What's New in the Mineral World?

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Midsummer here in Tucson…yes, early mornings are lovely, ideal for taking long walks in the desert, but before noon the three-digit heat is apt to kick in, with ruthless, metallic-blue, featureless skies, dry arroyos heat-shocked into stillness, and leaden, immobile air which seems just to be waiting out the long day. However, some lucky late afternoons and evenings bring in rollicking monsoon storms to cool and to entertain us…on the other hand, though, there may be *haboobs* (if you don't recognize the term, a haboob is a towering desert dust storm such that you do not want to be caught driving on Interstate-10 between Tucson and Phoenix if one of *those* things looms up in the sky). Of course, it is folly to try to enliven the summer by taking field-collecting trips in the outrageous heat, but then, for one's indoor mineralogical needs, there is always the Internet. Below therefore are some midsummer Internet goodies, from goethite to gold—and not just for desert-dwellers—which I have spotted of late on dealers' websites:

On the Web

Ghulam Mustafa (whom everyone calls Mustafa) is increasingly a good source of fine minerals from Afghanistan, from his home country of Pakistan, and from farther-flung regions too. His *Fine Art Minerals* website (fineartminerals.com) is increasingly fun and enlightening to scroll through. Currently the website features 33 loose thumbnail-size crystals (and one matrix specimen) of **väyrynenite** from Shengus, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, all of which are lustrous, partially to wholly gemmy, and brilliant in their colors, which range from salmon-orange through pink-red and red-orange. Väyrynenite is a rare hydrous Mn-Be phosphate which in recent years has been exceeding itself in specimens from a few pegmatites in the high Hindu Kush; I have mentioned some specimen lots on the market before, but Mustafa's is easily the best I have seen so far. The little prismatic to bladed väyrynenite crystals are lighly eched in differing ways, and so, besides being vividly colorful, they have differing "personalities" as well. They range in size from less than 1 through almost 3 cm, and they are priced in the low to mid-four figures; the two 1.7-cm crystals here bear price tags of $3,500 (for the stouter, thicker one) and $1,800 (for the tall, skinny one).

Väyrynenite, 1.7 cm, from Shengus, Roundu District, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

Väyrynenite, 1.7 cm, from Shengus, Roundu District, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

Also on his website, Mustafa has about 20 excellent miniature to cabinet-size specimens of **lazurite** from the ancient "lapis lazuli" mines at Sar-e-Sang, Kokcha River Valley, Badakhshan Province, Afghanistan (see the full article on Sar-e-Sang in the May-June 2014 *Mineralogical Record*). All of Mustafa's specimens feature sharp, equant lazurite crystals which show varying isometric form-combinations, on characteristic white marble matrix. Most pieces feature a single prominent crystal well placed on the matrix, but in a few, like the one shown here, the marble is richly populated with very sharp, very blue lazurite crystals. All of these specimens have been well prepared (without making them look "artificial," as sometimes happens), and thus all are top-quality representatives of a classic collector's item not easy to find on the market today. Mustafa's prices are in the low to mid-four figures.

Lazurite, 10.5 cm, from Sar-e-Sang, Badakhshan, Afghanistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

Another scarce Asian "classic" these days is the **pink topaz** found as gemmy prismatic crystals in calcite/quartz/talc veins in limestone at several occurrences a few kilometers north of the village of Katlang in the Mardan District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan—Mustafa says that the 25 specimens of these beautiful gem topaz crystals which he now offers on his website are from Ghundao Hill, the site of the first discovery and mining of the gem crystals in the late 1960s, though other sub-localities in the neighborhood (Shakar Tangi, Rama, Shamoozi) have been cited in later years. The Katlang topaz crystals in Mustafa's lot are typically pale to medium rose-pink in color, lustrous, and partially to wholly gemmy; the loose, gemmy crystals, to 3 cm, are special in their own ways, but the matrix miniatures with gleaming pink crystals to 4 cm rising from white calcite/quartz segregations in dark gray limestone are the real showboats. A specimen of each of these types is shown below, each of them priced by Mustafa at $1,800.

