





**Forsterite var. Peridot, 3.1 cm, from Zabargad (St. John's) Island,
Red Sea, Egypt. Arkenstone specimen and photo.**

Other early postings include Dan Weinrich's extensive online offerings of fine old barite, calcite, rhodochrosite, hematite and other specimens from the Montreal mine, Iron County, Wisconsin. I first saw these specimens from an excellent, long-defunct Midwestern locality on *Dan Weinrich Minerals Inc.* (WeinichMineralsInc.com) at some time, I think, in the late fall of 2024, and since Dan augments his site with new postings at least once a week, you will now have to find the Montreal mine specimens on a "back" page: go to "Special Collections," and then to "Karen & David DeBruin," to see them. Also you might do some homework: Chris Stefano's thorough article on the Montreal mine appears in the May-June 2020 *Mineralogical Record*, and there is pertinent information as well in *The F. John Barlow Mineral Collection* (1996). In these sources you will read that during the 75-odd years of successful mining of iron ore before final closure in 1962, the Montreal mine employed only one person who cared at all about saving crystallized mineral specimens: miner John Allen Brottlund, who put in compulsive after-hours stints of locating crystal pockets and extracting their contents. Over the years he sold many specimens to fellow Wisconsinites Don Olson, Lance Hampel, and (yes) Karen and David DeBruin, from whom Dan Weinrich acquired the stash he now offers online. And finally, in 1979, Brottlund sold what had been his personal hoard of Montreal mine specimens—then already considered rare "classics"—to F. John Barlow, another Wisconsinite, who prized them highly. So you see, a visit to Dan Weinrich's website may offer a rare chance to pick up distinctive specimens from the Montreal mine...



Barite, 5 cm, from the Montreal mine, Iron County, Wisconsin. Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.

These include miniature to cabinet-size examples of **barite** in a remarkably varied array of habits, colors and styles (see the photos in the Stefano article); it is merely personal preference that moves me to show you a parallel cluster of blue-white tabular crystals. This is a highly aesthetic miniature, priced at \$1800, whose image has stayed with me since I first saw it on Dan's site, some time back in the fall.

Calcite from the Montreal mine also comes in many styles, although it likes especially to make lustrous "snowballs" which perch alone or in intergrown coatings on matrix. The spheres range from pure white through pale to medium pink (and fluorescent red) as trace manganese content increases...and at the other end of this solid-solution series there is **rhodochrosite**, also in many habits, although in my opinion the dense groups of columnar forms, as seen here, are prettiest.



**Calcite, 7 cm, from the Montreal mine, Iron County, Wisconsin.
Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.**



**Rhodochrosite, 5.5 cm, from the Montreal mine, Iron County,
Wisconsin. Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.**

The major iron ore species exploited at the Montreal mine were hematite and goethite, and these could make handsome specimens of the “kidney ore” and pseudomorph/epimorph types respectively, but *manganese* oxides also occurred in quantity, these often lumped imprecisely under the non-species term “psilomelane.” Chris

Stefano writes that manganese oxide species including cryptomelane, hollandite and romanèchite have all been verified from the mine—and so I show you here a jumbo specimen, 24 cm across, designated as **cryptomelane**, still available on the Weinrich site. It is impressive enough for its great size and for its rarity, but is it ugly or beautiful? While you are deciding about this, I will remark that its price is \$7,500.



Cryptomelane, 24 cm, from the Montreal mine, Iron County, Wisconsin. Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.

Also, in quite recent times—i.e. in his last two or three weekly updates—Dan Weinrich has been offering loose, thumbnail-sized, translucent rose-pink crystals of *pegmatitic rhodochrosite* from Barra do Salinas, Minas Gerais, Brazil. If you know of the beautiful elbaite crystals which have been coming in quantity lately from Barra do Salinas, you are aware of this pegmatite locality—and pegmatite-hosted rhodochrosite is something rather special and rare. (Pegmatitic rhodochrosite crystals are also known from the famous Virgem da Lapa mines in Minas Gerais, but they are a bit gemmier and pinker than the Barra do Salinas crystals.) These little loose rhombohedral crystals do not, to be sure, rival anything from the Sweet Home, Huallapón or Wutong mines, but they are quite pretty, and they are interesting as to origin; the small thumbnail shown below costs \$160.



