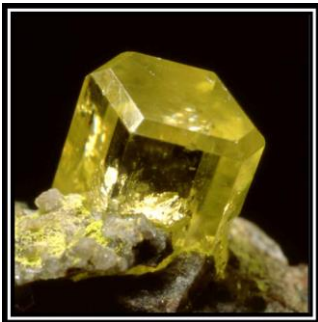
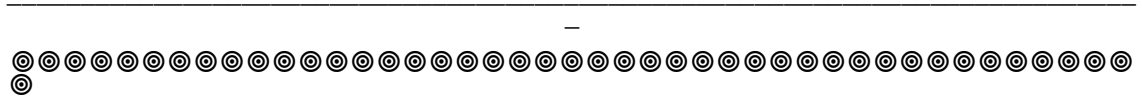


What's New in the Mineral World?



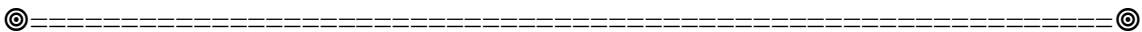
Report #57
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Record
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With the end of summer in sight it's time for another report on current Internet mineral-dealing action. That action seems busy enough, maybe even busier than usual in a kind of compensatory way, since, as we know, 2020 has been a bleak year indeed for mineral *shows*. The pandemic has wiped out late June's Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show altogether, along with many other smaller shows in the US and Europe, and it has brought about major downsizings in Denver and Munich, and so I won't be able to furnish the usual gabby reports on those shows in the print magazine—but readers will at least get to enjoy Wendell Wilson's well-illustrated "no-show" report in September-October 2020.

The wipeout of in-person shows is not total: the Colorado Mineral and Fossil Show at the Crowne Plaza Hotel (near the Denver airport) is still on for September 11-15, and from October 29 to November 3 there will be something like the usual big event at the Munich Trade Fair Center, although it's likely that "foreign" attendance at Munich will be way down. Meanwhile, let us not despair; let's keep hoping (while dutifully wearing our masks and washing our hands) that when it's time for the 2021 Tucson Show an effective vaccine will have come along and will be being distributed widely. Until then there is, of course, the Internet to help us pursue the extremely important purpose of *shopping for mineral specimens*.



Our July-August 2020 issue contains an article by Wendell Wilson on the Japanese collector/dealer/photographer/saxophone player Kiyoshi Kiikuni, whose dealership is called *Key's Minerals* (\keysminerals.com). “Mr. Key,” as he’s known to his friends, is a connoisseur of elegant thumbnail and small-miniature-size specimens, and if (like me) you fancy such specimens too, you’ll find it a treat to peruse this website—which, like the items it offers, is small but elegant. An August 9 “New Additions” update features a gallery of flamboyantly colored arsenates (mostly **adamite**) from the Ojuela mine. The sterling pale purple example shown here costs 65,000 yen (Mr. Key’s prices are given solely in yen, so you’ll have to check out the daily exchange rate; as of today, 65,000 yen is about \$615).



Adamite, 2.2 cm, from the Ojuela mine, Mapimí, Durango, Mexico. Key’s Minerals specimen and photo.

Mr. Key certainly has some exquisite thumbnails...and before moving on I can't resist showing you a classic German one for which he asks 58,000 yen (\approx \$550). This **fluorapatite/fluorite** "combination" piece from the Sauberg mine, Ehrenfriedersdorf, Obersachsen—i.e. Upper Saxony in the Erzgebirge ("Ore Mountains") of the former East Germany—is a wondrous thing which will become more and more of a rarity as time goes by. The Sauberg tin/tungsten mine closed for good when the Berlin Wall came down in 1990, having produced many fine things for centuries before that.



**Fluorapatite and Fluorite, 2.3 cm, from the Sauberg mine, Ehrenfriedersdorf, Saxony, Germany.
Key's Minerals specimen and photo.**

Jordi Fabre of *Fabre Minerals* (fabreminerals.com) has always been a significant presence at the Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show in late June, and this year he dealt creatively with the show's cancellation by running a "Virtual Ste.-Marie Show" on his website, complete with you-are-there pictures and videos of that colorful scene. Then, forging on into August, Jordi ran two later updates to offer some colorful new material, including, on August 27, eight lovely specimens of **scepter amethyst** collected in 2018 from the Chibuku mine, Zambezi Valley, Mashonaland West, Zimbabwe. The specimens are loose, scepter-tipped prisms, the transparent, lustrous scepters showing both amethystine and smoky areas. They range in size from 4 to 8.3 cm and in price from \$117 to \$341.



