
WILENSKY



ESSENTIALS OF MINERAL COLLECTING
BY STUART WILENSKY

PROVIDING COLLECTORS WITH THE VERY FINEST CREATIONS
FROM THE PAST 4 BILLION YEARS.

Our origins as Stuart and Donna Wilensky Fine Minerals began at a flea market on Long Island. We were newly married and stumbled across a table filled with Arkansas Quartz and polished Agates. We instantly fell in love with a clear quartz group and bought it for \$50.00.

That night we took it home, placed it on our dining room table and just stared with wonder at the natural beauty, the unbelievable perfection of the sharp, clear crystals. We had seen crystals like this in natural history museums but never thought we could own them.

I grew up in a very artistic family. My parents were art dealers and I traveled the world with them visiting museums and studying every period of art from Egyptian to 20th century. In college, I earned my master's degree in art history. Little did I know that every artist, every creative work I had ever seen would pale in comparison to the work of Mother Nature.

My lifetime of aesthetic learning drew me rapidly towards the natural beauty of minerals. It was as if a lifetime studying art had brought me to this point where I now understood that all art, all aesthetics, come from nature. The appreciation of human art is but a reflection of nature itself.

Donna has the most incredible taste in beauty and was drawn to the minerals as quickly as I was. We actively pursued knowledge, visiting museums and mineral galleries wherever we could find them. I have been a collector my whole life and knew that obtaining the very best was the path for us. We relentlessly refined our taste, learning all that we could.

Thirty-five years later, minerals are still our passion. Our intention is to share with fellow collectors this passion, the joy we have experienced in owning and handling so many wonderful mineral specimens, and to encourage the collection and preservation of mineral specimens as works of art. By displaying minerals in our gallery where others can view, compare, and enjoy aesthetic mineral specimens, we hope to promote mineral collecting right alongside the more traditional fine arts of painting and sculpture.

Our legacy as mineral dealers and collectors are the specimens you see in our gallery and pictured in our book series. The collections we have helped build are constant reminders of the beauty and wonder of the natural world.



WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

Every mineral specimen we display is completely natural, as found deep in the Earth. The only intervention by human hands is the removal from the mine and cleaning. Every mineral specimen we sell carries our lifetime guarantee of authenticity and satisfaction. Our reputation as dealers in the finest minerals is our bond with you, our client. We deal not only in minerals, but also in trust, honesty, quality, investment, and beauty.

Further, our focus is on acquiring and selling the finest of all mineral specimens. Our goal is to provide collectors with aesthetic mineral specimens of the highest quality, and to sell them with honesty and integrity. It is our obligation to our clients to provide only those examples that we feel worthy of their collections. Your collection is a direct reflection upon us and we take that distinction very seriously.



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- DAVID ROCKEFELLER

ESSENTIALS OF MINERAL COLLECTING

We've come to a new chapter with the opening of our gallery in the Chelsea Art District of NYC. Presenting fine minerals amongst the world's great art galleries; displaying minerals as works of art. Minerals will be displayed alongside our neighbors exhibiting Warhol, Basquiat, Pollack, and Picasso. Achieving the impact of art through natural mineral specimens is our goal. Not a competition, but a convergence.

WHY DO PEOPLE COLLECT MINERALS?

This was a question I never actually asked of myself. First and foremost, I enjoy collecting and I enjoy visually beautiful and aesthetic objects. You can call it “art” but I think mineral beauty goes a step beyond those boundaries. Art by definition is something created by humans. How then do we categorize minerals? I believe they are art in a larger sense of the term. Our eyes and sensibilities are attracted to them, excited by them, even unconsciously drawn to them because they stimulate our senses in several ways: form, color, transparency, sculpturally, texturally, etc. The appreciation of something beautiful is uniquely human and with that concept in mind, appreciating mineral specimens is simple; it is enjoyable.

I've collected several things in my life, but once introduced to minerals they literally took over my life. Minerals always came first. I have wondered why that is. Everything else I have collected was man-made and within those parameters I always knew what was possible. The surprises are there, but few. Minerals have no boundaries. As soon as you think you have seen the best, or the ultimate, something comes forth from the earth to shock and astound you. The excitement and thrill of the next wonderful specimen is never-ending. If you collect coins, stamps, or lunch boxes you already know what the greatest rarity is, or the most beautiful piece will be, when you start. Acquiring that item is an adventure, but imagine collecting something where the greatest hasn't been found yet, where the most outrageous piece has never been seen by any human! That's the adrenaline rush that only a collector of minerals can experience. This excitement, this ongoing treasure hunt, is like no other collectible. This is the everlasting, ageless and endless, pursuit of the wondrous, beautiful, and rare.

