, some starting new outposts here while also maintaining old ones at InnSuites.



(The *Mineralogical Record* also will have a new presence at Mineral City while still manning tables at the Westward Look and TGMS Shows). And take note: the Mineral City Show will host opening, mid-show and after-show *parties* at the location, by way of celebrating Graham Sutton's (expected) success in staging and managing the whole complex business. For more information on Mineral City, consult [www.Mineralcityshow@gmail.com](mailto:www.Mineralcityshow@gmail.com).

**And a happy holiday season to all!**

**Tom Moore**

