

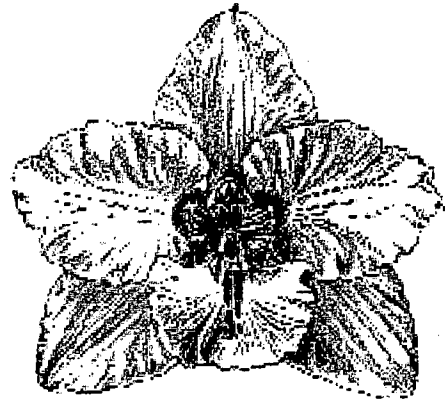
Odontoglossum Alliance Newsletter

Volume 4

November 2007

In This Issue

Viva Colombia	Page 1
Alliance Meeting	Page 3
Presidents Message	Page 4
2007 Dugger Award	Page 5
Viva Colombia Pictures	Page 6
Dugger Award Flower	Page 8
HBK Illustrations	Page 9



Viva Colombia, Viva Pereira - Part II

by Robert Hamilton

(In my first installment, some months ago, I highlighted the 2006 Pereira Show, the city and its environs. Part II, my conclusion, covers our group's subsequent trip to Medellin, following the show and our visit to several Colombia's orchid nurseries.)

The flight from Pereira to Medellin takes only about an hour. Medellin, pronounced (med-ay-een) is in the Department (state) of Antioquia, the second largest and most progressive city in Colombia. Medellin is certainly one of the most beautiful cities in South America. The city is served by two airports, one in the countryside, above the city and the other one virtually downtown.

From the downtown airport to our hotel, The Intercontinental, took about 15 minutes through traffic. The Intercontinental is a first-class hotel with terrific accommodations. It was in the process of being remodeled when we arrived. The scope of the remodel looked all encompassing with the Intercontinental destined to become even classier. Rooms were spacious and well furnished. To my taste was the stunning Olympic-sized pool and cabana. I headed for a swim, immediately followed by a drink and a lounge chair.

The day after arrival in Medellin was scheduled for a visit to Colomborquideas, one of the World's great orchid nurseries and surely the premier nursery in Colombia. Colomborquideas is operated by the Posada family. Juan Felipe Posada is well known in the odont world and a founding Director of the Odontoglossum Alliance. Ligia Posada, Juan Felipe's mother is iconic to the Pleurothallids. This nursery is in the temperate highlands above Medellin and the end of a long private road.

As in Pereira, a tour bus was engaged to transport us from the city to Colomborquideas. This requires a steep

ascend up the roadways leaving the city. The trip takes about 30 minutes. On arrival at Colomborquideas, we were greeted by Juan Felipe, Maria Victoria, (Juan Felipe's wife) and Ligia Posada. They had coffee and pastries waiting. After an introduction to the history of the nursery and an explanation of its layout our group was invited to tour the grounds. The group quickly scattered to view the orchids. The plants are arranged by orchid family. The nursery is quite large and it would take more than a day to really take in Colomborquideas. The growing is superb; the nursery neat and orderly. From my past experience, plants ordered from Colomborquideas are invariably healthy.

Those amongst us whose passion was odonts quickly found the location of the appropriate benches. There was a stunning display of flowering hybrids bred by Juan Felipe, many from stud plants acquired decades earlier from Charlesworth in England. These plants on display were first-class plants. One area of the nursery that is unique is the cyrtochilum/ottoglossum house. These gangly plants have been given a special house and potted at floor level to allow the room to grow. Amongst these were several stunning species were in bloom.

Midday, an excellent homemade lunch was served and an extraordinary cake and coffee topped off the meal.

The afternoon was spent, like the morning viewing wonderful plants. As mentioned, every orchid grower has to visit Colomborquideas at least once in a lifetime.

We returned to our hotel late in the day. It was decided to have dinner at a rustic, open-air restaurant across the road from the Intercontinental. Crossing the road was bit dicey as the hotel construction had blocked the normal route and we had to take our chances and dash across this busy thoroughfare. I would not characterize Colombian drivers as calm or slow! That dinner was extraordinary. The food, service and wine were all great and the cost was very reasonable by US standards. The company that evening made the meal memorable with everyone in good spirits.