Amethyst, 4.7 cm, from the Chibuku mine, Zambezi Valley, Mashonaland West, Zimbabwe. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.

Also in Jordi's August 27 update he has four miniatures showing sharp, lustrous, deep blackish green crystals of **libethenite** to more than 1 cm on a matrix of fine-grained gray argillite, from the Rokana mine near Kitwe, Copperbelt Province, Zambia. (He refers to the Rokana mine as the "Nkana" mine—same thing. For a full report on the locality see the article by Korowski and Notebaart in November-December 1978.) Probably this is the world's best locality for libethenite, and no newer specimens comparable to these have hit the general market (as far as I know) since the mine's heyday in the 1970s. Jordi reports that his four miniatures were collected in June 1976. Oh yes, and there are also two fine thumbnails of Rokana mine libethenite: loose, glittering, richly dark green crystal clusters which were once part of the Robert Noble collection—excellent thumbnails from which have been shown recently in several of Jordi's postings.



Libethenite, 3.6 cm, from the Nkana [Rokana] mine, Mindola pit, Kitwe, Copperbelt Province, Zambia. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.



Libethenite, 2.3 cm, from the Nkana [Rokana] mine, Mindola pit, Kitwe, Copperbelt Province, Zambia. Ex Robert Noble collection. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.

From the 2018 Munich Show I reported that Tomasz Praszkiel of *Spirifer Minerals* (spiriferminerals.com) had brought in some good **sphalerite** specimens from a famous locality never famous before for *that* species: the Bouismas mine in the Bou Azzer district, Ouarzazate Province, Morocco. Sphalerite specimens much like the 2018 ones (which Tomasz released to Jordi Fabre) are now up for sale on the *Spirifer* site, these said to be from the nearby Aït Ahmane mine in the Bou Azzer district. This sphalerite comes as loose, lustrous, somewhat crude crystals and tight crystal clusters which look dark brown, almost black, in daylight or frontal lamplight but which strong backlighting turns to a flashy, gemmy orange-brown.



Sphalerite, 3.1 cm, from the Aït Ahmane mine, Bou Azzer district, Ouarzazate, Morocco. Spirifer Minerals specimen and photo.



Same specimen with backlighting.

From the same locality come sphalerite specimens that look entirely different, with crystals which are bright greenish yellow and gemmy even in “natural” light. Some loose yellow-green crystals measuring under 2 cm are now on the Spirifer site, but the miniature-size matrix specimens on the site are much more impressive, as they show aggregations of greenish yellow sphalerite crystals on quartz crystals which have uniform coatings of snow-white talc, accented here and there by metallic-gray spots of löllingite. Sphalerite so iron-poor as to be yellow is quite rare, known of old mainly as some antique Franklin, New Jersey examples and recently as specimens from the Huanggang mining complex in Inner Mongolia, China. These new yellow-green Moroccan specimens measure up quite nicely to their predecessors, and they seem promising for the future.



**Sphalerite, 4.5 cm, from the Aït Ahmane mine, Bou Azzer district, Ouarzazate Province, Morocco.
Spirifer Minerals specimen and photo.**

A June update on the site of *Mch Minerals* (mchminerals.com) shows some striking **bournonite** specimens lately taken from one of the polymetallic mines at Trepča, Mitrovica, Kosovo. A few similar-looking Trepča bournonites came to the 2020 Tucson Show (see that report in May-June 2020), where they were overshadowed by that show's plethora of fabulous bournonites from the mines of the Viloco district, Bolivia. Nevertheless the Trepča pieces are topnotch examples of the popular sulfosalt; the four large miniatures on the *Mch Minerals* website, said to come from "new finds" at Trepča, show abundant sharp, lustrous metallic black bournonite cogwheels to 2.5 cm perching lightly on matrix of massive pyrite with sparkling surfaces of drusy pyrite and little crystals of white calcite and black sphalerite in attendance.



Bournonite, 7 cm, from Trepča, Mitrovica, Kosovo. Mch Minerals specimen and photo.

The same June *Mch Minerals* update has two juicy-looking bright purple miniatures of **coquimbite** from the finds of 2009-2010 in the Javier mine, Ayacucho Department, Peru. Again, some overshadowing has occurred recently: it's now likely that the best of the coquimbite specimens found in December 2018 in the Monte Arsiccio mine, Tuscany, Italy (see the 2019 Munich Show report in March-April 2020) are even better than their Peruvian cousins. But the latter are growing scarce on the market, and these of the *Mch* dealership are exceptional for the occurrence and for the species.



