
WHAT'S NEW IN THE MINERAL WORLD?

Report #47



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Recently back from my pilgrimage to the Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show (with results you will read about in the September-October 2017 issue), I'm sunk in the usual midsummer torpor in Tucson, amusing myself by checking out dealers' websites to find new things...

What's New on the Web

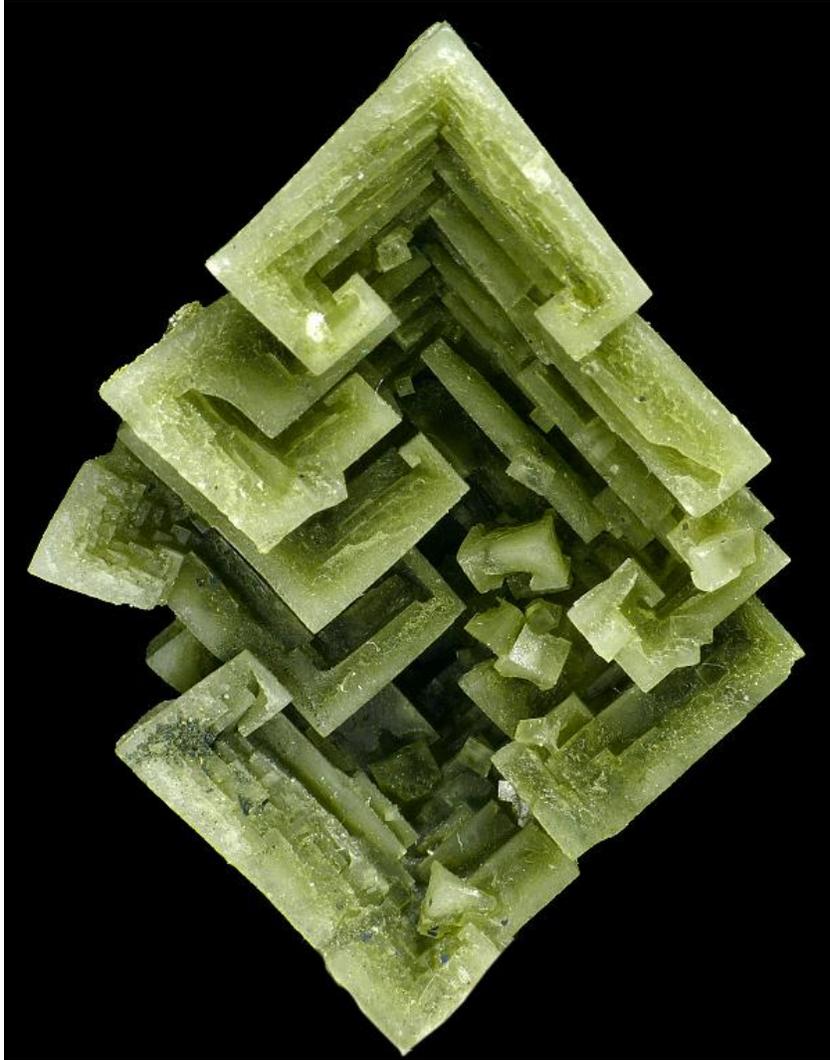
Not many collectors give places of honor on their display shelves to **halite**, but the fact is that common NaCl can be very attractive when well crystallized, and especially when graced as well with unusual features—just keep it dry, is all. Historically, most of the best halite specimens have come from huge salt mines in Lower Silesia, Poland—a region which now has come up with two new occurrences. First, Tomek Praszkiel of *Spirifer Minerals* (spiriferminerals.com) has the best of a few hundred floater specimens of *green, skeletal* halite collected late in 2016 in a disused tunnel of the Sieroszowice mine, and the *Spirifer* website, with typical conscientiousness, has a full scoop on the material. A partial quotation:

The Lubin [in Lower Silesia] area is famous for one of the world's biggest copper deposits...known as [the] Legnica-Głogów copper district, mining *Kupferschiefer* copper shales...Formation of the copper, silver and halite deposits...is connected with deposition in a Late Permian sedimentary basin [in] the Zechstein Sea.

