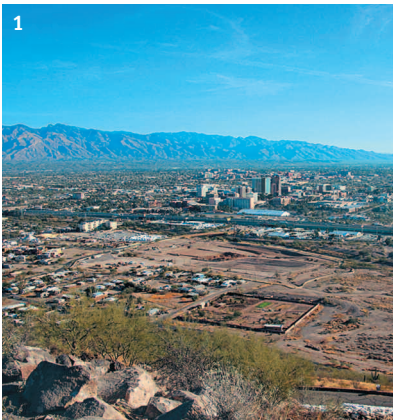


Mineral Shows 2020:
Tucson (USA)

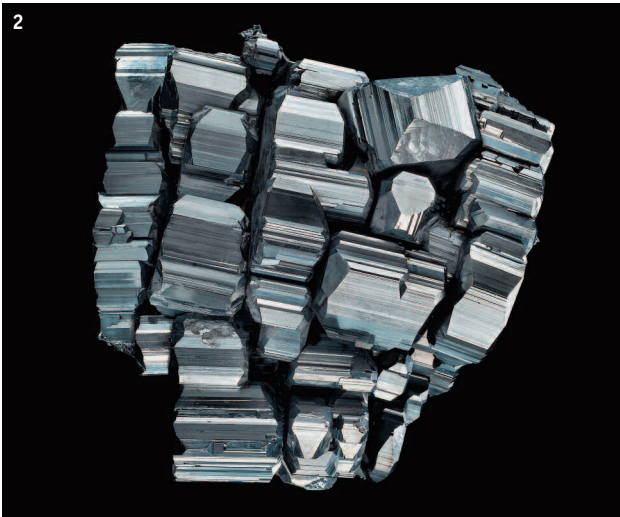
TUCSON 2020: IMPRESSIONS OF EYEWITNESSES



1. Tucson view from “A” mountain.
Photo: Vyacheslav Kalachev, 2020.

2. **Bournonite**. 10.4 cm.
Viboras Mine, Machacamarca, Cornelio
Saavedra Province, Potosí, Bolivia.
Specimen: Gail and Jim Spann.
Photo: Annette Slade.

3. **Gold** crystals (*from left to right*) 91 grams,
68 grams, and 162 grams. Serra do Caldeira
Concessions, Pontes e Lacerda, Mato Grosso,
Brazil. Specimens and photo: Terry Wallace.



This year, for the first time in many years, the editors of the Mineralogical Almanac failed to visit the Tucson Show – we did not manage to get a visa on time. But our friends helped us out Marie and Terry Huizing, along with Diana Francis, presented our magazine at all shows where we usually participate.

Our friends Terry Wallace, Carles Manresa with Alfredo Petrov, Gail and Jim Spann, and Peter Megaw kindly agreed to share with our readers their impressions of the show on these pages. Special thanks to Jeff Scovil, Joaquim Callen, Renato Pagano, Peter Modreski, Jordi Fabre and Tom Spann for submitting photos for publication.

We hope to see our friends and *Mineralogical Almanac* readers soon!

1. Tucson 2020: The calm before the storm

Terry Wallace

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The 66th version of the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show occurred shortly before the world began to understand the Covid-19 pandemic that would soon firmly grip the global population. The health and economic concerns that descended like a tsunami on the entire planet were in the consciousness of the mineral community, but barely; the US had severely restricted travel from China, so that part of the mineral community was partially absent, and nearly every dealer, buyer and collector was

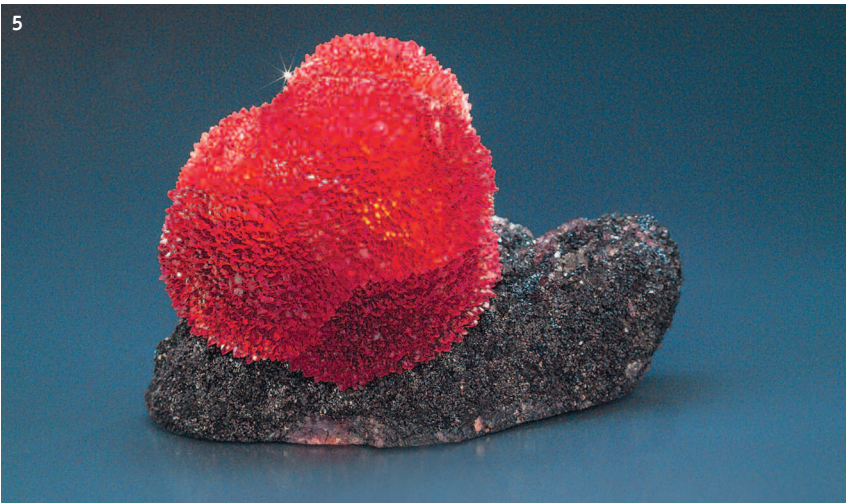


4. **Quartz** with **fluorite**. 13.3 cm high.
Lincoln County, New Mexico, USA.
Specimen: Phil Simmons. Photo: Jeff Scovil.

