

2019, September, Fluorite, Weisseck, Lungau, Salzburg , Austria

At the beginning of September 2019, I was out on the Weisseck Mountain with Gerhard Aschacher and Alois Krendl to look for fluorites. Gerhard wanted to show me an old cleft on the Weisseck that he had discovered many years ago. The cleft had already been cleared by then and was so big that Gerhard could crawl into it. Due to lack of time, Gerhard could not investigate more closely and did not have an opportunity to return, until now. He and I decided it was time to take a closer look at this cleft. Alois Krendl from Lower Austria accompanied us. I had once promised him that I would take him to the Weisseck; this was just the right time because Alois had just two days off. We started our trip very early. After a leisurely climb of one and a half hours, we then faced very steep alpine terrain. While ascending the next 100 meters of altitude we couldn't afford any mistakes. Fortunately, Alois was also very sure-footed. Then the situation eased before we again confronted yet another 300 very steep and strenuous vertical meters to reach the area where Gerhard suspected the cleft. After a few breaks we finally reached the desired location at about 2000 meters height.



Alois and Gerhard in the discovery area

In this area, we were taken by complete surprise to find narrow horizontal fluorite veins between small rock faces. In small cavities we also discovered small crystals, which, however, were badly deformed by frost and the harsh weather. We started working the ground with our tools by removing debris and starting to chisel. I worked about a meter above Gerhard. After a short time I didn't like this place anymore and searched the area for new signs. I didn't get far, because already 3 meters below Gerhard I started working again after a fluorite vein caught my eye. The rubble was quickly removed. Now I pried on the floor near the fluorite vein.



Gerhard and I looking for fluorites

After a couple of blows, my chisel fell into a cavity. Caution was called for now. I moved my chisel 30 cm and immediately fell into a new cavity. Meanwhile Alois was with me and helped to remove rubble. We were able to discover more fluorite veins in several places as multiple probing resulted in the chisel breaking frequently into cavities. These were flat horizontal-oriented cavities that repeatedly opened and closed. In the meantime, we had already recovered a few fluorites that excited us with their intense square texture on the faces and edge lengths of up to 3 cm. Happily, we continued to work diligently.

Gerhard was also able to find some beautiful fluorites 3 meters above us. They weren't that big, but the quality was much better. After a while, Gerhard's location seemed empty of fluorites, so he came down and joined us working on our ever-growing site. Together we tried to get deeper by chiseling on one side in the rock to facilitate recovering the fluorites in the horizontal cavities. The work proved very strenuous. Especially after several hours of exhausting chiseling and removing debris, we regularly took turns resting so that we nevertheless could maintain a certain pace. Additional strength and motivation came readily as we continued to find every now and then breath-taking fluorites. We clearly had made the right decision on strategy for opening the clefts as we managed to expose large areas of sensitive fluorite and to recover larger pieces intact.



Gerhard engaged in strenuous chiseling work



Hard work yields rewards: Full of joy, Alois holds a large, freshly recovered fluorite specimen

We didn't notice how quickly time was passing as we worked late into the afternoon. When we finally checked the clock, we knew it was time to finish the work and divide-up our finds. After carefully packing, we began the steep descent with well-filled rucksacks. On the particularly steep sections, we proceeded extra cautiously. It was already dark and late by the time when we reached the car. Hungry and exhausted, we didn't care as we had just experienced a day was full of beautiful impressions and wonderful experiences.



Gerhard and I after a successful day full of wonderful experiences and memories.

On a return trip, we were still able to recover a few additional beautiful pieces before concluding that now the site was exhausted. Of course isn't there a saying about never declaring that a site is "finished"! In July 2020 I re-visited. After long intensive chiseling, I managed to open a small cavity and recover a particularly beautiful piece.

B L U E mountains

The fluorites from this site show two striking differences compared to others from Weisseck: These fluorites have an intense purple zoning only on the outermost layer of about 3 millimeters. This zoning is what gives these fluorites color. The rest of each crystal and especially in the center is entirely colorless. And that is completely unusual for Weisseck fluorites. Moreover, the fluorites from the Weisseck usually glow bright violet under UV light. These new fluorites show several colors under UV light: The outer violet layer shows the usual violet color but the main colorless area fluoresces colors from intense red-orange to pink and in between even areas that are lilac. This change of the colors is very attractive and seductively results in playing with the UV-lamp to see the alterations in colors. The partly cuboid crystal surfaces show an intensive square texture. The surfaces have a beautiful silk gloss. Some fluorites are strongly dissolved by the influence of water and have deeply etched cracks. Snow-white calcite has deposited on the fluorite in the shape of a hood or has grown in small crystals. In many pieces, tectonic fractures were completely filled with calcite while some detached fluorite pieces were completely embedded in calcite. The calcites show a light beige color in UV light. Small clear quartz crystals up to 2 millimeters could occasionally be found on the gray slate matrix.



The fluorite shows a beautiful play of colors with UV lighting, 12.8 x 9.5 x 8 cm

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Fluorite with calcite, above with UV lighting and below in natural daylight, 12.8 x 9.5 x 8 cm



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Fluorite with calcite, above with UV lighting and below in natural daylight, 5.7 x 5 x 4.5 cm



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Cuboid, transparent fluorite with intensive square texture and calcite on the side, 5.8 cm edge length (Find July 2020), 6.7 x 5 x 3.9 cm



Fluorite with intensive square texture and deepened growth in the center, 4.5 cm edge length, 5 x 4.2 x 2.9 cm

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Fluorite with exceptional crystal structure, 6.5 x 4.5 x 2.9 cm



A particularly nice specimen from this find. The piece looks like there is snow on the fluorites, 12.3 x 8 x 5.7 cm

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Three intergrown crystals with intensive square texture and good shine, 13 x 5.5 x 5 cm



The largest specimen from this find, with solved crystals by the influence of water, 23.8 x 12.5 x 11 cm