



WHAT'S NEW IN TUCSON-2011

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1-3. Welcome to Tucson Gem and Minerals Show.
Photos: 2 – John Veevaert; 3 – John White

4. Brett Kosnar's masterclass of cutting for children. Photo: Joaquim Callen

5. Eloisa and Joaquim Callen at photographing mineral specimen in Jordi Fabre room.
Photo: www.mineral-forum.com

6. Mohammad Arif and Aisha Jan, Rockaholics.
Photo: Gail Spann

7. Elise Skalwold and Jeff Scovil at work.
Photo: Gail Spann

8. Marie Huizing and Rob Lavinsky.
Photo: Gail Spann

9. Robert Cook near large cluster of "lemurian" crystal. Photo: John White

10. A general view of the main hall of the Tucson Convention Center.
Photo: www.mineral-forum.com

11. Dave Wilber is explaining mineral properties. Photo: Joaquim Callen

Bryan Lees (Collector's Edge) stole the show this year with two unbelievable giant rhodochrosites from the Wutong mine, Guangxi Zhuang AR., China. The "*Emperor of China*" stands about a meter high and I was told that it was removed from the mine with virtually no damage. There is, I believe, only one repair on this amazing piece. Its companion the "*Empress of China*" is only about 2/3's the size but is equally stunning. Seldom have there been two specimens shown at the show in the convention center that have had as many photographs taken of them as this pair, and for good reason. In addition to these giants, many dealers had excellent smaller groups of tabular rhombic crystals, most of which had little or no matrix. Just a year or so ago there was little better than rough cleavages of this rhodochrosite available, and these were generally priced very high.

Of course the show was hard to "steal" (see opening line above) because this year the Tucson Gem & Minerals Society Show at the Convention Center featured *Minerals of California* and one would be hard-pressed to find any other geographical entity with such a diversity and abundance of extraordinary crystallized and beautiful minerals. Everywhere you turned you were confronted with cases full of breathtaking tourmalines, wonderful blue benitoites, amazing golds, and literally hundreds of other exceptional speci-



12. **Rhodochrosite** "Empress of China". China.
Specimen: Collector's Edge. Photo: Jeff Scovil



28. Steve Sorrell with Julian Gray, and Barb Epstein on back.

29. Pete Modreski

30. Ed Swoboda and Gail Spann. Photo: Jim Spann

31. Looking at minerals – Rudolf and Anton Watzl. Photo: Joaquim Callen

32. Rock Currier and Bryan Lees. Photo: Jim Spann

33. Linda Vanegas Smith, Rick Ely and Diana Weinrich

34. Tom Moore and John Veevaert

35. Allyson and Lauren Megaw. Lauren won the Lidstrom and Desautels award this year

36. Gene Schlepp shows Jim Spann a copper

37. Jessica Simonoff, Brandy Zzyx and Jolyon Ralph with their awards. Photo: Robin Hansen

38. Ann and Si Frazier

mens from this mineral rich state. It is hard to visualize the reality of there being so many example of fine tourmaline (mostly elbaite) that after a while your eyes glazed over.

There was a very large case devoted to the wonderful kunzites and other species that are now being recovered at the Oceanview Mine, Pala district, San Diego County. After more than six years of finding very little, in September 2007, the crew of the Oceanview Mine finally uncovered the 49er Pocket, which contained fine beryl specimens (morganite and aquamarine), along with citrine-smoky quartz and schorl. Fueled by the discovery, the miners redoubled their efforts, exposing a number of gemmy citrine-smoky quartz and feldspar pockets. On December 3rd, 2009, miners encountered a pocket of very fine spodumene (kunzite), the color of which rivals that of the best the district, or the world, has produced. The year 2010 proved to be quite rewarding as over the next few months, numerous small pockets opened into what is now called the Big Kahuna zone. For the first time, large masses of rich purple lepidolite, colored tourmaline, few fine beryl specimens, and hundreds of kilograms of gem spodumene, almost all of which is the kunzite variety, was recovered from the mine. One specimen, 21 cm in length and over 2 kg in

Unless otherwise stated, photos on this page by Gail Spann

47. **Fluorite**, 17 x 13 cm.
Yaogangxian mine, China.
Specimen: Rob Lavinsky.
Photo: Joe Budd

48. **Tanzanite** and **Prenhite** on **Calcite**, 18 cm.
Merelani mine, Tanzania.
Specimen: Green Mountains Minerals.
Photo: Joe Budd

49. **Gold**, 4.9 cm.
Round Mountain mine, Nevada, USA.
Specimen: Miner's Lunchbox.
Photo: Jeff Scovil

50-56. Kristalle and Crystal Classics "Gold Rush" Party. Photo: Robin Hansen, Kristalle



There were several largish specimens, up to 20 cm, of groups of octahedral crystals that were perfectly transparent and absolutely colorless. The fact that they were so perfectly clear made it a little difficult to appreciate how unusual they were. The locality was given as Ulanhad League, Chifeng district, Inner Mongolia.

And, of course, there were the cuprites, copper pseudomorphs after cuprite, and the associated iodide minerals from the Rubtsovskoe Deposit in Northwest Altai, Russia. This deposit delivers top class mineral specimens of copper minerals, particularly of cuprite crystals of size, luster and perfection in form never met before anywhere on the earth. Oxidation sone – a “motherlode” for these extraordinary specimens is not exhausted yet and we may expect new astounding discoveries there.

From Brazil I was surprised to discover a new emerald occurrence. In the InnSuites the dealer Geometa Ltda had a very impressive assortment of small, richly colored emerald crystals, some of which were still embedded in the biotite schist in which they occur. Because the deposit is new the owners are not prepared to provide the exact location for it, they will only say that it is somewhere in Minas Gerais, a very large state. The same dealer has an impressive array of kunzite crystals from the Urucum mine, Galileia, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Virtually all of the crystals were etched “floaters,” that is, they showed no point of attachment and most or all of the surfaces were rounded by etching. The color was quite good and they were remarkably free of internal flaws, that is to say extremely gemmy.