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TOUR CODE

**FIP1**

### BRAZIL FOR GEM & MINERAL LOVERS

#### Special FIPP 2009 August Departure

This tour is designed around the FIPP show in Teofilo Otoni taking place in 2008 on August 27th. We do not yet have the dates for the show in 2009 but it will be approximately the same. The date for next year's show should be available by the end of August 2008.

Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world and the largest in South America, comprising nearly half of that continent's area. Perhaps it should not be surprising that Brazil has yielded considerable mineralogical wealth. What never fails to amaze, however, are the beauty and significance of many of the wonderful minerals and gems that it continues to produce. **To view that production, in all its detail and glory, you could not find a better time than during the industry's annual exhibition - Feira Internacional de Pedras Preciosas, known internationally as the FIPP, featured in our tour.**

The state name Minas Gerais means "General Mines" in Portuguese, and with good reason. By the mid-18th century, the area around Diamantina was the largest producer of diamonds in the world and that around Ouro Preto was Brazil's largest producer of gold. The wonderful baroque architecture of both of these cities dates to this period.

Though the first pegmatite gem discoveries date even earlier, the majority of these deposits were first exploited for strategic minerals such as muscovite, quartz and beryl during WWI and especially WWII. Gemstones and gem mineral specimens remained largely by-products of this mining for many years. In recent years, the search for gems has reached into the extensive metamorphic terrain of Minas Gerais, netting rich deposits of emerald, alexandrite and more. Today, Minas Gerais stands out as one of the world's foremost producers of fine gems and minerals.

Throughout the gem centers of Belo Horizonte, Ouro Preto, Governador Valadares, Teofilo Otoni and Aracuai, and in the backcountry, one senses a continuing excitement as the search for gem treasures goes on. The northeastern portion of the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, contains the world's greatest concentration of complex granitic pegmatites, which are especially noted for the production of gem beryl, chrysoberyl, topaz, tourmaline, garnet, kunzite and brazilianite. Because of the geologic environment of these deposits, this region of Brazil is the greatest laboratory workshop in the world for the study of pegmatite geology, crystallography and gemology.

### Day 1 Arrival in Brazil - Belo Horizonte

Today we arrive in Sao Paulo and connect to a flight to Belo Horizonte. Transfer to our hotel in Belo Horizonte.

Overnight in Belo Horizonte. Dinner if required.

### Day 2 Belo Horizonte - Teofilo Otoni

This morning we leave Belo Horizonte and travel by road to Teofilo Otoni. We stop in Governador Valadares for lunch (your own account) and continue on to Teofilo, arriving in the late afternoon.

From August 26 to 30, 2008 will be held the 18th International Gem Fair in Teofilo Otoni (Minas Gerais, Brazil) known internationally as FIPP (Feira Internacional de Pedras Preciosas). The open fair (mainly of rough minerals for collections, carvings, and beads, but also cut gems and some rough minerals for cutting) will take place near the central plaza of the town, which is famous for the many sloths that live in the trees and that come to the ground from time to time. The gem fair, which will take place in the outskirts of town, is organized as a closed environment with tight security and focuses on cut gems, unusual mineral specimens, good quality rough for cutting, and jewelry. Usually a Gemological Lab is available for free identification of cut gems to all that require the service.

Overnight in Teofilo Otoni. Breakfast and dinner.

### Day 3 Teofilo Otoni: Gem and Mineral Show

A full day to explore the town. We will visit some of the local dealers and spend a lot of time at the show. Past travellers have found well-priced blue apatite crystals, crystalline rhodonite, emeralds, aquamarine, alexandrite and several others. There are also some very interesting quartz crystals if you can afford the weight. Some have also found good deals on tourmalines, emeralds, and even alexandrite and chrysoberyl. Unbelievable artisans, such as Diane Dille, who knits silver chain, weaving in gems like aquamarine, carnelian and amethyst, or making rings that hug bold gemstones like turtleneck sweaters, will be visited.



Tonight a special treat. Dinner will be with Guillermo Bamberger, past president of Brazil's Gems Exporters Association (GEA) who will give a short talk after dinner.

Overnight in Teofilo Otoni. Breakfast

and dinner.

### Day 4 Teofilo Otoni - Governador Valadares

After checking out of our hotel we head off for a mine visit, the Faisca Chrysoberyl Mine (just outside town) and then it's off on the road to Governador Valadares

This town of some 230,000 souls, on the banks of the Doce River, is quickly taking over from Teofilo Otoni as the nationwide centre for the trading and cutting of colored

gemstones. On the way into town we will stop at the famous Golconda mine which is well used to geologist visitors.

Overnight in Governador Valadares. Breakfast and dinner.

### Day 5 Governador Valadares

After breakfast we will visit several gem and mineral dealers and then an appointment at the local University for a short talk. The afternoon sees us head off to the fabulous Navigator Mine where we will be met by the owner Rogerio Zigoloto. For many years, the facility was known as a producer of mica and feldspar. But in 2000, a large pocket was discovered containing a variety of minerals, including large crystals of quartz, albite, aquamarine, garnet, tourmaline and apatite. Today the mine has become additionally famous for its blue-green tourmaline.

*"Here, the mines are located in what only can be described as huge caves. Some of them have been blasted open so that trucks can drive in and out, carrying literally tons and tons of rough quartzes, smoky and crystal, amethyst and citrine, and huge slabs of rose quartz. We were here to see the blue green tourmaline, but we felt like children in a toy shop, amazed by the wide variety of rough pockets, protruding from the cave's walls. It was amazing." Avi Meiorim, Past President, ICA.*

Overnight in Governador Valadares. Breakfast and dinner.

