

## A Report on the 2010 Santa Barbara International Orchid Show

Text by PHIL WATT

For 25 years the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show has been what could be called a Mecca for cymbidium fanciers. This was especially so in the 1950s and 1960s. As cymbidium culture has expanded throughout America, it is now possible to see fine cymbidiums on display in the spring in other areas of the country as well. However, many of the most widely acclaimed cymbidiums of all time have first been seen at the Santa Barbara Show or gained their greatest fame there. There are many exciting stories to be told about the various plants which have won "Grand Champion" at that show.

~ Ernest Hetherington. AOS Bulletin, v.41, July 1972.

For anyone who has never attended the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show, it is a spectacular exhibit held at the Earl Warren Showgrounds, a short drive away from the downtown area and close to six local nurseries. This is no ordinary orchid show. Visitors are greeted with an amazing variety of colors and shapes, and with the overpowering fragrance of sweet perfumes and spicy peppers. In

attendance are orchid judges and orchid experts, hybridizers, amateur growers, and wide eyed beginners, all admiring the fascinating world of orchids.



Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick

Grand Champion Cymbidium: *Cymbidium* Satin Dragon 'Cinnabar', exhibitor Weegie Caughlan.



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers

Seed Engei brings an Eastern aesthetic to the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show with their Japanese-style display.



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers

Clockwise from Above: *Cymbidium* Squeegie 'Geyserland' B/CSA, Hatfield Orchids; Best Oriental Cymbidium: *Cymbidium* tortisepalum var. longibracteatum 'Faye Wong' B/CSA, Don Brown; *Cymbidium* (Lady Clarisse x Lady in Red) 'Nancy' B/CSA, Casa de las Orquideas; *Cymbidium* Elise Hetherington 'Lupe', Gallup and Stribling; *Cymbidium* (Brenda x John Wooden) 'Jimmy' B/CSA, Gallup and Stribling; Reserve Champion Cymbidium: *Cymbidium* Sunblast 'Envy' B/CSA, Cal-Orchid.



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers



Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers



Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick

**Clockwise from Below:** *Cymbidium* Nancy Miyamoto 'New Horizon' B/CSA, Hatfield Orchids; *Cymbidium* (Fancy Free × Red Beauty) 'Debbie's Beauty' AD/CSA, Gallup and Stribling; *Cymbidium* (Wootoona × Trinity Hall) 'Cresta', Cal-Orchid; *Cymbidium goeringii*, Don Brown; Best Standard Cymbidium Potted Plant: *Cymbidium* Regal Ruby 'Cinnabar' B/CSA, Weegie Caughlan; Best First Blooming Standard Pink Cymbidium Seedling: *Cymbidium* (Enchanted Profile × Helen Tangcay) 'Nancy', Casa de las Orquideas.



Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers



Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers

Plants are arranged in landscapes to be walked through and around, and carefully placed on tables by anxious amateurs and experienced professionals. There are big awards to be handed out, and with that comes prestige. The more elegant of the awards are large trophies with the names of previous winners etched into their sides. A highlight of the Santa Barbara Show is the arrangement and corsage division, where hobbyists strive to make artistic statements in the tradition of ikebana, and others try to dream up the classic corsage.

The theme for the show this year was "Nature in Harmony," and visitors were drawn to the sprawling center display, a collection of phalaenopsis and Staghorn ferns arranged in groups and on different levels. Meandering paths were decorated with clusters of flowers on either side, and a waterfall was streaming off a rustic shed. There were cattleyas and masdevallias, wooden bridges and palm trees. This exhibit, installed by Ventura Farms, was the most lavish display of the show, and for that, it won the Sweepstakes Best Display. Ventura Farms also won for Best Amateur Display over 100 square feet, and Best Phalaenopsis of Show—*Phal.* Ming-Hsing Snow Angel, bearing large white flowers with flat faces and yellow centers, set high in the display.

The San Gabriel Branch of the CSA can claim bragging rights for the year for having some of the finest plants in the show. Most notably, they had the honor of displaying The Grand Champion Cymbidium, which is awarded the Mosher Trophy. *Cymbidium* Satin Dragon 'Cinnabar' (Khan Flame × Francis Aebi), owned by Weegie Caughlan, held a single spike with enormous pink flowers bearing a deep red velvet line on the lip. Fine spots on the sepals and petals appeared to be solid from a distance, like the spots on a

pointillistic painting.

The San Gabriel Branch displayed two more trophy-winning plants from



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers

Best Cut Cymbidium Spray: *Cymbidium* Dick Bart 'Annie', exhibitor Lynn Pettigrew.



Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick

*Cymbidium lowianum* 'Concolor' AM/RHS, exhibitor Santa Barbara Orchid Garden and Library (Paul Gripp).