5. **Rhodochrosite** “snail”.
11 x 8 cm.
N'Chwaning, South Africa.
Specimen: Bill Larson.
Photo: Benjamin De Camp.
*The David P. Wilber Award for
Finest Overall Mineral Specimen in Show.
Tucson, Arizona, 2020.
Presented by
Arkenstone & Fine Minerals International.*

practicing some sort of preventive hygiene (no shaking of hands, and lots of sanitizer was available, and many people avoided some events), but there was little thought that in a few weeks the whole concept of a Tucson Gem and Mineral Show would be impossible. The Tucson show is a truly extraordinary international market place with dealers from over a 100 countries by my count, and although the Tucson Gem and Mineral Society’s “main show” remains the capstone of 6 weeks of minerals, gems, fossils, meteorites, beads and lapidary commerce, there were more than 3,500 booths at scores of other shows in hotels and tents for the public to peruse. The sheer magnitude of the Tucson show makes it the antithesis of communities practicing isolation and interactions at a distance.

Despite the jarring juxtaposition of human interactions today and a few months ago, the Tucson of early February 2020 was a mineral show of marvel. The sheer volume of mineral specimens was amazing, and despite the annual gripe of “there is not much new”, the number of recently mined or collected specimens that are amongst the best ever found continues to confirm the old Mark Twain quote “reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated”. My personal focus is silver minerals, along with metals as mineral specimens. There is always something new and interesting for silver – the annual global silver production is 27,000 metric tonnes – but compared to many years, 2020 was a modest year. A few well crystallized specimens of native silver from the Bouismas mine, Bou Azzer, Morocco were available, and remarkably “cheap”. For copper, there were some spectacular crystallized specimens from the Rocklands Mine, Cloncurry, Queensland Australia. The Rocklands mine is a set of modest sized open pit excavations that exploit supergene copper ores, including significant native copper. The specimens available at the Tucson show were very well crystallized spinel twin clusters, the largest being 15-20 cm on a side. Although spinel twins are well known from many global localities, the Rockland mine specimens are much coarser, and typically have individual copper crystals that are up to a cm in size attached to the spinel twin. The Rocklands mine is not operating as present, and it appears that these specimens were recovered in 2017–2018. Many dealers had crystallized gold from Pontes e Lacerda, Mato Grosso, Brazil that were exceptionally fine. These golds, recovered mostly from very small “rat hole” mining operations first appear in 2016, and are among the finest crystallized specimens known. The inventory in the 2020 show appears to be from earlier mining operations, and the specimens have been diffused to hundreds of dealers. Although there were rumors of some ex-





6. **Copper**. 27 cm wide.
St. Lewis County, Minnesota, USA.
Specimen: Chuck Graves.
Photo: Jeff Scovil.



7. **Quartz**. 13.6 cm wide.
Lincoln County, New Mexico, USA.
Specimen: Phil Simmons.
Photo: Jeff Scovil.

8. **Elbaite**. 10 x 6.4 cm.
Tourmaline Queen Mine, Pala Dist.,
San Diego Co., California, USA.
Specimen and photo: Stuart Wilensky.



traordinary specimens at Tucson (but unseen by me), the bulk of the material appeared to be lower quality than 2018 and 2019. The Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, aka the main show, has evolved much since the March of 1955 when the first edition was held in the gymnasium of an elementary school with about 10 dealers. In 2020 there are more than 100 dealers, but many of those dealers have been in Tucson for a month before the doors to the show open. The general tone is that the TGMS show is not great for selling minerals because the money has come and gone, but that the show is still a “must do” because it is a touchstone of the hobby. What the TGMS show does better than any other in the world is the range of displays from museums, universities, collector groups and private collectors. No other show has such a vast array of minerals on exhibit — other shows have special exhibits and displays, but TGMS has something that has not been reproduced elsewhere. Every year the show announces a theme, and many of the exhibits are various interpretations of that theme. In 2020 the theme was “World Class Minerals”; that unleashed an outpouring of grand specimens to make their way to Tucson (despite the modern day difficulties of international borders, insurance, and transportation). The highlight of the entire 2020 Tucson show was the TGMS exhibits. From the Ground Hog Mine ram’s horn gold of the Harvard Museum, the rhodochrosite snail in the Bill Larson collection, the type locality specimen of spangolite from Yale that has the original label of “near Tombstone” (even though it has to be Bisbee), the Brazilian imperial topaz owned by Alyssa Donovan, and world’s best bournonite in the Spann collection (Viboras Mine, Machacamarca, Cornelio Saavedra Province, Potosí Department, Bolivia), the minerals on display rivaled the best museums in the world.

