

BANSKÁ ŠTIAVNICA MOUNTAINS: A CLASSICAL EUROPEAN MINING AND MINERALOGICAL REGION

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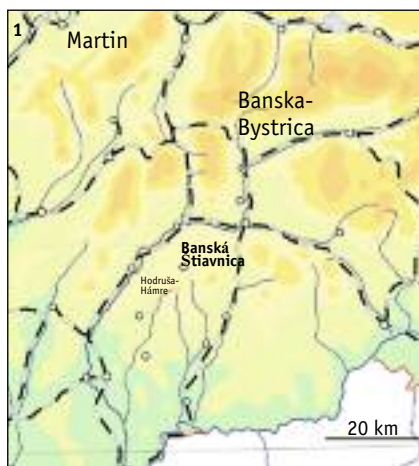
Photo: Albert Russ.

What was once an important mining region in Europe, today remains a legendary geological and historic attraction for many people. Banská Štiavnica certainly holds something special for everyone. For most tourists and casual collectors Banská Štiavnica is an attractive tourist destination with a monastery and a historic town center surrounded by relatively anonymous mountains. However, these surrounding mountains, natural vistas and underground systems of which some are still rich in minerals, offer much more than what one can find in a general guide book. Admittedly the vast majority of these secret spots and localities remain inaccessible to the general public but like elsewhere in the world but there is always room for some additional exploration. Of course many would disagree. There are dubious local laws which officially prohibit mineral collecting and there are obvious safety and legal issues regarding mine exploration. The aim of this article is to provide a brief overview of the famous Banská Štiavnica region and to suggest that despite many obstacles and challenges, the region is still capable of producing fine mineral specimens.