During that geologic period, several evaporitic events created beds of halite to 160 meters thick, with intercalated layers of a black shale unusually rich in Cu, Ag, and Pt-group elements. In the Sieroszowice mine, which exploits both halite and *Kupferschiefer*, saline waters from an overlying halite bed have trickled down about 80 meters to reach the old tunnel where Tomek's specimens were found. The account concludes:

The 320 meter-long tunnel was abandoned in July 2016 and it seems that the halite crystals...grew in only a few months' time. Mining will restart around September 2017, and will result in destruction of the halite [specimen] deposit.

So get yours while you can: the ten specimens now offered on the *Spirifer* site range in size from 5.5 to 10.5 cm, and none cost more than \$150. According to Tomek, the main coloring agent of this halite is the rare copper chloride tolbachite—presumably leached from the copper-bearing shales—as fine-grained inclusions within the salt crystals.



Halite, 3.5 cm, from the Sierszowice mine, Lubin district, Lower Silesia, Poland. *Spirifer Minerals* specimen and photo.



Halite, 6.5 cm, from the Sieroszowice mine, Lubin district, Lower Silesia, Poland. *Spirifer Minerals* specimen and photo.

From another place in the same region—the locality is given as the Rudna mine, Lubin district, Legnica, Lower Silesia, Poland—come gleaming stacks of cubic crystals of halite which are transparent and *pale bluish green* (like the typical color of vanadium-bearing Indian fluorapophyllite). Individual halite crystals reach 2 cm and the stacked groups reach small-cabinet size. Some of the stacks are curved and have what look like faden lines down their centers, and most of the specimens show a zoned orange fluorescence in shortwave ultraviolet light. This attractive material may be found on a June update of the Kosnar family's *Mineral Classics* (minclassics.com) website:



Halite, 7.2 cm, from the Rudna mine, Lubin district, Lower Silesia, Poland.
Mineral Classics specimen and photo.

While we're visiting *Mineral Classics*, let's look also at four miniature-size specimens from the new lot of world-class **bertrandite** which the Golconda mine, Minas Gerais, Brazil has lately yielded. The 2017 Tucson Show (see the report in May-June 2017) saw the emergence of just a few exceptional pieces from this December 2016 discovery, with sharp, lustrous bertrandite crystals to 4 cm perched on long-prismatic, dark green to black elbaite crystals—the finest bertrandite specimens found in the Golconda mine since the 1992 discovery of very similar, slightly thicker crystals. The bertrandites from these two finds are unquestionably the finest known for the species. The Kosnars say that they got a “first pick” selection of smaller pieces, and pictured here is a good example, with thin, white, bladed, compound bertrandite crystals associated with crystals of elbaite and muscovite. Rob Lavinsky also scored an early pick of these bertrandites, and you will find ten of them offered on a June 15 update of *The Arkenstone* (irocks.com).



Bertrandite, 3.7 cm, from the Golconda mine, Governador Valadares district, Minas Gerais, Brazil. *Mineral Classics* specimen and photo.

What *else* is new at *The Arkenstone*? Well, on that same June 15 update, besides the bertrandites, Rob Lavinsky posted some fine-looking phosphates from the famous Rapid Creek area of the Yukon Territory, Canada. The specimens, recently acquired by Rob from the personal collection of Rod Tyson, include three thumbnails of the rare species **messelite**, as orange-brown spherical aggregates on siderite matrix from a sub-locality called Grizzly Bear Peak, Stoneman Mountain, “from a find Rod Tyson made only a few years ago on a helicopter trip in.” And there are some snazzy thumbnails of **lazulite** and one (already sold) of **kulanite** from a sub-locality in the same area called “Mount Seafoam.”