Rhodochrosite, 1.6 cm, from Barra do Salinas, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.

One final group of items now to be seen on the *Weinrich Minerals Inc.* website consists of a few small-thumb-nail-size crystalline pieces of the Sikhote-Alin meteorite, which fell in 1947 in the Sikhote-Alin Mountains of Primorskiy Kraj, far-southeastern Russia. These lustrous little fragments once belonged to an iron meteorite which weighed an estimated 23 tons, and whose fall (it is said) was the largest ever witnessed in history. Wikipedia says that “native iron” shards from the meteorite have always been popular with space-based collectors; Dan’s price for the 1.5-cm shard shown here is \$60.



Iron, 1.5 cm, from the Sikhote-Alin meteorite, Primorskiy Kraj, Russia. Weinrich Minerals Inc. specimen and photo.

Dan Zellner of *DanZ Rockshop* (danzrockshop.com) is a new advertiser with the *Mineralogical Record*, and his dealership—his full-time vocation since 2021—is well-

stocked, eclectic, and generally quite classy. Currently on the DanZ website, under the alluring if unoriginal heading “Fine Minerals,” there are about 25 miscellaneous higher-end pieces, priced moderately for how fine they are, and among these there are two great old U.S. classics which at once claimed my special attention (read “maybe I should start *collecting* that size...”): an **azurite** from the Copper Queen mine, Bisbee, Arizona (\$2,000), and a **pyromorphite** from the Wheatley mine, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania (\$3,500).



Azurite, 6.2 cm, from the Copper Queen mine, Bisbee, Cochise County, Arizona. DanZ Rockshop specimen and photo.



Pyromorphite, 7 cm, from the Wheatley mine, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. DanZ Rockshop specimen and photo.

Under “Available Minerals,” Dan Zellner has various more modern items such as this lovely miniature **calcite** from the little-known “Pau” locality in the southwestern corner of France—near the town of Pau, Pyrénées-Atlantiques, Nouvelle-Aquitaine, just 50 km north of the Spanish border. Road-construction and other projects at Pau since the 1980s have sometimes yielded specimens showing equant, face-rich, highly lustrous, colorless and transparent calcite crystals on limestone—such as this fine example of Dan’s, for which he asks \$300.



Calcite, 4.6 cm, from Pau, Pyrenees-Atlantiques, Nouvelle-Aquitaine, France. DanZ Rockshop specimen and photo.

As concerns on-the-mark contemporaneity, Dan Zellner offers ten large thumbnails and small miniatures of gorgeously color-zoned purple **fluorite** from Berbes, Ribadesella, Asturias, Spain, from a 2024 find which I noted in my report on the 2024 Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines Show in the September-October 2024 *Mineralogical Record*. Actually, according to the French field collector, Sébastien Khayati, who had hundreds of specimens of this fluorite at Ste.-Marie, the finds of the past two years have come from an immense pocket system which Khayati and others call (for some reason) “the French Pocket.” Specimen finds in the pocket system have gone on for a couple of years now, but the haul in early 2024 was especially rich—I saw specimens from it in Denver, too, with Christophe Gobin and one or two others. The fluorite crystals are sharp-edged and lustrous but are mostly noteworthy for their beautiful color zoning, deep purple to almost colorless in the outermost zone parallel to the cube faces. Dan’s prices for his thumbnails and miniatures range from \$200 to \$600.



