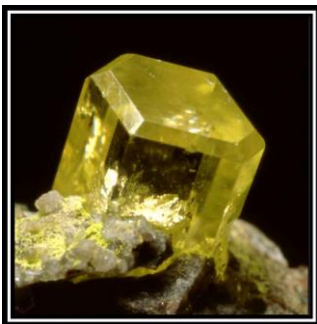
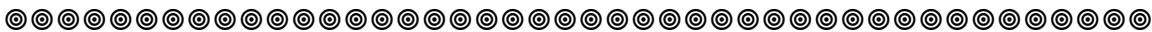


What's New in the Mineral World?



Report #55
March 30, 2020

by **Thomas P. Moore**
The Mineralogical
Record
TPMoore1@cox.net

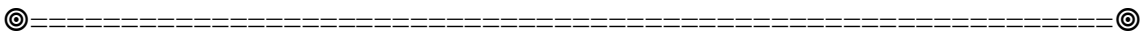


So you say you have to stay home and “shelter in place” for as long as the covid-19 pandemic lasts? Then why not spend some of that otherwise glum indoor time gazing at beautiful, virus-free, mineral images on your desktop computer? All right, some mineral shows you might normally have attended in upcoming weeks or months will be canceled, but you can still shop on the web as you’ve done before—maybe even *more* than you’ve done before.

In the survey below I’ve steered mostly clear of what’s-new information that I picked up at the Tucson Show in February, since you’ll read about much of *that* in my magazine report coming out in May. But, of course, there are some new things which didn’t show up in Tucson, and some of the websites noted below have splendid one-of-a-kind, both of new and of old-classic types. Also I’m pleased to say that three of the dealerships featured in this online report have never been featured in any of the 54 earlier online reports. Check it out...

On The Web

On page 334 of the March-April 2018 issue of the *Mineralogical Record* you’ll find Christi Cramer’s excellent photo of an excellent thumbnail-size **azurite** specimen from the Christiana mine, Laurium, Attika, Greece, which I acquired at the 2017 Munich Show. The person from whom I acquired it is Christos Spiromitros of *Greek Rocks* (greekrocks.com)—a website which regularly features minerals from Greece generally and from the ancient Laurium district especially. Some of Christos’s Laurium azurite specimens—call them the *regular* kind—show blocky, opaque medium-blue crystals in clusters and rosette-shaped aggregates. These, collected sporadically over the past decade or so, are very pretty but are no aesthetic match for the *special* specimens from the very small 2017 find in the Christiana mine which yielded the specimens seen in Munich later that year. Laurium azurites of this *special* type show very sharp, purplish-indigo-colored,



translucent to transparent, bladed crystals either rising singly from matrix, as in the example seen in the print report (and in my collection drawer), or in fan-shaped groups, as in the one shown on the next page. Christos seems to be running short on the thumbnail-size *special* specimens, but a larger specimen of the *regular* kind wouldn't do one's collection any aesthetic harm either:



Azurite, 4.2 cm, from the Christiana mine, Laurium, Attika, Greece. Greekrocks specimen and photo.



Azurite, 1.8 cm, from the Christiana mine, Laurium, Attika, Greece. Greekrocks specimen and photo.

In an early March update on his *Andy Seibel Minerals* site (andyseibel.com), Andy offers three very nice-looking loose crystals of gemmy dark orange **spessartine** from a “recent find” at a place purportedly called “Ludasi, Zambia”: a check with Mindat would seem to confirm that this is **Lundazi**, a town in Eastern Zambia Province and very near the Zambia/Malawi border. The spessartine crystals, measuring 1.9, 1.9 and 2.1 cm, are complete, very sharp trapezohedrons, with faces not mirror-lustrous but actually more interesting than that, with subtle patterns of tiny etch pits suppressing the luster but adding complexity to the way that the crystals handle light. The specimen shown here (because its picture is the best of the three on the site) is already sold; the others are priced at \$750 and \$950.



