**Turquoise: Often Admired, Frequently Faked**

Lapidarist Eugene Donlan founded mineral shop TOPS - Turquoise & Rocks in 2012 in Pahrump, Nevada, after a successful 20 year run heading his previous TOPS location in California. In addition to being a distributor of turquoise, Eugene Donlan has owned claims on a number of turquoise mines in Nevada.  
  
The [turquoise](http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/commodity/gemstones/sp14-95/turquoise.html) market has long dealt with clever and not-so-clever treated stones and fakes. Although treated and fake stones have always been a concern for industry members, a flood of stabilized and dyed stone from China in the last decade along with too-good-to-be-true Internet deals has only exacerbated the problem.  
  
Stabilized and fake turquoise is only considered "fake" if the seller does not disclose its true nature. Certain minerals, like chrysocolla and Arizona malachite, can resemble turquoise, and are often sold in its place, intentionally or otherwise. Other minerals, such as howlite, may be dyed sky-blue or greenish and sold as turquoise in online marketplaces like Ebay. Synthetic or "stove top" turquoise is produced artificially, and may even resemble natural turquoise in chemical composition. Other fakes are made of dense plastic or other materials; in fact, fakes made of bone and ceramic have been sold by unscrupulous traders for thousands of years.  
  
A good policy when purchasing turquoise is to deal with only reputable sellers or directly with a mine. Responsible dealers are generally willing to "put it in writing" in order to protect their integrity and the buyer's investment.