Coquimbite, 5 cm, from the Javier mine, Huachuas, Lucanas Province, Ayacucho Department, Peru. Mch Minerals specimen and photo.

Then there is the *August* update on the *Mch Minerals* site, with a long, generous page full of very attractive things from Panasqueira, Portugal. Unsurprisingly this Spanish dealership has specialized all along in minerals from Panasqueira, but the newest selection is especially tempting. Besides many fine specimens of fluorapatite, siderite, quartz, cassiterite, etc. from Panasqueira, there is a brilliant 6-cm group of platy **ferberite** crystals:



Ferberite, 6 cm, from Panasqueira, Portugal. Mch Minerals specimen and photo.

And the bountiful Panasqueira selection with *Mch Minerals* contains, as well, many examples of **fluorite** (known only lately as a major Panasqueira species), of which the oddest and most aesthetic is a 6.5-cm cluster of frosty purple cubo-dodecahedral fluorite crystals interspersed with little brown siderite saddles:



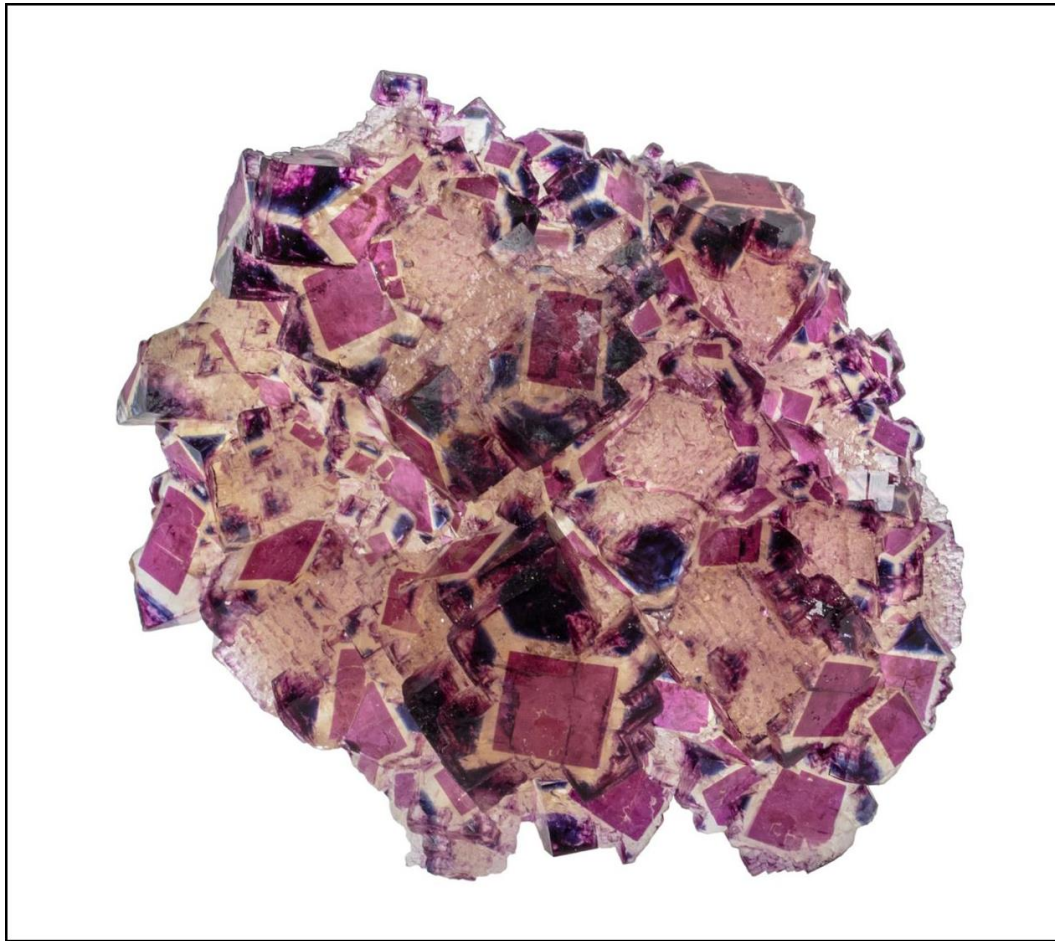
Fluorite with Siderite, 6.5 cm, from Panasqueira, Portugal. Mch Minerals specimen and photo.

