

Mineral of the Month Club Newsletter

January 2016



Wishing all the Mineral of the Month Club members a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year! Another year has flown by and believe it or not, next month marks the 20th anniversary of Mineral of the Month Club! That makes the 239 consecutive mailing of specimens to our members.

Featured Mineral: Our January Mineral of the Month is halite from the Searles Lake evaporite deposit in southeastern California. Over the past 140 years, Searles Lake, one of the world's greatest evaporite deposits, has yielded evaporite minerals worth more than \$1.5 billion dollars. Searles Lake formed from glacial runoff during the Pleistocene Epoch some 2.5 million years ago. Seasonal evaporite deposition at Searles Lake has created a 600-foot-thick, bedded deposit of mixed halide, carbonate, sulfate, and borate minerals. The lake, which is dry most of the year, covers 50 square miles and contains more than 25 different evaporite minerals. Searles Valley Minerals, Inc. currently extracts 1.7 million tons of evaporite minerals from the lake each year. An estimated four billion tons of evaporite-mineral reserves will support mining at Searles Lake for centuries to come. Our halite specimens consist of clusters of well-shaped, translucent, cubic crystals with light-gray or pale-pink colors. As we explain in our write-up, the pink color is created by reddish pigments produced by halobacteria (salt-loving bacteria) that thrive in the Searles Lake brine.

Just a reminder that each month the featured mineral is available to purchase in larger sizes and can be found in the "Featured Mineral Platinum Letter" which has photos, sizing and pricing information. The Featured Mineral Platinum Letter can be found in the monthly email that goes out to all members. If you do not have a computer we can mail it to you, just let Christine know.

Rock Hound Tidbits: In the special section of our write-up, we visit the world's most remarkable salt mine—the Wieliczka Salt Mine near Kraków, Poland. The Wieliczka salt mine has 125 miles of underground passages that connect some 2,000 excavated chambers as deep as 1,100 feet below the surface. Many workings contain spectacular halite carvings and sculptures. Wieliczka is now a United Nations World Cultural Heritage Site of "outstanding universal value

to mankind.” Be sure to read the fascinating story of the Wieliczka Salt Mine in our special section.

Celebrating 20 years of MOTMC:

Next month will mark the 20th anniversary of the Mineral of the Month Club. The special section of our February write-up will look back at the minerals and mineral varieties that we have featured over the past 20 years. We have categorized our Minerals of the Month by nation or state of origin, and also by mineral class, and you may be surprised at the results.

And to help celebrate our 20th anniversary, we are making all our previous Minerals of the Month and special monthly offers that remain in stock available to our members at a 20-percent discount. We encourage all members to take advantage of this opportunity to acquire specimens that you may have missed in the past—and to do so at a substantial discount. This special offer will remain in effect only until the end of February.

Memberships: Welcome to Janice G. from Wisconsin, John R. from Ontario, Canada, Ruth D. from Florida, The Silvers family from Arizona, and Tracie T. from North Dakota. Welcome back to Richard K. from New York State who rejoined this month after a several year hiatus from MOTMC. And a warm thank you to all our other members who renewed for yet another year!

Coming in February: The featured mineral will be orange calcite from Mexico’s Ojuela Mine. Ojuela has recently become an important source of the orange and red varieties of massive calcite. Both occur as fracture and fissure fillings in the mine’s upper levels and are mined by drilling and blasting. The orange color is caused by included, microscopic particles of hematite, or iron oxide. Our specimens were briefly immersed in acid to remove a thin surface layer of the calcite to intensify color and improve translucency. When backlighted, these orange calcite specimens have a warm, radiant glow. Many of them have such a luscious color and sheen that here in the office we say that our mouths water just looking at them...like a juicy orange.

To compliment the orange calcite specimens we have added a beautiful multi-colored calcite on the monthly offering sheet.

We are here for you: We are here for you and all your collecting needs. If you have any questions please contact Christine, our Mineral of the Month Club manager, by telephone at 1-800-941-5594 or via e-mail at christine@celestialearthminerals.com.

Don’t forget there is a growing community of members on our Facebook pages called Mineral Crew/ Mineral of the Month Club and Celestial Earth Minerals, Instagram and Twitter as well as Pinterest.

Dimitri, Mary, Christine, and Lora