Weegie Caughlan. The Best Standard Cymbidium Potted Plant was *Cym. Regal Ruby 'Cinnabar'* (Red Beauty × Claude Pepper), which also gained a Bronze Certificate from the CSA. This well-grown plant had very pleasing brick red flowers with white picotee edging. Flowers were about the size of small dinner plates. The Best Pendulous Cymbidium of Show (the Keith Andrew Trophy) was *Cym. Sweet Muffet 'Windermere'* (Sweet Devon × Miss Muffet). This cymbidium had at least six spikes with 25 burgundy star-shaped flowers hanging from each spike. The flowers were marked by solid deeply colored lips. If that weren't enough, Weegie Caughlan also won on the cut-flower table for Best Green Cut Cymbidium Spray with *Cym. Fareguard 'Verde Grande'* (Fanfare × Vanguard).

The Reserve Champion (Chrisman Trophy) went to Cal-Orchid for *Cym. Sunblast 'Envy'* (May Hopcraft × Fifi). It had two cascading spikes with at least 23 alba green flowers, each bearing a contrasting yellow lip. The flowers had a

pristine quality about them, as there were no spots or markings on the sepals and petals. The judges of the CSA also noted the significance of this plant by awarding it a Bronze certificate.

Cal-Orchid has long set the standard for having well designed and thoughtful displays, and this year was no exception. They won the Design of Distinction for grouping large collections of plants around a very wild looking zebra pelt. The foreground of the exhibit featured an impressive number of *Cym. Vidar 'Harlequin'*, bearing peloric green flowers, each with three red lips. Standing tall were Cal-Orchid's reedstem epidendrums. Their latest hybrids came in a variety of great colors: Pinks, salmons, and watermelon shades. For a job well done, Cal-Orchid was the proud winner of the Best Open Display over 100 square feet, which receives the Cobb Trophy.

The Best Orchid in Show, receiving the Gallup & Stribling Trophy, went to the Santa Barbara Orchid Estate. The winning plant was not a cymbidium

but instead a good cymbidium growing companion. *Laelia anceps 'SanBar Pink Virtue'* caught the judges' attention out of a display packed with great *Laelia anceps*. This particular flower was exceptional for its size and flat pink petals, grown on a specimen size plant that must have taken years to cultivate. And with any plant deemed Best in Show, it drew crowds of people who gawked and jostled for a chance to take a photo. This is an example of the classic



*Cymbidium Psychotic 'Green Dragon'*, exhibitor Casa de las Orquideas.

show orchid top prize winner.

Not to be outdone, Paul Gripp of the Santa Barbara Orchid Garden & Library won for Best Educational Display. His exhibit consisted entirely of the species *Cymbidium lowianum*, bearing the characteristic, long, cascading sprays of flowers that first won awards for the species 1879! On display was a large collection of the yellow form, known as *Cym. lowianum 'James Drysdale'*. Providing an educational comparison were also the green 'Concolor' form of the species and typical forms, with the signature red "V" shape on the lip. Paul Gripp is a treasure in that he is our personal curator of the orchid museum. He knows the history, and he has the live plants pulled straight from the textbooks to share with all of us.

Casa de las Orquideas set themselves apart by concocting unusual and distinctive hybrids; the most outrageous of these are highly spotted. For their variety of high quality cymbidiums, they were honored with the Gold Cymbidium Display from the CSA. *Cymbidium Dotz 'Cutie'* won Best Novelty Cymbidium Potted Plant, with a pendulous spike and spotted flowers. The sepals and petals were a cream base color, flecked with wine splotches, and a solid burgundy lip.

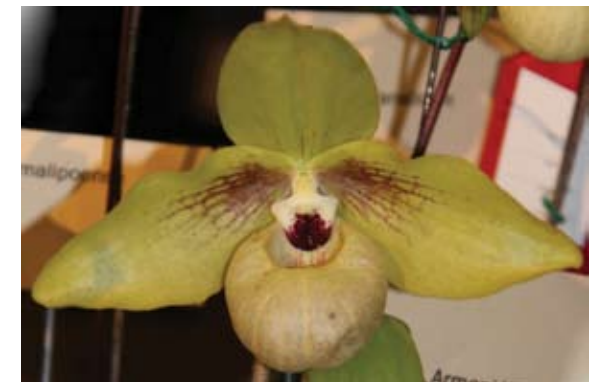
Casa de las Orquideas also won the Best First Blooming Pink Cymbidium Seedling with *Cym. (Enchanted Profile × Helen Tangcay) 'Nancy'*, and had the Best Specimen Cymbidium in *Cym. Marie Bashir 'Shocking'* (Wallacia × Mighty Mouse), a stunning plant in art shade stripes of orange and yellow. Another unique award for this display is the Best Group of 3 Cymbidium Plants, Each a Different Clone, which included *Cym. Hazel Fay 'Shocking'* AM/AOS, B/CSA, (Mighty Mouse × Karen). They really did assemble quite a prestigious group of



*Paphiopedilum Norito Hasegawa 'Sunny Day'*, exhibitor Santa Barbara Cymbidium Society.