Speaking of **fluorite**, longtime Arizona dealer Mike Shannon has acquired ten flats of fine specimens of green octahedral fluorite, thumbnail to “museum” size, priced from \$5 to \$450, which have emerged recently from the Gila Fluorspar District near Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico. Mike does not have a website, but his dealership has a new name, *Shannon Family Minerals*, and he can be contacted via e-mail: xlhunter@msn.com. Mike would also like us to know that in July 2020, *Shannon Family Minerals* assumed ownership of the former *Mineralogical Research Company*, whose proprietor, Sharon Cisneros, is retiring from the mineral business. Let us hope that the Shannon family will maintain the strong reputation of Sharon’s decades-old company for offering well selected, well documented specimens from a huge inventory of worldwide occurrences classic and modern (plus a big menu of back issues of the *Mineralogical Record*). Meanwhile try contacting Mike about those New Mexico fluorites:



Fluorite, 23 cm, from the Gila Fluorspar district, Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico. Shannon Family Minerals specimen and photo.

Still speaking of **fluorite**, in 2010, in the famed Okorusu fluorite mine in Namibia, there was a pocket find which yielded beautiful flat plates of color-zoned fluorite crystals. To quote the description in my report on the 2017 Tucson Show (May-June 2017), “The specimens consist of very thin, slightly curved, plates of intergrown octahedral fluorite crystals, each crystal about 1.5 cm on edge, the plates measuring from 5 to 20 cm across. Large cube faces modify each octahedron, and strong backlighting causes these square cube faces to glow in deep purple whereas the octahedral faces around them are colorless.” The pocket was named the “Polish Prodigy Pocket,” and it was Polish Prodigy Tomasz Praszkiel of *Spirifer Minerals* who supervised the years-long process of preparing the specimens (involving removing the matrix to show the translucency of the plates), and likewise Tomasz was the dealer who brought about 40 pieces to Tucson in 2017. Now, though, some remainders from this ten-year-old find of very dramatic fluorite are with Rob Lavinsky of *The Arkenstone* (irocks.com), and Rob shows ten of them (six of which are already marked “sold” or “on hold”) in an *Arkenstone* posting of August 6. They are all cabinet-size specimens, and the ones still unsold (as of the end of August) are priced from \$3,500 to \$9,000.



Fluorite, 7.4 cm, from the Okorusu mine, Otjiwarongo, Namibia. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.

Cairol Fine Minerals (cairolifineminerals.com) is an Italian dealership being noted here for the first time in a “what’s new” online report. In a June posting on its handsome website the dealership offers, for one thing, a fine lot of specimens of the aforementioned bournonite from the Viboras district, Bolivia, and, for another, many miniatures of the newly discovered **vivianite** from the Rosia Poieni mine, Lupsa, Alba Province, Romania. I first saw a little family of these fine vivianites with Anton Watzl at the 2019 Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show (see September-October 2019), and they have continued to show up since then, but since you can’t go to big shows these days you might as well pick up your new Romanian vivianite from *Cairol*, on which website there are many excellent ones. The prismatic crystals are fresh-looking, transparent and blue-green (more green than blue), and attached to some of the clusters are cement-gray shards of the breccia in which the deposit occurs—the shards are ugly but they help render specimens from this occurrence distinctive. The material is getting pricier than it was originally: for the specimen shown here *Cairol* asks 3,600 Euros (≈ \$4300).



Vivianite, 7.5 cm, from the Rosia Poieni mine, Lupsa, Alba Province, Romania. Cairol Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

Also on the *Cairol Fine Minerals* website are four very fine **sulfur** specimens mined about 40 years ago from the now inactive Cozzodisi mine, Casteltermini, Agrigento Province, Sicily, Italy (for the scoop on this mine, and on Sicilian sulfur in general, see the article by Pagano and Wilson in March-April 2012). These still very fresh-looking specimens show sharp, transparent sulfur crystals to almost 5 cm on matrix, with just a touch of bitumen, guaranteeing that the specimen is not one of the barrel-grown examples produced by Dr. Martinet (see Renato Pagano’s article, “Artificial Sicilian sulfur,” in the March-April 2002 issue); the one shown below has a price tag of 3,100 Euros (≈ \$3700).



