

BECOME A BETTER ORCHID GROWER

AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY ORCHIDS

JANUARY 2008



www.aos.org

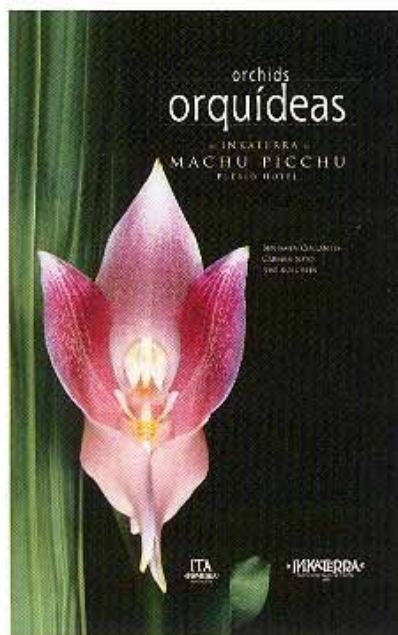
Orchids in Inkaterra at Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel

By Benjamín Collantes, Carmen Soto and José Koechlin. 2007. Inkaterra Asociación, Lima, Peru. 255 color photographs, nine black-and-white illustrations, three color illustrations, two maps. Hardcover. 352 pages. Available through the AOS Web site and at the AOS Booth at the 19th World Orchid Conference, Miami, Florida, January 19–27.

TO AN ORCHID LOVER, MACHU Picchu conjures visions of *Masdevallia veitchiana* growing among the ruins of a large Inca city that was abandoned in the 16th century and rediscovered in 1902. At present, plants of this *Masdevallia* are gone from the most visited part of this popular and easily accessible tourist attraction that counts an average of 2,000 people visiting every day. The terraces once alive with *Elleanthus*, *Masdevallia*, *Epidendrum* and other genera are now grass, probably due to disturbance of the soil by archeologists combined with grazing of llamas and human foot traffic. There are a few garden areas within the compound where orchids grow, but nothing like it was many years ago.

The Historical Sanctuary of Machu Picchu (SHMP) was created in 1981 to "mitigate further deterioration caused by economic and social development." Within the 80,000 acres (32,374 ha) of SHMP is the Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel. Inkaterra manages the hotel and has created a nonprofit organization of biological conservation and study. Spanning 20 years, this ecologically sound cooperation of Inkaterra and Inkaterra Association has promoted study of the orchids of SHMP through photographs, drawings and the collection of salvaged plants into the Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel gardens and orchid trail. Along with the study in the gardens and trail, Inkaterra is reintroducing some orchid species into the SHMP area through seed germination projects and habitat regeneration.

The visitor to the Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel would first notice the plantings of orchids mixed in with the gingers, heliconias and other tropical foliage that line the pathways around the buildings and rooms of this lovely hotel. Farther into the river



canyon behind the hotel is the Orchidarium, with species collected from the hotel grounds during construction and other species rescued from fallen trees or rock slides from the surrounding areas, all being well cared for in a natural and well-maintained setting that is an easy walk and allows plenty of opportunity to see the orchids up close.

Over the years, some photographs of the 372 orchid species flowering within the hotel grounds have been collected and are now selectively presented in this lovely book, *Orchids in Inkaterra at Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel*.

As a picture book, this captures the magnificence and variety of Machu Picchu and its orchids. There are photographs of the sanctuary and the hotel to orient the reader who may not know the area. Text describes the area, its history and why there is so much diversity. There is a short section of orchid biology, with some text and outstanding photographs. At the end of the book are maps of the climate zones and an aerial map of SHMP, a calendar of flowering times and a glossary.

The rest is photographs of orchids; beautiful and detailed pictures of the flowers of 178 species from 57 genera. Also included are a few type drawings as well as copies of paintings by Angela Mirro. Each page is breathtaking. The variety included is a wonderful mix and

does not favor any one orchid type over another. Captions give a brief description of the plant, flower size, habitat and blooming period.

I will leave it to the taxonomists to debate on the identification of the species, allowing that those in the field can ascertain the characteristics of the species that may not be obvious from a picture. When a species is newly described, its locality is given and each time new locations are published this is added to scientific knowledge. Mixed throughout the photographs are clearly labeled new-site records for many species, apparently newly reported with this publication, which means that this book adds to the written knowledge of orchids.

One error repeated throughout the book is the use of "*sp. nov.*" and other Latin phrases that are used when describing a new species, genus or combination. These terms are used only with the original description, not with subsequent publications of the name. Once the name is published, it ceases to be a *sp. nov.*; it is an established species. I am sure the authors wanted to point out that it was a new species at one time and imply that the discovery was due to their efforts. This is a small matter that few would notice.

All text is presented in Spanish with an English translation. The English text is awkward at times but the intended meaning is obvious in most instances.

There is a comment on *Masdevallia veitchiana*'s receiving an FCC/AOS award, not making clear that it was a particular clone that received the FCC, not the species itself. *Otoglossum scansor* is a valid species, yet the text has the species name in parentheses, with no explanation. This and other errors are minor and should in no way be reasons not to admire this book. What this book represents is the variety and splendor of the orchids of the Machu Picchu area. It is not meant to help you identify your orchid, but to be a generous introduction to the spectrum of orchids that are grown within the grounds of the Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel.

The book's authors also want to stress that all profits from this book will go to orchid conservation and study. — Patricia Harding is an AOS accredited judge and a proofreader for Awards Quarterly. 39127 Griggs Drive, Lebanon, Oregon 97355 (e-mail pjh@centurytel.net).