The next day was scheduled for tourism. We found an excellent, attractive and most charming tour guide, Adriana. Adriana gave us a tour of Medellin including a stop at an overlook of the city, by the airport. Medellin is nestled in a valley, something of a bowl with mountains on opposing sides. The city is modern with a lot of high-rises which are mostly residences. It has a modern municipal rail system and a tram at one end of the valley to serve local residents living on the slopes. From the overlook we were shown the venue where the 2008, Birds, Butterflies and Orchids will be held. From the overlook we headed to the municipal chambers, a stunning Deco building purchased by Colombian artist Fernando Botero and converted into a public museum for his works. Botero's success has made him one of Colombia's most beloved sons and benefactors. His work is figurative, much of it social criticism and humorous. This museum is well worth the visit. We also visited a shopping area set up for tourism. The objects were mostly kitsch. I found this visit was mostly a waste of time unless you are looking for a keychain or ashtray.

Our third day took us out the end of the valley to the two nurseries of Francisco Villegas, "Orquifooajes" and the private finca of Gustavo Aquirre.

Villegas grows at two nurseries, a medium elevation nursery in Medellin and a high elevation nursery in the mountains outside and above the Medellin. The warmer nursery was a very interesting stop. We had the opportunity to see many unusual plants in bloom and all well grown. For warm to intermediate species growers this nursery is a must. For us cool growers the trip up into the mountains to the cool nursery was icing on the cake. The cool nursery is on a steep incline with several terraces of steel hoop houses. At this nursery are the milto-

niopsis species, the draculas and masdevallias and the odonts. Francisco Villegas' collection is first class and he had some very fine modern hybrids. His growing is superb. We were lucky to catch a large variety of *Miltoniopsis phalaenopsis* in bloom. I was impressed by the quality of his draculas.

Our last nursery visit was to the private finca of Gustavo Aquirre. The site of this finca is a steep slope. The property and the view of the mountains was as good as it gets. Gustavo and his wife were very hospitable and he showed us his collection. Although considerable smaller than the large nurseries of Colomborquideas and Orquifooajes, the collection is most interesting with many extraordinary clones in a wide variety of cool growing genera. Getting to the finca was something of a challenge. The roadway was too steep for a fully loaded tour bus so many of us volunteered to get off the bus and hike up the drive. This was one steep roadway!

From Medellin we flew to Bogota for our return flight to the US. We only had enough time to spend a night before flying out the next morning. Colombia was a wonderful vacation. The Pereira Show was an excellent experience and the subsequent visit to Medellin, magic. I look forward to my next trip to Colombia for the Medellin 2008 Birds, Butterflies and Orchids Exposition. Visiting the Colombian orchid nurseries is a must! Next time I also want to spend time in Bogota.

Bob Hamilton 8/07

Update Odontoglossum Alliance Meeting Medellin, Colombia

We now have an agreement that the Pluerothallid Alliance will join us for a joint meeting in Colombia in August 2008. This will be similar to the meeting we held in San Francisco in February 2007. Joe Parker of the PA has been great in cooperating to jointly plan this meeting with our Colombian friends. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the Orchids, Birds and Flowers show 5-10 August 2008. The meeting will take place on Friday, 8 August with the function being held at the Intercontinental Hotel. Cocktails and dinner are planned with four (4) speakers during the function. We are still discussing the possibility of having an auction of Pluerothallid and *Odontoglossum* material. This is somewhat dependent on the ability to ship or bring material into and out of Colombia. We are still investigating this possibility. We may find that it is much easier to ship material out of Colombia than it is to bring material into Colombia. We will keep you posted on this situation. The latest information is that we will have an auction of fine pleurothallid and *odontoglossum* alliances material. Start putting away any contributions you wish to make to this auction. We will get out detailed instructions on how to get plant material into Colombia. We will try to establish a procedure where there is a central location in the US for collection and then only one shipment into Colombia. For non plant material there should be no problem. The *Odontoglossum* Alliance has a number of original RHS water colors and several will be in the auction. In addition the *Odontoglossum* Alliance has an original 'Les *Odontoglossums*' by Leon Duval, the little book published in 1900. This will be on the auction table. For collectors of orchid original material this is a rare item.

If you are planning on attending, you are urged to make your reservations at the hotel of your choice early, like now. In the May newsletter we listed several hotels. (As the function will be held at the Intercontinental Hotel, I have made my reservation there. My room rate is \$127.00/night.) If you are thinking

about attending you are urged to let me know so I can add your name to the fast response e-mail list. Remember the last newsletter with information will be sent out in May 2008. The August 08 newsletter will not reach you in time for any additional information before you would need to depart for Colombia. Use the form in the August newsletter to get on the list. You may also send me questions concerning the meeting and I will do my best to get those answered. If the answers have wide use information, I will distribute that as well. Brush up on your Spanish and plan to attend.