Spessartine, 1.9 cm, from Ludasi [Lundazi?], Zambia. Andy Seibel Minerals specimen and photo.

The August 10, 2019 installment of “What’s new in the mineral world” led off with some minerals, shown on Dan Weinrich’s website (weinrichmineralsinc.com), from the collection of my late friend Doug Toland, whose heirs had sold the collection to Dan. Much of that first lot of Toland Collection material handled by Dan consisted of epidote and quartz specimens which Doug and his partner Tom Hanna had been winning for many years from their diggings on Prince of Wales Island, Alaska—and now, with Doug gone and Tom Hanna retired, there was general apprehension that this renowned locality would be producing no more.

But happily it turns out that Doug had willed exclusive collecting rights on Prince of Wales Island to his two children, and one of these, Drew Toland, spent a fruitful summer of 2019 collecting (alone!) on the island, his principle finds being specimens showing sharp, lustrous black, rosette-shaped aggregates of platy crystals of **magnetite** on skarn matrix of epidote/andradite/quartz. In earlier years I’ve seen a few—only a few—Prince of Wales Island magnetite specimens of this description, unearthed by Doug and Tom at rare intervals, but the best such specimens now with Dan Weinrich exceed all past ones I’m aware of. The magnetite rosettes reach 5 cm, and the matrix specimens which are available on Dan’s site range from thumbnail to cabinet size.



Magnetite, 10 cm, from Green Monster Mountain, Prince of Wales Island, Alaska; collected by Drew Toland. Weinrich Minerals specimen and photo.

While snooping around on the *Weinrich Minerals* site I can't resist showing you also some fine things on Dan's "Our Very Best" page. First, there are a few **ludlamite** specimens from an autumn 2019 find in the Huanuni mine, Dalence Province, Oruro Department, Bolivia: these probably are the best ludlamite specimens ever seen from this long-familiar occurrence (a few others showed up, mainly with Luis Burillo, at the 2020 Tucson Show). The transparent, smoky green ludlamite crystals form fans, much thicker than usual, which stand up nicely from their matrix, looking chiseled and classy. Dan has three miniature-size examples, and you must call him to get the price for the one shown here (in other words, it's not cheap).



**Ludlamite, 7 cm, from the Huanuni mine,
Dalence, Oruro, Bolivia. Weinrich Minerals
specimen and photo.**

Also among Dan’s “Very Best” are some miniature-size specimens of **azurite-coated tetrahedrite** from the La Gardette mine, Bourg d’Oisans, Isère, France. First worked around 1720 for “rock crystal” quartz and worked again briefly in the late 18th century for gold, the La Gardette mine has been sealed shut since 2005. Nevertheless, some industrious French collectors continue to find nice quartz specimens in veins which crop out nearby, and selections of these make it every year to the Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show. The azurite/tetrahedrite specimens, of unknown age and unspecified collection history, were acquired by Dan in time for him to bring six of them to the 2019 Tucson Show (see that report in May-June 2019), and four remain for sale on the website now. The tetrahedral form of the crystals is very sharp; some specimens still have tetrahedrite beneath while in others the tetrahedrite is gone and the azurite coating is an epimorphic shell. In the “floater” example shown here a quartz crystal skewers the tetrahedrite, and malachite and goethite spots accent the bright blue of the azurite. Dan asks \$4375 for this unusual and attractive item—remember, he has three others, but he is unlikely ever to have any more.



Azurite coating tetrahedrite, 5 cm, from the La Gardette mine, Bourg d’Oisans, Isère, France. Weinrich Minerals specimen and photo.

A superstar thumbnail shown in the “Very Best” section of the Weinrich website is a brilliantly lustrous, luxuriously wormy-looking crystal group of the extremely rare **aguilarite** (Ag_4SeS), known in this quality only from its type locality, the silver-mining district of Guanajuato, Mexico (see the article on Guanajuato in September-October 2016: “Mexico VII”). This specimen is, for its size, surely among the world’s very finest agularites, and Dan asks \$4500 for it.