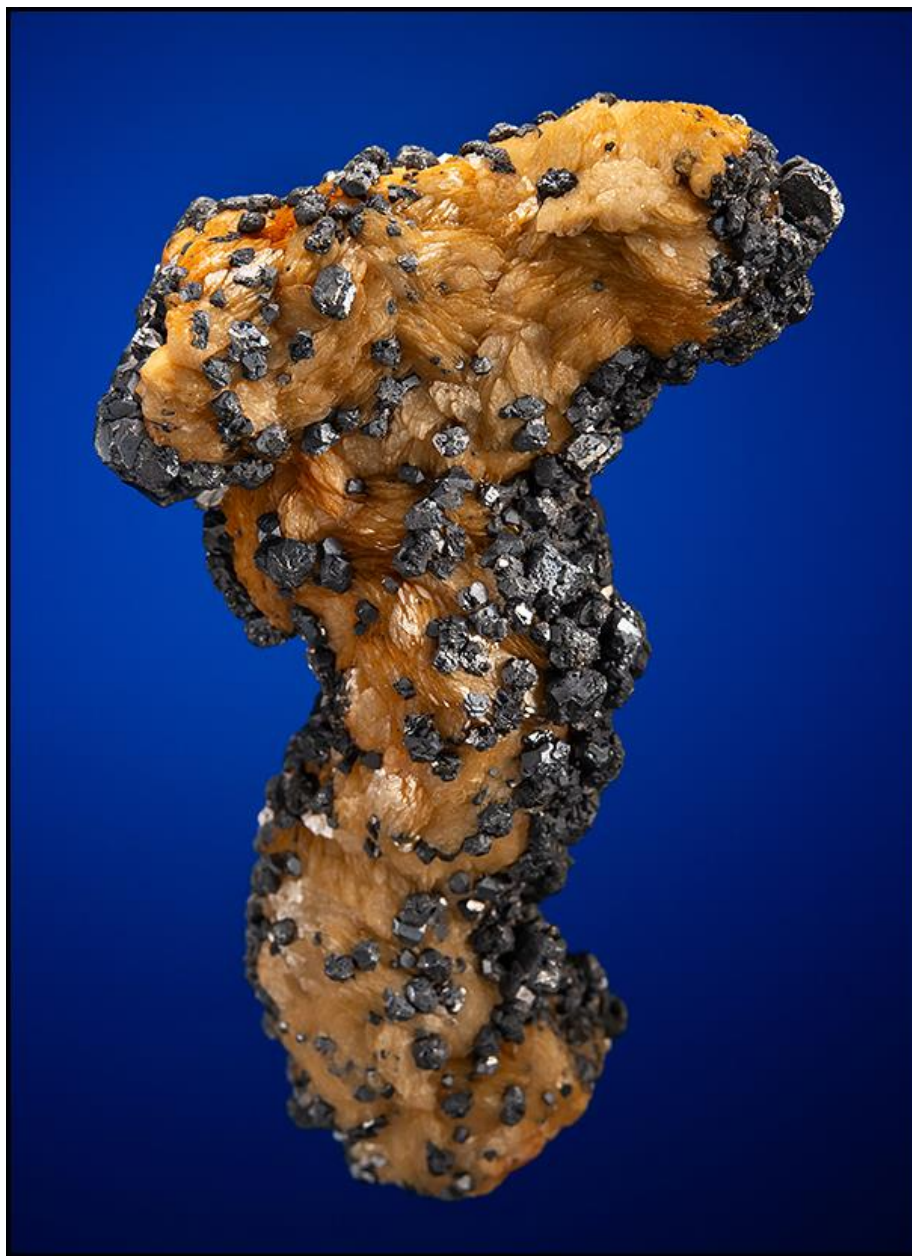
Fluorite, 2.9 cm, from Berbes, Ribadesella, Asturias, Spain. DanZ Rockshop specimen and photo.

Now, for *more* fine purple fluorite of contemporary vintage, consider the specimens from a new locality given only as "Xinjiang," China. Since the geographical spread of the far-western Chinese province of Xinjiang almost equals that of Alaska, you might say that this locality specification needs further refinement—perhaps it may come from some westering Chinese dealer who makes it to Tucson or Munich, or else, in good time, from the website of *Jinan Chinese Mineral Trading Co., Ltd.* (chinesemineral.com), whereon about 25 specimens are shown in several pages of a "New Update" dated November 15, 2024. Many of these handsome fluorites are still up for sale as the year turns, at prices ranging from \$120 to \$750 for miniature to large-cabinet-size pieces. All show parallel growths and stackings of sharp cubic crystals on matrix of massive fluorite (with snow-white dolomite crystals in a few cases); the purple color is darker than for the Spanish fluorites and the color zoning is less dramatic, but there is a satisfying transparency when the light and the angles are right. The 7.6-cm example shown here costs \$580.



Fluorite, 7.6 cm, from Xinjiang Province, China. Jinan Chinese Mineral Trading Co., Ltd. specimen and photo.