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President's Message

Let me start this out with CONGRATULATIONS going to Tom Etheridge and Luanne Rolly on winning the Annual Dugger Award for their plant Odm. Black Diamond 'Solar Place' HCC/AOS. I had the pleasure of being at the AOS meetings in Delray Beach, Florida when the Judging Committee made the selection. I didn't learn until the next day that the winner belonged to Tom. Odm. Black Diamond (Odm. nobile X Odm. Jim Mintsiveris) is a cross made by Tom Perlite of Golden gate Orchids and registered in 2005. I have some of this hybrid and have seen a few others. They are wonderful strong growers producing strong inflorescences with well-spaced and incredibly clear and distinctly marked flat flowers of heavy substance. It's great to keep the award in the membership. Fall took a long time to arrive here in the Niagara area. In fact we only just had our first frost last week (that's a full two months later than usual).

After the hot summer and then dark (as in cloudy) early fall we have begun to have cold nights and bright sunny days. I can see that the Odms are perking up after languishing for so long. I can see inflorescences starting to emerge on some of the stronger growths. Now I have to hope that they will carry a good flower count.

John Miller has started a small project involving Steve Beckendorf and Stig Dalstrom, where they will locate and possibly distribute hard to find species.

Another project that might be worth doing is to maybe have each member list the species they have and then we might be able to send pollen and produce a seedling population of species for members and others to enjoy. John, myself and the rest of the Executives would like to hear from members on any other type of project that would benefit our beloved Odontoglossums.

Thank you and good growing.

Mario Ferrusi
President
Odontoglossum Alliance

Robert B. Dugger Award for 2006

I awoke on Wednesday, October 24, 2007 to a wonderful surprise. I am an email addict and the first thing I do in the morning is look to see what's come in. A few months ago I had agreed to write the article on the 2006 AOS Special Awards and, on this Wednesday after the AOS Trustees meeting, Jim Watson, editor of "Orchids", sent me an email with the list of winners. The first thing I did, of course, was scroll down to find the Dugger Award. There I found my plant of Odm. Black Diamond 'Solar Place' HCC/AOS listed as the winner! I grabbed Luanne's morning cup of coffee and went racing back to the bedroom to tell her the great news (even in my elation I knew better than to come back to bed without her coffee). Trite though it may sound, winning the Dugger Award is a dream come true.

This particular grex is Odm. Jim Mintsiveris 'Leopard' x Odm. nobile 'Aussie' made by Tom Perlite of Golden Gate Orchids (his cross # GG1757). I first saw a plant of Odm. Black Diamond, a stunning black-on-white Odont that caught my attention across the room, for sale at the Oregon Orchid Society Show a few years ago (in its reciprocal form and using different clones for the parents, GG1474, Odm. nobile 'Gina' x Odm. Jim Mintsiveris). Fortunately the seller had left Tom's original tag in the plant, so I called him to inquire about getting more. He told me that he had a few left, but they were all large plants now and many were the same hybrid using different parents. I didn't care, I bought everything would sell.

This year's Dugger Award winner was one of those plants. When it first bloomed I was so taken with its intense color contrast and form that I took it to judging in Tacoma, Washington (April 15, 2006) despite the fact that it had only four flowers. I found it amazing that a flower with so much pigment opened with such good form. The flower size was average for a nobile hybrid, with a natural spread of about 8 cm. The team that got the plant debated it for at least 30 minutes before scoring and eventually gave it an HCC of 76 points. They commented in the description that 'substance, form and color compensated for low flower count.' Whether any Odont with only four flowers should be awarded is a topic sure to elicit vigorous debate, but I am certainly happy that the team chose to score it. What I am most grateful for is that Mike Pearson, our exceptional photographer in the Pacific Northwest Region, was the photographer that day and that he took such a stunning photo.

So far, according to AQPlus, Howard Liebman, Tom Perlite and I have all received awards on other plants of Odm. Black Diamond. Interestingly, each of these awards appear to have gone to the GG1474 crossing. In comparison, my experience is that this crossing tends to favor the Odm. nobile parent more strongly than GG1757, with more triangular petals, greater ruffling, smaller spots, and lighter texture. The cross in general has been of excellent quality across the board however. The flowers have all been black-on-white with some bearing only a faint white picotee on solid black-burgundy segments.

In one final note about this year's Dugger Award winner, the plant is exceptionally vigorous and has bloomed twice since April, 2006. The pseudobulbs are baseball size yet it has never deigned to produce more than five flowers on an inflorescence, so I presume it to be a polyploid.

