What's New in the Mineral World?

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As I write this it is late June, and the Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines mineral show is in progress in bucolic, vineyard-cloaked Alsace, France. I have been to most of the Ste.-Marie shows of the past 40 years and have always had great times there, but this year the hard fact is that for rather low-level health reasons I am unable to make it to Ste.-Marie, and the gist of what I have to say about that is (this being a family website) "*gawldernit, anyways*!" I see in the news, though, that temperatures in central Europe right now are running around 100º F with high humidity whereas in Tucson they're running, okay, even higher than that but without much humidity. And most of the action at Ste.-Marie happens outside so that showgoers must endure slogging sweatbaths in exchange for their fun, while in Tucson (to continue these rationalizations) one need not go outside at all but rather can stay inside, in one's air-conditioned office, and sit at one's desk to comfortably consult one's computer regarding What's New Online. So I am reconciled to staying home after all—*dadgummit!*

What's New Online

Currently the "New Arrivals" section of Ghulam Mustafa's *Fine Art Minerals* website (fineartminerals.com) offers a lavish 134 crystals of lilac, purplish and greenish **kunzite spodumene** and 30 of yellow **triphane spodumene**, all lately brought in from new finds in the Mawi pegmatite, Laghman Province, Afghanistan. All of these are loose, typically etched, completely gemmy and uniformly gorgeous crystals, miniature to large-cabinet size, bearing prices from $250 to "P.O.R." (price on request); a few are unusual in that crystals of green tourmaline are lightly attached to their sides. Below are photos of five specimens from this, a remarkably generous lot of top-quality gem spodumene from the Hindu Kush:

A typical, lightly etched, deep lilac-colored, miniature crystal priced at $450

Kunzite spodumene, 5.5 cm, from the Mawi pegmatite, Laghman Province, Afghanistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

A large kunzite crystal with lilac-colored edges and greenish body color, priced at $9,800

Kunzite spodumene, 14.5 cm, from the Mawi pegmatite, Laghman Province, Afghanistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

Another large crystal, dramatically bicolored, “P.O.R.”

Kunzite spodumene, 14 cm, from the Mawi pegmatite, Laghman Province, Afghanistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

A gemmy yellow crystal of triphane, priced at $4,300

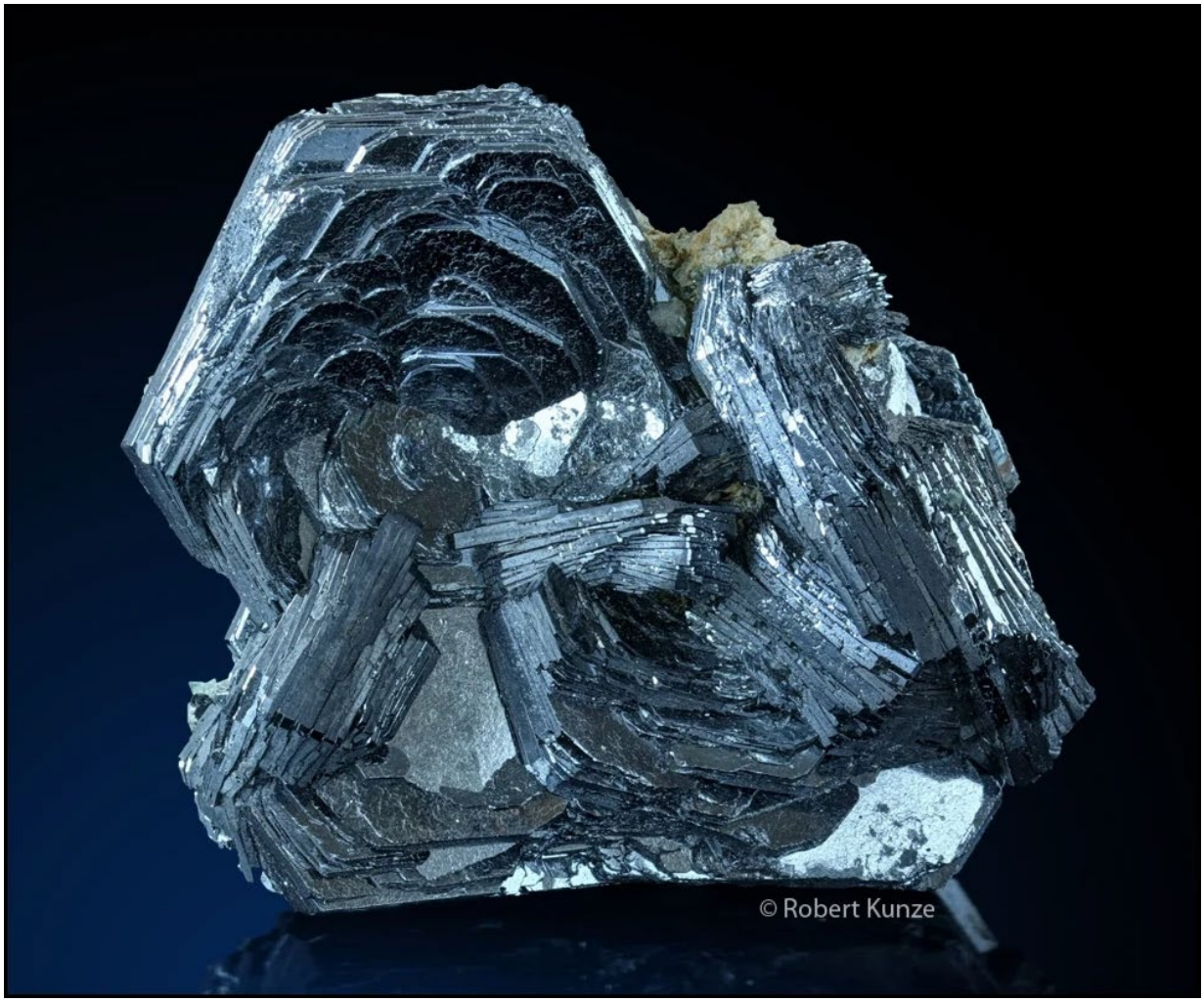
Triphane spodumene, 14 cm, from the Mawi pegmatite, Laghman Province, Afghanistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

