

Melbourne 17 October 2016

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Gold Rush at Sotheby's Australia

Fine Asian, Australian & European Arts & Design
Auction in Sydney 25 October 2016



The highly important 1881 Adelaide Hunt Club Cup, 18ct gold, by Henry Steiner. Estimate \$160,000-220,000.

There is a gold rush at Sotheby's Australia with significant historic gold items consigned for auction on 25 October 2016 in Sydney. The change of design aesthetic and taste is observed as two important racing cups are offered; the 1881 Adelaide Hunt Club Cup (estimate \$160,000-220,000, lot 46, pictured) and the 1985 Foster's Melbourne Cup (estimate \$100,000-120,000, lot 29, pictured following). The raw mineral will also be offered for sale, with the 'David Reed' gold nugget from Western Australia estimated at \$40,000-50,000 (lot 37, pictured following).

The 1881 Adelaide Hunt Club Cup is the only known surviving 19th century South Australian gold trophy that remains in private ownership. Modelled to a neoclassical form, the 18 carat gold cup features an elongated scroll handle and an inverted spout, the collared neck consists of a band of acanthus leaves above a tapered body, and was made by Henry Steiner of Adelaide.

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On Saturday 1 October 1881, a large crowd attended the steeplechase meeting of the Adelaide Hunt Club at Morphettville, under bright favourable weather conditions (the previous 24 hours were unsettled). There were ten starters in the Hunt Club Cup, with *Roebuck* considered amongst the favourites. In a tightly contested race, it was only in the home run that *Roebuck* beat his opponent, winning by a half a dozen lengths to rousing cheers from the crowd.

Sotheby's Australia is honoured to be entrusted with the sale of the historic 1985 Foster's Melbourne Cup won by *What A Nuisance*. The 1985 Melbourne Cup was the first to be attended and presented by a member of the royal family. As part of their Victorian visit, the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Flemington, with Prince Charles later presenting the Melbourne Cup to Lloyd Williams, co-owner of *What A Nuisance*. The Cup has remained in the private collection of the late Dennis Gowing and his family, co-owner of *What A Nuisance*, since the great 1985 win, and was on long-term loan to the Australian Racing Museum and Hall of Fame between 2003 and 2016.

The Melbourne Cup was sponsored for the first time in 1985 and it was the first race in Australia to have a prize pool of \$1 million, making it the most valuable race in Australia. Leading into the race *What A Nuisance*, just recovered from injury was at odds of 15/1. On a wet November day, with crowds at 80,000, *What A Nuisance* appeared to be overtaken and out of the race at the final stages, before a final surge took him over the line to win by a nose.

Discovered in the mid-1970s near Kalgoorlie, Western Australia was the 'David Reed' gold nugget. Weighing 620 grams, it measures 11.5 cm in length. The nugget has remained in a private collection since it was acquired from Mr Reed, with the vendor now selling the nugget to assist with the St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide organ restoration.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Sotheby's Australia is honoured to be entrusted with a gold trifecta with the 'David Reed' nugget and two highly important 19th and 20th century racing cups of unique distinction and particular historical significance.'



The 1985 Foster's Melbourne Cup, 18ct gold, Fortunato Rocca for Hardy Brothers, won by *What A Nuisance*. Estimate \$100,000-120,000



The 'David Reed' gold nugget, discovered near Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, circa 1975. Estimate \$40,000-50,000



Prince Charles presenting the 1985 Foster's Melbourne Cup to Lloyd Williams. Image courtesy of Victorian Racing Club, Melbourne

AT A GLANCE

The highly important 1881 Adelaide Hunt Club Cup, 18ct gold, by Henry Steiner, Adelaide
Won by the Robertson Brothers with *Roebuck*, ridden by Mr. T. Baker
585 gms, 36.3 cm high
Estimate \$160,000-220,000

The 1985 Foster's Melbourne Cup, 18ct gold, Fortunato Rocca for Hardy Brothers,
Won by Lloyd Williams and Dennis Gowing with *What A Nuisance*, ridden by Pat Hyland
894 gms, 29 cm high, 36.2 cm (with base)
Estimate \$100,000-120,000

The 'David Reed' gold nugget, discovered near Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, circa 1975
620 gms, 11.5cm long
Estimate \$40,000-50,000

Fine Asian, Australian & European Arts & Design
Auction in Sydney, The Hughenden, 14 Queen Street, Woollahra, 25 October 2016, 6 pm
Total auction estimate \$1,270,700-1,750,000 | 261 lots

Exhibition in Sydney, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra, 20-25 October, 10 am to 5 pm

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