Topaz, 4 cm, from the Ghundao mine, Katlang, Mardan District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

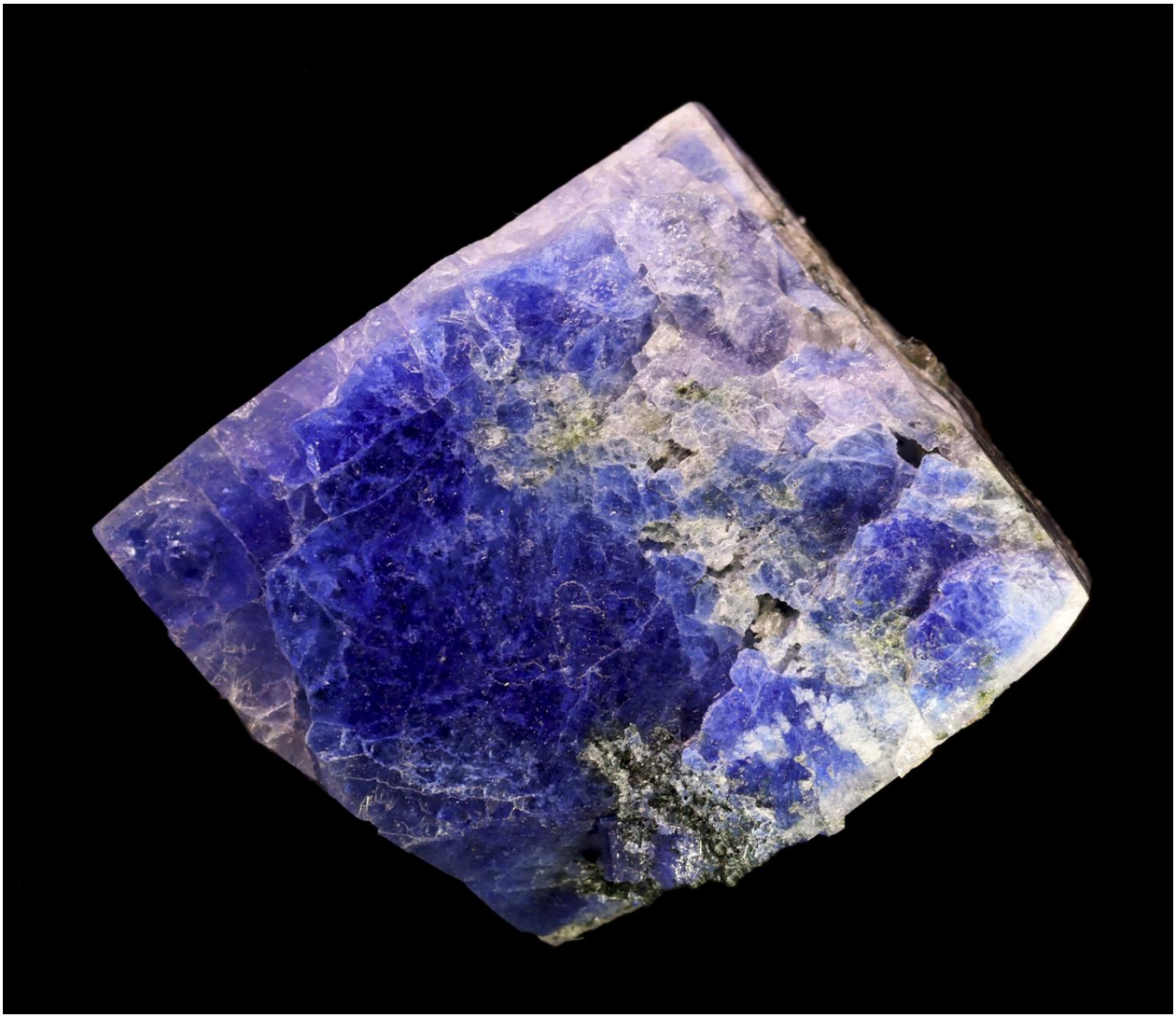
Topaz, 1.4 cm, from the Ghundao mine, Katlang, Mardan District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