Messelite, 2.5 cm, from Grizzly Bear Peak, Stoneman Mountain, Rapid Creek area, Yukon Territory, Canada. *The Arkenstone* specimen and photo.



Lazulite, 1.7 cm, from Mt. Seafoam, Rapid Creek area, Yukon Territory, Canada. *The Arkenstone* specimen and photo.

Rob also has nine fine specimens, thumbnail through small-cabinet size, from the new occurrence of **djurleite** in the Aït Ahmane mine, Bou Azzer district, Morocco. This material also debuted at the 2017 Tucson Show, where Christophe Gobin had a good selection of specimens. Sharp, medium-lustrous, lead-gray, tabular djurleite crystals with hexagonal profiles form 1.5-cm clusters on matrix plates. Of course we cannot yet tell whether this limited find—two pockets, one opened in November 2014 and a second in May 2015—will be all of the story or will be the start of a fleeting abundance, but in any case the occurrence has yielded the best specimens of djurleite ever discovered.



Djurleite, 4.7 cm, from the Aït Ahmane mine, Bou Azzer district, Ouarzazate, Morocco. *The Arkenstone* specimen and photo.

Before I went to Ste.-Marie in late June, Jordi Fabre (fabreminerals.com) posted a “pre-Ste.-Marie update” which featured a few specimens of **chalcostibite** recently found at the only significant worldwide locality for the rare copper sulfosalt (CuSbS_2), namely the old Rar el Anz copper mine, Oued Cherrat, Chaouia-Ouardigha, Casablanca Prefecture, Morocco. At the Ste.-Marie show, sure enough, Jordi had a few excellent chalcostibite thumbnails and miniatures, but, I regret to say, no more specimens of the material appear on his July 11 “Ste.-Marie update.” I’m showing you one of the earlier-posted specimens here anyway because—who knows?—more may appear with Jordi or with whoever it was who bought up his supply; besides, the specimens are distinctive and striking-looking. Just as for the classic specimens taken out in the 1920s and 1930s, the thick, bladed crystals of metallic black chalcostibite are coated in every case with skins of bright blue azurite, sometimes supplemented by green malachite. More information on this contemporary revival of an old-classic occurrence will be found in my Ste.-Marie report in September-October 2017.



**Chalcostibite, 3 cm, from Rar el Anz, Oued Cherrat,
Chaouia-Ouardigha, Casablanca Prefecture, Morocco.
Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.**

The *Fabre Minerals* “Ste.-Marie update” of July 11 *does* have a couple of noteworthy things which (I imagine) Jordi picked up at the show. For one, there are cabinet-size specimens of vividly

deep blue **azurite** from a May 2017 find at the ancient locality of Špania Dolina (widely known also by its old German name: Herregrund), Banská Bystrica, Slovak Republic. In the five specimens on the site, ranging in size from 7.4 to 13.3 cm, little lenticular crystals of azurite form spherical aggregates which are intergrown in fresh-looking coatings, with pale green malachite botryoids over pale brown rock matrix plates. This is not Chessy or Tsumeb or Milpillas-quality azurite, certainly, but it's an intriguing thing to have come *this year* from a place where copper mining, having gone on for roughly a thousand years, ended in 1888.



Azurite, 7.4 cm, from Špania Dolina (Herregrund), Banská Bystrica, Slovak Republic. *Fabre Minerals* specimen and photo.

Also on his July 11 update, Jordi offers six thumbnails of “eudidymite-epididymite” (the two species are dimorphs, indistinguishable by sight) found recently in Malawi—not, as you may be thinking, in the Zomba district, home to the famous Mount Malosa locality, but somewhere in the Machinga district, in the south of the skinny little country squeezed up between Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique. (“Machinga, Malawi” has also been cited as the locality for some superb specimens of niobophyllite uncovered recently: the locality seems to share important geological/geochemical characteristics with Mount Malosa, but shouldn't be confused with it.) Jordi's eudidymite-epididymite thumbnails, which are superb for the species (all right, for *either* species), are clusters of translucent gray-white, platy to short-prismatic crystals with individuals from 1 to 2.4 cm, associated with quartz, aegirine and tiny brown crystals of (yes) niobophyllite. And none of the thumbnails costs more than \$200.



