What's New in the Mineral World?

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Springtime 2013 greetings to everyone, and here's the 34th report in this space concerning What's New Online. The web is wide, and now, as ever, full of interesting minerals new *and* old, in large-lot clusters and as one-of-a-kind lone stars, scattered about the great wheeling galaxy of dealers' sites. Below, then, consider some items which you might choose to pursue…or maybe just to admire on your screen and/or learn a thing or two from.

Pyromorphite, 5.8 cm, from the San Andres mine, Villaviciosa de Cordoba, Espiel, Cordoba, Spain. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.

An "Initial Tucson 2013 Update" on the site of Jordi Fabre's *Fabre Minerals* (fabreminerals.com) displays ten excellent, vividly bright **pyromorphite** specimens from

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the San Andres mine, Villaviciosa de Cordoba, Espiel, Cordoba, Spain. It's good to see such a fine lot from this major pyromorphite occurrence making the scene again, for no such lots have appeared for quite a few years now—San Andres pyromorphites were marketed heretofore in two main waves, in the mid-1980s (when, at the Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show, I first saw them) and in the late 1990s (when about a thousand new specimens were collected, and Jordi brought some to the 1998 Tucson Show). The specimens currently on the site were collected in 1997, i.e. during the second of the bonanza occasions. Sharp, highly lustrous, medium yellow-green, short-prismatic to tabular pyromorphite crystals to 1 cm form loose clusters of thumbnail dimensions or huddle in cavities in matrix pieces, to 9 cm across, of earthy brown limonite.

Azurite, 3 cm, from Kamariza, Laurium, Attika, Greece.
Greek Rocks specimen and photo.

Christos Spiromitros of the reliably interesting *Greek Rocks* dealership (greekrocks.com) has a March 1 posting of about 20 new **azurite** specimens from Laurium, Attika, Greece. As is well known, Laurium is just about the most venerable of mineral localities, the mines having been worked for silver and lead by the classical Athenians of the 5th century B.C., then again by a French mining company in *ca*. 1870-1970. A highly evolved local collecting culture continues to flourish at Laurium, and 366 species are known to occur there—this according to Bernard and Hyršl's *Minerals and Their Localities* (2004). But good azurite specimens from Laurium have always been rather rare, or were so until summer 2012, when a goodly number of mostly miniature-size specimens were taken from one of the old underground workings in the Kamariza subdistrict. Some of these specimens appeared at last year's Munich Show (see my report in the January-February 2013 issue), and now 20 more are being offered on the *Greek Rocks* site. The azurite crystals form roughly spherical clusters which range in diameter

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from about 3 to about 5 cm; they are deep blue, and the better specimens are rosettes of sharp, distinct, bladed crystals. Some of the spheres have pale green malachite spots, and one 3.7-cm specimen shows an open vug with dense, foliage-like growths of azurite, malachite pseudomorphs after azurite, olivenite, conichalcite and arsenocrandallite. Most of these pieces, though, are simply tight intergrowths of lustrous blue, well crystallized azurite: they suggest some azurites from Mexico but in fact are from one of the most "historic" of classic localities.

Probertite, 13 cm, from the Footwall Shale, Extension 18, Boron open pit, Boron, Kern County, California. Lehigh Minerals specimen and photo.

Lehigh Minerals (lehighminerals.com) has an early March posting of 68 mostly cabinet-size specimens of borate minerals from the great mine at Boron, California—and from the former collection of Jim and Dawn Minette. In my report on the 2012 Tucson Show (in the May-June 2012 issue) I noted that Dave Bunk was selling many of the Minettes' best borate "keepers," but this online *Lehigh Minerals* lot comes close to equaling Dave's, having really superb, large specimens of **colemanite, ulexite, kurnakovite** and more from Boron's glory days in the 1960s and 1970s. And nearly all of these specimens have attributions to particular collecting sites: by way of example, here's a rare one, a 13-cm cluster of **probertite** crystals from the Footwall Shale, Extension 18, in the great open pit. Almost certainly this specimen comes from the big strike in March 1987 which Jim Minette described in his article in the September-October 1988 *Mineralogical Record*. The fan-sprays of opaque brownish white probertite crystals are not exactly beautiful, but in his article Jim wrote, probably justly, that they are "the most aesthetic specimens of the mineral ever found."