Aguilarite, 2.8 cm, from Guanajuato, Mexico. Weinrich Minerals specimen and photo.



“Valencianite” (adularian orthoclase), 13.6 cm, from the Valenciana mine, Guanajuato, Mexico. Cal Neva Mineral Company.

That same article in “Mexico VII” on the silver mines of Guanajuato describes the distinctive specimens of “**valencianite**” which were found, chiefly during the 1970s, lining veins and vugs which crossed masses of rich silver ore in the great Valenciana mine at Guanajuato. “Valencianite,” the local name for this style of adularian orthoclase, emerged as platy masses of sharp, wedge-shaped white crystals, and a few elite

specimens are even spotted with yellow milarite crystals. Guanajuato “valencianite,” either with or without the milarite, is almost never seen on the specimen market today—so I really want to show you some fine cabinet-size crystal plates now in Gallery 1 on the website of the *Cal Neva Mineral Company* (cnmineral.com). These are attractive plates, measuring up to 11 cm, of interlocked, slightly curved, snowy white orthoclase crystals to 3 cm individually. As a comparative sidelight the same gallery of Cal Neva also shows a nearly identical-looking plate of “valencianite” from the Silver City mining district, Owyhee County, Idaho.



“Valencianite” (adularian orthoclase), 8.7 cm, from the Silver City Mining District, Owyhee County, Idaho. Cal Neva Mineral Company.

Continuing with the theme of Mexican minerals, let’s check out the eight-page March 24 “Mexico” update on Tom Loomis’s *Dakota Matrix Minerals* website (dakotamatrix.com). Tom offers many fine miniature to cabinet-size pieces—at HQLP-level prices—from the Ojuela and Los Lamentos mines especially, including old-timers like this specimen (and two others) of **aurichalcite** such as were found during the 1950s and 1960s in the “Cumbres” area of the Ojuela mine, Mapimí, Durango. Baby-blue sprays of acicular crystals of aurichalcite to 1 cm nestle in vugs in typical brown “Ojuela” goethite.



**Aurichalcite, 6.5 cm, from the Ojuela mine, Mapimí, Durango, Mexico.
Dakota Matrix Minerals specimen and photo.**

And then there is **calcite** from the Ojuela mine, which can take many forms, but this beautiful 14-cm group of sharp, opaque chocolate-brown calcite scalenohedrons to 3 cm individually is, I think, a standout. Both this and the aurichalcite are priced at just \$75.



**Calcite, 14 cm, from the Ojuela mine, Mapimí, Durango, Mexico.
Dakota Matrix Minerals specimen and photo.**

Also in the Dakota Matrix selection is an appealing **mimetite** specimen from a locality that this reporter has never heard of before, the San Roberto mine, which Dakota Matrix places in San Luis Potosí but Mindat places in Zacatecas (maybe there are two mines names after the good Saint Robert?). Acquired, Tom Loomis writes, from the collection of Arnold Hampson, who picked it up in 1966, the specimen is an 8-cm quartz-rich matrix with bright orange, well individualized spheres of mimetite microcrystals, the spheres reaching 5 mm; Tom’s price for this one is \$250.



Mimetite, 8 cm, from the San Roberto mine, San Luis Potosí, Mexico. Dakota Matrix Minerals specimen and photo.