Dave Bunk (davebunkminerals.com) has four specimens of **galena on siderite** from the long-closed White Raven silver mine at Ward, Boulder County, Colorado: two miniatures and two cabinet-size pieces. All of these old-timers feature lustrous little galena crystals dispersed over crusts of lenticular, latté-colored siderite crystals, as seen in the miniature here, for which Dave asks \$450.



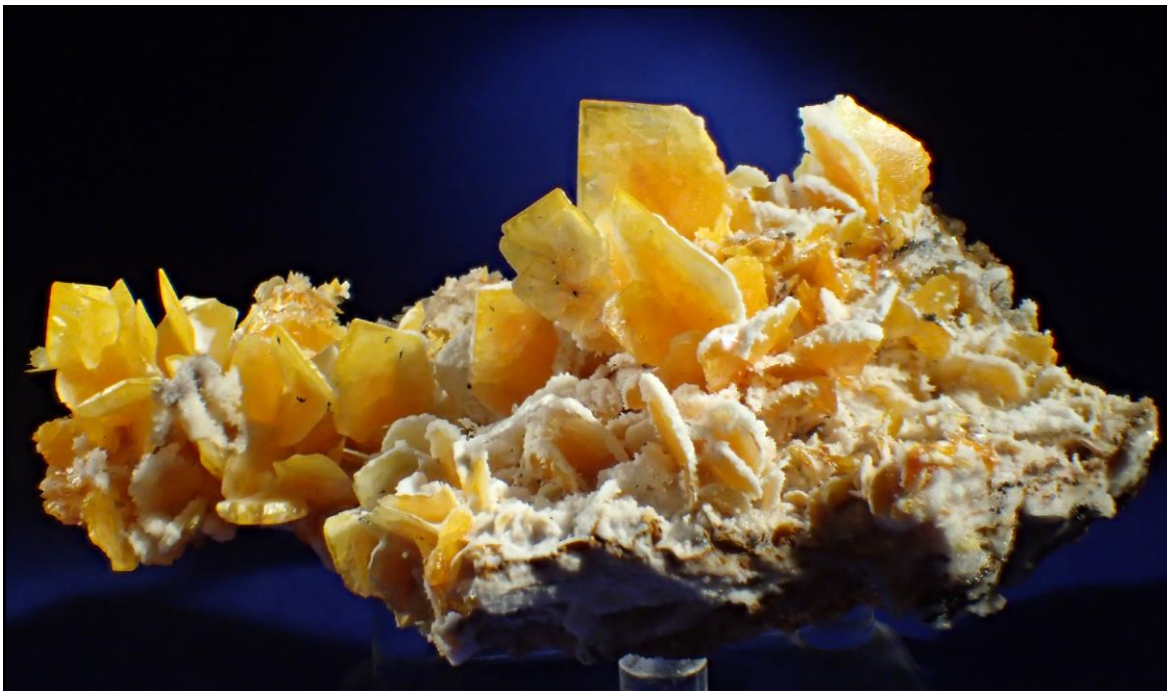
Galena on Siderite, 3.5 cm, from the White Raven mine, Ward, Boulder County, Colorado. Dave Bunk Minerals specimen and photo.

Others of Dave Bunk's specimens from the White Raven mine show mixtures of small gray **acanthite** crystals, white blades of **barite**, and delicate sprigs of **wire silver**, all over matrix. These rich ore specimens are not fashion plates but they are interesting relics of Colorado's former times as an important silver producer. For \$200 you can pick up the dignified-looking 6-cm example shown here.



Acanthite/Barite/Silver, 6 cm, from the White Raven mine, Ward, Boulder County, Colorado. Dave Bunk Minerals specimen and photo.

Two or three earlier online reports have shown minerals from the website of German dealer Gerd Wiedenbeck's *Alpine Mineralien* dealership (alpine-mineralien.de). Most of the specimens here are from European localities, as we would expect, but Gerd often surprises us with fine lots of things from elsewhere in the world. Scroll down under "Neue Mineralien" on the website right now and you will find generous lots of **wulfenite** specimens from two localities in Iran. Both mines have been fairly productive of specimens in the last decade or two, but their wulfenites (as well as their locations within Iran) are quite different, and we should be careful not to confuse the mines' names when making our labels. First, Gerd has about 20 specimens, miniature to small cabinet-size, with butterscotch-colored wulfenite crystals partially covered by "snowfalls" of calcite, from the Ahmad Abbas mine, Bahabad, Yazd Province. Most of the tabular wulfenite crystals show some translucency, and their association with frosty little ridges and rills of white calcite makes them entirely distinctive. The 7.5-cm example shown here is priced at 1,200 euros (effectively, these days, the same as \$1,200).



