

TESTING the

Gold Cube

A Field Test by Jim Klein

Just about the time this old sourdough thinks he has seen everything there is for getting the most gold out of the material he's dug, panned, sluiced, dredged or dry-washed, along comes something that he has never seen before. You would think there's nothing new under the sun for finding that bright yellow stuff that you can test and write about.

Then, along comes something that is really new. Not only is it something new, get this, it works! With the price of gold what it is today and going even higher the experts say, you'll want to get every piece of even the smallest bits of gold in your concentrates.

I realize now how naive I was when the gold bug bit me or I caught gold fever or whatever you want to call it. You've all had that itch, I'm sure and know the only cure for it. At first, I didn't care much about the fine flour gold. I was after the big one — *El Dorado*. Only large nuggets were going into my poke.

But, it didn't take long for me to figure out that wasn't the way it was in real life. Now, I know that even the smallest nugget is to be treasured and that over 90 percent of the gold we find is going to be fine flour gold. I now know that I have let a lot of fine gold slip through my fingers over the last 40 or more years. Not anymore! I'm going to get every single piece of gold that I can from my concentrates. You know, from

little acorns mighty oaks grow.

When I heard that people were getting 98 to 99 percent recovery of the gold from their concentrates with the Gold Cube, it was a product that I wanted to test. The Gold Cube is the invention of Mike Pung and Red Wilcox, two prospectors from Oklahoma and Colorado, respectively.

Mike caught the fever when he went on a trip to Alaska. The campground where he stayed had a pile of gravels and dirt they brought in and a small stream to pan the material. He thought he'd give it a try. Well, he found some color and he was hooked.

Mike met Red when he was looking for equipment on the Internet and came across Red's website. Red has quite a few devices he has personally developed. To make a long story short, they became friends and prospecting partners and began kicking around ideas on how to get the most gold for their efforts. They claim that the Gold Cube was idea No. 13 and they are up to No. 23 now.

I'm kind of interested in what they come up with next. The Gold Cube is certainly different. Mike says he had spent some time working the beach sands on Lake Superior in Michigan. Most all of the gold there is very fine flour gold and he was afraid he was losing a lot of it.



Boy, I gotta give Mike or anyone else a lot of credit for working placès like that. I've worked beach placers, but it has always been in known rich gold-bearing areas in California, Oregon or Alaska. Most states have some occurrence of gold, mostly placer, but few hard rock mines.

I think most of the placer gold was carried down from the north by glaciers during the ice age and was left behind when the glaciers melted. You can see why a device to recover the flour gold would be so important to them and to all of us miners and prospectors because that's what we're going to find most of the time.

You probably have buckets of concentrates sitting around the garage or shed where you keep your prospecting equipment stored. If you're like most of us, you have gotten all the pickers out of them and have left the fine stuff and black sands to clean up later. It seems like later never gets here and the material just seems to pile up over time. I know how long it takes to separate all that fine flour gold from the black sands and it takes a lot of time.

Gold wheels work good and are a lot faster than panning, but you can only feed most of them a spoonful at a time. This is also slow, but still faster than panning it out. Now, don't get me wrong, there is still nothing like seeing gold peek through those black sands in your pan as you wash your dirt. By the way, I still prefer the black plastic pan over the other color pans because it just seems like gold looks even more beautiful in them. Don't throw away your pan though as you will need it in your clean up.

First off, you need to know that the Gold Cube is not a prospecting device in itself, but a real gold

getter and as good a piece of equipment for your outfit as your sluice box, drywasher, dredge, metal detector or whatever you use to recover that "lovely yellow stuff" as they call it in the film, *Paint Your Wagon*. I love that movie for the music as well as its philosophy of complete irresponsibility of the miners.