Besides this wealth of gem spodumene crystals, Mustafa's website shows us a single 13-cm specimen of something called "Pom Pom Quartz" (alternatively, "Sunflower Quartz")—and I recall that at the last Denver Show, too, Mustafa was flashing around this (or perhaps another, like-looking) "Pom Pom Quartz" crystal, eliciting surprised exclamations of pleasure from random onlookers. The slightly smoky, incomplete but wholly transparent quartz crystal comes, Mustafa writes on the website, from "a recent and highly sought-after discovery" somewhere in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil; he goes on to say that the golden sprays of acicular crystals seen as inclusions within it "have been identified as a rare association involving bassanite"—bassanite being, oddly enough, an intermediate stage of the alteration of anhydrite to gypsum, formula $Ca(SO_4)\cdot 0.5H_2O$. No doubt because it is so spectacular and (for now at least) so rare, Mustafa has placed this peculiar "Pom Pom Quartz" specimen on the elite "P.O.R." level.

"Pom Pom" Quartz, 13 cm, from Minas Gerais, Brazil. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

In earlier online reports we have made the acquaintance of two Austrian mineral enthusiasts, Martin Grüll and Robert Kunze, who once were partners in running the dealership called *Via Mineralia,* but that dealership is now exclusively in Martin's hands (and still is worth a long online visit) while Robert presides over an enterprise which he calls *Mister Mineral* (mistermineral.com). On a recent web update of *Mister Mineral*—strong, like its predecessor, on European, especially Alpine, minerals—Robert offers nine excellent **"iron rose" hematite** specimens, large-thumbnail to large-miniature size, from two localities near Leventino in Canton Ticino (German: Tessin), Switzerland. If, like me, you think that Alpine "iron roses" at their best are the most highly desirable of all hematite specimens, you should check out these, some of which, Robert says, are from old collections while others, presumably, are from recent *strahler* discoveries. Seven of the specimens consist of single, loose roses or clusters of two or three while the other two show the metallic black roses aesthetically perched on off-white, quartz-heavy matrix, one with little crystals of rutile. Prices range from 165 to 2,000 euros (these days, about $200 to $2,200).

Hematite, 3.2 cm, from Fibbia, Airolo, Leventina, Canton Ticino, Switzerland. Mister Mineral (Robert Kunze) specimen and photo.



Hematite, 5 cm, from Fibbia, Airolo, Leventina, Canton Ticino, Switzerland. Mister Mineral (Robert Kunze) specimen and photo.

Also, ten unusual, fairly attractive **calcite** specimens from a contemporary locality called Weissach, in the state of Vorarlberg, westernmost Austria (not to be confused with the famous fluorite locality called Weisseck, in Salzburg state) are shown under both the "All Minerals" and the "Europe" sections on *Mister Mineral*. These specimens show sharp, steep-scalenohedral calcite crystals from 5 to 7.5 cm long, basically colorless and transparent but variously tinted a medium-brown by fine-grained cloudy inclusions of something or other. Most of the specimens are loose, lone crystals but a few have bits of adhering matrix; all are good bargains at 80 to 200 euros (~ $100 to $225).

Calcite, 5.5 cm, from Weissach, Vorarlberg, Austria. Mister Mineral (Robert Kunze) specimen and photo.