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Colemanite, 16 cm, from Extension 21S, Boron open pit, Boron, Kern County, California. Collected by Jim Minette in 1980 Lehigh Minerals specimen and photo.

Oh yes, an earlier (November-December 2012) posting on the *Lehigh Minerals* site shows 40 *more* borate specimens—and have you ever seen a **colemanite** as good as this one from Boron? Jim Minette took it out from Extension 21S of the open pit in 1980.

Veszelyite, 1.1 cm, from the Black Pine mine, Philipsburg, Granite County, Montana. Lehigh Minerals specimen and photo.

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Before we leave the *Lehigh Minerals* site, let's take a quick, covetous look at the two small-thumbnail-size specimens of a very rare, glamorous phosphate species now shown on that site: **veszelyite** from the Black Pine mine, Philipsburg, Granite County, Montana. This occurrence became an instant classic when amazing specimens from it first appeared in the 1970s; by several orders of magnitude they are the world's best veszelyites. Specimens almost never exceed thumbnail size, nor do the prices ever go much below four figures even so. It's highly unusual these days to see fine examples offered for sale, and all right, one of the two on the *Lehigh* site is already marked "sold" and the other (shown here) is priced at $1700, but even if you can't buy them they are—to understate the case—worth looking at. For more information on the locality see Dave Waisman's 1992 article on the "Minerals of the Black Pine mine, Granite County, Montana" in vol. 23, number 6, of the *Mineralogical Record*. Yes, that is the very same Dave Waisman who now manages several mineral shows around the country, including the Westward Look Show in Tucson every February.

Tremolite, largest crystal 2.2 cm, from the Merelani mines, Arusha Region, Tanzania. Marin Minerals specimens and photo.

Mike Keim's *Marin Minerals* (marinmineral.com) is offering some lovely **tremolite** crystals from the tanzanite mines at Merelani, Arusha Region, Tanzania. From these mines, we are by now accustomed to seeing beautiful gemmy crystals of green (Cr-rich)

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diopside, grossular, axinite-(Mg), blue fluorapatite and of course tanzanite, but the gemmy, mint-green, bladed crystals of tremolite have been rarer in really fine specimens: most crystals found up to now have lacked good terminations and have had a sort of off-putting splinteriness about them. But Mike Keim's crystals, which he says are from a "new find," are different. Ranging in size from 2 to 7 cm, they boast sharp, smooth terminal faces, and all appear to be almost wholly gemmy within, in varying shades of green. (Merelani tremolite crystals from earlier finds are illustrated in Wendell Wilson's 2009 article on the Merelani mines in the *Mineralogical Record*, vol. 40, number 5.)

Cuprite, 4 cm, from the Rubtsovskoye mine, Altai Mountains, western Siberia, Russia. Marin Minerals specimen and photo.

You can also get a pretty good deal from Mike Keim if your collection still lacks a **cuprite** specimen from the recent extraordinary finds in the Rubtsovskoe deposit, Altai Mountains, western Siberia, Russia. I have been extolling this Russian cuprite (and copper, and copper pseudmorphs after cuprite) for a while now in my show reports, as the occurrence seems to me to be the world's finest, old or new, for crystallized cuprite. If you can't get to the big shows, where the material is still plentiful, you'll have to buy your specimen(s) on the web—and you'd do well to hurry because, as Mike Keim reports, "the Russian dealers said the deposit is no longer producing (all the specimens are out of the ground) so it is unclear how much longer these will be available." That's pretty much what I have been hearing too. So consider that a 4-cm crystal group like that shown in the picture here—with little smears of bright native silver on it, at that—can be had from Mike for $750, and that's quite reasonable for cuprite of such exceptional quality.

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Like the Russian cuprite, green **fluorite** from the Rogerley mine, Frosterley, Weardale, England has been so abundant on the market lately that there's a danger that we will take it for granted and look right past it; but, like the cuprite, it is beautiful and world-class at its best. The *UK Mining Ventures* company, headed by Cal Graeber, has been working the Rogerley mine, solely for mineral specimens, every summer since 1999, and at each Tucson Show since then there has been a room full of this superb fluorite at the InnSuites, and more at the Main Show, with Cal and other dealers…but it's about time to tell those who don't get to this and the other big shows that the company's website (ukminingventures.com) might just have the specimen of your dreams. Right now you can see a few pieces from the 2012 collecting season (each with a 2-pence coin, about the size of a U.S. quarter, for scale). The big specimen in the picture here is from "Penny's Pocket Zone," exploited in August 2012.