Wulfenite, 7.5 cm, from the Ahmad Abbas mine, Bahabad, Yazd Province, Iran. Alpine Mineralien specimen and photo.

Just below the butterscotch-colored Ahmad Abbas wulfenites on the *Alpine Mineralien* site are a few small-thumb-nail-size clusters of sharp, highly lustrous, fiery red to red-orange **wulfenite** crystals such as are characteristic of the Chah Karboze mine, Anarak District, Isfahan Province (note: many variant spellings of this mine's name have appeared, e.g. "Shah Kharbuzeh," "Tchah-Kharboze" and others). In their brilliant color these wulfenites rival even the famous, much-revered ones from the Red Cloud mine in Arizona; however, the specimens on this site, like the ones sometimes seen at mineral shows, are diminutive, seldom reaching even "full-thumb-nail" size. One of Gerd Wiedenback's specimens, with screaming red wulfenites arrayed along a 3.5-cm matrix, is an exception, but the little specimen shown below, at 1.7 cm and costing 180 euros, is typical of the rest, both in size and price range. (See Wendell Wilson's January-February 2023 *Mineralogical Record* article on the nearby Nakhlak mine for a map showing the locations of the various localities in the Anarak District.)



Wulfenite, 1.7 cm, from the Chah Karboze mine, Anarak District, Isfahan Province, Iran. Alpine Mineralien specimen and photo.

About two years ago, a new **fluorite** locality in Brazil came to light, its specimens showing pale blue to greenish blue, cubic fluorite crystals of considerable size on pegmatitic matrix. Indeed, this is a pegmatite occurrence, its name usually given as Fazenda [“Farm”] do Centro, Castelo Region, Espirito Santo, Brazil; see the relevant paragraph and specimen photo in the report from the 2023 Denver Show in the January-February 2024 *Mineralogical Record*. The Fazenda do Meio, also in the Castelo Region, likewise produced some large and beautiful blue fluorite crystal clusters in 2019 (see the photos in the article on Espirito Santo mineral occurrences in the November-December 2013 issue.) My recent web-surfings have discovered Brazilian pegmatite-hosted blue fluorite just once, under “Latest Updates” on the website of the Italian dealership *The Webmineralshop* (webmineralshop.com), where six cabinet-size specimens of the material are currently offered. Some are loose groups of cubic, pale to sky-blue, translucent fluorite crystals with prominent pyramid-shaped growth features on the cube faces; other

specimens feature the same unusual-looking crystals on white matrix. The hefty specimen shown below is priced at 2,400 euros.



Fluorite, 10 cm, from Fazenda do Centro, Castelo, Espirito Santo, Brazil. Webmineralshop specimen and photo.

Rare zeolites from obscure localities may be an acquired taste for most collectors but, in any case, we should be aware that there are significant zeolite-bearing basalts in worldwide places other than India, Scotland, Nova Scotia, New Jersey and Oregon. For example, a little basaltic region between the towns of Děčín and Ústí nad Labem (old German name: “Aussig”), Bohemia, Czech Republic, has yielded notable zeolite specimens (especially beautiful pink natrolite) for more than a century. At a locality which *Webmineralshop* gives as Dobrná, Děčín, Ústí region, the much rarer zeolite species **thomsonite** has been found, presumably recently, as attractive white spheres of microcrystals in open vugs in basalt, and currently there are eight specimens, miniature to small-cabinet-size, of this description, on the “Europe” page of that website. The 7-cm example shown here costs a modest 45 euros.



