

## Supplement to the Cape Town *Mineral Chatter* – July 2015

### Fluorite from the Lower Orange River

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A great variety of fluorite is found in quartz veins in the Lower Orange River area between Vioolsdrift and Aussenkehr on both sides of the river forming the border between South Africa and Namibia.

The historic Seven Pillars Mine, located on the Farm Aussenkehr 147 is a good example that fluorite mining took place here in the past. The mine produced nice green cubic fluorite crystals which could be found in quartz-fluorite veins in an altered gneiss. Sometimes colourless, pink and light violet crystals were also found.



*Figure. 1: View from the Seven Pillar Mine onto the Orange River.*

Unfortunately the remaining fluorite specimens at that locality are not of a good quality. Better fluorite minerals are found on the South African side of the Orange River. Nevertheless, small miners are busy in this area and have found big green crystals on the Namibian side again which are still undergoing a cleaning process. The problems the small miners face here is that most of the ground along the Orange River is covered by EPLs for diamond exploration or active diamond mining. To register claims at the Ministry of Mines and Energy for taking out fluorite can become a nightmare for the small miner. Completing complicated forms and paying for prospecting licences and claims can prove to be too much for the small miner. I strongly appeal to the MME to make the lives of the small miner easier and offer as much help as possible. Namibia is famous for its great minerals; prospecting, mining, buying and exporting of these wonders of nature should be supported by the government. The Rosh Pinah Geo Centre was established 3 years ago for the purpose of exhibiting and preserving Namibian minerals and giving the interested visitor information on geology, mining and processing of mineral resources. The south of Namibia is neglected by tour operators and not well known to tourists and otherwise interested people. Nevertheless, the south of Namibia has a lot to offer and like the diamond is the hidden gem of Namibia. That has to be changed and people must be made aware of all the treasures to be seen and found here.

Sorry, I got a little side tracked but now back to the fluorites. Great colours, different colours and beautiful phantoms - that is how I have to describe the fluorites from the Lower Orange River. There is a big potential of finding outstanding quality specimen which can easily compare to the Okorusu fluorites.



*Figure 2: Small miners are presenting the minerals after weeks of hard work and hoping for some money for food and other necessities*

The people along the Orange River mainly make a living from tourism, fishing and herding livestock and only a few from digging minerals.



*Figure 3: A 'tate' trying to sell a dried river fish*



*Figure 4: Beautiful green fluorite with tiny purple corner phantoms, 13 x 8 x 6cm*

## Welcome to the Lower Orange River Fluorite Gallery !



*Figure 5 and 6: Beautiful pink fluorite cubes with purple growth phantoms, specimen size about 6 x 4 x 2cm*



*Figure 7: Small purple fluorite octahedras, partly covered by an iron oxide crust, 7 x 4 x 2cm*



Figure 8: Fluorite with purple growth phantoms on green massive fluorite, 11 x 7 x 6cm



Figure 9: Another green fluorite with purple corner phantoms and small quartz crystals , 12 x 8 x 5cm



Figure 10: Blue fluorite 'Ochsenaugen', 6 x 5 x 4cm

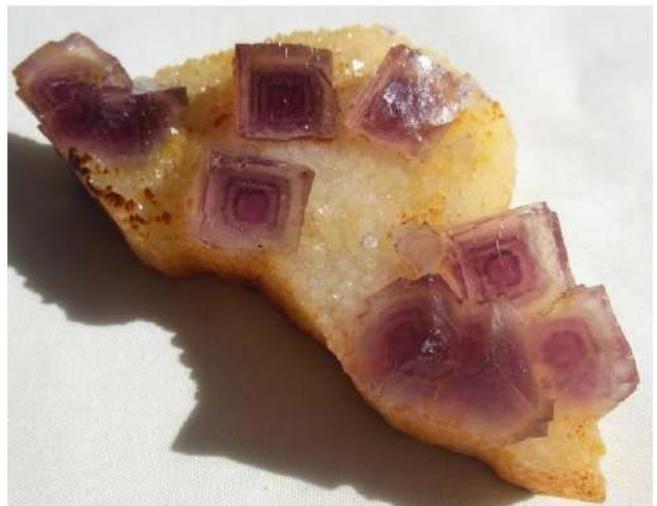


Figure 11: Beautiful fluorite cubes with purple growth phantoms, 8 x 5 x 3cm



Figure 12: Pink fluorite with phantoms, 15 x 11 x 8cm



Figure 13: Polished green fluorite slab, 9 x 5 x 0.3cm



Figure 14: Polished green fluorite slab, 6 x 4 x 0.3cm



Figure 12: Pink fluorite with phantoms, 7 x 4 x 3cm



*Figure 13: Fluorite cubes with purple phantoms, 11 x 6 x 4cm*



*Figure 14: Yellow fluorite with purple phantoms, 8 x 6 x 4cm*



*Figure 15: Clear fluorite with blue growth phantoms, 8 x 6 x 4cm*

All specimens from Rosh Pinah Geo Centre, photos taken by Gisela Hinder and Dr Heinz Malzahn

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