# What's New in the Mineral World?


Report #43

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Yes, I'm still here—setting out once again to fill you in on what's new on the web. Actually there *is* quite a lot new, as dealers have processed what they picked up at the February Tucson Show and elsewhere. Now the long summer slog begins (we Tucsonans know all about it), and school will be getting out and work perhaps will be letting up some, and field collecting might be getting more dicey (at least in Arizona) because of the heat. So here are some dealers' offerings, popping up on the web like spring flowers and tempting you to some picking.

**On The Web**

Rudolf Watzl, the gent from an Austrian *Strahler* family who now runs the *Saphira Minerals* dealership (saphiraminerals.com), has just—April 30—posted some pages of newly arrived, mostly one-of-a-kind, mostly high-end specimens, displayed in photos typically gorgeous: it's always a pleasure to browse these pages (forgetting about the financial inhibitors in one's life). Scattered among the specimens on the "Treasure Trove" page (see under "Galleries") are a few crystal groups of **gold** from a find in September 2015 at Serra do Caldeirão, Pontes e Lacerda, Mato Grosso, Brazil. As you'll read in my print report on the 2016 Tucson Show (coming up in the May-June 2016 issue now being printed), this is marvelous gold and there's plenty of it: hundreds of first-rate specimens ranging in size from small-thumbnail to almost 8 cm were brought to Tucson last February and were the talk of the town. Rudolf's pieces are miniatures, and they are typical of the occurrence in that the crystals, though many are hoppered, distorted and somewhat tortured-looking, are sharp-edged all around: the gold stayed "in place" once weathered out from its host rock, and thus the crystals were spared alluvial rounding. Other web dealers besides Rudolf now also have the new golds from Brazil, but to get a feel for how good they can be you are advised to visit the *Saphira* site. Quite a few of the



specimens there are already marked "sold," but in general this material, so abundant in Tucson, will probably linger around the market for quite some time yet even if there are no fresh finds. The specimen shown below is from the website of *Fabre Minerals*, who is also offering fine gold specimens from the new occurrence.

**Gold, 1.9 cm, from Serra do Caldeirão, Pontes e Lacerda, Mato Grosso, Brazil. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.**

Rob Lavinsky's *The Arkenstone* usually gets some notice in this space, and why not? as Rob still has one of the most wide-ranging and creative of dealerships and a deep, diverse website to spread the word. At the 2015 Munich Show, Rob picked up some excellent cabinet and small cabinet-size **fluorite** specimens from a "small new find" at Frohnau near Annaberg, Erzgebirge, Upper Saxony, Germany, and nine of these specimens are offered now on his site (irocks.com). Major extraction of Ag-Bi-Co-Ni ores ceased long ago around Annaberg, but local collectors have continued digging good fluorite specimens from some of the old mines; in Munich I always check out certain German (former East German) dealers who've been known to bring the material in. Most Frohnau fluorite is yellow, yellow-brown or orange-brown, but some is very deep purple and largely opaque such that specimens appear black at first glance; when strongly backlit some crystals show purple-yellow or purple-orange color zoning. In Rob's specimens, though, there is no confusing opacity, only straightforward beauty. The simple cubic crystals are transparent, lustrous and a lush yellow-orange except for bits of purple where they meet matrix.

**Fluorite, 7.7 cm, from Frohnau near Annaberg, Upper Saxony, Germany. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.**

