

OCTOBER 2022 – HARDROCK SUMMIT REVIEW

A YOUNG GEM AND MINERAL SHOW IN BLOOMING

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It has been a difficult wait for many gem, jewelry, and mineral professionals since the official lockdown affected the Tucson shows. This might read like a superficial statement but it is absolutely true if you are an appraiser needing market interaction in person. Let's face it, even with the 2022 shows being open, many of us couldn't attend. Furthermore, if your involvement in the business is not specifically trading jewelry, the Las Vegas shows typically don't cater to you. No matter how many jewelry appraisal reports I produce, I always seek any opportunity to look at gems and minerals when I am at an industry convention. My Covid-prompted two-year hiatus from the Tucson shows, followed by the recent underwhelming Las Vegas show, left me longing for an occasion to visit a gem and mineral focused event. Granted, there has been great activity online so I cannot complain about lack of information in terms of market research, but nothing replaces the real experience. Enter The HardRock Summit 2022 in Denver!

Denver, Colorado has been a home to an international core mineral collectors' show for decades. It was different than Tucson because of its more intimate minerals only structure. It has been a show that all the avid mineral collectors of every level would come together, share, show off, and offer educational events open to the public. Therefore, it couldn't have been a difficult decision for the HardRock Summit organizers to pick Denver for a brand-new show bringing it all together; minerals, gems, and jewelry. The first event took place in September 2021 when most countries, including the US, had travel restrictions. Despite its challenges, the debut was such a success that the expansion in 2022 was inevitable. While major trade organizations such as AGTA recognized its advantages, HRS organizers added educational events and remarkable exhibitions. Moreover, everything was under one roof at the Colorado Convention Center. The venue provided convenient access for buyers, private collectors, hobbyists, and researchers. Yet trade boundaries were not compromised for the AGTA gem section, which was open to qualified trade members. One of the new features of this show was to



include the trade publications, appraisal organizations, and industry associations such as Accredited Gemologists Association, National Association of Jewelry Appraisers, Gem Legacy and American Gem Society. As mentioned in the Publisher's Page in this issue, Gemworld attended for the first time to check the pulse of the gem industry.

My experience with the HRS is quite positive. I was impressed by the modern, accessible venue but most importantly very happy with the fact that I could walk into both the gem (Sparkle & Joy) and mineral (Evolution) shows without having to travel or

wait. The layout of the booths and halls were very well organized. My biggest fascination was the special exhibition on gold. The exhibition had brought the most important gold specimens next to each other; namely "The Dragon" the world's most valuable crystalized gold specimen from the Natural History Museum in Houston and the famous "Ram's Horn" from Harvard's Mineralogical & Geological Museum. These were not the only crystal specimens on display and all were simply stunning. The exhibition not only included exceptional gold crystals, but also the gold treasures from two famed sunken ships; SS Central America (Ship of Gold) of the mid-19th century and SS Islander of the early 20th century, both with unique links to the gold rushes in California and Alaska. Pieces from Somewhere In The Rainbow Collection were also part of this exhibition exemplifying a number of great jewelry creations.

In my humble opinion, HardRock Summit will grow into a unique show in the coming years. By allowing public access to certain sections, it encourages interest and growth of the gem and mineral trades. It was a great pleasure to talk to a high school student about minerals and gems. Her interest in the subject gave me hope that we can introduce our profession to the younger generations during such events while they can roam around and ask questions to the practicing gem and mineral professionals directly. Tucson 2023 is just round the corner, yet I am looking forward to rockin' and rollin' next year in Denver too. ♦

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