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**The ever-growing, description-defying Tucson "show" — the world's foremost convergence of gem, mineral, fossil, jewelry and bead expos — explodes into existence each winter in the (usually) sunny Southwest.**

**Charged. Energetic. Eye candy on steroids.**

The most important gem trade event on the planet. Old home week for rock geeks (a term I assure you I use affectionately). A bead bonanza. The one place on earth where you can find suppliers for calibrated citrines and one-of-a-kind carvings in kyanite, cast silver trinkets and fabricated gold masterpieces, mass-produced gemstone beads and handmade glass beads, oceans of pearls, sharks' teeth and *Triceratops* skulls, single quartz crystals, decorator crystal clusters, and poldervaartite groups. Two-plus weeks of the good, the bad, the ugly, the cheap, the expensive, the weird, and the astonishingly beautiful, day in and day out, meals included, invading your dreams. It's rocks 24/7 and then some.

Ah, Tucson. I love it all: the thrill of discovery, the pleasure of reconnecting with old friends, getting away from the cold and snow, the overflowing enthusiasm, even the giddy sense of overload.

In over 20 years, I've never failed to be amazed and enriched by it, but preparing someone who's never been there for the experience? That's a different story altogether.



# rocks 24/7

**By Merle White  
Editor-in-Chief**



Opposite page, far left: Christina Helmes' inspiration for this pendant was the rough material. She chose layered agate "for its shading, which gives room to create atmospheric engravings. The form of the pendants [was] inspired by the work of Rene Lalique, one of the greatest masters of Art Nouveau." Left top and bottom: Megan Butterfly and Megan Leaf, Glenn Lehrer's carvings of Imperial Mayan jadeite, Lehrer Designs, Inc.

Left: Pendant of 14K gold, carved chakodony, pearl, peridot, and diamond, by Patrick Murphy, of Murphy Design.

Below: Fabricated 18K yellow and white gold pendant by Erik Stewart with Starburst-cut citrine, 6.68 cts., by Mark Grenlund. Montana sapphire multi-color accents by Fine Gems International.

Bottom: An assortment of turquoise, variscite, chalcocideritz, taustite and "variqueis" Neckties™, by Richard and Helen-Constantine Shull, of Out of Our Minds. Photo Credit: Richard M. Shull.

