

Ray Hill's TN Blog for the new website - February 25, 2009

Dear members:

Having just returned from Tucson, I usually take a day or two to reflect upon what I have seen there, and the people that I met there, and what I learned this year.

The first thing that I learned, was that Big is not necessarily best. I knew this, but this year was the first time that I really had the time to visit many, but not all of the various shows, in a fairly thorough manner. The immensity of this sprawling show site, really sank in more this time. There is so very much to see, and so much of it was big, and much of what I saw, felt like it was all the same. The new display, it seems, has to have lots of colour and lots of big showy specimens. It seemed to me, that if one wanted rare or unusual, one had to go smaller. Most of the specimens I saw, were Spodumenes, Beryls, Tourmalines and Gem minerals. Don't get me wrong, gem minerals are one of my specialities, but not in the sizes and prices that abounded in most show rooms. I always have a ball in Rock Currier's room, and this year that fun extended to Dudley Blauet's room in the Inne Suites as well. There, I found small, unusual and reasonably priced specimens. I also found some really nice small cabinet, and TN pieces at affordable prices, in odd tents in Electric Park, or small booths at the main show. I apparently missed Kristalle's half price room which was purported to have a few hidden treasures.

My highlight of the main show, was Stretch and Lynn Young's Desautel prize winning case of Pseudomorphs, most of which were small cabinet, to TN in size. They did their state proud by also winning the Friends of Mineralogy prize, for their teaching case on Pseudomorphs. They weren't big showy, colourful pieces for the most part, but they were unusual, perfect and mostly quite rare examples, of this most often underappreciated, area of the hobby. I got a personal tour of the four cases that Stretch and Lynn Young put into the main show, and they were all very well thought out and most interesting.

I cannot understand why more people aren't flocking to TN and Micro sellers, since the new reality is smaller homes, and condos, and our genre is perfectly suited for this reducing of living space!!

Smaller specimens are more prone to perfection or near perfection and aesthetics and much less expensive, than the larger pieces, so I can't see a downside. Hopefully, the news of this revitalization of the TN collector group will spark more people to think "small is beautiful" and "Good things come in small packages" etc.

I look forward to reading articles on mounting for competition, shopping for specialized collections, good areas for field collecting TN's, and hints about good dealers to look into.. if anyone is inspired to write in these areas.

Sincerely

Ray Hill