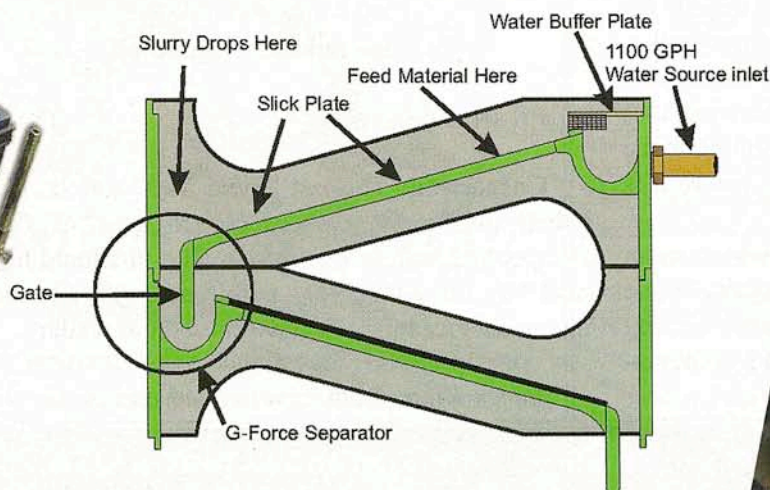
The Gold Cube separates the fine flour gold from the black sand or other waste rock quicker and better than anything I have ever used.

After talking to Mike several times, I went to one of their websites to watch a demo of how they filled 16 buckets of concentrates that had been classified through a No. 8 classifier. In two hours, they had 1,048 pounds of material to run in the Gold Cube. They were able to clean it down to about a cup of concentrates in just over an hour and recovered virtually all the fine gold.

In a separate test, they salted 100 pounds of black sand with 100 specks of fine flour gold and recovered 98 of them. Then, they reran the 100 pounds of salted material and achieved 98 percent retention a second time.

There are really only four parts to the Gold Cube: Slick Plate, G-Force Separator, Vortex Matting and Stand.

✳ **The Slick Plate** is the first stage of your cleanup. It has nothing on it and is designed to process 8 mesh and smaller material. It is where the first separation of the lighter sands and gravels from the heavier black sands and gold occurs. It's like a sluice box with no riffles or miner's moss. There is a buffer plate which spreads out your water intake to make the water flow more evenly over your concentrates, helping you separate the material. We found that it is very important to make sure the Gold Cube is level. If it





GOLD CUBE SPECS

Slick Plate and Tray Size — 5 inch X 12 inch X 7 inch

Three Tray Size: 5 inch X 12 inch X 15 inch

Weight (three tray combo): 20 pounds (approximately)

Construction: 3/8-inch low density polyethylene

Color: Black

isn't level, the material will flow to the lowest side and you might lose some fine gold as it will not have a chance to drop down and get caught up in the matting lining in the second stage. This principal is important if you are using a Gold Cube or a sluice or drywasher to mine your gold-bearing material.

✱ **The G-Force Separator** is the second stage where the first of the gold is caught. This is the really hard part to explain. Let me tell you the way they explain this part of the operation of the Gold Cube. The material coming off the slick plate drops into a gated trough and is forced underwater. Then the centrifugal force causes the gold to go to the outer edge of the rounded trough. The concentrates then go out the opposite side of the gate. There the material is forced to go up the side of the trough where it is separated by weight — the lighter stuff to the top and the heavier gold to the bottom. The lighter material is first out and washes quickly over the matting and out, while the majority of the gold following it is slowed down and drops into the matting lining in the second stage of the Gold Cube process where it is trapped.

✱ Their third stage is the matting or miner's moss as we call it and vortex as they call it. Again, let me use their description of what it does: Vortex matting works because water flow interacts with a combination of very small pillar walls and cavities — over 7,000 of them per mat. Passing gold will be trapped and forced to the bottom of the vortexes and held in

place by the lighter material. That's how they explain the matting. The matting is incline conveyor belt material. I don't remember anyone using the material before and why not call it vortex? That works as well as any name. It does catch the fine gold very well.

The feature we liked best, outside of the great fine gold recovery, is the zig-zag design. It's great for working so much material and taking up so little space while in use or in storage. I recommend that you contact them for more details as it's difficult to tell you everything about what the Gold Cube can do.

For more information on the Gold Cube, contact:

www.GoldRushTradingPost.com

James Klein is an experienced prospector and author of several books on prospecting and treasure hunting.