**Thomsonite in basalt, 7 cm, from Dobrná, Děčín, Ústí region, Bohemia, Czech Republic.
Webmineralshop specimen and photo.**

It is perennially wise to keep up with Mike Keim's frequent updates on his *Marin Mineral Company* website (marinmineral.com). Here for example are some *differently* remarkable things from his two most recent December 2024 updates, from the 16th and 21st of the month...and of course one shouldn't neglect to scroll through the 11 pages of goodies at 50% discounts on the update of December 10. The December 15 selection includes a terrific cabinet-size "**tarnowitzite**" (zinc-rich aragonite) from Tsumeb, a veteran of the Alex Neufeld, Wilhelm Kegel and Erika Pohl-Ströher collections, which is a happy-looking expanse of sharp, gleaming white, prismatic crystals of tarnowitzite on a flat matrix plate.



Aragonite var. Tarnowitzite, 8.5 cm, from Tsumeb, Oshikoto, Namibia. Marin Mineral Company specimen and photo.

And here, also from the December 16 *Marin Mineral* update, is something you probably can't afford but owe it to yourself to ogle regardless: a splendidly well-proportioned cluster of **rhodochrosite** crystals, entirely blood-red and gemmy, from the great 1977-1978 finds in the N'Chwaning I mine, Kalahari Manganese Field, Northern Cape Province, South Africa. (See the spectacular N'Chwaning issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, January-February 2017.) Mike writes that he acquired the specimen some 20 years ago from Marshall Sussman, and conscientiously he points out that three crystal tips on the front left side of the specimen have popped off (a common feature generally attributed to the focusing of shock waves from blasting). But the *rest* of the crystal tips on this specimen, including all of the crowning ones at the top, look fine. So, all of these variables considered, what do you think Mike's price for this specimen might be? *Give up?* Well, it's twenty-four thousand dollars...and who can blame him?



Rhodochrosite, 3.5 cm, from the N'Chwaning I mine, Kalahari Manganese Field, Northern Cape Province, South Africa. Marin Mineral Company specimen and photo.

In the December 21 *Marin Mineral* update, interesting and quite worthy of note, are two little crystals of the sodium-niobium oxide **lueshite** (NaNbO_3) from its type locality, the “Lueshe carbonatite” in North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo. Mindat specifies that the locality actually is the Lueshe *mine*, Bwito, Rutshuru Territory, North Kivu, where lueshite and pyrochlore were commercially mined for niobium at intervals from the 1980s through 2022 (it’s a complex industrial and political story, a summary of which you can read on mindat.org/loc-4317.html). Lueshite is orthorhombic but its specimens—which I have spotted at mineral shows from time to time—are always diminutive black pseudocubes like these two of Mike Keim’s. The 6-mm crystal shown here costs \$200: exotic-species collectors take note.



Lueshite, 6 mm, from the Lueshe carbonatite, Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo. Marin Mineral Company specimen and photo.

Canadian dealer David K. Joyce has a new, much expanded and much improved website (davidkjoyceminerals.com) whereon nice assortments of worldwide specimens—pre-eminently Canadian ones—are offered. There is also a series of “Localities and Collections” pages where minerals are arranged according to where they have come from; and surely, too, you should check out David’s “Mineralogical Merch,” among which, for example, is this forthright and undoubtedly comfy “Diggin’ in a Hole” tee-shirt for just \$30.



A highly informative feature which is now accessible through the David K. Joyce website is a blog post about his collecting trip last September to a lost-looking little digging site by the sea, and just off a railroad track (see the photo below), near the town of Iona, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia—the world's only half-decent locality for the rare calcium silicate-borate **howlite**.



The howlite collecting site near Iona, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada. David K. Joyce photo.

The howlite occurs as thumbnail-size sprays of translucent gray-brown, sword-shaped crystals half-embedded in massive anhydrite. In the blog we read close descriptions of what it is like to reconnoiter for the little sprays in the wave-lashed outcrop, and how howlite-on-anhydrite matrix specimens, as well as loose, delicate howlite crystal sprays, are later prepared for sale to collectors. As of New Year's Day 2025, only one howlite specimen is available on the website, but I show here a photo of one which appeared on the same site a week or so ago, priced at \$200. It is a fair bet that David, a fine field collector, will come up with more like this in the future.



Howlite on anhydrite, 3.4 cm, from Iona, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada. David K. Joyce Minerals specimen and photo.

