

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Point Vicente Interpretive Center to Unveil Exhibits on Historic Fresnel Lens, Shore Whalers**

**Rancho Palos Verdes, CA (April 8, 2019)** — After nearly 93 years beaming over the Palos Verdes Peninsula coast, the historic Fresnel lens of the Point Vicente Lighthouse has made its new home on display at the Point Vicente Interpretive Center.

The lens is one of two new permanent exhibits at the museum, including an exploration of the whaling industry, both locally at Portuguese Bend in the late 19th century, and around the world.

The new exhibits will open to the public during the City of Rancho Palos Verdes' annual Whale of a Day Celebration April 13. They were made possible with funding from the California Natural Resource Agency's California Cultural and Historical Endowment Museum Grant Program.



"We are thrilled to open our first new exhibits in 13 years and to permanently house a treasure of such historical significance," said Emily Rodin, Recreation Supervisor with the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. "These exhibits chronicle important chapters in local history and will inform generations."

**Point Vicente Lighthouse Fresnel Lens**

Made in Paris, France in 1914, the third-order Fresnel lens was first lit in the tower of the Point Vicente Lighthouse on April 14, 1926, providing a much-needed navigational aid to mariners. Its hand-ground glass prisms and lenses were designed to retract and reflect light so that the flash could be seen more than 20 miles away. During WWII, the light was dimmed in an effort to prevent potentially aiding the enemy.

In February 2019, the United States Coast Guard decommissioned the lens and replaced it with LED technology. The lens was removed from the lighthouse and generously loaned to the museum for display.

Curated by renowned lighthouse expert Jim Woodward, the exhibit offers an up-close look at the stunning artistry of the five-foot-tall, clam shell shaped lens. Visitors can also watch a time-lapse video of the decommissioning and the installation of the lens in the museum.

### **The Shore Whalers**

Portuguese whalers operated a whaling station on the Peninsula from 1869 to 1885 at a site that would later be home to the Portuguese Bend Beach Club.

The exhibit features a replica whaling shack and a variety of whaling tools from the era, including a toggle head harpoon, flensing knives, tongs and a trypot, which was used to boil blubber for oil extraction.



A collection of decades' worth of artifacts made with baleen, whale oil and other whale parts shows the wide range of everyday items whale products were used for before petroleum became dominant, from jewelry and corsets, to candles and oil lamps.

The exhibit was curated by Diana McIntyre, the museum's former longtime curator and docent coordinator.

For high-resolution images of the new exhibits, please visit [bit.ly/2Ua4Fja](https://bit.ly/2Ua4Fja)

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### **About the Point Vicente Interpretive Center**

The Point Vicente Interpretive Center opened in 1984 with a mission to present and interpret the unique features and history of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. The almost 10,000-square-foot expanded museum, re-opened in July 2006, features exhibits on the natural and cultural history of the Peninsula, with a special emphasis on the Pacific gray whale. Tours are led by members of the docent volunteer organization Los Serenos de Point Vicente. This premier whale watch site provides spectacular opportunities to view the annual migration of the Pacific gray whale from December through mid-May.

The Point Vicente Interpretive Center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is located at 31501 Palos Verdes Drive West in Rancho Palos Verdes.