The website of Rob Lavinsky's *The Arkenstone* (irocks.com) offers its usual generous menu of "themed" galleries, among the most interesting and appetizing of which at the moment, I think, is a "Rare Mineral Species Update," posted on June 26. Of course, not everyone fancies very rare

minerals, but if you feel any need to brush up on the looks of, say, henmilite from Japan, biehlite from Tsumeb, or wakabayashilite from Nevada, this is the menu item to open. Under the "rare species" rubric Rob also has specimens representing rare or antique *occurrences* of more common species, e.g. a nice phlogopite from Franklin, New Jersey; a very large brucite from Wood's Chrome mine in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (see the July-August 2011 *Mineralogical Record*); and a lustrous cassiterite from the Cryo-Genie mine in southern California. Among other rarities in this ten-page gallery is a large and substantive, indeed almost *attractive* specimen of **native arsenic** from what Rob writes was "a single and highly unusual find of pure arsenic… in the summer of 2013" in the Quiruvilca mine, Santiago de Cruco Province, La Libertad, Peru. The satiny gray, three-dimensional botryoids of the element are ringed by translucent quartz crystals, making the specimen is an entire aesthetic success; its price is $7,500.

Arsenic, 11.5 cm, from the Quiruvilca mine, Quiruvilca District, Santiago de Chuco Province, La Libertad, Peru. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.

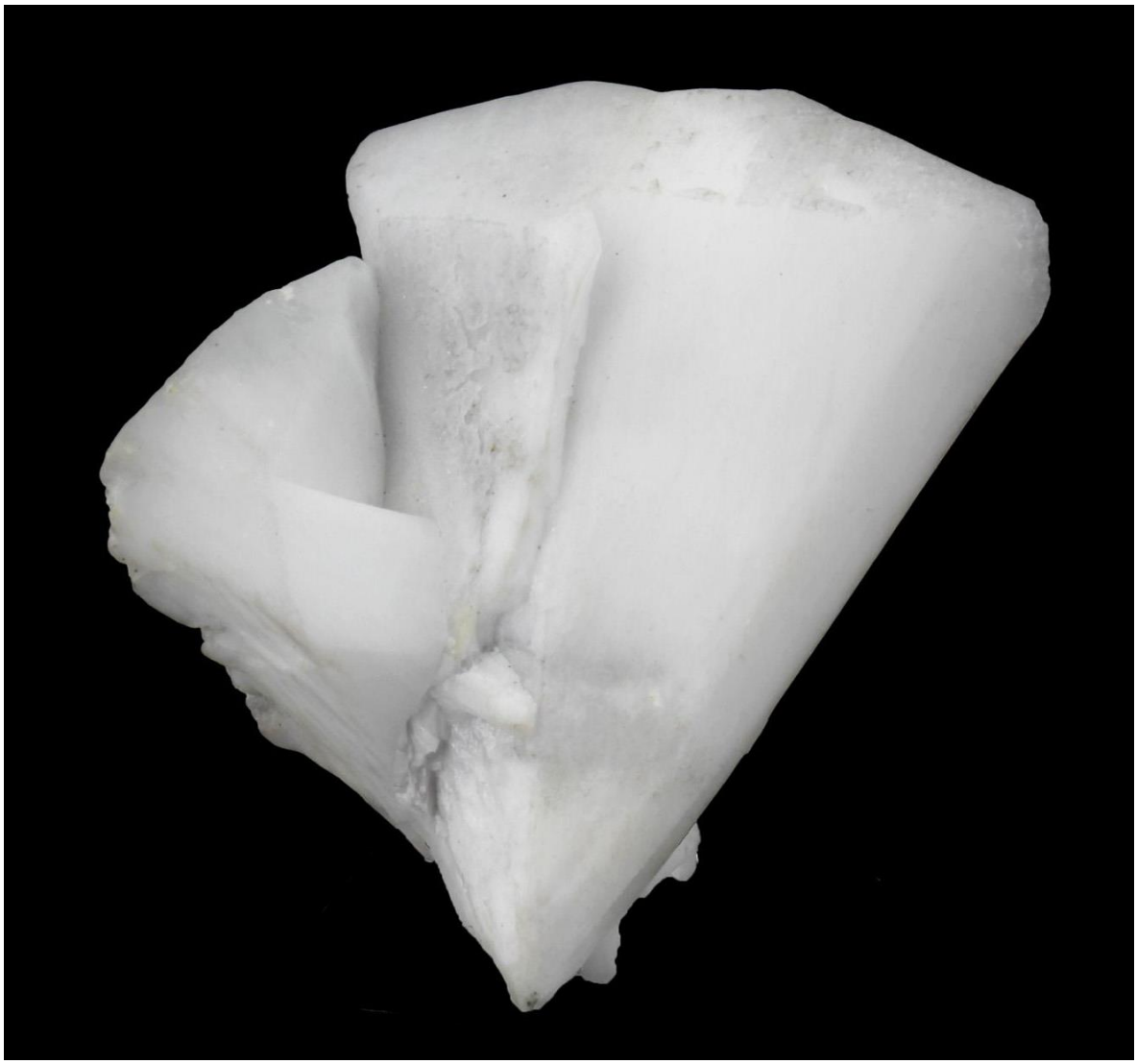
The "rarities" gallery also includes a remarkably large—3.6-cm—floater crystal of **carletonite** from the Poudrette quarry at Mont St.-Hilaire, Montérégie, Québec: the type locality, and indeed the world's only locality of any import, for this complex silicate-carbonate-fluoride species. The crystal is sharp, translucent, and richly blue for most of its volume. Collected by Gilles Haineault in the 1980s, it resided in a European collection for about 20 years and now is available from Rob for $2,750.



