



Spectral Gems

December 4, 2012

What goes around...

What goes around...comes around. It's an important but little known fact that Roger worked with the government in Namibia during the late 90's to set up two gem cutting facilities. Where, you may wonder, is Namibia? It was formerly Southwest Africa bordering South Africa and Angola on the Atlantic.

The Namibian project involved purchasing land, working with architects, developing construction plans, purchasing machinery and initial training. The premise was to educate locals with a viable skill set. Alas, there was governmental turmoil and as far as Roger knew, the project was put on hold. Roger hadn't followed up on the project or been in Namibia since spring 2001.

Fast forward...November, 2012. Roger visited Namibia to develop sources for Tourmaline and Aquamarine rough and potentially renew contacts. The likelihood seemed slim as almost twelve years had passed and after all, 'this is Africa'. While there he had an opportunity to visit the Neu Schwaben mining site where Tourmaline was first found on the property in 1947.



The Neu Schwaben Tourmaline mining site used to be farmland and now is a series of dug out holes like craters on the moon. This alluvial mining began in the late 90s.



The Namibian gem cutting facilities did in fact get up and running, however, one of the facilities has since closed. Roger visited the facility that was still open. The faceting machines were barely running as repair parts aren't readily available. The eighteen students haven't had any real gemological instruction available to them and faceting instruction was basic. As soon as the managers realized who Roger was and that he had been in on the initial development of the cutting facility they put him on the spot and asked him to run a mini workshop. There he was in Namibia demonstrating basic polishing technique.

As the visit ensued Roger was struck with a way to continue contributing in Namibia. In fall 2013 he'll be spearheading a group of gem cutters to teach basic faceting and then a group of gemologists to teach basic gem identification. If this interests you, contact Roger. What an opportunity to contribute to others!



Roger just finished this pair of Tourmaline pear shapes 2.76 tcw.

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Regards,

Roger and Ginger Dery
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