From time to time in these reports I have drawn readers' attention to the website of *Luis Burillo Minerales* (luisburillominerales.com), where strong selections of worldwide specimens, but especially those of Spain and of Panasqueira, Portugal, may be ogled. Right now I recommend that you ogle the Burillo offering of 10 lovely cabinet-size specimens showing pellucid, bladed and wedge-terminated crystals of **gypsum** sticking up at all angles from pieces of white alabaster

matrix, from Fuentes de Ebro, Zaragoza, Spain—among the most distinctive of worldwide occurrences of the common but (in this case) very beautiful sulfate. Such gypsum specimens, taken from alabaster quarries south of the town of Fuentes de Ebro, appeared suddenly on the market, then disappeared quite as suddenly, in the late 1980s, and they have counted as uncommon "classics" ever since then. Luis Burillo's specimens now on show on his website are as dramatic as any yet seen, and they range in price from 120 to 1695 euros; the one in the photo here goes for 485 euros (~ $500).

Gypsum, 10.8 cm, from Fuentes de Ebro, Zaragoza, Aragon, Spain. Luis Burillo Minerals specimen and photo.

Also, on the "Spain" page of *Luis Burillo Minerales* you will find three fine miniatures of another near-contemporary Spanish classic: **quartz, variety "Jacinto de Compostela,"** from near the town of Chelva (or "Chella," as some labels say), in northwestern Valencia Province. Vividly colored brick-red by finely divided hematite within, the quartz crystals occur as sharp, complete floaters to modest sizes or else as bristling spherical aggregates which may still rest in their original matrix of red-tinted gypsum: a text on the website tells us that two common informal terms for the bristling red spheres are "pinecones" and, well, "devil's balls." Luis' three specimens, all of which show the spheres resting on groups of crude gypsum crystals, range from 4.5 to 6.2 cm in size and from 170 to 220 euros in price. Loose, complete floaters of "Jacinto de Compostela" quartz are actually fairly common around the market, but matrix pieces like these, much less widely known, are elusive.

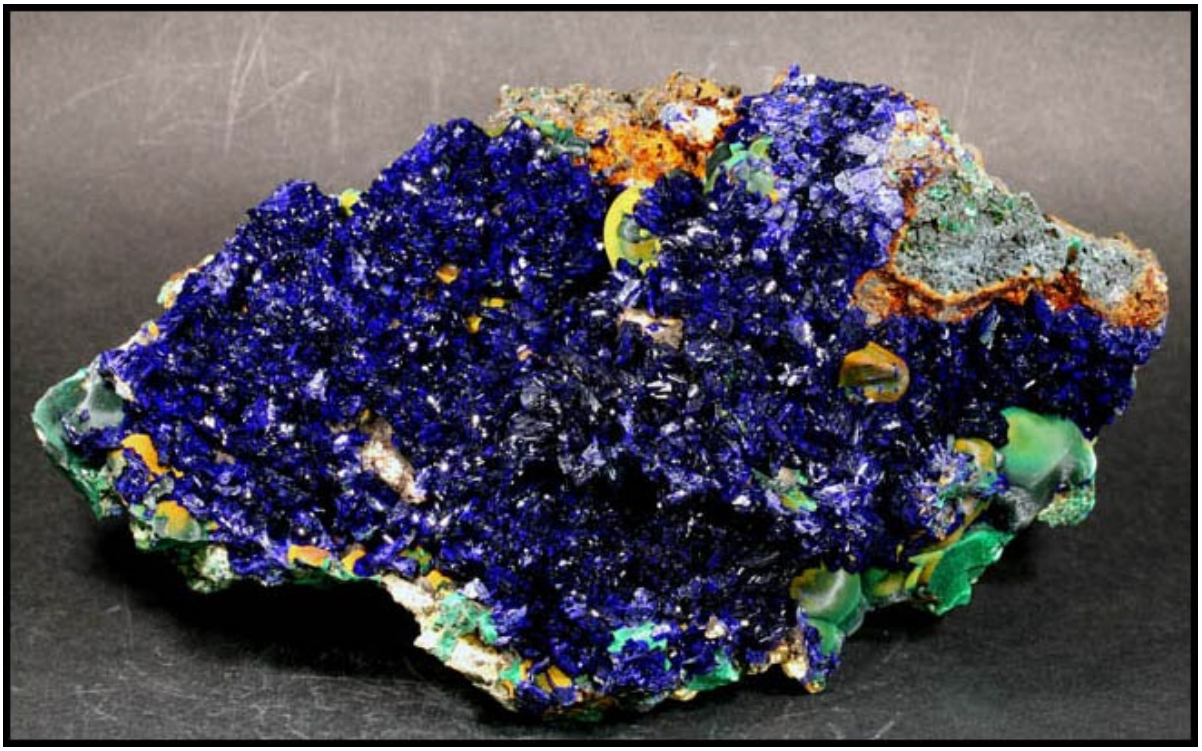
Quartz on gypsum, 6.7 cm, from Chelva, Valencia, Spain. Luis Burillo Minerals specimen and photo.

