INTRODUCING NORTHWEST AFRICA 5000

Get A Piece Of "*The Rock*" - A Masterpiece From The Moon!

Northwest Africa 5000 is the largest meteorite from the ancient Lunar Highlands ever found. Weighing in at 25 lbs 6.6 ounces (11,528 grams), it is massive. Although the weight is very impressive, its presence is tremendous. When trying to portray Northwest Africa 5000, one may be at a loss for words -- it is simply too beautiful to properly describe. It is the most handsome meteorite from the moon I have ever seen -- the contrast is incredible. The matrix looks like a black and white intaglio print of the universe rendered by a spirited yet masterful artist. This stone contains breccias within breccias, and the apparently preferential orientation of clasts lends a unique 3-D appearance to flat surfaces. Generous amounts of shiny metal are present in almost every piece, adding yet another impressive element to nature's artwork. Northwest Africa 5000 is by far the most spectacular meteorite from the Moon, and is destined to become legendary, establishing new benchmarks for excellence!

This celestial masterpiece lay undisturbed for millennia in the world's largest and hottest desert, the Sahara, until it was liberated by some inexperienced although very fortunate hunters of treasure in July of 2007. A small sample was provided, and a lunar origin was soon established in the Electron Microprobe Laboratory at the University of Washington. I informed the finders that it was a rare lunar meteorite and made a symbolic offer. In the very next sentence, the statement was made that it was worth far beyond the offer or what I was prepared to pay them for it. They asked for my help since they were impressed with me for being forthcoming about its rarity and great value instead of trying to take advantage of their lack of knowledge. Knowing that a first-class team could be assembled, I told them that a stone like this deserved the very best in the way of study and preparation and accepted their request for help. To my surprise, they prayed about it and then entrusted me with the stone by shipping it, thus demonstrating an extreme level of faith. We later agreed that equity in the piece could be purchased over time and that the initial main mass holder would bear the entire laboratory, consulting, artistic, preparation and promotional costs up front -- an extremely expensive undertaking thus far.

A team of world renowned scientists, photographers, artists and consultants was assembled and sworn to secrecy for security purposes. The meteorite was given the informal name "The Rock" because its immense posture commanded more than just the next number in a sequence. There was no mistaking what rock was being referred to in the laboratory when using this moniker. Scientists were permitted to select their own type specimen, and a repository amount of 40 grams was committed in advance of the official name Northwest Africa 5000 being assigned. Washington University in St. Louis and Carnegie Institution in Washington D.C. soon provided additional confirmation of its lunar provenance by way of bulk elemental analysis and oxygen isotope testing. Several more laboratories are now onboard determining crystallization age, time spent in space, terrestrial residence age and detailed composition of the metal, among other things.

Preparation posed its own set of challenges. Only after studying a very accurate casting for weeks and crunching the numbers was the team able to put together a cutting plan. The decision was made to withhold an end-cut large enough to hopefully satisfy the collector market, yield the world's largest complete lunar slice, and maintain an impressive main mass for display purposes. This would require a flawless execution since the tolerances were within a few millimeters of reaching our preset limits. After careful consideration, both water-cooled wire and nitrogen-cooled band saws were ruled out in favor of a diamond lapidary saw to perform the main cuts, even though cutting losses would be great. The more rigid, precision lapidary saw performed the main cut flawlessly, leaving no tell-tale cutting marks on the main mass. It also minimized the time the stone spent in the mineral/chemical-free water coolant and provided needed security. A wire saw, for instance, would take several days to make the necessary main cuts, requiring armed security around the clock and could leave unsightly cutting marks, whereas the radial saw could perform the task in a fraction of the time. The less time spent in the pure coolant the better, since this meteorite is unusually metal-rich for a Lunaite, and we were unsure what other minerals were present and how they would be affected.

It is understandable how nervous a diamond cutter must feel when confronted with the task of cutting the big one. Even though I have prepared well over 25,000 meteorite slices, the entire team lost some sleep over this one, having never cut something this valuable before. Much like a brilliant-cut diamond with cutting losses sometimes approaching 60%, a decision was made to diamond-lap every cut surface (including the sides) on all of the specimens. It is uncommon for dealers to offer planetary material this way, as most will not take polishing losses, but this gorgeous material merited the very best. We think you will agree that the end product is the best in the known universe.

Some may ask "Why all of the fuss, aren't we just talking about a rock?" My answer is simple, "A diamond is also just a rock but no where near as rare, complex or scientifically important as a rock from our nearest celestial neighbor, the Moon." If this rock were brought back from the Moon by astronauts, its proportionate cost would be enormous, much more than that of flawless diamonds. On the other hand, natural processes brought this rock from the Moon here to Earth. An asteroid strike most likely caused the ejection of this meteorite into an Earth-crossing orbit, which is a much less expensive yet time consuming process.

Every slice of Northwest Africa 5000 was examined and evaluated by a former NASA scientist who studied Apollo returned lunar samples. A side benefit of having scientists selectively pick out samples for the type specimen repository is that every piece was examined in the process and unique notes were provided for each one. All specimens come with a signed Certificate of Authenticity, an independent evaluation describing the particular piece (and any unusual or noteworthy features unique to the specimen), a portfolio loaded with fascinating scientific notes and a color identification card identifying it as coming from the world famous Hupé Planetary Collection.

Get a piece of superlative quality material from the Moon: **Northwest Africa 5000, "*The Rock*"**