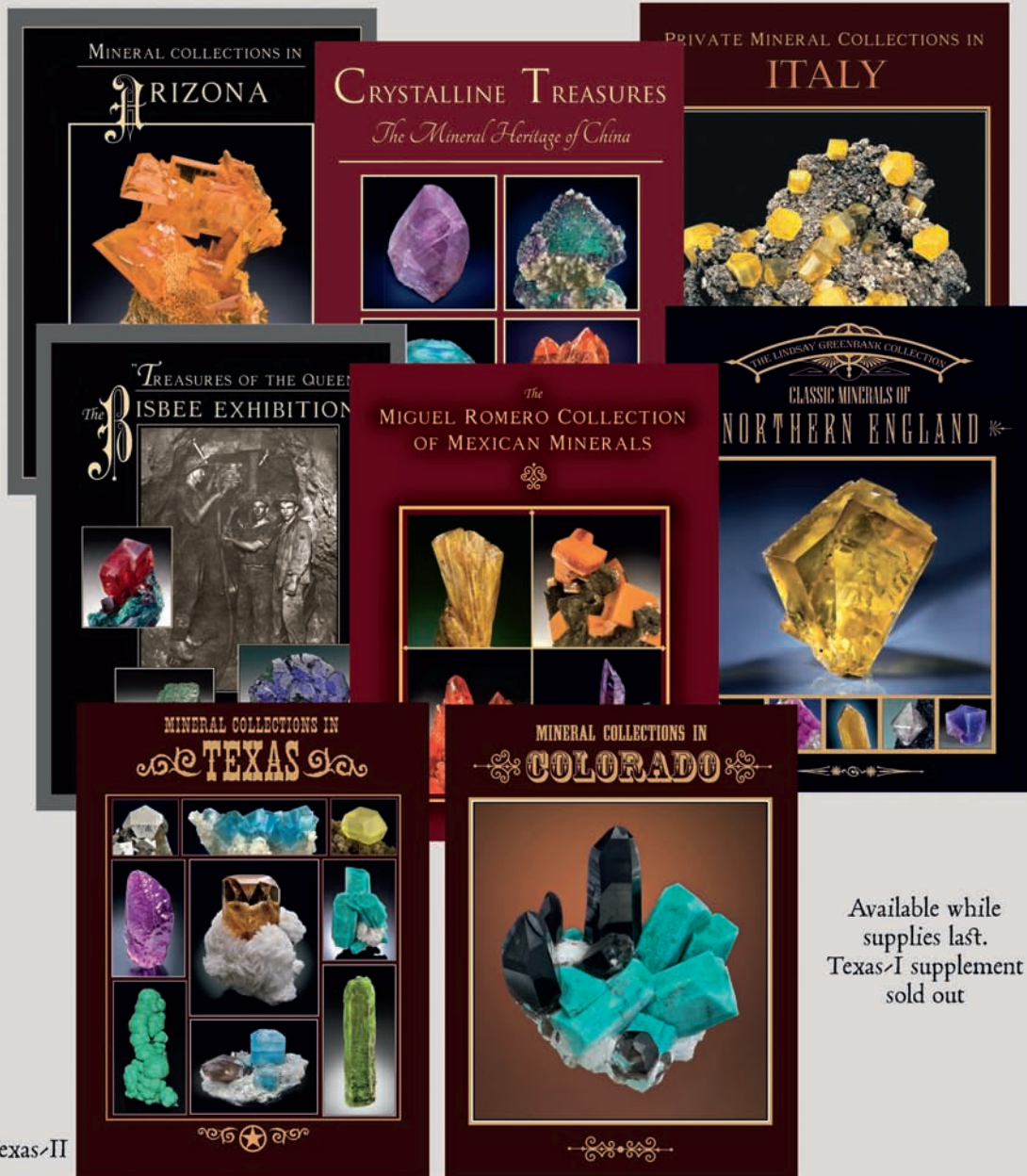
Regional Overview

The Banská Štiavnica Mountains are the inner part of the Western Carpathians, located in the south-central portion of Slovakia. They stretch about 30 km from the Hron River to the west to the neighboring Javorie in the east and almost 40 km from the Hron River near Žiar nad Hronom to the south of Pukanec. The highest peak in the region is Sitno (1009 m). The Banská Štiavnica town center is about 170 km

1. The Banská Štiavnica settings.



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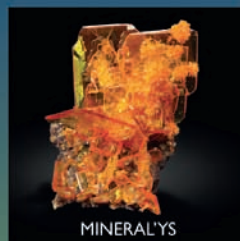
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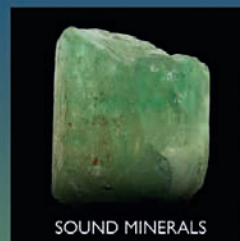
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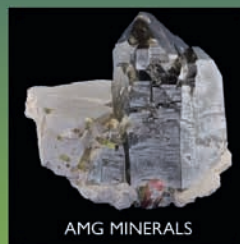
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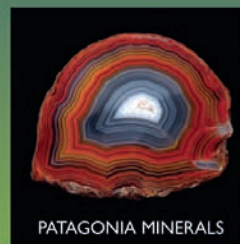
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Amethyst. Amatitlan, Mexico. 10.3 cm. Photo: Joe Budd.



