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Jubilation 'Geronimo'and 'Wyborn'

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Post

subject: Jubilation 'Geronimo'and 'Wyborn'

Back in the old days there was a slippery character in the Victorian (Australia) orchid world named Bob Hodgins. Now Hodgins was connected to Laurie Humphries in England and he was the Australian outlet for Humphries purloined seedlings from the mother flask sowings he did for Dell Park. But that is another story.

Hodgins and his little coterie of sycophants ran the Victorian Orchid Club (VOC) and it was largely because of their dealings that the Victorian Orchid Council came into existence and has now become predominant.

Anyway, Hodgins had responsibility for doing an interstate VOC display many years ago and in it was a cut spike of the then famous Wallara 'Gold Nugget'. Let me confirm that the original WGN was a prett good yellow standard. My plant, sourced from Snow Peterson, came from the original 100 meristems that were sold at \$100 apiece. It was counted with as many as 19 flowers on the stem. However, many of the later WGN clones showed all the problems of bad cloning technique and seemed to have about 6-8 flowers per spike.

Hodgins was told to destroy the pollen at the conclusion of the show. Russell Martin, owner of WGN closely guarded his

prize plant both before and after the clones were released. Hodgins, true to form, pinched the pollen and took it home to make a cross onto his plant of Borough Green 'Conference', a diploid green. From that pod came seedlings that he registered as Jubilation and one clone in particular that he called 'Geronimo'. Now Jubilation 'Geronimo' was a quite pleasant standard yellow with an arching spike and was only an average grower and not too free flowering. Hodgins showed it and got an AM but he wanted the FCC so he made sure his buddies were on the panel and finally got enough of them to push it up to the highest award. Now it is important to remember that in Australia you only need to score 85% for an FCC but I actually saw the plant just a week prior to it being judged and would have barely scored it at 80%

This was the time that the CSA was getting underway in Australia and we were trying to make as few waves as possible. Hodgins and one of his stooges asked if they might observe the first CSA judging in Australia and we agreed to this. Little did we know that they were only there to confirm that Clive Halls was actually functioning as a CSA judge. They then used this to have him thrown off the Victorian AOC judging panel due to some regulation that AOC judges could not be part of any other judging system. Needless to say, Snow Peterson and I were outraged!

Hodgins duly released his prized FCC Jubilation 'Geronimo' as small bulb meristems at \$100 a pop. We decided to engage in a little payback. I bought one and immediately cloned the first growth off it. We gave it the varietal name 'Wyborn' (which was Hodgin's middle name) and gave clones to all our Australian agents. They were in on the deal and agreed to give these plants as discount plants, free of charge, to their customers. Many were thus distributed. Hodgins was fuming as we said the clone 'Wyborn' was at least as good as Geronimo!!

Fast forward about five years (I said it wasn't a great grower!) and the Wyborns were appearing at all the area shows in company with older plants of Geronimo. A great discussion developed as to which was better. Some "experts" said Wyborn was better and others said no, that Geronimo had more yellow coloring. We said nothing and just laughed at them all. Hodgins about this time became unwell and faded rapidly from the orchid scene but it gave Snow and I the last laugh. Even Geronimo had a very short spell at the top and now like Wyborn and its originator, has faded from the Australian orchid scene.