The *Luis Burillo Minerales* dealership, run by affable Luis Burillo of Zaragoza, Spain, is a major presence at every big mineral show, and the dealership’s extensive website (luisburillominerales.com) is worth frequent visits as well. Because I am so accustomed to inspecting Luis’s material in person at shows, I’ve never thought to mention the website in these online reports before. Check it out, and one good thing you’ll find is a good stock of topnotch **pyrite/hematite** specimens from fairly recent work in the Valle Giove area of the Rio Marina iron ore deposit on the eastern edge of the Isle of Elba, Tuscany, Italy. Ongoing collecting activities at this famous, centuries-old locality, one of the world’s best for pyrite, are still producing things like this bright, lightly striated, 5.4-cm compound-pyritohedral crystal of pyrite on massive black hematite matrix, for which Luis asks 340 Euros (~ \$375). To locate this stash of fine Elba pyrites, go to “Our Minerals, Europe.Rest.”

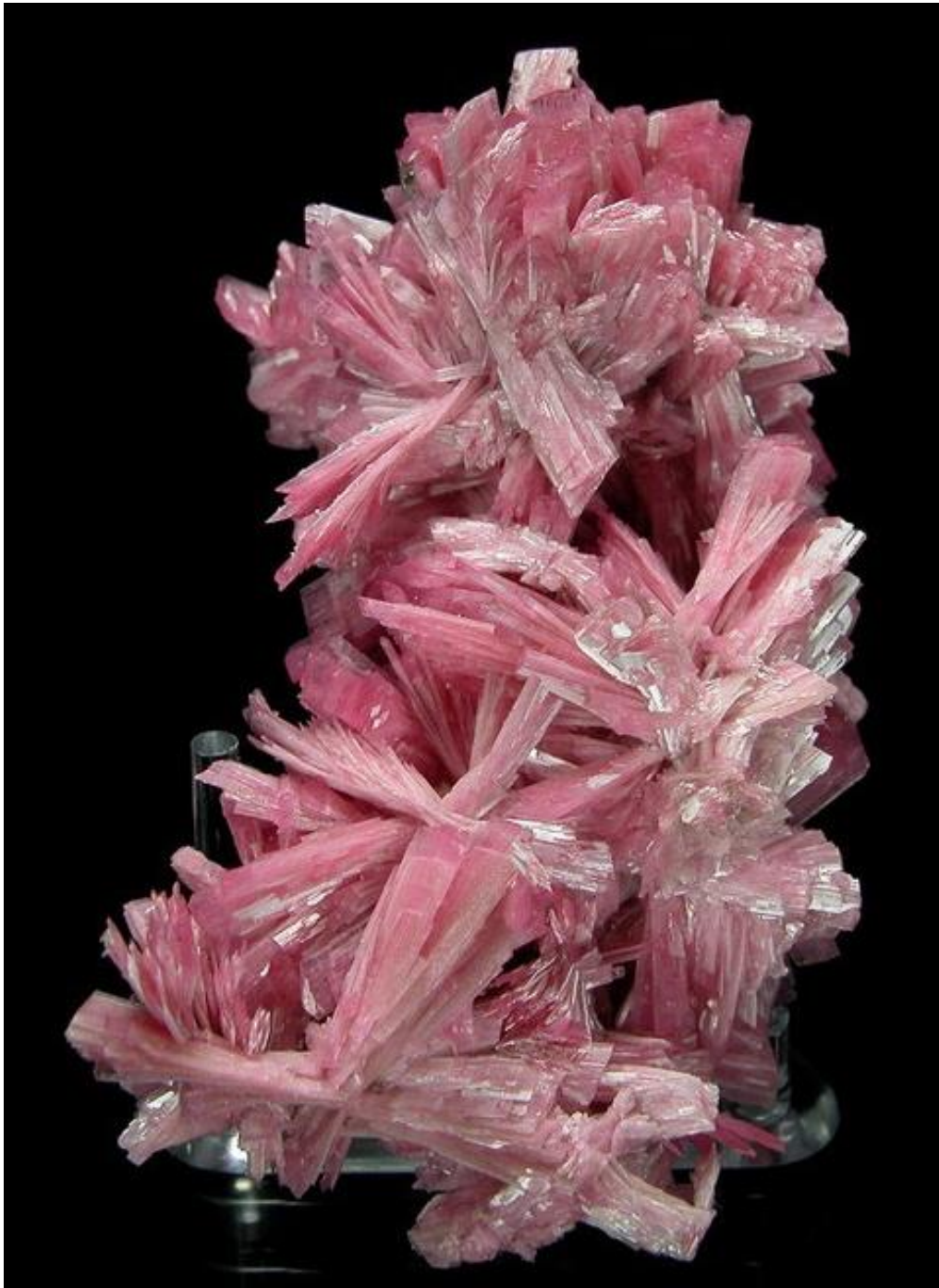


Pyrite, 5.4 cm, from Valle Giove, Rio Marina, Isle of Elba, Tuscany, Italy. Luis Burillo Minerales specimen and photo.

Then, while still visiting Luis Burillo, go to the “Peru” page and admire the ten or so miniature and cabinet-size specimens which Luis has saved up from the late 1980s and/or late 1990s discoveries of gorgeous pink **rhodonite** in the San Martín stope of the Chiurucu mine, Dos de Mayo Province, Huanuco Department, Peru. These are clusters of bladed rhodonite crystals with smaller quartz, calcite, pyrite, and sphalerite crystals in varying combinations, and no selection as nice as this one this has been seen on the specimen market for quite some time. Luis was, after all, the dealer who brought the first big lot of Peruvian rhodonite to Tucson in 2007: see that show report in May-June 2007.



Rhodonite, 2.2 cm, from the Chiurucu mine, Dos de Mayo, Huanuco, Peru. Luis Burillo Minerales specimen and photo.



Rhodonite, 6.3 cm, from the Chiurucu mine, Dos de Mayo, Huanuco, Peru. Luis Burillo Minerales specimen and photo.

Luis Burillo Minerales also excels consistently in goodies from Panasqueira, Portugal. Go to the “Panasqueira” page on the website and you will see, besides fine examples of that great locality’s long-familiar fluorapatite, ferberite, arsenopyrite, etc., some specimens showing deep purple cubic crystals of **fluorite**—a member of the Panasqueira