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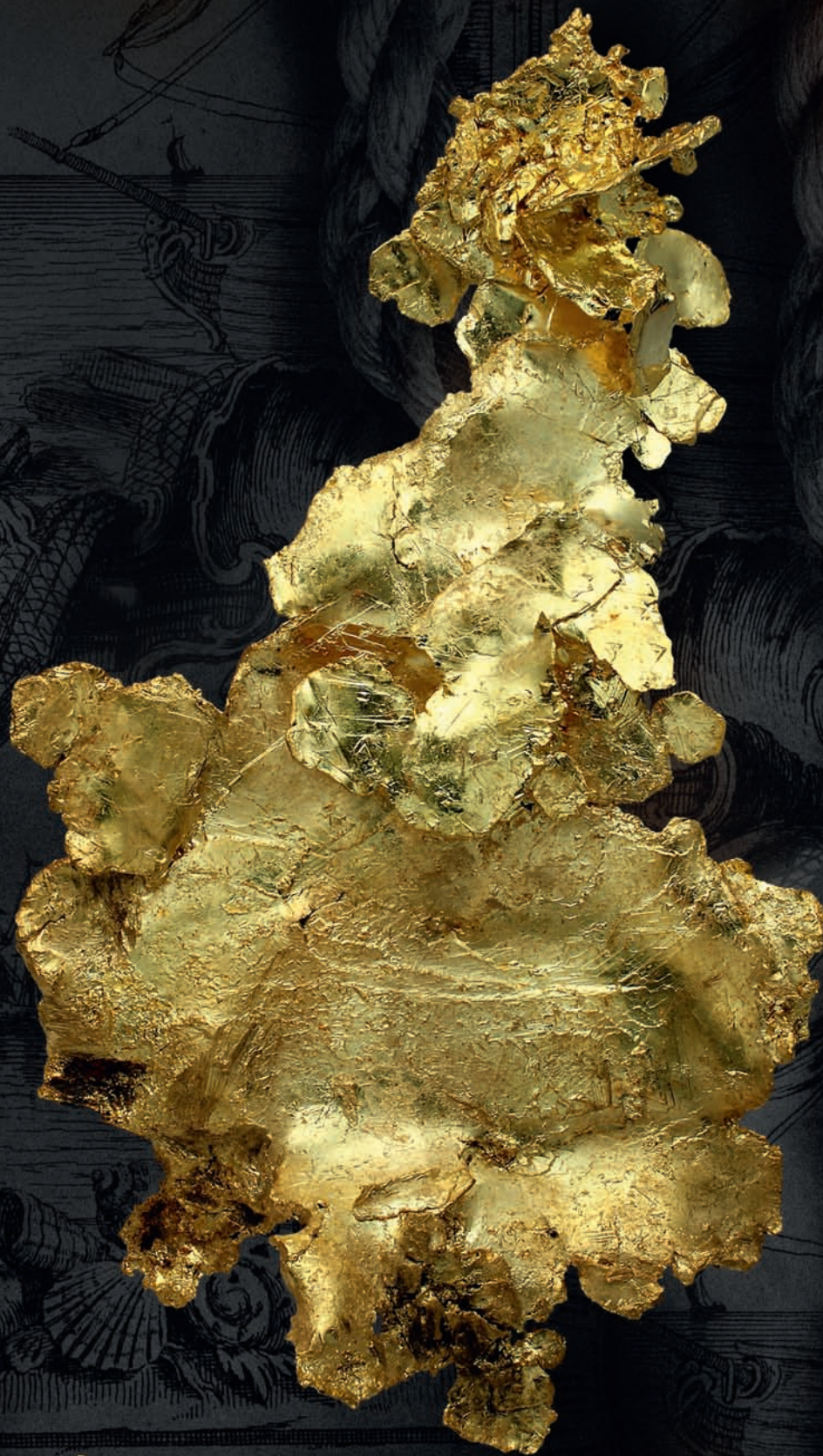


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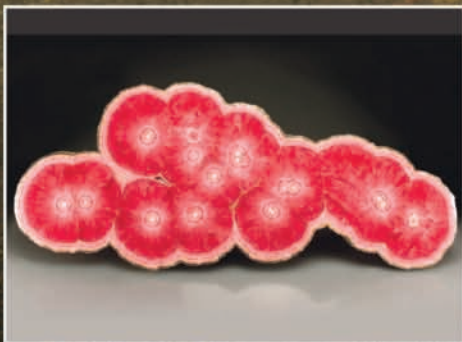
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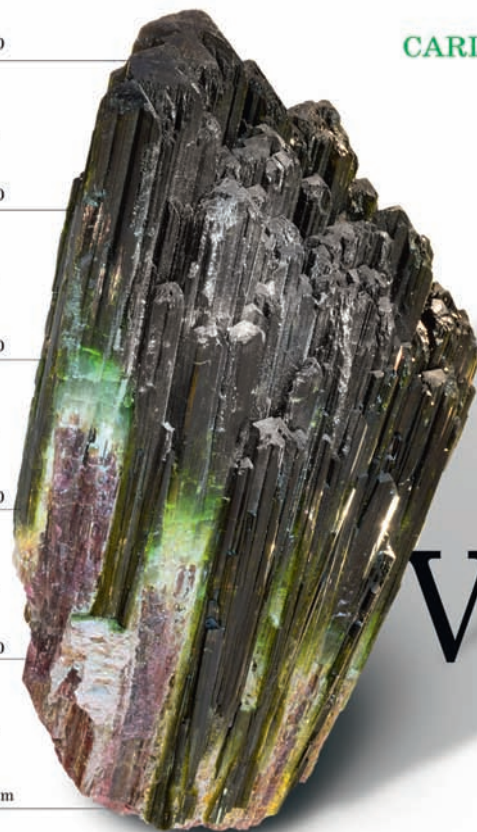
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Tourmaline. 55 cm. Minas Gerais, Brazil. Photo: © Michael Leybov

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