Do you want to see something *really new* which just might make it onto the market in time for the current Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show (where I am *not* in attendance, *dernblastit*)? If so, here is something for you, via me, from Jordi Fabre, who, although retired as a dealer, seems always to be aware of new finds, particularly in Morocco. Jordi sends word (and a handful of photos by Joaquim Callén) of some very large clusters of **red quartz** crystals found in April of this year—just two months or so ago—in an area called Toufassmame, Alnif, Tinghir Province, Drâa-Tafilalet region, Morocco. Individual prismatic crystals in these groups are smoother-sided and more lustrous than for the typical red quartz floaters from Spain, and they are intensely, flamboyantly *red*—reminiscent of some of the best we have seen from elsewhere in Morocco and from the Orange River Mouth area, South Africa/Namibia. Jordi writes that the crystal groups occur in fractures and cavities in late Precambrian to early Paleozoic metasedimentary rocks within the Anti-Atlas mountain belt, and that the distinctive red color is caused, just as you'd think, by iron-oxide inclusions and coatings which were deposited during quartz crystallization; moreover, many specimens show a second generation of small, colorless quartz crystals over the big red crystals, although in the largest example of all (26.5 cm—shown here) the *first* generation of quartz is colorless while the *second* is red. Anyway, Jordi's guess is that only a few Moroccan dealers will have specimens from the find on offer at Ste.-Marie, since there has not yet been time for selections to reach international dealers and be prepared for sale—so you heard it here first; watch for these splashy specimens at, of course, the upcoming Denver and Munich shows or, *of course*, on the Web.

Quartz, 26.5 cm, from Toufassmame, near Alnif, Tinghir Province, Drâa-Tafilalet region, Morocco. Jordi Fabre specimen; Joaquim Callén photo.

Quartz, 11.8 cm, from Toufassmame, near Alnif, Tinghir Province, Drâa-Tafilalet region, Morocco. Jordi Fabre specimen; Joaquim Callén photo.

Once before in an online report I displayed a selection of fine, mostly moderately priced **azurite** specimens from worldwide localities as seen on Jack Crowley's *The Crystal Mine* website (crystal-mine.com), and now I am moved to repeat myself, since on his May 20 update Jack sets out another azurite smorgasbord, the better to whet our appetites for the popular species and the better, too, to remind us of the great number of distinctive occurrences where it has been and is being found. Go to "New Arrivals," page 2, on the website of *The Crystal Mine* and you will see nothing but azurite in a wide range of styles, sizes and of hues of blue: localities represented include Morenci and Bisbee, Arizona; Tsumeb, Namibia; Chessy, France; the Touissit-Bou Beker and M'Sissi mines, Morocco; the Burra Burra mine, Australia; the El Cobre, Milpillas and a couple of other mines in Mexico; the Christiana mine, Laurium, Greece; the (very new) Yanga Koubenza occurrence, Republic of Congo; the Blue Jay mine, Idaho; the Sepon mine, Laos; the Lost Lake claim, New Mexico; the Liufengshan mine, China; someplace in Romania I've never heard of…and more besides. The prices of the six specimens that I show here range from $1,175 (which must be close to a record for Jack) for the wonderful 1883-vintage miniature from the Copper Queen mine at Bisbee, down to $120 for the vividly bright crystal plate from Mexico's El Cobre mine (which dates to the 1960s, when pieces like this were reaching the market). So, without further pedantic comment, here are six of Jack Crowley's azurites—selected after a long, obsessive but fun, half-hour of scrolling up and down and dithering over choices:

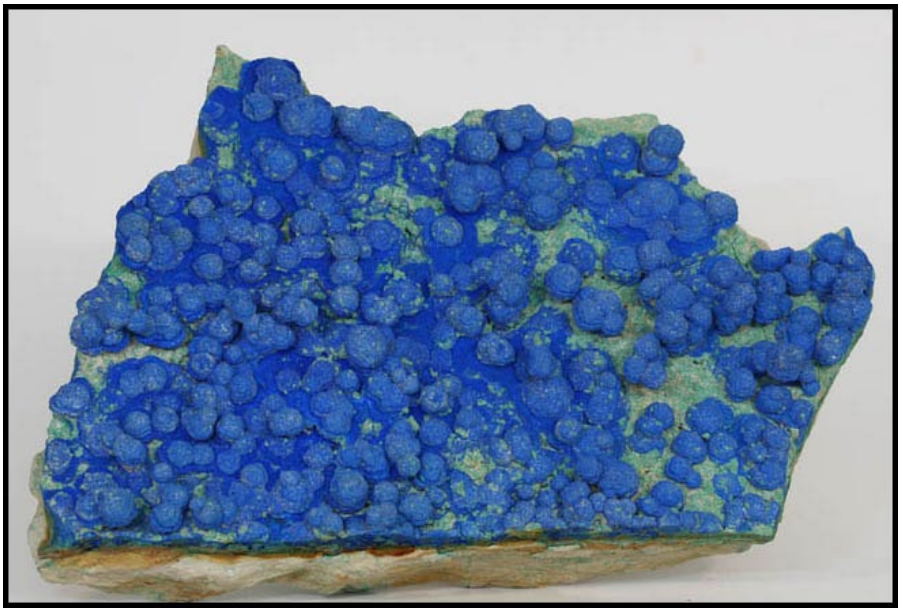


Azurite, 18 cm, from the Liufengshan mine, Chizhou Prefecture, Anhui Province, China. The Crystal Mine specimen; Jack Crowley photo.

