



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Garret Romaine

503-647-2418 (office)

971-506-3059 (mobile)

[garret@ricenorthwestmuseum.org](mailto:garret@ricenorthwestmuseum.org)

### **Recent Rare Mexican Agate Finds Go On Exhibit At Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals**

HILLSBORO, OREGON (September 10, 2019) – The Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals is pleased to announce that a significant selection of recent agate finds from northern Mexico's famed Chihuahua agate beds will go on exhibit on Sept. 21, 2019.

The "showstopper" exhibit will feature "La Guadalupe," known as The Monarch Queen of Mexico. Shaped like an enormous butterfly, it was unearthed in January 2016 in the Laguna region from the claim of Don Armondo Mendoza. "La Guadalupe" has vibrant colors, interesting patterns, and is broken naturally by a fault line. The agate measures 23" x 13" and weighs more than 60 lbs.



Alberto Del Ray posing with “La Guadalupe,” the Monarch Queen of Mexico.

The collection going on exhibit will also include the famed “Heart of Chihuahua” a notable 20+-pound specimen roughly shaped like a heart. The Heart of Chihuahua has recently been on display at famed gem shows in Munich, German; Tucson, Arizona; Santa Ana, California; and Denver, Colorado. It is noted for its nodular appearance, with bright red and vivid orange hues, mixed with dark blue, yellow, tan and white streaks. The remainder of the agate collection going on display also includes Laguna agates from the Alianza, Santa Monica, Conejeros, San Martin, and other important claims. In addition, there will be agates from Coyamito, Moctezuma, Parcelas, and more. It is a striking representation of the material from northern Mexico.



The Heart of Guadalupe. (photograph by Jeff Scovil)

The loan is spearheaded by Alberto Ray, the head of the Sociedad Internacional de Gemas y Minerales Destrito Galeana Chihuahua A.C. (Galchi International Gems and Minerals Society). He is also the president of Del Rey Agates Gems & Minerals, Inc. Born and raised in Colony LeBaron, located in the municipality of Galeana Chihuahua, Ray has been a driving force to raise the profile of the world-famous collecting district. He has collected, traded, and sold specimens from the area since 2008. His non-profit, together with Del Rey Agates team, has access to more than 4,000 hectares of rich deposits of chalcedony, jasper, agate, thunder eggs, and other material, and he hand-picked 30 specimens for the display at the Rice NW museum.

The geology of the agate beds in northern Mexico resembles the classic Basin and Range structure of much of the western United States. Volcanic terrain, including altered rhyolites, yield impressive veins and masses of agate, chalcedony, and thunder eggs, similar to the famed Richardson's Ranch locale near Madras, Oregon. Some of the Mexican locales also feature chalcedony replacements of barite and aragonite crystals. Some nodules reach up to 70 pounds. The deposits were first collected for export in the early 1950s, but extensive commercial development with heavy equipment has been a more recent development.

"I wish more collectors could walk some of our deserts valleys and mountains and see for themselves the amazing specimens we are collecting," Ray said. "Collectors throughout the agate community know that the agates, jaspers, and thunder eggs from our deposit are among the best of their kind due to their exquisite beauty. Until you can visit and collect on your own, I invite you to check out some of the material we are loaning to the museum."

In addition to popular appearances at gem shows, Ray's agates have been featured prominently in high-end collector books and magazines around the world, including the book *Exquisite Agates* by Dietrich Mayer; *Agates*, by Pat McMahan; multiple issues of *Mineralien Welt* (Mineral World) in Germany; and other publications.

Long known in rock and mineral circles for its world-class collection, the Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals currently boasts a sizable collection of colorful banded agates from Mexico, collected and purchased by the late Richard and Helen Rice over 30 years ago. "These new specimens show that the locales still contain notable deposits," said Garret Romaine, the museum's executive director. "This exhibit is a testimony to both the uniqueness and beauty of agates from northern Mexico, and the energy and enthusiasm Alberto brings to his campaign to increase awareness about the area. We are pleased to host this exhibit and we invite visitors to make plans to see it."

## Press Availability

Alberto Ray will be available for press interview on Friday, September 20 during a special preview party and presentation at the museum, or by appointment.