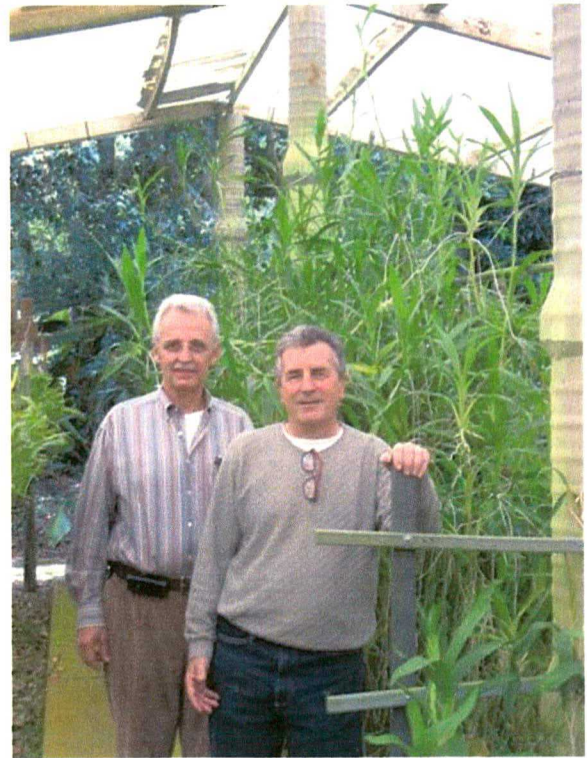
Tom Etheridge
Chairman of the Board
Odontoglossum Alliance