Fluorite, 18 cm, from the Rogerley mine, Frosterley, Weardale, England. UK Mining Ventures specimen and photo.

The March 16 update of the *Weinrich Minerals* site (danweinrich.com) offers three gorgeous cabinet-size specimens of **realgar-included barite** from the old locality of Baia Sprie (old Hungarian name: Felsöbánya), Maramures, Romania. Such regal specimens as these have been emerging at intervals since the 19th century (maybe earlier), and in the 1990s there were a few small finds one of which probably produced the three pieces that Dan Weinrich now has. Delicate, bladed, reddish barite crystals form jumbles and crudely rosette-shaped aggregates over matrix; the specimen shown here is the smallest (at 10.5 cm) and least expensive ($6150) of the three, but also (in my opinion) the most aesthetic.

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Barite with realgar inclusions, 10.5 cm, from Baia Sprie, Maramures, Romania. Weinrich Minerals specimen and photo.

In the same *Weinrich Minerals* update we find two intriguing **vivianite** specimens, 4.5 and 8.5 cm, from a "new find" at a place you'd never guess (so I'll have to tell you)—the Batu Hijau mine, Sumbawa Island, Lesser Sundra Islands, Indonesia. This open-pit mine, opened in 2000, exploits a copper porphyry body with a high gold content, and no mineral specimens of any kind from it have appeared on the market (as far as I or Dan knows) until now. Dan's two specimens show typical-looking, bladed, well terminated, transparent blue-green vivianite crystals to 2.5 cm; in the larger specimen (shown here) the vivianites form subparallel sprays rising from a gray matrix with ochre-yellow encrustations of something or other. Keep an eye out for more of these.

Vivianite, 8.5 cm, from the Batu Hijau mine, Sumbawa Island, Lesser Sundra Islands, Indonesia. Weinrich Minerals specimen and photo.

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Phillipsite, 5.5 cm, from the Olinghouse mine, Washoe County, Nevada. The Crystal Mine specimen and photo.

At the Main Show at Tucson—as you will see in the May-June issue—I took note of some modest and inexpensive but likable specimens of the rare zeolite **phillipsite** in vugs in altered andesite from, of all unpredictable places, the Olinghouse gold mine, Washoe County, Nevada. Specimens collected at the mine in 2001 show lustrous, snow-white, blocky phillipsite crystals to about 1 cm, associated in some cases with stilbite and natrolite crystals, lining vugs in the pale gray andesite. Some specimens of this description are being sold now on the website of Jack Crowley's *The Crystal Mine* (crystal-mine.com), and I couldn't resist telegraphing my what's-new punches somewhat by telling you about them here.

Zunyite in matrix, 8 cm (zunyite crystals to 9 mm), from near Quartzsite, La Paz County, Arizona. The Crystal Mine specimen and photo.

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The Crystal Mine also has a whole page of newly collected specimens of **zunyite** (an Al silicate with F and Cl) from the world's only significant locality for the species: a desert area near Quartzsite, La Paz County, Arizona. In 1984, Jim and Mary Walker, while hiking towards another locality, came on a single float boulder which was found to contain sharp tetrahedral crystals of zunyite to 2 cm embedded in pale tan, micaceous, pyrophyllite-rich schist; they christened the find the Electric Meatball mine (my favorite of all mineral-locality designations), and a few specimens were marketed at the 1999 Tucson Show. Since then there have been more zunyite finds in the area: Anthony *et al.*'s *Mineralogy of Arizona* (1995) gives other locality names, e.g. the Big Bertha and Veta Grande "mines." In March 2012 Mike Shannon collected some excellent zunyite specimens near Quartzsite, and presumably those being offered now by *The Crystal Mine* came from that venture. The specimens are chunks of dirty-white matrix in which the sharp outlines of yellow-brown zunyite tetrahedrons from 4 to 9 mm may be made out. No, they're not pretty, but they cost only around $20 and are, actually, among the world's finest representatives of a very rare species.

Clintonite in calcite, 5 cm, from the Crestmore quarry, Riverside, California. C & C Forrester specimen and photo.