Further, on an April 7 "Rare Species" update on the site of *The Arkenstone*, Rob offers ten pages of rarities, mostly from the former collections of Paolo Matioli and the late Rock Currier, and a surf through these pages can be fascinating even for those (like me) who are not especially into rare species *per se*. Inevitably, some of these specimens are massive pieces in mottled colors with little arrows affixed to point out spots of interest, but others are quite well crystallized and aesthetically respectable at the very least. Some represent rare old *occurrences* of common species—pink apophyllite from Andreasberg, Harz, Germany; sharp, tan-colored scheelite from Traversella, Piedmont, Italy—and some are from unique but fairly familiar finds—boleite from the Amelia mine, Baja California, Mexico; zunyite from Quartzsite, Arizona; chalcosiderite from St. Day, Cornwall, England. But there are also pyrosmalite from Broken Hill, Australia; painite from Burma; perhamite from Oxford County, Maine; the brand-new species bobdownsite from the Yukon; and lots, lots more. Pictured here are two handsome examples of rarities from their world's-only-significant occurrences: a thumbnail-size, matrix **sapphirine** from Androy, Madagascar, and a cabinet-size piece with an open cavity lined by drusy **senegalite**, from the type locality in Senegal. Tired of looking at trophy-type aquamarines and rhodochrosites and tourmalines? Give these pages of Rob's a try.

**Sapphirine, 3 cm, from Androy, Toliary Province, Madagascar. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.**

**Senegalite, 8.5 cm, from the Kouroudiako iron deposit, Tambacounda region, Senegal. The Arkenstone specimen and photo.**

Speaking of rare minerals, Jordi Fabre (fabreminerals.com) has a few miniatures of **yuanfuliite** (I did *too* spell it right), a very rare borate described as a new species in 1994. The type locality is in China but Jordi's specimens were collected in early 2016 at a Spanish locality. There is something appealing about these specimens whereon lustrous, red-brown, acicular to fibrous crystals of yuanfuliite form flat-lying sprays on salt-and-pepper matrix of lamproite rock.

**Yuanfuliite, 3.3 cm, from the Nuestra Señora del Carmen mines area, La Celia, Jumilla, Murcia, Spain. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.**

Jordi also offers some beautiful **calcite** specimens from a revered Spanish locality: the La Florida mining area, Herrería-Valdáliga-Rionansa, Santander Province (region of

Cantabria). The small Pb-Zn mines of the La Florida group have been inactive since 1978, but in 1998 some Spanish collectors breached a single enormous cavity which gave up about 1000 superb calcites; Jordi says that his specimens were gathered around the year 2000, and thus it's likely that they came from this discovery.

**Calcite, 5.6 cm, from the La Florida mining area, Herrería-Valdáliga-Rionansa, Santander, Spain. Fabre Minerals specimen and photo.**

Another excellent Spanish dealer, Joan Rosell of *Rosell Minerals*, has a large number of one-of-a-kinders, especially from Spain and more generally from Europe, on his site right now. Often Joan comes up with a great old classic—witness (below) the **galena** from the Dörnberg mine, Ramsbeck district, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, collected at some time during the 1960s, as the last of the old Ramsbeck mines were closing down. The specimen is already marked Sold, but here it is anyway. Also, from recent finds on the dumps of the old La Vidale lead mine, Bréziès, Asprières, Aveyron, France, there is this large specimen of botryoidal yellow-green **pyromorphite**. I *like* these unusual new pyromorphites from La Vidale, and I mentioned them in reports from the Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines shows of 2012, 2014 and 2015…so here's another, as good as just about any I've seen, which Joan would let you have for 220 Euros (about $250); it is on page 2 of the April update on his site (rosellminerals.com).

**Galena, 4.2 cm, from the Dörnberg mine, Ramsbeck district, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. Rosell Minerals specimen and photo.**

**Pyromorphite, 9.8 cm, from Mine de la Vidale, Bréziès, Asprières, Aveyron, France. Rosell Minerals specimen and photo.**