Carletonite, 3.6 cm, from the Poudrette quarry, Mont St.-Hilaire, Montérégie, Québec, Canada. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.

A third "Rare Mineral Species" examplar on the June 26 *Arkenstone* update is a loose, 3.8-cm twin, "ghostly white" as Rob puts it, of **whewellite** from Schlema-Hartenstein, Saxony, Germany. Such fine V-twins of the unusual calcium oxalate species were first noted in the 1950s from several of the huge dumps surrounding mine shafts in the Schlema-Hartenstein area of the western Erzgebirge ("Ore Mountains"); the shafts are mostly products of post-World War II uranium

mining by the Soviet-German *SDAG Wismut* consortium, and the whewellite twins came out at sparse intervals from 1960 through the mid-1980s, primarily from dumps around Shaft 207 and Shaft 271. Rob does not say from which of the shaft-dumps this whewellite V-twin came, but he justly remarks that it is "excellent for the species," and that such specimens are "almost impossible to find" today. This one would set you back $2,850.



Whewellite, 3.8 cm, from the Schlema-Hartenstein District, Saxony, Germany. The Arkkenstone specimen and photo.

Somewhat more mundanely, consider this "jackstraw" crystal cluster of **quartz with chlorite inclusions** from a currently highly productive system of Alpine-type clefts between 3,000 and 4,500 meters elevation at (or above) Ganesh Himal, Dhading, Nepal—the specimen is the largest of five which are now to be seen on the website of Gerd Wiedenbeck's *Alpine Mineralien* (alpine-mineralien.de). For several years now, native Nepalese mineral people have covered whole tabletops at big international shows with hundreds of specimens of chloritized quartz like this, but

if you can't make it to the Munich or Tucson shows you would do well to examine the small, elite selection on *Alpine Mineralien* (look under "Neue Mineralien," or, if you click on the "English translation" button, under "New Minerals"). The long, thin, somewhat curvaceous quartz crystals end in sharp points, i.e. they display the "Tessin habit," and although most of their surfaces are rendered dull gray-green by the chlorite inclusions, there are areas of colorless transparency as well. The jackstraw groups are sturdier and more damage-resistent than they look, and even the best of them, even when seen on a "Western" website like this one, are not too expensive: Gerd Wiedenbeck's champion example, shown here, is priced at 280 euros (~ $300).