### Day 6 Valadares - Ouro Preto

After breakfast we leave for Ouro Preto, a relatively small town that was once the Portugese base during a war between the Portugese and the Paulista bandeirantes. Later the town became the capital of the gold-producing area of Minas, and today it is rich with 18th century churches.



Ouro Preto's name means "Black Gold," a reference to the black colouring of the gold mined in the area caused by the iron oxide in the soil. Today we will explore the town with its charming old buildings and cobblestone streets. Ouro Preto is known for precious topaz. In fact, most of the precious topaz mined in Brazil comes from an area one hundred kilometers around Ouro Preto.

Overnight in Ouro Preto. Breakfast and dinner

### Day 7 Ouro Preto

A full day to enjoy Ouro Preto and its surroundings. There is so much iron surrounding Ouro Preto that in the early morning one can smell it in the air! This morning we visit the Mineral Museum

and some of the colonial treasures of the town, like the opera house, the oldest in South America.

This afternoon, a visit to "Mineracao Topazio Imperial"--the Imperial Topaz Mine

Overnight in Ouro Preto. Breakfast and dinner

**Day 8 Ouro Preto - Belo Horizonte - Rio de Janeiro**

Off on the road this morning back to Belo Horizonte to complete our circle tour of Minas Gerais. Afternoon flight to Rio de Janeiro, the Cidade Marvilhosa (marvelous city). We will be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel on Ipanema beach.



Seven million Cariocas, as the inhabitants are called, are jammed into one of the world's most beautiful city settings - between ocean and escarpment. This makes Rio one of the most densely populated places on earth. Cariocas pursue pleasures like no other people: beaches and the body beautiful, samba and football; cerveja (beer); and cachaca (sugarcane rum). In Rio everything ends with samba--football games, weddings, work, political demonstrations and, of course, a day at the beach. There's a lust for life, and a love of romance, music, dance and a talk that distinguishes the Cariocas from everyone else

After check-in we depart the hotel for a short ride past Rio's famous beaches, to the Tijuca Forest and the station where we

will board a modern cogwheel train for the twenty-minute ascend up Corcovado Mountain. Here 220 steps take us to the base of the famous forty-ton statue of Christ the Redeemer. From this vantage point we will have an outstanding view of Rio, its beaches, Guanabara Bay, and, out on the horizon, Sugar Loaf.

This evening we enjoy a Brazilian barbeque dinner with our special guest Julius Sauer, of Sauer Amsterdam, for an exclusive tour of his private collection.

Overnight in Rio. Breakfast and dinner

**Day 9 Rio de Janeiro: Petropolis**

After breakfast we drive to the town of Petropolis, about 60 km from Rio and 800m above sea level, where we will visit the summer palace of the Emperor Dom Pedro II, now a museum. The most visited room in the museum is the one that houses Pedro's crown--a remarkable work of craftsmanship that sparkles with 629 diamonds and 77 pearls.

Ironically, for a country that supplies ninety per cent of the coloured gemstones in the world, the crown does not have a single colored gemstone on it. The interior of the palace has been faithfully preserved as its last occupants left it.

We will also visit the Crystal Palace, erected by the royal family for musical concerts and exhibitions. The entire glass and metal structure was imported from France in pieces and assembled in Brazil.

We return to Rio. This afternoon free time to explore and shop in fashionable Ipanema. Later it is on to Plataforma Uno for a show, a two-hour extravaganza of carnival costumes, Samba music, and dancing.

Overnight in Rio. Breakfast and dinner.

**Day 10 Depart**

Departure from Rio.

Breakfast and transfer to airport for trip home or onwards to Part II, for those heading off to the Amethyst Fields

TOUR CODE

# FIP2

## BRAZIL FOR GEM & MINERAL LOVERS

Special FIPP 2008 August Departure – Extension to the Amethyst Fields

### Day 10 Rio - Porto Alegre - Bento Goncalves

After breakfast we fly to Porto Alegre (via Sao Paulo).



The capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the southernmost state of Brazil, Porto Alegre is a city of one and a half million people and a region of contrasts. In the south where Rio Grande do Sul borders Argentina and Uruguay it is flat pampas grassland. Here there are vast cattle ranches; sources for the succulent beef that has made the gaucho barbecue-the churrasco--a synonym for mouth-watering steaks and sausages throughout Brazil. In the north where Germans and Italian immigrants settled, there are beautiful gardens and Bavarian architecture dotting the countryside. This is where the best Brazilian wine is produced.

We will be met at the airport on arrival in Porto Alegre and driven to the town of Bento Goncalves. On the way we stop at a winery to taste some of the local wines..

Overnight in Bento Goncalves. Breakfast and dinner.

### Day 11 Bento Goncalves – Soledade

After breakfast a short drive takes us to Soledade, located in the heart of Brazil's amethyst and agate country. The city is nicknamed *the Cidade das Pedras Preciosas* meaning the *City of Precious Stones* or *Rare Gems*. More than 180 million years ago, this region, with adjoining areas of Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentina, experienced extensive volcanic activities that produced the largest known discharge of lava on the surface of the earth, covering an area of approximately 1.2 million square kilometers. These lava flows, now hardened into black, fine-grained basalt (in some places as thick as a thousand meters) are the source of the seemingly unlimited supply of geodes that we will admire and buy during the next few days.

Overnight in Soledade. Breakfast and dinner.

### Day 12 Soledade



Today is dedicated to visiting wholesalers and touring the huge warehouses where geodes of all shapes and sizes await. Rare minerals are always a pleasant surprise!

Overnight in Soledade. Breakfast and dinner.

### Day 13 Soledade - Porto Alegre - Sao Paulo – Depart

After breakfast depart for Porto Alegre's airport and a flight to Sao Paulo and the connecting flight homeward. Breakfast. VIAGEM BOA!!