Azurite, 5 cm, from the Copper Queen mine, Bisbee, Cochise County, Arizona. Collected in 1883; ex Evan Jones collection. The Crystal Mine specimen; Jack Crowley photo.

Azurite, 6 cm, from the El Cobre mine, Conception del Oro, Zacatecas, Mexico. The Crystal Mine specimen; Jack Crowley photo.

Azurite, 3 cm, from Tsumeb, Namibia. The Crystal Mine specimen; Jack Crowley photo.



Azurite and malachite on sandstone, 13 cm, from the Lost Lake claim, Nacimiento mine, San Pablo, Sandoval County, New Mexico. The Crystal Mine specimen; Jack Crowley photo.

Everyone knows by now of the exciting discoveries made during the past eight years or so in the Balmat zinc mining district, St. Lawrence County, New York—see numerous recent show reports, and, more importantly, see the article by Brizendine and Stefano in the January-February 2025 *Mineralogical Record*, with many photographs of dramatic (indeed, in some cases, world-beating) specimens of magnetite, calcite, anhydrite and sphalerite from the Balmat district. The best-known **sphalerite** from these recent finds comes as crystals, exceptionally to 4.5 cm, which are remarkable for being completely gemmy and highly lustrous, and showing colors along a spectrum from yellow to orange to brown, sometimes with whispers of green. These are, of course, some of the swankiest, most brilliant sphalerites ever found anywhere, but we should remember that the *rarest* of sphalerites generally are those so iron-poor as to be palest green, palest yellow, or even nearly colorless (as in a few antique examples from Franklin, New Jersey). Well, in the aforementioned article on the Balmat mines the authors write that "In April 2023, sphalerite crystals up to 2 cm...were recovered from an isolated boulder on the 3861 level" of the Empire State mine #4, and "These crystals show a bright yellow resinous luster…"; in fact, I have learned, they show a bright lemon-yellow *color*, in addition to Balmat-trademark gemminess. New York North Country collector Mike Walter knows all about this new yellow sphalerite: he mentioned it in a *Rocks & Minerals* article which he wrote with Kevin Dixon, and he has e-mailed me about it, saying that this sphalerite, besides being the best *yellow* sphalerite he has seen from any locality, is fluorescent red in shortwave ultraviolet light and fluorescent orange in longwave. And, say, on the website of his *Geologic Desires* dealership (geologicdesire.com) Mike offers three thumbnails of the material. Considering the rarity of any sphalerite as yellow as *that*, I would say that these little crystal groups are great bargains at Mike's asking prices of $325, $300 and $225.

Sphalerite, 3.2 cm, from the Empire State mine #4, 3,861-foot level, Balmat, St. Lawrence County, New York. Geologic Desires specimen; Mike Walter photo.

Another noteworthy group of small thumbnails, these of the old-classic variety, appears on the June 3 "Mixed Minerals" update of Mike Keim's *Marin Minerals* website (marinmineral.com). Mike calls the species in question "manganpyrosmalite" although that old name, bestowed in 1953, has since been changed by the IMA to **pyrosmalite-(Mn)**—the manganese-dominant analog of iron-dominant pyrosmalite-(Fe). Both of these very rare but attractive species, always highly desirable to collectors, were found at their best long ago in the mines of Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia: Mike's examples, he says, are from an old Australian collection. William D. Birch tells us in *Minerals of Broken Hill* (1999) that in 1955 there was a find of what were "probably the finest crystals" of "manganpyrosmalite [as] stout hexagonal prisms up to 4 cm across," and that other Broken Hill finds produced excellent crystals in the 1.5 to 3-cm range…well, Mike Keim's specimens have individual crystals reaching just 5 mm in groups reaching just 1.2 cm, but the little jumbles of sharp, hexagonal-tabular red-brown crystals are very pretty (as we can tell even though most of the photos are a bit out of focus), and they cost between $350 and $450. One exceptional 2-cm group with a gemmy red rhodonite crystal attached to the pyrosmalite-(Mn) crystals costs $600.