ensemble only unearthed (in really fine examples) during the past few years. Luis has several good Panasqueira fluorites, but I think that the small miniature shown below is his most impressive:



Fluorite, 3.3 cm, from Panasqueira, Portugal. Luis Burillo Minerales specimen and photo.

Ray McDougall of *McDougall Minerals* (mcdougallminerals.com) has again come up with something new from Canada, his native country. This time Ray offers seven miniatures of **analcime on stilbite** from Five Islands, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia—collected, he writes, “in a precarious area, beneath an unstable-looking cliff face” near the town of Five Islands. Indeed, the basalt exposures surrounding the tidally vicious Bay of Fundy and its couple of inlet bays has a long history of producing well crystallized zeolites, but specimens like these in Ray’s new lot, showing sparkling,

colorless, trapezohedral analcime crystals resting on groups of salmon-orange stilbite sheaves, are apparently something new. The specimen shown here, perhaps the best of the lot, costs a civilized \$70.



Stilbite with Analcime, 4.2 cm, from Five Islands, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, Canada. McDougall Minerals specimen and photo.

Having earlier lingered in Mexico, let us linger a short while in Canada, where our host will be François Lortie of *Collection Arkane* (collectionarkane.com). This website offers minerals from Canadian places including the Francon quarry, the Jeffrey mine, and the Big Fish-Rapid Creek area in the Yukon, but by far the most and the best of the current offerings are specimens from the Poudrette quarry, Mont St.-Hilaire, Quebec, mostly collected, François tells us, during the first decade of this century.

Besides much serandite and some catapleiite, leifite, narsarsukite and sphalerite, there are splendid specimens of **siderite** which are groups of very sharp, latte-brown rhombohedral crystals, and there is **rhodochrosite** in various habits, and there are miscellaneous specimens which simply are “cute,” e.g. the one shown on the next page, with a sharp **zircon** crystal perched pertly, sideways, on white matrix mainly of albite. If

you like St.-Hilaire as much as I do you should get in touch with François Lortie—last spotted in person at the Pueblo Show in Tucson in February—and you should keep looking in on his website, these shut-in days.