In the summer of 2011, with Brian Swoboda, I took a trip to the far Southern Hemisphere to see the spectacular new discovery of **crocoite** in what Adam Wright was just then deciding to call the "Red River Find," a crystal-lined watercourse of immense, then-undetermined extent in the Adelaide mine, Tasmania, Australia (in the November-December 2012 issue of our magazine you will find the article which resulted). At every major show from 2013 until now, Adam, of The Adelaide Mining Company, has had gorgeous crocoite specimens to huge sizes for sale, and on the company's website (theadelaidemine.com) he has had *more* crocoite from this huge renaissance at the Adelaide mine. But while web-surfing for this report I discovered that a new dealership called *The Crystal Fraction* has a website (crystalfraction.com) which also sells crocoite from the "Red River Pocket." Turns out that the new site's proprietors, Bee and Shane Stanfield, are good friends of Adam's, and indeed they obtain their "Red River" crocoites from him. Even though this material has grown pretty familiar during the past few years, you should check out *The Crystal Fraction*, where the crocoite offerings are sorted into three tiers (pages), called "entry level," "intermediate" and "connoisseur." Shown here are an "entry level" and a "connoisseur" specimen, which seem to differ only in size, not in quality, i.e. both examples, like almost all of the crocoite specimens on this site, are superb.

**Crocoite, 3.5 cm, from the Adelaide mine, Dundas area, Tasmania, Australia. The Crystal Fraction specimen and photo.**

**Crocoite, 20 cm, from the Adelaide mine, Dundas area, Tasmania, Australia. The Crystal Fraction specimen and photo.**

Additionally it seems that the Red River Pocket ("Find?" "Watercourse?") has been yielding some noteworthy **gibbsite** specimens. Whereas in most cases the aluminum hydroxide is nothing more than an annoying, earthy or waxy coating on crocoite crystals, gibbsite is now showing up as smooth, snow-white botryoids arranged in bunches-of-grapes style to make specimens which I think we must call attractive or, at least, "interesting."



**Gibbsite, 4.5 cm, from the Adelaide mine, Dundas area, Tasmania, Australia. The Crystal Fraction specimen and photo.**

Another new presence on the web is *Barnett Fine Minerals* (barnettfineminerals.com), Blake Barnett, proprietor. During the recent 2016 Tucson Show I met Blake at the InnSuites, where he had a surprise for my show report: an assortment of old fluorapatite specimens from the Foote mine in North Carolina, with sharp, brownish lilac, short-hexagonal crystals all over drusy white albite on matrix pieces from small-miniature to large-cabinet size (you'll see a picture of one of these shortly in the May-June 2016 issue). The *Barnett Fine Minerals* website has, for now, just miscellaneous one-of-a-kinders, but some of these are splendid. For instance I'm especially taken with the 15.4-cm specimen showing **hematite pseudomorphous after siderite** on matrix of crystallized microcline and smoky quartz from a place called the Lakeview Lode II mine, Stevens Ranch, Lake George, Park County, Colorado. These satiny black, rhombohedral pseudocrystals of hematite from diggings in the granite of the Pikes Peak batholith have been familiar items for many years, but Blake's specimen is the best I have ever seen; it is priced at $1,200. Let us bookmark this site for frequent future visits.

**Hematite pseudomorphous after siderite, 15.4 cm, from the Lakeview Lode II mine, Stevens Ranch, Lake George, Park County, Colorado. Barnett Fine Minerals specimen and photo.**

*John Betts Minerals* (johnbetts-fineminerals.com) of New York City has locality-area pages to click on, and if you go to the latest update of "New England States" you'll find several good thumbnail and miniature-size examples from the recent **amethyst** find from a secret place said to be somewhere in Windham County, Connecticut. Amethyst specimens from the occurrence, mostly loose crystals to 2 or 3 cm, have been offered at recent shows, including the 2016 Tucson Show, and the Betts specimens now online show some price inflation from these, but at least the locality given by John is a *little* more specific: "undisclosed locality in the Wrentham-Burrillville amethyst belt, Connecticut." However, I note that Wrentham is in Massachusetts and Burrillville is in Rhode Island—could the Betts crystals be from *another* occurrence, or is the "secret" of the Connecticut crystals that they are not from Connecticut but from somewhere off the state's northeastern corner, i.e. just over the border from Windham County? In any event the crystals are sharp, lustrous, and many are doubly terminated; most show color zoning from almost colorless to medium-purple.

