

*The Orchid Conservation Alliance*  
*564 Arden Drive*  
*Encinitas, CA 92024*



November 6, 2013

Dear Friends –

2013 is shaping up as a great year for the OCA. As you know, because you get these newsletters, I am always asking for money with the promise that it will be used to support orchid reserves. That money went to start Reserva Rio Anzu, the first reserve organized by Fundacion EcoMinga, it has paid for the Ecuador Gap Analysis, and helped with the running expenses of Fundacion EcoMinga as well. However, since 2007 we haven't brought any new orchid habitat under protection. It has been hard to find the right combination of orchid biodiversity, long term commitment to conservation, and land legal protection that seemed like the right place to commit your funds. This has been frustrating to me and surely also to you.

*However, that has changed.*

Presenting ... Reserva Serra Bonita, in Brazil's Atlantic rain forest. Serra Bonita is not so much the brain storm as the love child of Vitor Becker and his wife Clemira Souza. About ten years ago this Brazilian couple invested their life's resources into saving a piece of the Atlantic rain forest in south eastern Bahia. Vitor had spent his professional career as an entomologist and he and his wife came to the realization that the Lepidoptera of the rain forest needed a safe place to live. Having travelled extensively internationally as well as throughout Brazil they knew that south eastern Bahia was a locus of great lepidopteran biodiversity and biodiversity in general. Near the town of Camacan, south of Ilheus, studies of the forests had identified areas with more than 450 species of tree per hectare, a level of biodiversity unparalleled anywhere in the world. Nearby, the couple identified a triangle of land bounded by two roads and a river, encompassing 7500 hectares with lots of primary rain forest remaining. The site had a TV tower at the top of the tallest mountain around, which meant that electricity and a road were already available. They invested their life savings in purchasing land and building a house. Fortunately, through his work, Vitor has made many friends in Brazil and internationally who shared his vision and they too contributed funds to begin acquiring more land. Together, they established the reserve's governing body, the Instituto Uiracu.

I first learned of Serra Bonita through an email from the RainforestTrust urging donations to expand the land purchases for Serra Bonita. At present about 4700 of the eventual 17,500 acres are under the control of the Instituto Uiracu. I asked our Director in Brazil, M. do Rosario de Almeida Braga whether we should look into Serra Bonita and her first perusal of their website was very favorable. As a consequence she and I visited there in March of this year and we were very impressed. In addition to the house in which Vitor and Clemira live there is a 'dormitory' for visitors, unlike any dormitory I ever saw in college, and a research center that houses work spaces for visiting investigators, a kitchen and dining room for visiting researchers and students, an auditorium for presentations, and a store room for the Lepidoptera that Vitor has collected throughout his life. *His collection encompasses 350,000 specimens of 35,000 different neotropical moths and butterflies.* Instituto Uiracu and Serra Bonita are clearly very serious enterprises. The orchid biodiversity of the reserve is as yet not so well studied as the Lepidoptera. However, the work of Andre Amorim, a professor at the local university, makes clear that when it is fully cataloged it will be exceptional. His inventory of orchids from Serra Bonita and

several nearby sites is available from our new web site. The reason why the orchid biodiversity of Serra Bonita will be found to be exceptional when fully characterized is the following. Amorim's data have been collected by only eight graduate students working part time over the last 5-6 years. In that time they identified about 130 species of orchids. By comparison, at Macae de Cima in Rio de Janeiro state, David Miller and his colleagues found about 350 species, but it took 30 years of work to do so. Just walking the trails of Serra Bonita for two days, Rosario and I found two species that are not yet on Amorim's inventory. If it is that easy to find new species in Serra Bonita, what will be found when a serious exploration is made is very exciting to contemplate.

Consequently OCA's directors have donated \$30,000 towards the purchase of new lands for Serra Bonita. The donation was made through the RainforestTrust. The RainforestTrust has agreed to double all donations we make to Serra Bonita up to \$50,000. Land available for purchase is available for \$400 per acre, but, because the RainforestTrust will double our donation, *each \$200 we donate buys another acre of land.*

THUS WE ARE STRONGLY, STRONGLY URGING EACH OF YOU WHO READS THIS NEWSLETTER TO IMMEDIATELY MAKE A DONATION TO HELP US REACH OUR GOAL OF \$50,000 FOR SERRA BONITA. ALL DONATIONS RECEIVED BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, AND THIS INCLUDES YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES, WILL BE DONATED TO THE RAINFORESTTRUST FOR SERRA BONITA.

REMEMBER, \$200 BUYS AN ACRE OF ORCHID RICH LAND FOR SERRA BONITA.

More information about Serra Bonita is on [our web site](#).

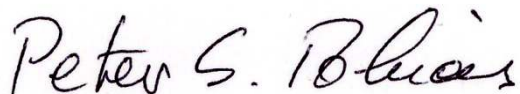
Coming soon: Details of an OCA *Orchids in the Wild* trip to visit Serra Bonita and other nearby orchid sites – Spring 2014.

Two other items of good news:

We have just launched [our new web site](#). It is quite the change. Check it out.

We have also invested \$22,000 in a new reserve in Colombia. This will be the topic of the next newsletter – coming soon.

Best regards,



Peter Tobias, President, OCA

PS – Please note that World Land Trust – US has changed its name to RainforestTrust. Our web site may still refer to World Land Trust – US in some locations.