Quartz with chlorite inclusions, 8.5 cm, from Ganesh Himal, Dhading, Nepal. Alpine Minerals specimen and photo.

Dan Weinrich of *Weinrich Minerals* (weinrichmineralsinc.com) has lately come into some very pretty new specimens of bright lemon-yellow, partially gemmy **calcite** from a locality called the Cemetery Ridge Development, Sweetwater mine, Viburnum Trend, Reynolds County, Missouri (Mindat says that the Cemetery Ridge Development is "in the vicinity of" the long-famous Sweetwater lead mine). In some of these specimens, scalenohedral calcite crystals to more than 5 cm are well isolated on grayish green matrix; in other specimens, smaller calcite crystals form solid coatings on matrix pieces up to large-cabinet size. Phil Persson of *Persson Rare Minerals* (perssonrareminerals.com) also has some of the new calcites…but Dan has been running a *sale*,

and so has reduced the price of the 20-cm example shown here from $565 to $283, and he has reduced the price of the 9.5-cm example shown here from $475 to $238. Yes, everyone has a specimen of Sweetwater mine calcite, typically showing yellow, not quite so lustrous, hexagonal-prismatic crystals with trigonal terminations, but these new Cemetery Ridge Development pieces represent, as it were, a different development for the locality, and so we should be mindful of them (and be on the lookout for more).

Calcite, 9.5 cm, from the Cemetery Ridge Development, Sweetwater mine, Viburnum Trend, Reynolds County, Missouri. Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.

Calcite, 20 cm, from the Cemetery Ridge Development, Sweetwater mine, Viburnum Trend, Reynolds County, Missouri. Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.

The online-only Canadian dealership called *Quebul Fine Minerals* (QuebulFineMinerals.com) is run by Nadya and Todor Georgiev. They have been cited in this space before for their offerings of mostly small, mostly "aesthetic" specimens with an emphasis on Canadian things—and I think that the miscellany of nice pieces in Quebul's late-July update may be their best such selection

yet. Of the numerous specimens from Canadian places, I was most impressed by some thumbnails of **lazulite** from the Big Fish-Rapid Creek area of the Yukon Territory (see the special *Mineralogical Record* issue devoted to this locality: July-August 1992). It is good to know that fine specimens of rare-ish phosphates from Big Fish-Rapid Creek might still occasionally be sighted around the market; the area, after all, is extremely remote, and its best decade for production of world-class lazulite, wardite, gormanite, kulanite, etc. was the 1970s. This cluster of midnight-blue lazulite crystals makes for a snazzy thumbnail and is an excellent buy at 190 Canadian dollars; and there are a few others like it dispersed, apparently randomly, throughout the recent *Quebul* update.

Lazulite, 2.4 cm, from Rapid Creek, Yukon Territory, Canada. Quebul Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

With *Quebul* I was also surprised to find a lone miniature which I knew to be from a small, little-known find in the Bor Pit at Dalnegorsk, Primorskiy Kraj, Russia, in 2020: a crisp, clean-looking, apparently undamaged 3.9-cm cluster of dodecahedral **andradite** crystals…and these crystals are *gemmy* and of an unusual, very attractive, medium-olive-green hue. I first saw gemmy

olive-green andradite from the Bor Pit when, at the *Mineralogical Record* booth at the 2020 Munich Show, Ludmilla Cheshko, the indomitable, ever-cheerful editor of the Russian periodical *Mineral Observer*, pulled from her pocket (or handbag?) five (or seven?) small specimens from the then-recent find, and even the thumbnail which she was moved to sell me is much exceeded, in quality as in size, by this one of Quebul's update. The garnet-fancier with a taste for the slightly exotic could have it for 780 Canadian dollars.