**Quartz variety Amethyst, 3.5 cm, from Windham County, Connecticut (?). John Betts Fine Minerals specimen and photo.**

Jack Crowley's *The Crystal Mine* website (crystal-mine.com) has 24 pages of miscellaneous minerals arranged alphabetically by species, including much material from California, some collected by Jack himself. On the most recent update of this site, the main what's-new standout has to be Jack's four excellent specimens of **analcime** from China's only good locality for the species so far discovered, and that quite recently: the Fengjiashan mine in the Daye district, Huangshi Prefecture, Hubei Province. Sharp, lustrous, colorless to milky white, trapezohedral analcime crystals are seen in loose groups or on matrix, in specimens to cabinet size.

**Analcime, 7.5 cm, from the Fengjiashan mine, Daye district, Huangshi Prefecture, Hubei, China. The Crystal Mine specimen and photo.**

Kevin Ward of *Exceptional Minerals* (exceptionalminerals.com) lives in Alabama but escapes from that mineral-challenged state each year to set up rooms at the Denver and Tucson shows, and in those rooms you'll find (yes) *exceptional* specimens, especially of silver minerals—Kevin's particular love. His website follows up with multiple showrooms called, for example, "Tucson 2016 Showroom Number 3," and a standout now in the very Showroom just named is a wonderful matrix specimen of dendritic **silver** from a new locality in Peru: the Andaychaqua mine, San Cristobal district, Yauli Province, Junin Department. I learned of the Andaychaqua mine only when I saw a couple of silver specimens from it in another dealer's keeping at the 2015 Tucson Show; Kevin's specimen, like those earlier ones, boasts brilliant silver dendrites in (if you don't mind the mixed metaphor) a herringbone aggregate style. The new Peruvian silvers are reminiscent of those brought out in plenty, especially during the decade 1975-1985, from the mines of the Batopilas district, Chihuahua, Mexico.

**Silver, 5.2 cm, from the Andaychagua mine, San Cristobal district, Yauli Province, Junin Department, Peru. Exceptional Minerals specimen and photo.**

Also Kevin Ward has a February 22 update called The Keystone Table—"Fine Showroom Specimens Discounted to Half Price"—with more superb one-of-a-kinders, and among these there is one which goes nicely with our forthcoming big article in May-June 2016 on the old locality of Banská Štiavnica (German name: Schemnitz), Slovakia.

The specimen is a 9.2-cm plate of **scepter quartz** crystals, all standing upright and all tinted a lustrous, slightly iridescent bronze by thin films of iron oxides. Quartz specimens looking like this are distinctively "Schemnitz," and they are among the few recent-to-contemporary items from the centuries-old mining district still seen, if only rarely, on the mineral market.

**Quartz (iron oxide coated), 9.2 cm, from Banská Štiavnica (Schemnitz), Slovakia. Exceptional Minerals specimen and photo.**

In these online columns I've often pointed to interesting new Canadian things on the ever-evolving site of *David K. Joyce Minerals* (davidkjoyceminerals.com)—and let me begin this time with an approving reference to the newly collected, rough-surfaced but deep red and partially gemmy, **almandine** crystals from a collecting site which David says has been "known for many decades" but which I (not being Canadian) had never heard of before, called simply "River Valley" in Dana Township, Ontario. The garnet crystals reach a jumbo 6 cm and display form-combinations ranging from the pure dodecahedron to the pure trapezohedron. Most of the Joyce specimens are loose crystals but some show adhering silvery bits of the mica schist matrix in which they grew.