Siderite, 6.8 cm, from the Poudrette quarry, Mont St.-Hilaire, Quebec, Canada. Collection Arkane specimen and photo.



Rhodochrosite with Elpidite, 4 cm, from the Poudrette quarry, Mont St.-Hilaire, Quebec, Canada. Collection Arkane specimen and photo.



Zircon, 4 cm, from the Poudrette quarry, Mont St.-Hilaire, Quebec, Canada. Collection Arkane specimen and photo.

One website noted quite often in these reports is Mike Keim’s *Marin Mineral Company* (marinmineral.com), and no wonder—Mike doesn’t set up at shows but rather deals exclusively on the web, and his frequent updates typically feature things of the gem-crystal variety which are new to the market. In his March 20 posting he offers a couple of loose, complete, elongated hexagonal prisms of translucent red **ruby corundum** with slightly corroded surfaces. The thumbnail shown here is very impressive at only \$100 – as are two others priced at \$95 and \$150 – but sorry, they are already marked “sold.” What’s most intriguing about these specimens is their locality, given only as “Guinea.” This is a little republic in West Africa, formerly a French colony, which produces a lot of bauxite and some diamonds and gold but is hardly a watchword with mineral collectors. Two more crystals like this, labeled only “Guinea,” are available on [Etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com) for even less. Certainly it would be interesting to latch on to a more specific locality attribution, as there is neither a heading for “Guinea” in Mindat’s list of corundum localities or any mention of Guinea under Corundum in the latest edition of Bernard and Hyršl’s *Minerals and Their Localities*. In any case, let us admire the good form and glowing scarlet color of these little African (?) ruby crystals.



Corundum variety ruby, 2.4 cm, from Guinea. Marin Mineral Company specimen and photo.

In the same update, Mike Keim has two outstanding thumbnail-size crystals of **sanidine** from somewhere near the village of Itrongay, Fianarantsoa Province, Madagascar. “Itrongay” is a familiar term denoting a long-standing locality for the world’s best gem-quality feldspar of any kind, the loose, blocky crystals being a vibrant deep yellow and (under their typically pitted surfaces) totally gemmy. I mention the two examples on the *Marin* website in order to (1) show that sanidine crystals from Itrongay *can* be euhedral and fresh-looking instead of corroded and misshapen over most of their surfaces, as the great majority of them are, and (2) to remind you that this material, though still called orthoclase by some collectors and even some dealers, is in fact sanidine, as was shown by X-ray diffraction work done in 2001 by William B. Simmons and Alexander U. Falster (see the abstract of their work on page 79 of the January-February 2002 *Mineralogical Record*). The crystal in the photo here, as well as the other one shown in the March 20 update, has already been sold.