**Eudidymite-Epididymite, 2.2 cm, from Machinga,
Malawi. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.**

The website of *Quebul Fine Minerals* (quebulfineminerals.com) always seems to have something new in its extensive stock, which leans towards “aesthetic,” i.e. dramatically colored and commonly gemmy, mineral specimens. What could be more appropriate for such a site than yet another new kind of **vanadinite** from Morocco? The single specimen from what the site calls a “new find” at Taouz, Er Rachidia Province, Meknes-Tafilalt Region, was picked up by Nadya and Todor of *Quebul* at the Ste.-Marie show, and it’s aesthetic, all right, showing highly lustrous *orange* vanadinite crystals in subparallel groupings which combine in a globular cluster, with just a bit of colorless barite on its back side (or so says the caption: the barite is not visible in the photo).



Vanadinite, 2.2 cm, from Taouz, Er Rachidia Province, Meknes-Tafilalet Region, Morocco. *Quebul Minerals* specimen and photo.

The *Quebul* site also has several attractive specimens of stilbite and of **stilbite/epidote** from scattered diggings in calc-silicate rocks in Diakon Arondissement, western Mali. As this material has been “out” for several years now and I haven’t yet shown a photo of a good example, either here or in print, I’ll show you the best now on view on the *Quebul* site: a miniature with a lively yellow-orange stilbite hemisphere which tops off a cluster of epidote crystals, with little green globs of prehnite. Specimens like this—though very few as good as this one—have been all over the major shows and the web of late, and you can read some of their story in Pohl and Currier, “Mineral Collecting in Mali,” in May-June 2011.



**Stilbite/Epidote/Prehnite, 6.3 cm, from the Diakon Arondissement,
Kayes Region, Mali. *Quebul Minerals* specimen and photo.**

On the website of Jeff Fast's *Mineral Movies* (mineralmovies.com) you'll find a selection of about a dozen top-quality specimens of **scepter and reverse-scepter amethyst** from the Kakamunurle mine, Karur district, Tamil Nadu, India. This region of pegmatites in India's far south seems to excel in creating distinctive amethyst specimens of this type, with deep purple, transparent scepter and reverse-scepter heads, many showing odd twists and distortions, crowning colorless, prismatic crystals of quartz joined in platelets and sprays; some of the amethyst scepters are tinted reddish by lepidocrocite inclusions.



Amethyst, 6.2 cm, from the Kakamunurle mine, Karur district, Tamil Nadu, India. *Mineral Movies* specimen and photo.

When Jeff Fast goes to Mexico, as he frequently does, he keeps an eye out especially for good specimens of silver minerals (and who can blame him?). To visit his InnSuites room during the Tucson Show, or indeed to visit the *Mineral Movies* site at most times, may well be to come on resplendent little specimens of, say, acanthite or polybasite from Guanajuato, or stephanite or pyrargyrite from Fresnillo...but currently on the site are a couple of fine new silvery items from a place farther south than these, which is much less well known to mineral collectors: the San José mining district in Oaxaca State. At the 2014 Tucson Show, Spanish dealer Luis Burillo offered specimens of miargyrite from somewhere in Oaxaca; there was some controversy about the species identification, but at the next Tucson Show, in 2015, Luis had proof that most, anyway, of the sulfosalt matter on these specimens is truly miargyrite, and he had more specimens too. Well, okay...Jeff Fast now offers a single magnificent thumbnail of **polybasite** attributed to the San José district (but to no particular mine in that district), and he offers a rather more complex but equally beautiful thumbnail, also attributed merely to the San José district, which is mostly **miargyrite** in small, brilliant metallic black, wedge-shaped crystals, but also contains some pyrargyrite and perhaps, Jeff thinks, miargyrite pseudomorphs after pyrargyrite. The polybasite is already marked "sold," but what we can learn from admiring these two dazzling specimens is that the state of Oaxaca is, like Fresnillo and Guanajuato, a source of world-class silver minerals—please keep journeying thither, Jeff.