Sulfur, 5.5 cm, from the Cozzodisi mine, Casteltermini, Agrigento Province, Sicily, Italy. Cairol Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

Another Italian dealership called, not too surprisingly, *Italian Minerals* (italianminerals.com), specializes in minerals from the island of Elba: regular visitors to the website may always count on finding elbaite and other pegmatite minerals from the Monte Capanne area of western Elba, as well as pyrite and hematite from the iron mines of eastern Elba, scattered about the pages. Some of these specimens are old and some are new, some are extremely fine and some are “study grade,” but in any case it’s always interesting to check in with this great locality where the history of mineral digging goes back many centuries (even Napoleon is said to have participated a little, during his brief Elban exile). An August update on the *Italian Minerals* site has a “Thumbnail Special Page”—actually 9 pages, with 111 thumbnail-sized specimens—where some quite unexpected things both from Elba and from elsewhere hide out. I was intrigued to find,

for example, a cluster of colorless, highly lustrous although corroded crystals of **petalite** from San Piero, Elba, for only 90 Euros (\approx \$100). This specimen may well be fairly “modern,” assuming that it came from one of the two pegmatite veins discovered around 1990 near the village of San Piero. According to Elba aficionado Federico Pezzotta, these veins produced good specimens of petalite as well as elbaite.



Petalite, 3 cm, from San Piero, Isle of Elba, Tuscany, Italy. Italian Minerals specimen and photo.

And if you *really* don't mind colorlessness in thumbnails of rare species, that same "Thumbnail Special Page" in the August update of *Italian Minerals* might entice you with its three excellent, highly aesthetic specimens of **hambergite** from the Sahatany Valley of Madagascar, all showing sharp, well terminated prismatic crystals to 1.2 cm in jackstraw clusters. The best of the three, priced at 175 Euros (\approx \$210), is shown here.



Hambergite, 2 cm, from the Tampo'ny Ilapa vein, Sahatany Valley, Antsirabe, Madagascar. Italian Minerals specimen and photo.

Mike Keim of *Marin Mineral Company* (marinmineral.com) is a web-only dealer who has never set up at mineral shows, and he updates his site frequently, so he must be a busy fellow these days, less hobbled by the pandemic than most. His material is

“miscellaneous” but in general it’s excellent (as are his photos), and he favors new finds, and these are among the reasons why I have featured *Marin* quite often in these reports. Since Mike’s updates come quickly and vanish quickly, and since the August 10 update already is the oldest one on the site, you’d better hurry if you are interested in this miniature with rare, sharp **bornite** crystals on matrix from Dzhezkazgan, Kazakhstan.



Bornite, 3.5 cm, from Dzhezkazgan, Kazakhstan. Marin Mineral Company specimen and photo.

Unfortunately it's already too late to snatch up Mike's extraordinary thumbnail of **phosgenite** from Tsumeb, also posted on August 10 but already marked "sold" (for \$1200). I show you this specimen because it *is* so extraordinary, if, that is, you know phosgenite and if you know how very rare any good specimens of it from Tsumeb have always been.



**Phosgenite, 2.4 cm, from Tsumeb, Namibia.
Marin Mineral Company specimen and
photo.**

Another frequent habitu  of these online reports has been *David K. Joyce Minerals* (davidkjoyceminerals.com), where goodies from Canada in particular may be ogled. Here are no pricey showboats, just interesting, well selected specimens from localities old and new, familiar and little-known, all over that very large country. Shown below are three such from eastern Canada; they may be located on the site by going down David's extensive list of species, species-groups and localities, with little orange "new"

signs on one quarter or so of the headings—all three of the headings for these specimens are indeed marked “new.” First we have a 7.7-cm specimen of **gmelinite**, with lustrous, pale pink, discoidal crystals of the rare zeolite all over matrix, from Two Islands, on the shore of the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia. Its very reasonable price is \$65:



Gmelinite, 7.7 cm, from Two Islands, Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia, Canada. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.

The second David K. Joyce item is another Canadian classic: a miniature-size group of silvery gray, pseudocubic crystals of **fluorapophyllite** from the Gaspé mines, Murdochville, Québec. Copper mining at this place began in 1937, and the best of the fluorapophyllite specimens emerged during the late 1960s and early 1970s; I have seen very few of these for sale, and have not seen one for a very long time.



Fluorapophyllite, 4.2 cm, from the Gaspé mining district, Murdochville, Gaspé Peninsula, Québec, Canada. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.

David K. Joyce would also like you to appreciate this specimen from the old silver-mining district of Cobalt, Ontario, which is a rich mass of botryoidal arsenides including layers of **nickeline**, **rammelsbergite** and **skutterudite**, with thin skins of **safflorite** in a few places-- \$75.



Nickeline/Rammelsbergite/Skutterudite/Safflorite, 6.9 cm, from Cobalt, Ontario, Canada. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.

