The collection of natural mineral crystals housed at the Houston Museum of Natural Science is the finest and best known in the world. Now the treasures of this singular collection are shown in resplendent photographs that will seduce both the connoisseur of beauty and the student of natural history.

The spectacular and rare specimens on display here, from a huge imperial topaz crystal weighing more than 2,000 carats to a crystallized gold cluster that is one of the most highly coveted objects in the mineral kingdom, are true masterpieces, the Rembrandts and Picassos of the natural world. Like fine art, minerals are prized for their aesthetic qualities—color, luster, sculptural composition—and for their provenance. Avidly pursued by naturalists throughout the centuries, precious metals and gem crystals have a fascinating history. Stories regarding the pursuit and discovery of these precious natural objects, including tales of good luck and hardship, are related in these pages. Essays that explore connoisseurship in the mineral kingdom and chronicle the history of this noble pursuit add to the appeal of this unique volume. AUTHOR BIO: Wendell E. Wilson is editor and publisher of The Mineralogical Record. Joel A. Bartsch is curator of gems and minerals at the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

My Personal Review:
Minerals and crystals are among the most beautiful objects on the planet. Their sculptural shapes and intense colors can be mesmerizing. Amazingly these specimens haven't been "enhanced" by cutting or polishing. They are as God made them. These magnificent photographs of the world's greatest collection capture their beauty as well as any book I've ever seen.