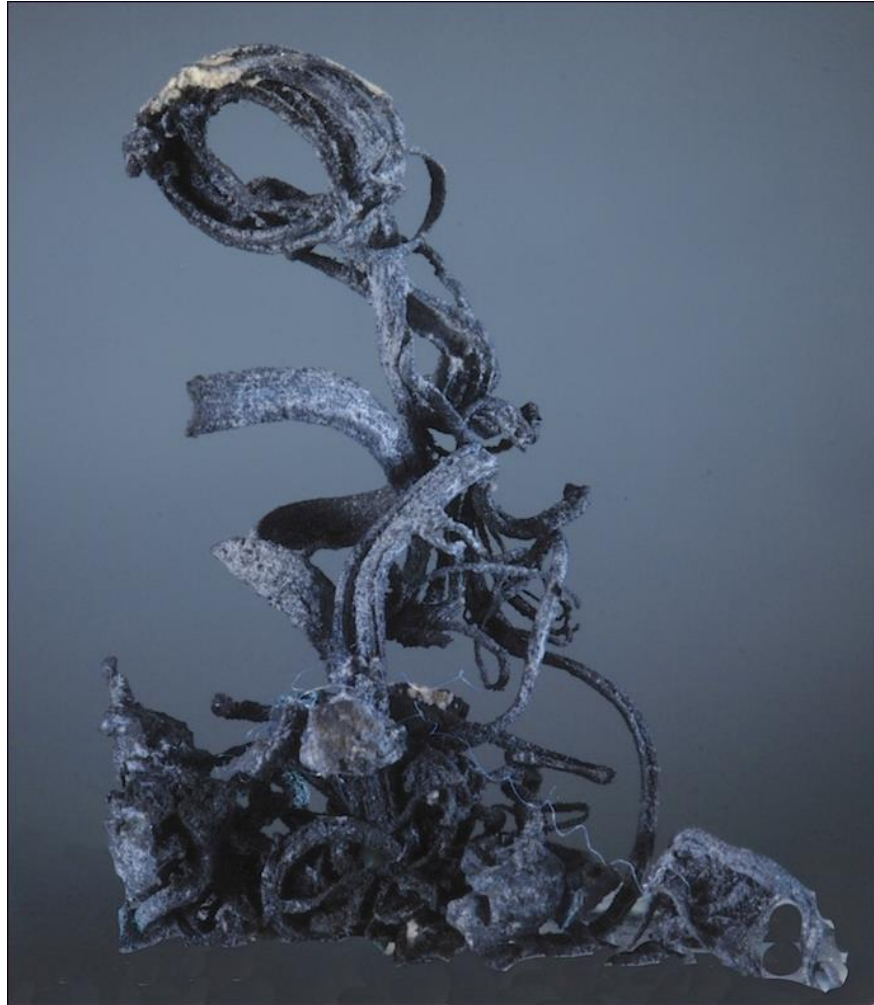
Sanidine, 2.4 cm, from Itrongay, Betroka, Fianarantsoa, Madagascar. Marin Mineral Company specimen and photo.

A March update on the website of *Mch Minerals* (mchminerals.com) offers many fine new things, in miniature through full cabinet sizes, from the famous Trepča, Kosovo (formerly Serbia) mining district. The last couple of print reports from the Denver Show have recorded that the old mines at Trepča, long idled by the civil wars that came with the breakup of Yugoslavia, are once more producing abundant polymetallic ores as well as plenty of well crystallized mineral specimens. The *Mch* website, although it offers (so far - ?) no glamorous Trepča examples of bournonite or pyrrhotite such as have shown up in person in the U.S., does offer busy, attractive pieces in which sharp crystals of **arsenopyrite**, **sphalerite**, **calcite**, **quartz** and even **rhodochrosite** are handsomely gathered together in varying combinations. Take a look at the typical piece shown here, then await the print report on the Tucson Show (coming in May-June), where you'll read of specimens of Trepča bournonite as remarkably fine as the Trepča pyrrhotite specimens spotted in Denver in 2018. (And stoke your optimism as regards Trepča vivianite and ludlamite, which, as the whisper goes, may emerge soon as *new* examples to rival the old ones from Yugoslav times.)



Arsenopyrite, Sphalerite and Calcite, 6.5 cm, from Trepča, Kosovo. Mch Minerals specimen and photo.