Best Paphiopedilum Standard Complex Hybrid: *Paphiopedilum Malibu Lights 'Sycamore Creek'* AM/AOS, exhibitor Bill Robson.



Best Paphiopedilum Alliance Plant: *Paphiopedilum Memora Larry Heuer*, exhibitor Jim Sloniker.

orange and plum shaded flowers. Finally, Casa de las Orquideas earned a Bronze certificate for *Cym.* (Lady Clarise × Lady

in Red) 'Nancy'.

Gallup & Stribling plays a significant role in the long history of the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show. The plants developed there still hold the standard for our modern day awards, and with their display they make a claim for the future. One grex in particular, *Cym.* Elise Hetherington (Hazel Tyers × John Wooden), won for the Best Group of Seedlings, any genera and the Best Group of First Blooming Standard Cymbidiums. The cultivar 'Isabel' also won the Best First Blooming Cymbidium Seedling. It was Ernest Hetherington's 93rd birthday the weekend of the show, and he was humbled and pleased to see the Hetherington name honored by award-winning plants.

A hidden gem of the display was the Award of Distinction for *Cym.* (Fancy Free × Red Beauty) 'Debbie's Beauty'. This was a large feathered flower in apricot and peach, with a vibrant yellow center. It took a Bronze certificate from the CSA, as did *Cym.* (Brenda × John Wooden) 'Jimmy'.

Hatfield Orchids earned the Cymbidium Beauty Trophy with *Cym.* Eastern Morning 'Shinshoku' AM/AOS, a blend of Eastern and Western influences in one graceful plant. It had the starry shape of its Asian parentage, but it was a large plant that held its yellow-green flowers high above the foliage.

The display also contained the Best Miniature Cymbidium in Show with a cross of *Cym. lianpan* with the natural hybrid *Cym. × zaleskianum*. This was a compact grower with plenty of spikes and species charm, featuring apple green flowers with a glossy texture. George Hatfield also scored high with Bronzes for *Cym.* Nancy Miyamoto 'New Horizon' and *Cym.* Squeegie 'Geyserland'.



Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers

Best Green Cut Cymbidium Spray: *Cymbidium* Fareguard 'Verde Grande' AM/AOS, S/CSA, exhibitor Weegie Caughlan.

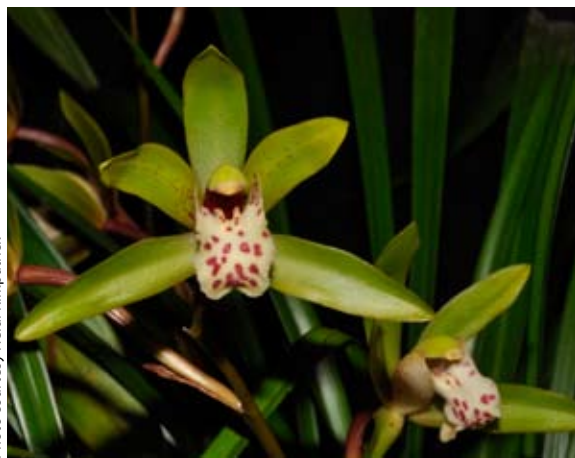


Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick

Best Miniature Cymbidium: *Cymbidium* (*lianpan* × *Zaleskianum*), exhibitor Hatfield Orchids.

There is something to be said about the Japanese aesthetic in our very Western-dominant show. The Japanese take a different approach to orchid display, and for those that can appreciate an austere and graceful beauty, the Japanese-style exhibit is their type of display. The Seed Engei tabletop was like no other in the show, with a backdrop of a gold screen and a small collection of Japanese rarities, including specimens of *Neofinetia falcata* and *Dendrobium monoliforme*. They won the Best Open Tabletop Display with plants placed in ornate, three-footed pots to highlight the elegance of the orchid foliage; some plants were even displayed for their foliage alone. The highlighted plant of the display won the Best Species Cymbidium Potted Plant; *Cym. goeringii* 'Setsuzan' made quite a statement. The plant held only one flower, but it was a variegated goeringii, grass green with asymmetrical yellow markings. The variegation carried into the leaves of the plant, with long strips of yellow edging the strap-like growths.

For certain orchid fanciers, the paphiopedilum is the only serious choice of the grower with a with sophisticated palettes. Orchids Royale never fails to please with their high quality display of gorgeous paphiopedilums. The CSA awarded them the Gold Paphiopedilum Display of the show. Their exhibit was packed with the large complex hybrids of slipper orchid, along with cymbidiums, lycastes, and miltonias.