**Almandine, 5.1 cm, from the River Valley, Dana Township, Ontario, Canada. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.**

The *David K. Joyce* site also has several pages—each marked with a little orange starburst and the word "new"—devoted to material from the Nanisivik mine, Baffin Island, Nunavut (formerly the eastern part of Northwest Territories), Canada. This Pb-Zn mine, in its day the second most northerly base metals mine in the world, was begun in 1976; it lies some 700 km north of the Arctic Circle. Most of the orebody is enclosed in deep permafrost and most crystal pockets are solidly filled with ice. Mining ceased in 2003, but enough of the very distinctive Nanisivik pyrite and pyrite-after-marcasite specimens were collected during active mining that some may occasionally be spotted around the market, though they are rapidly disappearing. Less well known are the sometimes splendid calcites and dolomites from Nanisivik, and the stash just acquired by David K. Joyce contains fine examples of all these things. On the **pyrite** specimen shown below, check out the (typically) very complex crystallography, with discernible cube, octahedron, trisoctahedron, pyritohedron and dodecahedron forms all crowding each other on the big central crystal. But you don't have to do any such brainwork to admire the specimens of **calcite** and **dolomite**—also shown below—from the Nanisivik mine.

**Pyrite, 3.2 cm, from the Nanisivik mine, Baffin Island, Nunavut, Canada. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.**

**Calcite, 4.6 cm, from the Nanisivik mine, Baffin Island, Nunavut, Canada. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.**

**Dolomite, 8.5 cm, from the Nanisivik mine, Baffin Island, Nunavut, Canada. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.**

One more Canadian item of note is a handful of newly collected specimens of the rare borate species **howlite** from its only good occurrence worldwide: Bras D'Or Lake, Iona, Victoria County, Nova Scotia, where the howlite occurs in massive anhydrite/gypsum boulders along the shore of the lake. Ray McDougall of *McDougall Minerals* (mcdougallminerals.com) began offering the howlite specimens in his December 2015 update, and, rather to my surprise, a first-rate thumbnail was still available when I visited in late April 2016. That thumbnail is pictured below, and you can't have it because *I bought it myself*, and for only $120 (plus shipping). But more howlites, almost as good, are still for sale on the site, and you'll never find better examples than these of a rare and unusual—if not aesthetically blessed—mineral. Some of Ray's specimens are miniature-size matrix pieces with sprays and rosettes of howlite rising from fine-grained gray gypsum, while others are loose sprays (like *mine*!) of sharp, tabular, wedge-terminated, colorless to cloudy gray-white howlite crystals.

**Howlite, 2.5 cm, from Bras D'Or Lake, Iona, Victoria County, Nova Scotia, Canada. McDougall Minerals specimen and photo.**

Of late—for example in February 2016, around the Tucson Show—there has been some buzz about record-quality specimens of the rare thallium-bearing sulfosalt **hutchinsonite** which have been emerging from the mines at Quiruvilca, Santiago de Chuco Province, La Libertad Department, Peru. First noted in the early 1970s from Quiruvilca, hutchinsonite has been found in good specimens nowhere else since, and very rarely, indeed, at Quiruvilca in subsequent years—but the new specimens are impressive, with brilliant metallic black sprays of thin-prismatic crystals of hutchinsonite lying flat on massive pyrite, with patches of drusy quartz. Three miniatures of this description may now be ogled on the site of Jeff Fast's *Mineral Movies* (mineralmovies.com), and Jeff has priced the best of the three, pictured here, at just $150. The hutchinsonite "needle" crystals reach 6 mm long, and Jeff writes that a proper lighting arrangement reveals them to be deep red within.

**Hutchinsonite, 4.5 cm, from Quiruvilca, Santiago de Chuco Province, La Libertad Department, Peru. Mineral Movies specimen and photo.**