C & C Forrester (forrestercc.com) offers various nice things for sale right now at "sale" prices, including good deals on thumbnails from Willard Perkin's old stocks: these include fine silvers, mostly from Mexico, and fine coppers, mostly from Michigan, as well as a dozen very good-looking thumbnails of Ojuela mine, Mexico **adamite** "from the early 1960s" and priced at $100 each. But the stars of the current show on this site are three fine **clintonite** specimens from the now-inactive, species-rich Crestmore limestone quarries at Riverside, California. After Prince of Wales Island, Alaska, Crestmore is the world's second best locality for clintonite, and a major strike of the material took place there in May 2001—see Curt Forrester's article in the July-August 2004 issue. The three pieces now up for sale are chunks of massive blue-white calcite, all around 5 cm, with numerous sharp, dark green, hexagonal-tabular crystals of clintonite half-embedded in them; the price of the specimen shown here is $475. You'll seldom—may never—see comparable Crestmore clintonites on the market.

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**Acanthite on quartz, 2.7 cm, from Guanajuato, Mexico.
Mineral Movies specimen and photo.**

Jeff Fast of Connecticut and of the *Mineral Movies* dealership (mineralmovies.com) has good contacts in Mexico, and he often returns from trips there with very good specimens, especially of silver sulfides and sulfosalts, especially in thumbnail and miniature sizes. Sure enough, his site has a January update with some dazzling small specimens of **acanthite** from Guanajuato, most of them bargains for $200 and less—his *very* best specimen, shown here, has a $750 price tag, but most of the $200 examples look almost as good. All of the specimens feature razor-sharp, brilliantly metallic black acanthite crystals; some are thumbnail-size groups without matrix while in the others the acanthite crystals sit up smartly on shards of drusy white calcite or quartz.

On the site run by Andy Seibel (andyseibel.com) you'll usually find one-of-a-kind items only, but Andy has an excellent eye and his specimens are, on the whole, very fine. His latest update has a whole page full of **elbaite** specimens from many places, and all are top-notch, but it was a piece from Stak Nala, Pakistan—already "reserved," it's my duty to say—which caught my eye, not so much because the elbaite crystal is shapely, well terminated and gemmy (most of the others are so as well) but because it is *yellow*. Of course, we expect Stak Nala elbaite crystals to be dark green with pink and colorless zones, and jacketed by white albite crystals; this one, however, is medium-yellow in most of its upper half, and lacks albite. It must be called educational in that it teaches new things about what a familiar species from a familiar occurrence might look like if it takes a mind to be "different." Collected in 1981 and thus very "early" for Stak Nala, the specimen was once in the David Eidahl collection.

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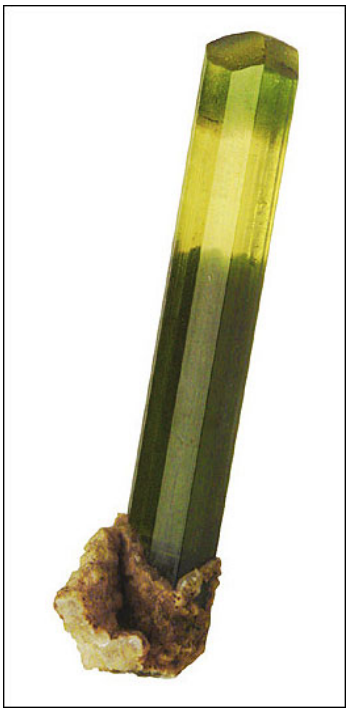

Elbaite, 4.7 cm, from Stak Nala near Skardu, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Andy Seibel Minerals specimen and photo.

As usual, a miscellany of old classics adorns the website of Ian Bruce's *Crystal Classics* (crystalclassics.co.uk), where a March 14 update tempts us with, for example, Brazilian **euclase**; Peruvian **gratonite**; Broken Hill **rhodonite**; **hopeite** from the *other* Broken Hill (in Zambia); Niederschlema, Germany **proustite**; Leadhills, Scotland **linarite**; **calcite** from Wheal Wrey, Cornwall; another **calcite** from Andreasberg, Germany; and a truly spectacular **hematite** from the Riederalp, Wallis, Switzerland. In the "educational" category there's also something surprising, formerly in the Mick Cooper collection: a miniature of **vanadinite** from the Keban mine in Elazig Province, Turkey. Mindat says only that this locality is a "lead-zinc deposit," and there are scattered references to Turkish vanadinite elsewhere—but when did you last have a chance to acquire such a thing?