Polybasite, 2.3 cm, from the San José mining district, Oaxaca, Mexico. *Mineral Movies* specimen and photo.



Miargyrite with Pyrargyrite, 2.7 cm, from the San José mining district, Oaxaca, Mexico. *Mineral Movies* specimen and photo.

On John Veevaert's *Trinity Minerals* site (trinityminerals.com) John posted, way back on May 24, a new lot of unusual, just-out-of-the-ground **blue-capped dravite crystals** from Mwajanga, near Komolo, Tanzania. By now, of course, most of the specimens are marked "sold," but a few remain unsold, and in any case you should hear about them: thin-prismatic tourmaline crystals which, John says, have been verified as dravite, dark green and mostly opaque in their midriffs but mostly gemmy and tipped with blue at their ends. The majority of the specimens in John's lot were single, loose crystals from 1.5 to 3 cm, but the striking miniature shown here is a subparallel-growth crystal group, and I, for one, have never seen any tourmaline specimen quite like it.



**Dravite, 5.6 cm, from Mwajanga, near Komolo, Tanzania.
Trinity Minerals specimen; John Veevaert photo.**

Longtime dealer Joe Kielbaso runs a site for his *Open Adit West* dealership, but if you click on that name you might get (as I did) the home page of his son Mark Kielbaso's *Mine Rat Minerals* (mineratminerals.com) instead. That page informs us that *Open Adit West* is *Mine Rat's* "parent

company,” and Joe, it seems, has been a good parent, as least mineralogically speaking, for *Mine Rat Minerals* is currently showing a plethora of fine miscellaneous specimens. Prominent among them are several cabinet-size examples of something hardly at all seen for many decades: **aurichalcite** from the Ojuela mine, Mapimí, Durango, Mexico. When I was researching this great locality (ultimately published as the “Mexico II” issue, September-October 2003), I learned that the best of the Ojuela mine’s aurichalcites were dug in the early 1960s from the “Cumbres” area in the San Antonio chimney, and that they are (to quote from myself) “dramatic specimens with matrix plates to 15 cm across, covered completely by delicate blue aurichalcite blankets and tufts,” with azurite, malachite and calcite in association. Mark Kielbaso’s pieces are “old” ones like that, and quite beautiful; the one pictured here measures 11 cm across and costs \$450. And while on this site you might enjoy Mark’s account of an underground collecting trip to Ojuela which he and Stan Esbenshade made in 1998, during which they got *almost all the way to the bottom* of the San Judas chimney and took lots of nifty photos now to be seen on the site (but they failed to find any legrandite).



Aurichalcite, 11 cm, from the Ojuela mine, Mapimí, Durango, Mexico. *Mine Rat Minerals* specimen and photo.

Surely there are worse crimes against Nature than failing to keep up with the frequent changes in amphibole/pyroxene nomenclature, so I’m not abashed to admit that I’d never heard of the amphibole species **ferri-fluorokatophorite** before I saw some good-looking specimens of it with *David K. Joyce Minerals* (davidkjoyceminerals.com). David lives in Ontario and is thus an inhabitant of the Grenville Province of Precambrian metamorphic rocks, cropping out in southeastern Canada and far-upstate New York. The region swarms with calcite-filled vein-dikes, many of which produce fine, not uncommonly gigantic, crystals of fluorapatite, titanite, and



orthoclase, plus a large confusion of amphiboles and pyroxenes. Typically the amphiboles come out as dark, equant, sharply formed crystals with glossy surfaces and slightly rounded edges—a fair description of David Joyce’s handsome new crystals of—say it—ferri-fluorokatophorite. This species, which before its latest redefinition was known at various times as fluor-magnesiokatophorite, magnesiokatophorite and (just plain) katophorite, is in fact the most widespread amphibole at the Bear Lake diggings near Haliburton, Ontario, from whence the loose, single crystals and crystal groups on the Joyce website come.