The Tucson show is changing and evolving, sometimes in unproductive ways, sometimes in response to collector tastes, and certainly in response to the fact that how minerals are sold has been impacted tremendously by the internet. In some ways, mineral shows are no longer about selling — that is done online, or through electronic connections that weave together a distant world. I regularly converse with mineral colleagues in distant lands with emails and picture apps. I don’t need to see them in person to have a rich friendship, or for commerce. I still prefer the in-person, but it is not essential. The Covid-19 crisis will change the world economic structure forever. I certainly don’t know how that will look in 2 or 5 or certainly 10 years, but perhaps the 2020 Tucson Show will be remembered as the last of something — the last mass market place perhaps, or maybe a significant shrinkage of shows with throngs of onlookers. This is distressing to me, but others will embrace a new world, and a new Tucson show experience will appear.



9. **Hemimorphite**. 6.2 cm high. M’Fouati,
M’Fouati Dist., Bouenza Dept., Congo.
Specimen: *Spirifer*.

10. **Calcite** (vanadian variety). 12.6 cm wide.
Garfield, Utah, USA. Specimen: Terry Huizing.

Photo 9–13: Jeff Scovil.

11. **Elbaite**. 5.5 cm high. Kivu, DR Congo.
Specimen: Patrick Mayer.

12. **Fluorite** with smoky **quartz**. 11.6 cm
wide. Stzregom, Lower Silesia, Poland.
Specimen: *Spirifer*.

13. **Cerussite** twinned. 2.8 cm wide.
M’Fouati, M’Fouati Dist., Bouenza Dept.,
Congo. Specimen: *Spirifer*.

14. **Fluorite**. 10.5 cm wide. China.
Specimen and photo: Dan Weinrich.



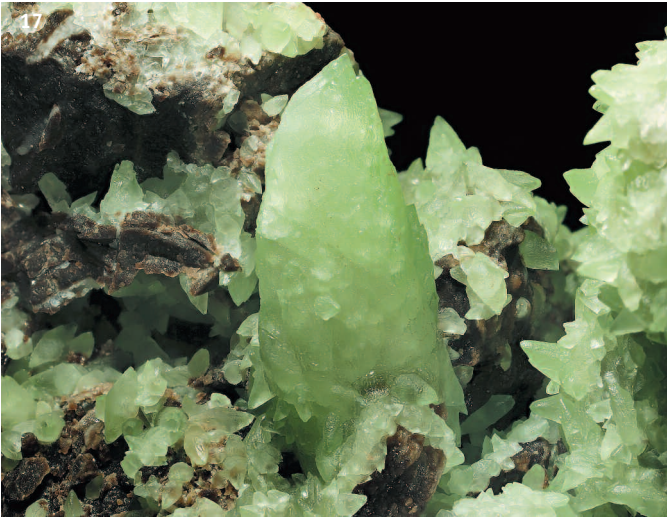
15. **Senarmontite** crystals up to 1.1 cm. Djebel Hammimat, Ain Babouche Dist., Oum el Bouaghi Prov, Algeria. Specimen: *Well-Arranged Molecules*.

Photo 15–24: Joaquim Callen.

16. **Bazzite**. 0.4 cm. Kersy Forest, Bonneval, Tarentaise, La Lauziere Massif, Savoie, France. Specimen: *Well-Arranged Molecules*.

17. **Calcite** crystal (5 cm) on matrix. Garland Co, Utah, USA. Specimen: *Unique Minerals*.

18. **Malachite** with **azurite** after **malachite**. 75 cm wide. L'Etoile du Congo Mine, Katanga, DR Congo. Specimen: Cristophe Gobin.



19. **Betafite**. 3.6 cm. Silver Crater Mine, Bancroft, Ontario, Canada. Specimen: Alfredo Petrov.

20. **Euclase**. 2.8 cm. Bahia, Brazil. Specimen: Anton Watzl.

21. **Beryl** (var. Emerald) crystal (2 cm) on **parisite-(Ce)**. Muzo Mine, Vasquez, Yacopi, Boyaca, Colombia. Specimen: Dan Weinrich.

22. **Copper** crystal (4 cm) on matrix. Mais Mine, Ontonagon Co, Michigan, USA. Specimen: Irv Brown.

23. **Bournonite**. 15 cm. Machacamarca, Potosi, Bolivia. Specimen: Cristophe Gobin.

24. **Cuprite**. 4.8 cm. Mashamba West, Kolwezi, DR Congo. Specimen: Cristophe Gobin.