Kevin Downey's *Well-Arranged Molecules* (wellarrangedmolecules.com) is another dealership often remarked upon here, as it has a very "deep" website with hundreds of pages of photos, plus likably wordy descriptions, of miscellaneous, mostly one-of-a-kind specimens, many of which are surprising and out-of-the-way. Kevin knows and appreciates the Old Classics, although he has a good eye for newer things, too, as witness his many fine pieces from the Jeffrey asbestos mine in Quebec (a major locality only recently closed down for good). On his website right now you'll find ten pages of "New Arrivals," but don't neglect to look also at the "Spring Updates" sections, especially the one devoted to specimens which came on board in spring 2019. Among the "New Arrivals" we find a superb and distinctive miniature of **wire silver** from Dzhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, like many such which emerged in the early 1990s but which have essentially disappeared from the market since then. In this ex-Ernie Schlichter miniature, the curling silver wires with light coatings of gray-black acanthite mark out a graceful, super-aesthetic shape in space.



Silver, 4.8 cm, from Dzhezkazgan, Kazakhstan. Well-Arranged Molecules specimen and photo.

Next on the “New Arrivals” page of *Well-Arranged Molecules* we have a smashing **vesuvianite** from the Jeffrey mine, only 2.2 cm in size but a lovely *transparent* pale green, with a sidecar crystal which is gemmy as well.



Vesuvianite, 2.2 cm, from the Jeffrey mine, Asbestos, Quebec, Canada. Well-Arranged Molecules specimen and photo.

Meanwhile, on page 6 of “Spring Updates,” Kevin shows us this wonderful **nickelskutterudite** from Schneeberg, Saxony, Germany, which is a mass of lustrous, metallic tin-white, well individualized cuboctahedral crystals to 2 cm, with patches of drusy quartz. Once called “chloanthite,” nickelskutterudite is one of Schneeberg’s iconic species, and it doesn’t get better anywhere else; Kevin asks \$1750 for this dignified old example.



Nickelskutterudite, 7.8 cm, from Schneeberg, Sachsen, Germany. Well-Arranged Molecules specimen and photo.

A Concluding Word or Two

By way of conclusion to this report I will spare you tiresome, overfamiliar reminders to stay in your home, keep washing your hands, refrain from hugging strangers, etc., but instead will suggest hopefully that *when you can get out and travel freely again* you might visit one or the other of the two new showrooms of Daniel Trinchillo’s *Mardani Fine Minerals*. As everyone knows, Daniel is the head man of *Fine Minerals International*, one of the world’s very small number of dealers in ultra-fine mineral specimens. He has now branched out to establish his first retail spaces “in order,” as his website says, “to make exceptional minerals available outside of the closed, private market.” Bravo—and yes, he does something like that *temporarily* at each Tucson Show, when shoppers and gawkers converge on the house on Granada Street which Daniel has filled with exceptional goodies—but the two new facilities are set to be *permanent* shopping venues in their two very different (though both very affluent) neighborhoods. The addresses are

Mardani Fine Minerals
766 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10065

and

Mardani Fine Minerals
Vail Village
186 Gore Creek Drive, Vail, CO 81657

I confess that I haven't yet visited either showroom myself—only checked out the alluring pictures and text on *mardanifineminerals.com*—but I know that the Mardani shops will be tastefully, beautifully laid out and furnished and, what's more important, that they will be loaded with mineral specimens of such quality as almost to dizzy you, make you doubt your own experience and knowledge (how *can* one of *those* be *that* good??). Here for example—and as a bangup concluding image for this report—is a 9.5-cm tanzanite which can be seen now on the *Mardani* website:



Zoisite variety Tanzanite, 9.5 cm, from the Merelani mines, Manyara Region, Tanzania. Mardani Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

50 Years of What's New!

In these torpid and boring days of self-quarantining, you need something to read, and there is nothing that will keep you enjoyably occupied longer than the new two-volume, 2100-page, fully illustrated compilation of What's New and related columns from the last 50 years of the *Mineralogical Record*! Start with John White's show report in the first issue in 1970, and work your way through the glorious days of mineral collecting every year thereafter. To order your copy now (only 500 sets are being prepared), and support your favorite mineral magazine at the same time, visit **THE BOOKSTORE** at MineralogicalRecord.com.

Stay Well This Summer

Tom Moore