Another Canadian dealership worth an attentive online inspection is *Quebul Fine Minerals* (quebulfineminerals.com); however, by the time you read this you will have missed a “Big Boxing Sale” on the site, with 50% off for specimens on the first couple of pages, this sale having ended on December 31. Never mind: the “regular” prices here are reasonable and the photos lovely, and nice things, especially Canadian things, abound. To give you a sense of the diversity of the Quebul stock, I have chosen three excellent pieces from non-Canadian places to show you. First comes a very good thumbnail (although Nadya and Todor Georgiev who run the Quebul site call specimens in this size range “toenails”) of **wire silver** from Dzhezkazgan, Karaganda, Kazakhstan. Silver, copper and many sulfides (including the world’s finest bornites) from the Dzhezkazgan mines were rather common around the market a couple of decades ago, but they are seldom seen now, and this bright little silver is priced at only \$195 (“Big Boxing Sale” price: a remarkably low \$77). For a very full story on Dzhezkazgan, see Wendell Wilson’s and my article on the locality in the July-August 2022 *Mineralogical Record*.



Silver, 2.3 cm, from Dzhezkazgan, Karaganda, Kazakhstan. Quebul Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

Next, Todor and Nadya have a couple of **aurichalcite** specimens from the little-known Uludağ tungsten mine, Bursa, Bursa Province, Turkey. Hemispheres and sprays of vividly bright, sky-blue, acicular crystals of aurichalcite inhabit shallow vugs in brown, gossany-looking matrix, as in the piece shown here (\$290).



Aurichalcite, 6.9 cm, from the Uludağ mine, Bursa, Bursa Province, Turkey Quebul Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

And we have lately been seeing many big, striking vivianite and ludlamite specimens from the Cabeça do Cachorro claim, São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Amazonas State, Brazil—a reducing-environment locality which according to Mindat is characterized by “recent alluvial deposits replacing organic material.” Vivianite crystals from Cabeça do Cachorro are sometimes measurable in feet, but this 5.2-cm **ludlamite** specimen on the *Quebul* website, a clean-looking cluster of sharp, blocky, gemmy, smoke-green crystals, also

speaks well for that swampy place in the Amazon Basin. Its price is \$340 (and I have seen much inferior ludlamites, from this and other localities, priced much, much higher).



Ludlamite, 5.2 cm, from the Cabeça do Cachorro claim, Sao Gabriel da Cochoeira, Amazonas, Brazil. Quebul Fine Minerals specimen and photo.

Now at last, for the customary Big Finish, we will look in on the website of Ghulam Mustafa's *Fine Art Minerals* (fineartminerals.com), where there are 12 "Featured Categories" according to mineral species. Mostly these are popular, snazzy and sexy (whatever...) gem-crystal species, mostly from Pakistan and Afghanistan, as we would expect of Mustafa; they include aquamarine, emerald, elbaite, rutile, fluorapatite, even bastnäsite and viitaniemiite—you get the idea. What really surprises me, though, is Mustafa's spread of 45 matrix **brookite** specimens from Alpine-type clefts in Balochistan Province, Pakistan. We have seen this material before, but seldom, if ever, in such a splendid array: the brookite specimens range in size from thumbnail to small-cabinet and in price from \$350 to \$8,500, and *all* are outstanding, the finest of them surpassing even the best old Swiss brookites that we are likely to see in museums and antique collections. Thin, bladed, transparent, richly rootbeer-colored crystals, many with black, hourglass-shaped inclusions, stand up at high angles from pieces of matrix strewn with little quartz crystals.

The specimen shown here is one of the most impressive of all, which may explain why it is already marked “sold.”



Brookite, 3.8 cm, from Balochistan, Pakistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

And finally, just to give your beauty receptors a final jolt, here is Mustafa’s 17-cm crystal of **kunzite spodumene** from Dara-i-Pech, Kunar Province, Afghanistan. Besides its gemminess and its soft, gently uniform lilac hue, the crystal is unusual for the sloping side faces which make for a roughly wedge-shaped termination—most large kunzite crystals instead show straight, slightly raggedy ends. As of New Year’s Day, this stunning specimen is “on hold” for some discerning (and surely affluent) devotee of top-notch gem crystals.



Spodumene var. Kunzite, 17 cm, from Dara-i-Pech, Kunar Province, Afghanistan. Fine Art Minerals specimen and photo.

Just to repeat myself in fizzy holiday fashion: **Happy New Year!** And I will see you—plenty of you, I hope—at the Tucson Show in about a month.