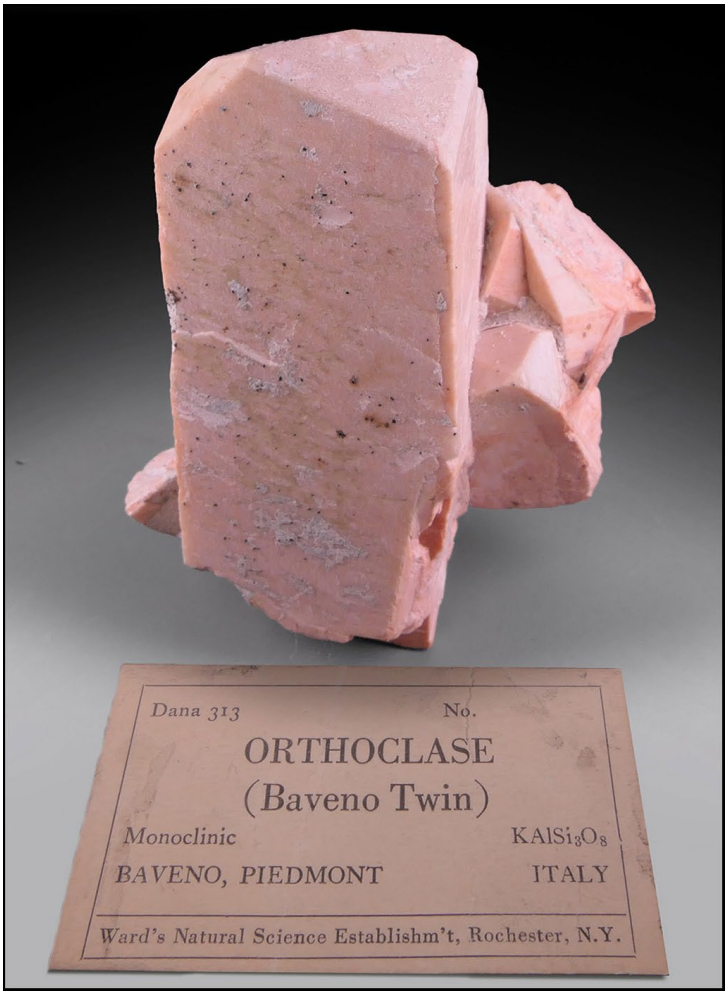
Pyrosmalite-(Mn), 8 mm, from Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia. Marin Minerals specimen and photo.

By now all subscribers have surely received in the mail or seen digitally the May-June 2026 *Mineralogical Record*, with a report on the 2026 Tucson Show by your current correspondent. In that report, a paragraph on page 407, with supporting Jeff Scovil photos on pp. 406-407, describes a selection of vividly bright green and deep blue miniatures from the Tantara mine, Kambove, Haut-Katanga, Democratic Republic of Congo, showing pseudomorphs of dioptase after calcite,