Now, John Veevaert of *Trinity Mineral Company* (trinityminerals.com) is a very good fellow, and usually a very good sport when I win money from him at poker games, but the reason that I recommend his material in this space so often is simply that he has an excellent eye for minerals, plus limitless energy for trolling around the big shows to find special take-home material to trim, photograph expertly, and sell on his site, frequently for prices that strike one as "reasonable" at the least. An April 4 update on *Trinity Minerals* has 14 specimens (of which nine had already been sold by April 30) of **fluorite** just brought out from the Boltsburn mine, Weardale, Durham, England. This famous old lead mine was closed commercially in the 1930s but recently has been investigated by some industrious people in search of specimens, and so this lot of John's represents, as he says, "the first new material in 85 years." Transparent cubic crystals of fluorite to 3 cm or so rest lightly on matrix, in some cases with crystals or microcrystals of galena, quartz and siderite. The fluorite is pale green, blue-green, or grayish purple, and in some cases it is color-zoned, with distinct bands of all these hues. The specimen shown (not the best of the bunch, but shown because still available on April 30) costs $400.

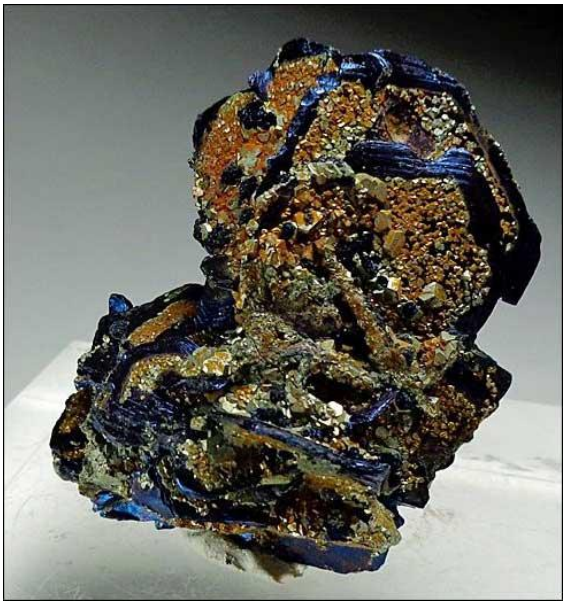
**Fluorite, 7 cm, from the Boltsburn mine, Weardale, Durham, England. Trinity Minerals specimen; John Veevaert photo.**

On that same *Trinity Minerals* site, John Veevaert has a March 26 update with some new specimens of the very rare **nifontovite** from the Rey y Reina mine, Charcas, San Luis Potosí, Mexico, and an April 22 update devoted to goodies from **Tsumeb**. But of even greater interest than these, I think, is an April 12 miscellany of "New Minerals," including many old classics, which by and large are stunningly good. Of the three I've chosen to serve pictures of for your special dessert here, the first is from a classic occurrence not so much "old" as timeless, as its history is already nearly 500 years old and shows no signs of fading: I mean the emerald mines of Colombia (see the article in the January-February 2016 issue). John's specimen is from the Cosquez mine, Muzo district (Boyacá State), and it's a killer which shows lustrous, gemmy emerald crystals thickly encrusting a miniature-size calcite matrix.

On the same page John offers…well, let me just *name* them, allowing the pictures of these three extraordinary old classics to speak for themselves: a **rhodochrosite** from the Wolf mine, Siegerland region, Rheinland-Palatinate, Germany; a **covellite** from the Calabona mine, Alghero, Sardinia, Italy; and a **chalcocite** with crystals to 1.6 cm from the old copper mine at Bristol, Hartford County, Connecticut:

**Beryl variety Emerald, 4.5 cm, from the Cosquez mine, Muzo district, Boyacá, Colombia. Trinity Minerals specimen; John Veevaert photo.**

**Rhodochrosite, 3.6 cm, from the Wolf mine, Siegerland region, Rheinland-Palatinate, Germany. Trinity Minerals specimen; John Veevaert photo.**



**Covellite, 5.4 cm, from the Calabona mine, Alghero, Sardinia, Italy. Trinity Minerals specimen; John Veevaert photo.**

**Chalcocite, 6.5 cm, from Bristol, Hartford County, Connecticut. Trinity Minerals specimen; John Veevaert photo.**

*Here's wishing everyone a good summer!*