Hematite, 3.6 cm, from the Riederalp, Brig, Wallis, Switzerland. Crystal Classics specimen and photo.

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Calcite, 6.2 cm, from Andreasberg, Harz Mountains, Germany. Crystal Classics specimen and photo.

Vanadinite, 7 cm, from the Keban mine, Keban, Elazig Province, Turkey. Crystal Classics specimen and photo.

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Dramatically enough, we conclude with **gold**. John Veevaert of *Trinity Minerals* (trinityminerals.com), returning to California from the Tucson Show, stopped by to see his buddy Scott Werschky and there picked up some spectacular gold specimens from the Round Mountain mine, Nye County, Nevada (Scott has consistently brought in some of the best available Round Mountain golds), and these specimens may now be seen on John's March 10 update. There are other gold localities represented in the same update—the Belshazzar mine, Idaho; the Mockingbird mine, California; the Alaska mine, California—but Round Mountain pieces are most numerous, and they are remarkable for their stylistic variety. John has thumbnails, miniatures, and even small-cabinet specimens (one measures 6 cm) of Round Mountain gold in all kinds of aspects, and all sport low-four-figure prices which seem to me very fair considering the quality of the pieces. To quote (why not?) from John's own descriptions, the specimens pictured here are, respectively, (1) "a leaf of gold with exceptional crystals on top of it," (2) "two brilliantly lustrous conjoined spinel twins," and (3) "a small piece of quartz [which] is host to what at first appear to be wires…[but] each wire is an elongated spinel-law twin." For more information on the occurrence see Wendell Wilson's 2009 article on the Round Mountain mine in vol. 40, no. 2 of the *Mineralogical Record*.

Gold, 2.7 cm, from the Round Mountain Mine, Nye County, Nevada.
Trinity Minerals specimen; John Veevaert photo.

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Gold, 2.5 cm, from the Round Mountain Mine, Nye County, Nevada.
Trinity Minerals specimen; John Veevaert photo.

Gold, 3 cm, from the Round Mountain Mine, Nye County, Nevada.
Trinity Minerals specimen; John Veevaert photo.

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Upcoming Shows

Small local shows seem to pop up everywhere like daffodils in the spring, but there are two not-so-small new ones of particular note. First, the New York/New Jersey Gem & Mineral Show will be held on April 12-14 at the New Jersey Exposition Center, 97 Sunfield Avenue, Edison, New Jersey. Show manager Lowell Carhart of *Eons Expos* is herewith continuing his efforts to create a major and permanent show for residents of the New York/Philadelphia area; last year he held the show in Secaucus, New Jersey, just across the Hudson River from Manhattan, but now, for various reasons, he's moving it a short distance south, more convenient to Philadelphia and *almost* as convenient to the New York Metro area as last time, when it went by the name of the New York Metro Show (see my review in the September-October 2012 issue). Besides about 200 dealers, there will be 60 showcases full of New York and New Jersey mineral and fossil specimens contributed by some of the area's finest museum and private collections. More information about the show can be found in the full-page ad for it in the January-February 2013 issue.

The other notable new show is going to be harder for most readers of this feature to get to: it's the first China (Changsha) Mineral & Gem Show, to be held May 16-20 in Changsha, Hunan Province, China. This show's full-page ad appears in the March-April 2013 issue (which subscribers should have in hand by now); the relevant website is www.changsha-show.com. This show is being conceived in a very ambitious way: small, local daffodil-shows also happen in China these days, but the one in Changsha aspires to become eventually the "The Tucson of Asia." There is massive support for it from many institutions, including the Chinese government, and the whole affair should be lavish. Contracts to take part have already been signed by many dealers from the U.S. and Europe, and, of course, there's no telling what minerals will be brought in by Chinese dealers, miners and middlemen who thus far have had no really *big* venue in China where they can deal directly with foreign buyers. Of course, if you want to go to China to check out this major event you should secure your visa, and otherwise start planning, *now*.

And that will have to do it for April (Mineral) Madness online.

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