Ferri-fluorokatophorite, 5 cm, from the Bear Lake Diggings, Haliburton County, Ontario, Canada. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.

On the well-stocked, juicy site of *Well-Arranged Molecules* (wellarrangedmolecules.com), proprietor Kevin Downey (of Massachusetts) is pleased to show 63 miscellaneous pieces under the heading “More of the newest finds, with some classics, oddities and surprises.” That about gets it: this update is fun, and indeed sometimes surprising, to scroll through. To my mind the star of the show is a gorgeous, 5.3-cm, cognac-colored group of twinned **cerussite** crystals which Kevin says comes from “big finds” in the period 1969-1972 in the Kombat mine, Namibia. This mine, 49 km south of Tsumeb, is arguably the world’s champion locality for cerussite; today it is flooded and closed, almost surely for good, and specimens from it are extremely scarce on the market. For this one Kevin asks \$1250.





Cerussite, 5.3 cm, from the Kombat mine, Otavi, Namibia.
Well-Arranged Molecules specimen and photo.

Two other outstanding **cerussite** specimens on the *Well-Arranged Molecules* update are quite different from the Kombat specimen and from each other. One, although quite fresh-looking, is a real antique, coming with a Bergakademie Freiberg label: it is a small-miniature cluster of lustrous, transparent, colorless cerussite crystals from the Friedrichsseggen mine (closed in 1913) in the Bad Ems district, Rheinland-Palatinate, Germany. If you want testimony that Bad Ems in its day produced excellent specimens of cerussite (and of azurite, and of copper) as well as of pyromorphite, see the article by Dietrich and Bode, “The mines and minerals of Bad Ems,” in the November-December 1984 issue.



**Cerussite, 3.2 cm, from the Friedrichsseggen mine,
Bad Ems district, Rheinland-Palatinate, Germany.
Well-Arranged Molecules specimen and photo.**

Finally, Kevin has an impressive cerussite from the Daoping mine, Guilin, Guangxi Province, China—like Bad Ems, a place best known for its pyromorphite but with fine stealth cerussite specimens too. Check out this 7.8-cm plate of translucent, pale yellow crystals to 2 cm individually, stacked densely on a bit of gossan matrix.



**Cerussite, 7.8 cm, from the Daoping mine,
Guangxi Province, China. *Well-Arranged
Molecules* specimen and photo.**



*J*ust a Word About Denver

Just this brief word: those who are planning to go to the Denver Show this year should probably plan for some extra, or at least unaccustomed, commuting. The “Main Show” at the Denver Merchandise Mart is on as usual, of course, and Dave Waisman’s Fine Mineral Show at the Denver Marriott West should be its usual busy and classy self, and additionally there’s Lowell Carhart’s *new* show at the Denver Coliseum, promising a wide range of dealers with a wide range of materials for sale (see the *six pages* of ads concerning this show in July-August 2017). This year, though, for the first time in many years, you can delete your visit to the Ramada Inn (earlier the Holiday Inn) on Bannock Street, for Marty Zinn’s contract there has expired and September mineral-show activity at this familiar venue has ceased, probably forever. Instead, the majority of Marty’s regular dealers will be on hand for a new “Colorado Mineral & Fossil Show” at the Crowne Plaza Denver Hotel, at 15500 East 40th Avenue, out near the Denver International Airport. Here’s wishing good fortune to the new enterprise.

And may all of you faithful what’s-new-online readers enjoy a happy, well mineralized rest of the summer.