In the neighboring display, Santa Barbara Branch member Jim Sloniker won the Best Paphiopedilum Alliance Plant with *Paph.* Memoria Larry Heuer (*malipoense* × *emersonii*). This plant had a single massive flower on a strong stem, a pale lime green with a lighter pouch

and a dark raspberry center. It was a true standout in his excellent display of mixed paphiopedilums and cymbidiums.



Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick

*Cymbidium* (Sydney Harbor × *devonianum*), exhibitor Santa Gabriel Valley Branch.



Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick

*Paphiopedilum* Razzmatazz 'Royale Alert', exhibitor Orchids Royale

Also a local society member, Bill Robson put in his own tabletop display, and won the Best Paphiopedilum

Standard Complex Hybrid (the Al Svoboda Trophy). *Paphiopedilum* Malibu Lights 'Sycamore Creek' AM/AOS, with its flat, glossy, perfectly symmetric flower, featured prominently in a display full of odd and wonderful species orchids. The ribbon judges had plenty of awards to hang on his botanical marvels.

Another impressive grower from our Santa Barbara Branch is Don Brown, who entered a nice variety of outdoor growing plants on a table top display. He earned one of the newer awards of the show, the Best Oriental Cymbidium Potted Plant for *Cym. tortisepalum* var. *longibracteatum*. This plant had the graceful arching foliage of species from the Orient, and also won a Bronze certificate from the CSA. Tucked in next to it was an orange-flowered *Cym. goeringii*, a treat for those who love Oriental Cymbidiums.

Every year the Santa Barbara Branch of the CSA puts in a display worthy of enthusiastic hobbyists. This year, our own Lynn Pettigrew surprised even himself by winning the Best Miniature Cymbidium Potted Plant. He won it with *Cym. Tom Thumb* 'Marguerite', a large specimen which had plenty of spikes, and later he confessed to cutting a few off for friends before the show. He also won on the Cut Flower table for Best Cut Cymbidium Spray with a robust and well grown spike of *Cym. Dick Bart* 'Annie'. As a society, we would like to thank Art Denk, and Louise and Steve Komp for their efforts. They work hard to make our small group stand out in a hall full of professionals.

The Best Foreign Exhibit



Best in Show: *Laelia anceps* 'SanBar Pink Virtue', AM/AOS exhibitor Santa Barbara Orchid Estate.



Best Miniature Cymbidium Potted Plant: *Cymbidium* Tom Thumb 'Marguerite', exhibitor Lynn Pettigrew.

Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick

Photo courtesy Arthur Pinkers

went to Brian Gerhardt of Down Under Native Orchids. He's known for his Australian plants, which grow very well with cymbidiums, and he brought some of his own hybrids of *Dendrobium kingianum* and its larger cousin, *Den. speciosum*.

The Coastal Valley Orchid Society won for Best Society Tabletop Display. This is a society that hails from Lompoc; they are a hard working bunch and they put in a quality display of plants grown by the various members. If there were prizes awarded for including the most members of a society, Coastal Valley would win it.

The Best Amateur Tabletop Display was awarded to myself and my wife Angela. It is an honor to win the Bean Trophy, and a privilege to be associated with the names of the previous winners, like Norito Hasegawa, and Ed and Shirly Carter. Among our plants were *Cym. Pepper's Fire* 'Fiesta', which we find striking for its odd peloric petals, and *Cym. Mimi* 'SanBar Feathered'. The flowers are a rich brown with feathered streaks of red in the sepals and petals. Though these plants may not measure up to the Grand Champions of the show, we're proud to have them in our modest table display.

Overall, the CSA awarded seven Bronze certificates and an Award of Distinction out of the outstanding displays and individual exhibits. CSA judges selected a number of the show trophy winners, in addition to the paphiopedilum and cymbidium

display winners. There were far too many other intriguing plants for a comprehensive list, though this survey should provide a good overview.

The efforts of those in attendance are deeply appreciated. These shows exist solely because of the volunteers who dedicate their time and expertise to put on a show of such a high caliber. We thank our CSA judges for the hard work they put in to judge the many cymbidiums and paphiopedilums in the show. As a reminder, the judges are all volunteers who undertake their job for the love of orchids. We would also like to thank Randall Umland for being this year's Show Manager, and the vendors who worked tirelessly to make the show a success.

*Phil Watt is a second generation orchid grower who began winning blue ribbons in the corsage division of the Santa Barbara International Orchid Show when he was eleven. He is the incoming president of the Cymbidium Society of America, president of the Santa Barbara Branch, and past president of the Orchid Society of Santa Barbara.*



The author in front of the display he installed with his wife, Angela. The exhibit was awarded the Best Amateur Tabletop Display.

Photo courtesy Heidi Kirkpatrick