Dan Weinrich of *Weinrich Minerals, Inc.* (WeinrichMineralsInc.com) resolved even before the pandemic to swear off going to mineral shows (with the possible exception of one or two events at Tucson), but that's okay, his online business looks very busy, with new updates coming along every three or four days. His August 20 posting is very rich in its "Latest Additions" department, with many splendid specimens of old standbys such as Peruvian pyrite, Moroccan vanadinite and Mexican amethyst, plus a debut offering of about seven cabinet to very-large-cabinet-size specimens which are **scepter quartz** groups with liberal associations of well crystallized sphalerite and some arsenopyrite, from the venerable Herja mine, Maramures, Romania. Dan doesn't say how old these specimens are, but I don't think I've ever seen their very attractive likes from the Herja mine:



Quartz/Sphalerite, 15 cm, from the Herja mine, Maramures, Romania. Weinrich Minerals specimen and photo.

Also with Dan Weinrich are three cabinet-size specimens of the rare borates **roweite** and **olshanskyite** from the recent—reportedly already exhausted—occurrence in the Shijiangshan mine, Linxi, Inner Mongolia, China. These specimens show subparallel clusters, to 2.5 cm, of leafy brown roweite crystals set on matrix occupied also by sprays of lustrous glassy white olshanskyite crystals. I’ve never seen better or larger specimens of this material, and even the thumbnails and miniatures of the past few years have just about disappeared from the market by now.



**Roweite and Olshanskyite, 11 cm, from the Shijiangshan mine, Linxi, Inner Mongolia, China.
Weinrich Minerals specimen and photo.**

Jordi Fabre has recently shown us a wonderful 7.3-cm specimen of **wire silver** from the Hongda mine, Lingqui, Datong Prefecture, Shanxi Province, China, which was collected in October 2017. The *Weinrich Minerals Inc.* site would seem to confirm that this silver mine (noted also for its fine acanthite) is having a productive go of it now, for Dan has about 20 thumbnails and small miniatures of the material. The little silver specimens are loose arabesques of thin to medium-thick wires with partial coatings of something yellow and powdery; most of the silver looks properly silvery, but in some specimens there's a uniform reddish patina over the curling wires. These specimens can hold their own with all but the very best wire silvers from Freiberg or anywhere else; their prices range from \$120 to \$190.



Silver, 2.4 cm, from the Hongda mine, Lingqiu, Datong Prefecture, Shanxi Province, China. Weinrich Minerals specimen and photo.



Silver, 4 cm, from the Hongda mine, Lingqiu, Datong Prefecture, Shanxi Province, China. Weinrich Minerals specimen and photo.

I know that among the mineral collecting fraternity there is a distinct overlap with the collectors who fancy mining artifacts. The connection is strong between the miners of old and the specimens they dug out using tools and (especially) lighting devices that today are rare and historic display items—natural compliments to a mineral collection or mineral room. Our editor-in-chief, Wendell Wilson, is a long-time fancier of such memorabilia (and has written four books on the subject). Two of his latest articles on some very rare miners' candleholders from the Homestake mine and the Comstock Lode areas are posted on the Eureka Magazine website (eurekamagazine.net)—click on “Scholarly articles on mining artifacts.” Sometimes even mining artifacts and ephemera for sale are posted on the website.

As you may have noticed, I like to conclude these reports by showing a single, somehow unusual, high-end specimen, preferably of the eye-candy sort. This time I found the appropriate image on the *Quebul Fine Minerals* site (quebulfineminerals.com). Besides a few more of the new thumbnails of “cleiophane”

sphalerite from Bou Azzer, Morocco, Todor and Nadya of *Quebel* have latched on to a terrific **proustite** from the new, very promising proustite occurrence in the Bouismas mine, Bou Azzer. The bright red, spiky proustite crystal which terminates in a point is 4.3 cm tall, and it is adorned on its backside (mostly not visible in this photo) with a burst of smaller, just-as-red proustite crystals. The specimen costs a surprisingly low \$1480, and its general appearance brings to mind one of the habits of 19th-century proustite specimens from Chañarcillo, Chile...could the Bouismas mine be on its way to equaling that long-gone locality for charismatic “ruby silvers?” Judge for yourself:



Proustite, 4.3 cm, from the Bouismas mine, Bou Azzer district, Ouarzazate Province, Morocco. Quebul Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

Do your best to stay healthy, happy and mineral-rich for the rest of this waning summer.

Tom Moore