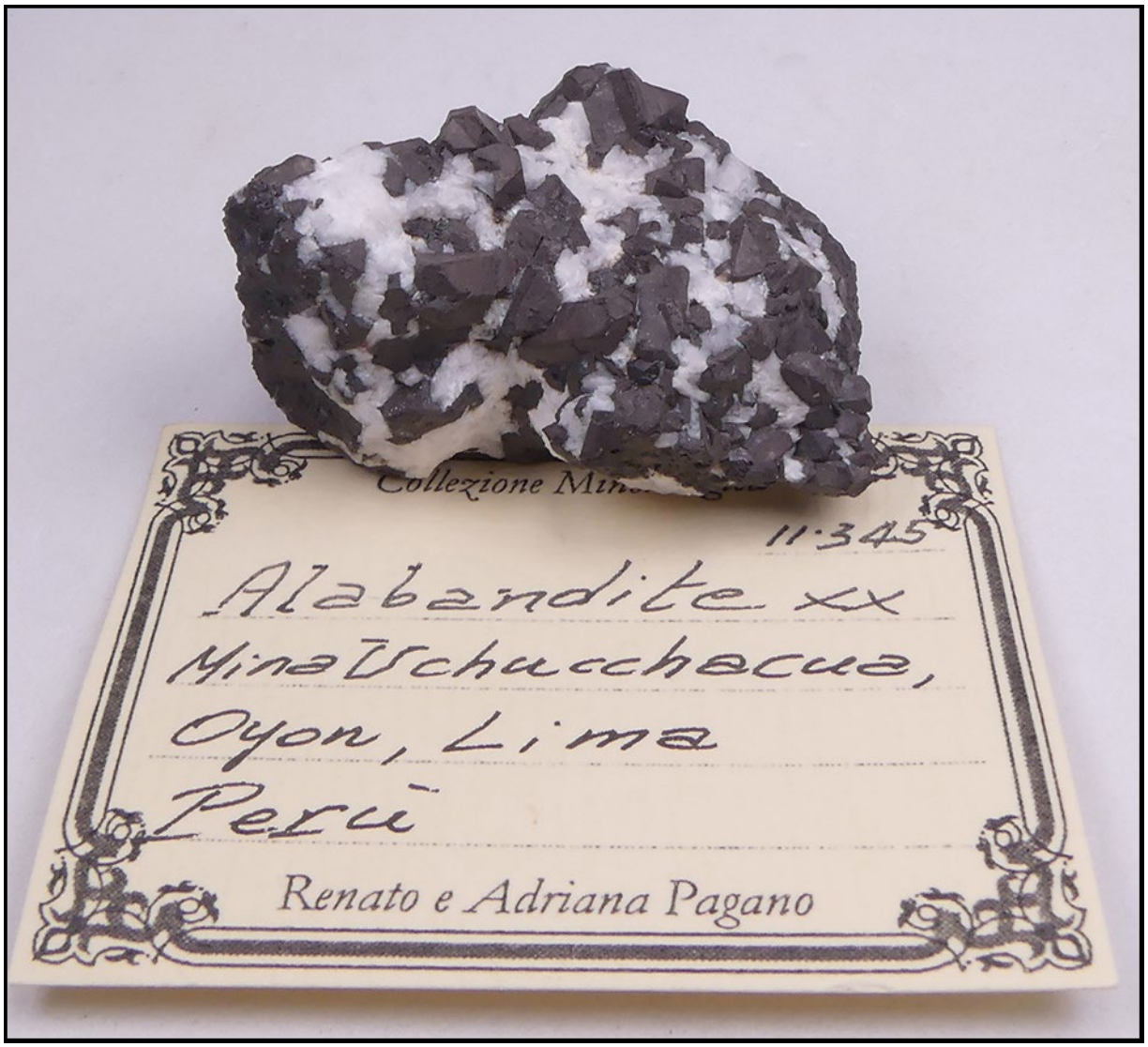
malachite after dioptase after calcite, and shattuckite after dioptase after calcite—all belonging to Jasun and Mandy McAvoy, who brought the small stash of specimens from their collection to Tucson to sell. I thought that I'd never before seen or heard of dioptase pseudomorphs after anything…but then I remembered an article in September-October 2005 by three Belgian scientists: "Dioptase-planchéite pseudomorphs after calcite from the Tantara copper deposit…," with photos of just such specimens as the McAvoys brought to Tucson in 2026. And, sure enough, the Belgians wrote that the pseudomorphs had been collected in the Tantara mine in 1920, and the McAvoys said that their specimens were perhaps 80 years out of the ground. Why do I tell you all this? Because these complex pseudomorphous behaviors result in distinctive and striking specimens which we should all know about, and because Andy Seibel right now is showing a single very impressive (and very expensive) specimen of **dioptase crystals on dioptase pseudomorph after calcite** from the Tantara mine. This 6.5-cm piece is a tower of dioptase-green, some of that green accounted for by simple, lustrous, straightforward dioptase crystals near the base of the tower while farther up there are very sharp scalenohedral forms which, Andy writes, are pseudomorphs "layered with malachite over a layer of dioptase, the entire replacement [being] after calcite." The specimen is from the Rosa Nowels collection, and Andy calls it a "modern classic," although "modern" is questionable unless, of course, *more specimens like this are now being found* at the site of the little Tantara mine.

Dioptase on dioptase pseudomorphs after calcite, 6.5 cm, from the Tantara mine, Haut-Katanga, Democratic Republic of Congo. Andy Seibel Minerals specimen and photo.