**Andradite, 3.9 cm, from the Bor Pit,
Dalnegorsk, Primorskiy Kraj, Russia. Quebul
Fine Minerals specimen and photo.**

A third little discovery that I enjoyed making on the late-July update of *Quebul Fine Minerals* was a handsome thumbnail of **enargite**, no, not from the Leonard mine in Butte, Montana but rather from an unspecified mine in the Bingham Mining District of Salt Lake County, Utah. This is excellent enargite, especially for *not* being from Butte, and there are tiny, bright crystals of chalcopyrite in there as well. The price of the piece is just 110 Canadian dollars.

Enargite, 2.1 cm, from the Bingham District, Salt Lake County, Utah. Quebul Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

If you attended the 2025 Tucson Show, or even if you just read the report on that show in the May-June 2025 *Mineralogical Record*, you know that a major hit of the show was a sumptuous-looking black-lined display case in the *Green Mountain Minerals* room at Mineral City—and later at the Main Show—which held about 25 magnificent **gold** specimens from a strike made one year before in the Eagle's Nest mine, Sage Hill, Placer County, California. Since the date of this 2024 strike was February 24, which was Valentine's Day, the pocket was named the Valentine Pocket, and it yielded more than 100 first-rate gold and gold-in-quartz specimens in a wide range of sizes and fashions. Daniel Trinchillo of *Fine Minerals International* obtained quite a few of these, and

one of Rob Lavinaky's midsummer *Arkenstone* galleries offers 38 more. I even saw about 10 specimens with the Italian *Cristalli* dealership at the Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show in June. But the pieces which stayed with *Green Mountain Minerals* and are now on that dealership's website (greenmountainminerals.com) are indeed heavyweights among all California golds ever unearthed, and of the 24 specimens on that website, 16 were marked "sold" as of July 24. Shown below here are three Green Mountain examples of Valentine Pocket gold, in decreasing order of size. The first, measuring 11.6 cm, is this website's most expensive—in fact, at $250,000 it is the most expensive specimen of any kind I have ever displayed in this space:

Gold, 11.6 cm, from the Valentine Pocket, Eagle's Nest mine, Sage Hill, Placer County, California. Green Mountain Minerals specimen and photo.

But if you can't quite scrape together a quarter of a million dollars, this 5-cm miniature, which fairly explodes with "aesthetics," would run you just $55,000.

Gold, 5 cm, from the Valentine Pocket, Eagle's Nest mine, Sage Hill, Placer County, California. Green Mountain Minerals specimen and photo.

And finally, I hope that the new owner of the 3-cm thumbnail marked "sold" is perceptive enough to concur with the Green Mountain people who write, "it is clearly a clarinet-playing goblin tip-toeing across the stage."

Gold, 3 cm, from the Valentine Pocket, Eagle's Nest mine, Sage Hill, Placer County, California. Green Mountain Minerals specimen and photo.

A May 16 update on the website of the Spanish dealership *MCh* (mch@mchminerals.com) features some very attractive specimens from "new finds," as the website puts it, from some familiar occurrences of the recent past (if there is a principle here it is that it's always wise to keep up with new activities by old friends). For example, distinctive specimens showing gemmy tabular crystals of yellow-orange **barite** on purple fluorite from the Xiefang mine, Rujin, Ganzhou, Jiangxi Province, China have been appearing regularly at the major shows for several years now, and always the dealers have had only *very large* examples. However, 9 specimens of the material which measure from a mere 4.5 cm to 10 cm are now being offered on the MCh website at prices from 80 to 530 euros. The miniature shown here, strongly suggesting some old Colorado barites of likewise elegant—almost "petite"—aspect, is priced at 180 euros, i.e. just under $200.

Barite, 4.5 cm, from the Xiefang mine, Rujin, Ganzhou, Jiangxi, China. MCh Minerals specimen and photo.

On the same May 16 update *MCh* also has 12 very fine, very snappy **galena** miniatures from a "May 2025" find—so they must be only two months or so out of the ground—in the Huanzala mine, Huallanca District, Bogonesi Province, Ancash Department, Peru. This locality is chiefly known, of course, for the pyrite specimens which have issued forth by the ton for many years now, and yes, there are pyrite-alone specimens from the Huanzala mine available also from *MCh*, but the groups of highly lustrous, super-sharp cuboctahedral galena crystals (with just a little pyrite) are the stars of the show. Prices range from 75 to 280 euros; the 8-cm specimen shown here costs 230 euros (~ $250).