Illustration on Page 8

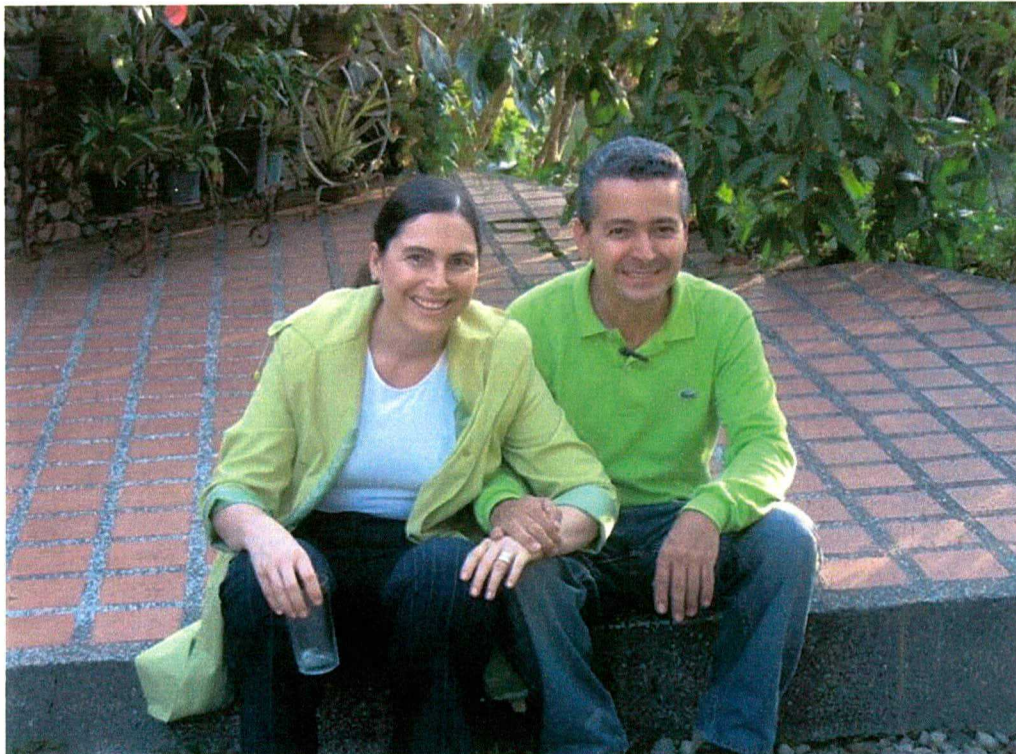
Viva Colombia Part II Illustrations



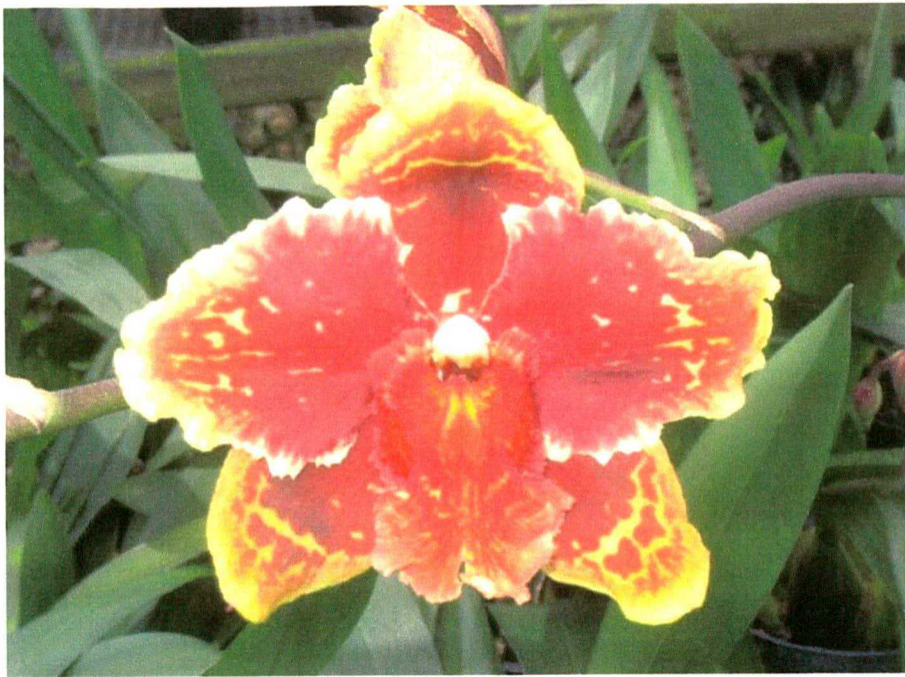
Cyrtorchillum species



Juan Felipe Posada and Howard Liebman in the cyrtorchillum/ottoglossum house

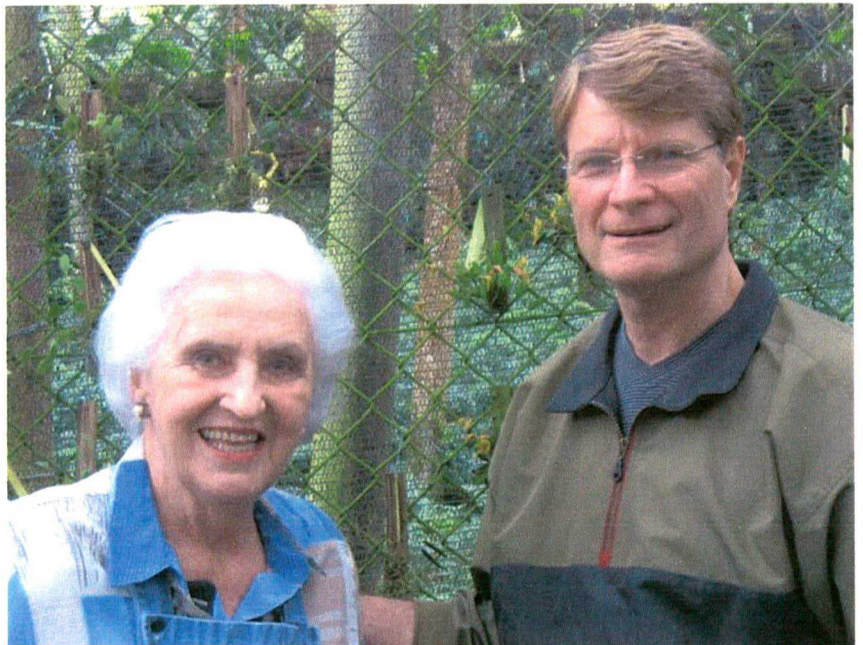


Mr. and Mrs. Gustavo Aquirre



An Odontioda breed by Juan Felipe Posada

Ligia Posada with John Leathers



Spectacular View from the Aquirre's house



American Orchid Society Dugger Award for 2007
 Odontoglossum Black Diamond 'Solar Place HCC/AOS
 Awarded to Tom Etheridge
 Photographer: Mike Pearson

Odontoglossum HBK

Juan Felipe Posada talk at the San Francisco meeting of the Odontoglossum Alliance, 17 February, 2007 was one of the highlights of the evening. His talk "Odontoglossums HBK" as presented was a shortened version, shorten because of time constraints. His complete talk is a power point presentation with very interesting color illustrations. There are some 114 slides altogether. With Juan Felipe's permission I shall be publishing his complete talk in a series of newsletters commencing with the May 2007 issue. The slides are printed six per page and the sequence order is illustrated in the table below.

1	2
3	4
5	6