YOU'RE IN GOOD COMPANY

Mineral specimens and crystals have been collected since the earliest humans came in contact with them. Many prehistoric burial sites contain assorted mineral fragments and crystals which were used both for ornamentation and spiritual purposes.

It is obvious why the natural beauty and perfection of minerals attracted the human eye. I can't tell you how many times I've introduced people who previously had little or no exposure to spectacular crystallized minerals and heard something like — "These can't be from the ground?" or "Oh, you made these?". I always enjoy watching the expressions and listening to comments of people's first experience with minerals. It is pure unadulterated amazement!

We can all appreciate the talent and skill of artists like Van Gogh or Michelangelo, but what can we say about the overwhelming beauty and natural aesthetics of minerals? They are truly the wonders of the world. They are the treasures of the Earth, each one is completely unique and cannot be duplicated by man. I then like to follow up with telling how most of the minerals they are looking at are hundreds of millions of years old. That's usually the point at which they look at me and are sure I'm making all this up!

Mineral specimen collecting really grew into a popular pastime during the Renaissance and grew more rapidly right through the Victorian age. Kings, Queens, and Royalty across Europe were collecting minerals at a feverish pace, often competing with one another for the very finest material available. Nearly every large European city maintains a mineral collection (usually within a larger natural history museum) that has its origins in one of these great 18th or 19th century Royal collections. Along the way other wealthy and influential people collected specimens. A good example is the famous British art critic and poet, John Ruskin (1821-1910) who maintained a large mineral collection. Here in the United States we had many 18th and 19th century collectors of note. One which most of you will have heard of was Washington Augustus Roebling (1837-1926), builder of the

Brooklyn Bridge. His collection was the basis for one of America's most important collections which is now in the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. So you see, if you love beautiful minerals, you're in good company.

Mineral collecting in the 20th and 21st century has built upon this great historical past and has grown into a thriving and wonderful collecting field. We have shows dedicated solely to mineral specimens. On any given weekend there are small and large shows and exhibitions around the United States and Europe. The famous Tucson, Denver, and Munich shows attract tens of thousands of collectors.

The great days of mining are mostly behind us due to mechanized mining methods and government regulations. But, interestingly, many of the finest known minerals have been found in the past twenty years.

This is a direct response to the ever-growing demand and appreciation of minerals and the opening up of new mining regions in China, Pakistan, and South America. Mines that were extinct for 50 or 100 years are also now being rediscovered and reworked just to extract fine specimens. New areas of the world are being explored by intrepid mineral dealers and startling finds are being discovered every few months. We have been mineral enthusiasts for over 30 years and we are constantly surprised how often we are shown pieces that are incredible, sometimes the best ever found for a particular species.