**Galena with pyrite, 8 cm, from the Huanzala mine,
Huallanca District, Bolognesi Province, Ancash, Peru.
MCh Minerals specimen and photo.**

Thirdly, as concerns fairly familiar yet somehow surprising offerings in the May 16 update by *MCh*, page two of that update offers three specimens of something quite lovely (water-soluble, okay, but lovely): **halite** from Searles Lake, San Bernardino County, California. These bright crystal groups, measuring 8 to 8.5 cm, show sharp, hoppered, translucent to transparent, nearly colorless cubes perched smartly on rose-pink substrates of less well crystallized halite; one specimen is marked "not available" but the other two are priced at 100 and 140 euros.

Halite, 8.5 cm, from Searles Lake, San Bernardino County, California. MCh Minerals specimen and photo.

Ray McDougall of *McDougall Minerals* (mcdougallminerals.com) makes the news again this time with a fine new lot of **goethite pseudomorphs after marcasite**, from a formation of Cretaceous-age chalk which crops out at a probably lonely but long-known collecting site a short distance north of the Farafra Oasis in the White Desert of Egypt. The equant "floater" clusters of glossy, mahogany-brown iron oxides preserve excellently the spear-headed shapes of marcasite crystals—pseudomorphs after pyrite are also known from the locality, but they are much less common than the marcasite-parented ones. Such "White Desert" specimens have been around on the market for years, and usually they have been called *hematite* pseudomorphs after marcasite, so, having always had my doubts about that, I was pleased to read Ray's clarification that "Work by Hannah Allen at Hamilton College has confirmed that the White Desert pseudomorphs are predominantly goethite." Ray's prices for his 17 large thumbnails and small miniatures of the pseudomorphs range from $75 to $150.

Goethite pseudomorph after marcasite, 3.4 cm, from north of the Farafra Oasis, White Desert, Egypt. McDougall Minerals specimen and photo.

Beginning about six years ago, *The Webmineralshop* (webmineralshop.com) has been one of the major commercial sources of attractive, pale to deep purple specimens of the hydrous Al, Fe sulfate *coquimbite* from deep secondary-sulfate zones in upper, groundwater-accessible reaches of

the deposit once worked by the Monte Arsiccio iron mine, Stazzema, Lucca Province, Tuscany, Italy. Many other rare sulfates also occur in these watery upper zones, and one of the rarest of them is **voltaite**, excellent specimens of which are featured now on the website of *The Webmineralshop*. Said to be from "a recent new find," the **voltaite** comes as sharp, lustrous black crystals to 1 cm, some as loose loners, others intergrown in tight groups on a matrix of white halotrichite. Voltaite is isometric, and these crystals look like octahedrons or cuboctahedrons, although in most cases they are too tightly intergrown to let us make close distinctions. Nevertheless, the crystals are smooth-faced and their luster is high, and so it seems that these are world-class representatives of the rather exotic species. The sizes run from 3 to 6 cm, and their very civilized prices run from 50 to 100 euros (think of them as "less than $100"). The specimen shown here goes for 75 euros.

Voltaite, 3 cm, from the Monte Arsiccio mine, Lucca, Tuscany, Italy. Webmineralshop specimen and photo.

Once or twice before in this space I have called attention to the little gathering of five Italian dealerships which share the website called *Minservice* (minservice.com). These dealerships—*Minservice* itself, *GMineral, Rolando Minerals, Silvia's Crystals* and *Ferrero's*—all offer motleys

of one-of-a-kinders, not only of contemporary items but also of very rare and/or old-classic ones, in a full range of sizes and of worldwide scope (although in general the site is heavy on rare goodies from Italy). Thinking that the best way to convey a sense of the fun, enlightenment and surprise to be had by spending an hour or two on this site (for some of the individual dealerships have spreads running for many pages) is to show just three of the pieces which especially grabbed me this time. First there is a 7-cm matrix specimen of **meionite** from Mount Vesuvius, Campania, Italy—the type locality for this member of the Scapolite Group, which only rarely is seen in crystals as fine and sharp as these, or as well placed on matrix. *Rolando Minerals* asks 140 euros (~ $155) for this very impressive display piece from what is surely history's most famous volcano.

