

BEAUTY FROM THE WORLD OF MICRO

Mineral collectors sometimes complain about the scarcity of field collecting opportunities due to mine closures, areas becoming off-limits, localities getting depleted, sites being paved over, etc. Because microscopic minerals are more common than their coarser brethren, they are relatively easy to find. Moreover, many mineral species are only found in the form of microscopic crystals. Therefore, to broaden one's knowledge of mineralogy, a microscope becomes a necessity. A collector who does not utilize a microscope is missing out an opportunity to better understand minerals. Looking at a specimen under a microscope, one realizes that there are things of great beauty within an otherwise routine-appearing rock. The illustrated conichalcite specimen is a good example.

Conichalcite, $\text{CaCu}(\text{AsO}_4)(\text{OH})$, is a common secondary mineral with a habit of forming small radiating spheres. This specimen is from the Gold Hill Mine, Tooele County, Utah, U.S.A. Conichalcite from Gold Hill is, arguably, the world's best. The Gold Hill Mine was opened in 1892 and produced arsenic, lead, copper, silver, and gold (Kokinos and Wise 1993). It is the type location for austinite, hidalgoite, and juanitaite. About fifty other mineral species occur there, making the mine well known to mineral collectors.

"All good things must come to an end" may apply in the case of the Gold Hill Mine, as it is scheduled for reclamation later this year. Considering the title of this feature, Parting Shot, images of conichalcite from Gold Hill are quite appropriate.

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REFERENCE

Kokinos M, Wise M (1993) The Gold Hill Mine, Tooele County, Utah. *Mineralogical Record* 24: 11-22



Conichalcite, field of view about 5 mm

The photographed conichalcite specimen is a "micromount" (box exterior dimensions are approx. 23 x 23 x 19 mm)



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