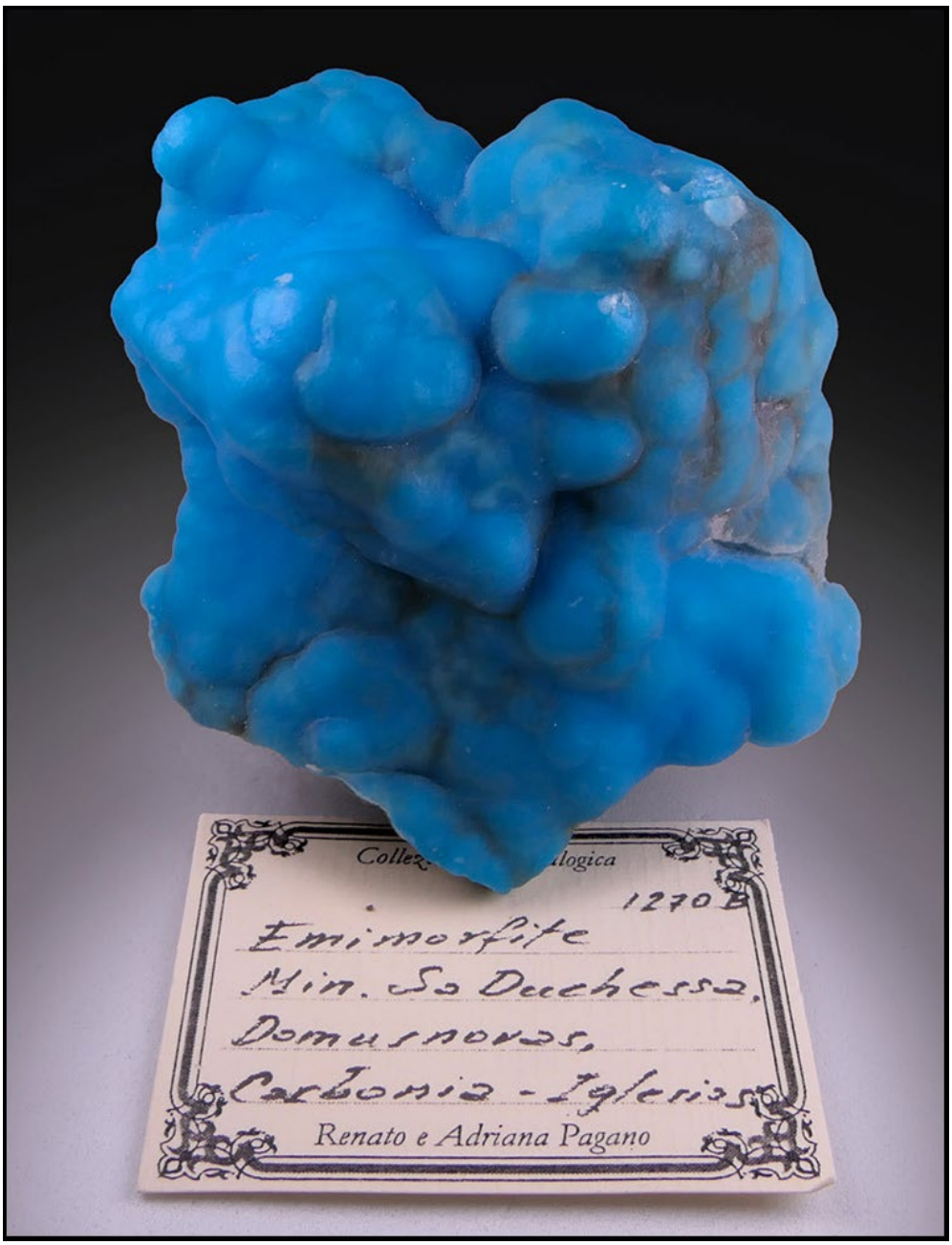
In print reports on major mineral shows I have often mentioned the going Italian concern of *MCP* (Mineralogical Collection Professionals), who regularly appear at the shows with fine worldwide (especially Italian) specimens for sale, and who also offer their expert services in cleaning, trimming and generally preparing specimens for display by collectors and institutions. There is also an *MCP* website (mcpgallery.com), which now has 56 pages of uniformly superb (again, especially Italian) specimens for collectors: go to "Fine Specimens" (not "Decorative") and have fun ogling the one-of-a-kinders there—being especially respectful of those with labels from the collection of the late Renato and Adriana Pagano. Most of us veteran collectors who knew this urbane, intelligent, kind-natured couple of sufferers from what Renato called "the gentle madness of collecting" grew very fond of them, and still miss them at the big shows. MCP is practicing serious virtue in saving and highlighting Pagano labels which go with the specimens…and so, as a very small sample of what you can find to admire in the MCP Gallery, I show you three standout former Pagano pieces:



Orthoclase, 6.5 cm, from Baveno, Piedmont, Italy. Ex Renato and Adriana Pagano. MCP specimen and photo.



Alabandite, 4.2 cm, from the Uchucchacua mine, Oyon Province, Lima Department, Peru. Ex Renato and Adriana Pagano. MCP specimen and photo.



Hemimorphite, 7 cm, from the Sa Duchessa mine, Domusnovas, Carbonia-Iglesias, Sardinia, Italy. Ex Renato and Adriana Pagano. MCP specimen and photo.

Time now at last for my customary Big Finish—customarily taking the form of textual ravings plus snazzy photo of some very large, very, very fantastically beautiful "killer," most often of the gem-crystal type. But who needs to look all the time at jumbo tourmalines, beryls or topazes—or

marvel until bedtime at proud-peacock pieces of rhodochrosite, wulfenite, dioptase, silver or gold—when one can gaze, instead, on a 2.2-cm crystal of **native tellurium** from the Emperor mine, Tavua gold field, Viti Levu Island, Republic of the Fiji Islands? Yes, elemental tellurium does come—excruciatingly rarely—as fine, sharp, complex, prismatic crystals to medium-thumbnail size, the only source of such specimens being the Emperor mine, on Viti Levu in the South Pacific (see the article on the locality by Smith, Smith and Wilson in the July-August 2008 *Mineralogical Record*). The extraordinary example shown here was sold to someone for $3500 by Mike Keim of *Marin Minerals*, as reported in Mike's June 3 "Mixed Minerals" update, already cited above. If that specimen were still available I would, as a thumbnail collector, run over my grandmother for it, as Rock Currier used to say, but I guess I will settle for displaying it here—just a touch ironically, playfully, yes, but in real mineralogical wonder—to you.

Tellurium, 2.2 cm, from the Emperor mine, Tavua gold field, Viti Levu Island, Fiji Islands. Marin Minerals specimen and photo.

That's all, folks….best summer wishes from Tom Moore.