Meionite, 7 cm, from Mount Vesuvius, Campania, Italy. Rolando Minerals specimen and photo.

Also in the *Rolando Minerals* gallery we find a splendid (if not very pretty) miniature of **argyrodite** (Ag_8GeS_6), one of the tiny handful of germanium-essential minerals known to exist. The type locality of the species is the Himmelsfürst mine, Freiberg, Saxony…and in the 1880s, in his lab in Freiberg, Clemens Winkler first identified germanium in Himmelsfürst samples, and the new element was named after its "native country." The old Freiberg argyrodites are highly cherished, but silver mines elsewhere have been known to produce the species as well; for example, the Rolando specimen hails from Colquechaca, Potosí, Bolivia. With its gray mammillary accretions of subhedral crystals of argyrodite, the piece could pass easily for one

from Freiberg, and it should be, I think, of almost equal desirability among history-minded collectors. Its price is 120 euros (~ $135).

Argyrodite, 3.6 cm, from Colquechaca, Potosí, Bolivia. Rolando Minerals specimen and photo.

And just to show that beautiful prizes from more familiar occurrences can be obtained as well from the *Minservice* family of dealerships, here, from *Ferrero's*, is a shining example of the "campylite" variety of **mimetite** from its classic occurrence in the Roughton Gill mine, Caldbeck Fells, Cumbria, England. For a piece this fine you could pay a lot more than the 280 euros (~ $300) which Fabrizio and Luca Ferrero ask for this one. (Feel free to consult the article on Caldbeck Fells in the March-April 1991 *Mineralogical Record* and, for that matter, the article on the nearby Dry Gill mine, also a source of campylite, in the September-October 2023 *Mineralogical Record*. In fact, why not go whole hog and check out the 2010 Mineralogical

Record supplement on the *Classic Minerals of Northern England*, which has an abundantly illustrated chapter on the various mines of the Caldbeck Fells, including the Roughton Gill and Dry Gill mines?)

Mimetite variety campylite, 4 cm, from Roughton Gill, Caldbeck Fells, Cumbria, England. Ferrero's Minerals specimen and photo.

Rather than follow my usual practice of ending an online report by displaying a lone super-specimen of some dazzling kind (I have already, after all, shown you here a cabinet-size California gold which goes for a cool quarter-million), I will instead recommend a new, handy-looking 330-page book, *Mineral Specimen Cleaning and Development for the Amateur*, by Steve Hardinger, a retired Lecturer in Chemistry at UCLA in California and the proprietor of the friendly online dealership called *Dragon Minerals*. On that website (dragon-minerals.com). Steve writes "My new self-published book is now available [for] $42 (pdf; 30 MB) or $55 (print) plus applicable shipping and sales tax. Note: images in the pdf version are better than in the print version. To order send an email to steve@dragon-minerals.com." Additionally, he refers us to a

"sister" website, mincleandev.com, through which the book may also be ordered. To judge from its Table of Contents, two pages of which are shown here, this work is a conscientious and thorough overview of the main procedures and pitfalls which amateur specimen-cleaners should know about, and I would say that if *you* are one of those amateur specimen-cleaners you ought to give it a try.

Mineral Specimen Cleaning and Development for the Amateur

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Accompanying website: www.mincleandev.com

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This report should reach cyberland, and from thence your computer screen, well before the big "Hardrock Summit" mineral show takes place at the Westin Westminster hotel just north of Denver. So if you will be going to that one, I wish you good shopping and ogling…and likewise, of course, as concerns the great Munich Show in October. Now, though, please excuse me while I go to my front yard to water the little orange tree which somehow still puts out white blossoms in all of this midsummer heat.

Tom Moore