4 TIPS TO COLLECTING MINERALS

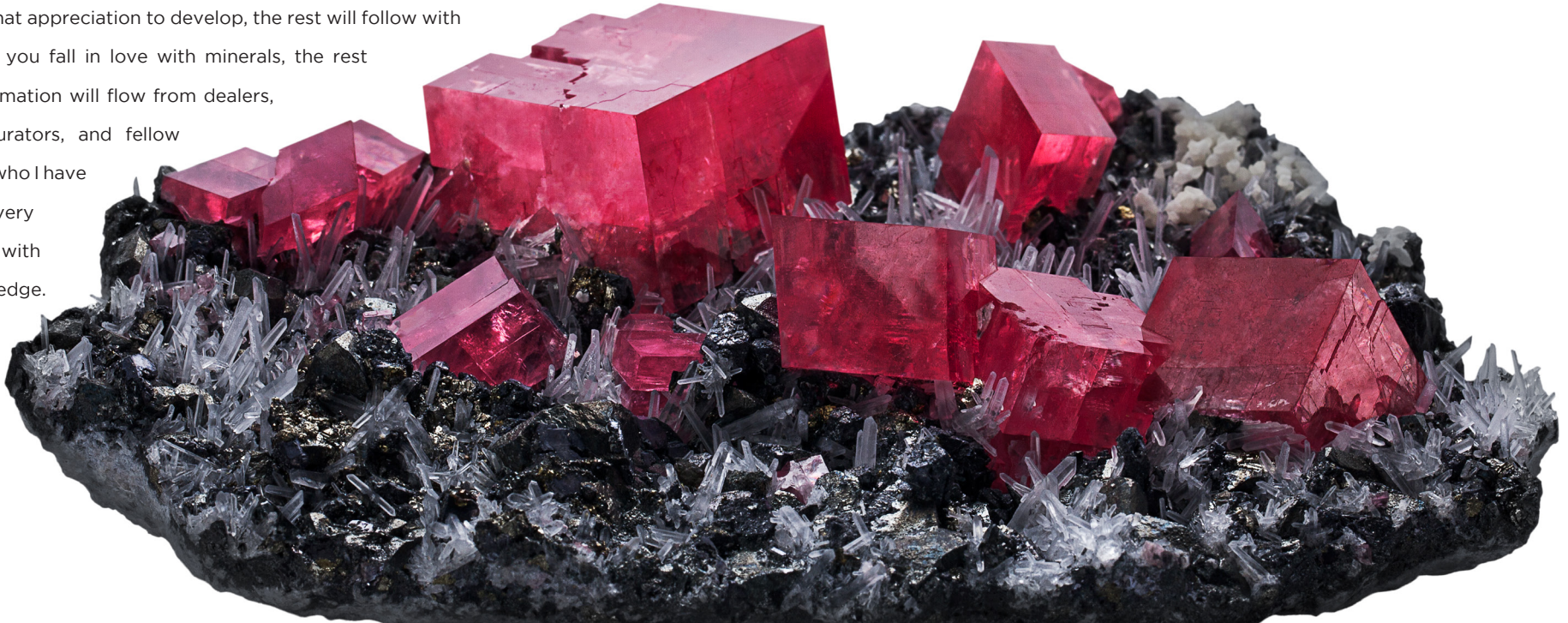
If you are new to mineral collecting here are a few tips to get you started:

EDUCATE YOURSELF

We suggest getting a few good books (see our list below) to start off and surely a subscription to both of the leading mineral collector magazines; "The Mineralogical Record" and "Rocks and Minerals".

LOOK AT MINERALS

Most important is get out and see a few good museum collections. Look at minerals, look at minerals, and look at minerals! You will develop your own taste and then follow that path. Do not be intimidated by the scientific aspects of mineralogy. It is not necessary to be scientifically inclined to enjoy the beauty of minerals. All it takes is the appreciation of nature and beauty. Do not worry much about "how do I know what species or crystal form a specimen is?". That will come with time. We have always stressed the aesthetics and perfection of specimens. If you allow that appreciation to develop, the rest will follow with ease. Once you fall in love with minerals, the rest of the information will flow from dealers, museum curators, and fellow collectors, who I have found are very generous with their knowledge.



GET TO KNOW OUR CRITERIA SCORING SYSTEM

Our primary focus has and always will be acquiring specimens which have the following criteria:

- a. **Beauty, aesthetics, and overall balance**
- b. **Perfection of crystal quality, sharpness, and form**
- c. **Color and clarity (if applicable)**
- d. **Lack of damage**
- e. **Color and/or texture contrast**
- f. **Intrinsic value: The essence of any work of art; how it affects and moves you emotionally and artistically.**

Please visit The Wilensky Approach page on www.wilenskyminerals.com for a more comprehensive discussion of our criteria scoring system.

BUY THE FINEST OF WHAT YOU LOVE

I always encourage collectors to strive for the very finest, the specimens that have no equal. They are special, unique, and most importantly - they are memorable.

RECOMMENDED READING

Mineralogical Record Magazine

Rocks and Minerals Magazine

Mineral Monograph series (Lithographie, Ltd.)

Gem & Crystal Treasures (Peter Bancroft, 1984)

Masterpieces of the Mineral World (Joel Bartsch, 2004)

The Smale Collection; Beauty in Natural Crystals (Stephen Smale, 2006)

Wilensky Fine Mineral Volumes

RECOMMENDED MUSEUMS

American Museum of Natural History, NYC

Houston Museum of Natural History, Houston, TX

The National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian, Washington, DC

The L.A. County Museum of Natural History, Los Angeles, CA

The Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, PA

David Friend Hall at Yale's Peabody Museum, New Haven, CT

Harvard Museum of Natural History, Cambridge, MA

The Natural History Museum, London, UK

MIM Mineral Museum, Beirut, Lebanon

Musee de Mineralogie + Museum National D'Histoire Naturelle + Collection des Mineraux de L'Universite Pierre et Marie Curie - all three museums in Paris, France

Terra Mineralia, Freiberg, Germany

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