



Museum of Nature and Science

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TWO “AUSSIE” GOLD SPECIMENS – DRAGON’S LAIR AND AUSROX NUGGET – COME TO THE PEROT MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

*Hailing from Australia’s most gold-rich areas,
the two heavy-weight “rock stars” are among the largest in existence*

DALLAS (Jan. 26, 2021) – With a combined weight of more than 110 pounds, two exquisite and rare gold pieces originally unearthed in Australia are now on display at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science. The largest piece – dubbed the Dragon’s Lair – tips the scales at 63 pounds making it one of the largest and most remarkable specimens to come out of the richest gold finds in Australia. This is the first time Dragon’s Lair has been on view at any museum. Its smaller lustrous companion – known as the Ausrox Nugget – weighs in at a whopping 51.29 pounds and is about the size of a basketball.

“For thousands of years humans have treasured gold for its beauty and abundant properties. I remember panning for gold as a child and being excited to take home a tiny vial of flakes, so to see the lustrous beauty and sheer size of the Dragon’s Lair and Ausrox nugget is truly captivating,” said Kimberly Vagner, director of the *Gems and Minerals Center of Excellence*. “What a thrill to be able to display these two extraordinary specimens together!”

Dragon’s Lair hails from Western Australia and was discovered in 2018 at the Royal Nickel Corporation’s Beta Hunt Mine in Kambalda, a goldfield which has produced more than 20 million troy ounces (roughly 1.3 million pounds) of gold since 1897. Although the mine was predominantly producing nickel at the time, the company knew of the potential to discover gold.

Initially a large boulder of quartz encasing gold, the enormous Dragon’s Lair emerged through the painstaking work of expert technicians at the Collector’s Edge in Colorado. The “rock doctors” began the cleaning process by envisioning how the gold lay within the large boulder. After X-rays and hours of visual scanning, an approach was designed to best bring out the piece’s aesthetics. Taking place over hundreds of hours, the process involved several cycles of incising, acid etching and iron removal.

Tedious weeks of quartz removal, wearing special magnifying glasses, revealed dozens of beautiful, sinuous gold leaves.

Following exposure of the leaves, some of the quartz was carefully sealed and the piece was immersed in hydrofluoric acid. This acid “eats” quartz and the unsealed areas were quickly dissolved away. After this acid treatment, more gold detail could be seen emerging from the boulder.

After acid etching, the piece again underwent stylus work to remove acid residue and to further bring out the aesthetics of the gold. The rock experts discovered small amounts of other minerals buried within the quartz like calcite, feldspar and pyrite. Some of these minerals turned brown during the etching process. The brown material, a form of iron, was removed with a special chemical treatment to re-whiten the specimen and brighten the gold.

Dragon’s Lair will be on exhibit next to the Ausrox Nugget in the Perot Museum’s *Lyda Hill Gems and Minerals Hall*. Additionally, trimmings and gold flakes removed from the Dragon’s Lair will be on display. Both pieces are on loan from the Pinnacle Collection.

The Ausrox Nugget was discovered in the Eastern Goldfields of Australia by three prospectors using a hand-held metal detector. This marks the third time the famed Ausrox has been on display at the Perot Museum. It debuted as part of the original collection in the *Lyda Hill Gems and Minerals Hall* when the Museum opened in December 2012. In 2015, the mineral headed to the Houston Museum of Natural Science, returning to the Perot Museum in 2017 before it went back to the Houston Museum of Natural Science in 2019.

HOURS. Operating at no more than 25% reduced capacity with strict safety protocols in place, the Museum is open Thursday-Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday.

TICKETS. Museum general admission is \$20 for adults (13-64), \$13 for youth (2-12) and \$18 for seniors (65+). General admission is free for members. Children under 2 are always free. Timed-entry tickets may be purchased online and in advance at perotmuseum.org.

The Perot Museum is located at 2201 N. Field Street in Dallas, Texas. For details and visitor information, go to perotmuseum.org.

NOTE: To obtain the news release, please go to perotmuseum.org/press.

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About the Perot Museum of Nature and Science. *The top cultural attraction in Dallas/Fort Worth and a Michelin Green Guide three-star destination, the Perot Museum of Nature and Science is a nonprofit educational organization located in the heart of Dallas, Texas. With a mission to inspire minds through nature and science, the Perot Museum delivers exciting, engaging and innovative visitor and outreach experiences through its education, exhibition, and research and collections programming for children, students, teachers, families and life-long learners. The 180,000-square-foot facility in Victory Park opened in December 2012 and is now recognized as the symbolic gateway to the Dallas Arts District. Future scientists, mathematicians and engineers will find inspiration and enlightenment through 11 permanent exhibit halls on five floors of public space; a children's museum; a state-of-the art traveling exhibition hall; and The Hogle Foundation Theater. Designed by 2005 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate Thom Mayne and his firm Morphosis Architects, the Victory Park museum has been lauded for its artistry and sustainability. To learn more, please visit perotmuseum.org*