

Alien Orchid

“SINCE I started photographing flowers (orchids in particular) a few years ago, I’ve seen some very strange looking types. None, however, can top the likes of this native plant of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, *Dendrobium spectabile*, commonly referred to as the grand dendrobium,” is how I begin my on-line essay, “An Orchid Only A Mother Can Love” (www.jpomag.com/stories/10945).

I continue, “For my own part, when I first saw *Den. spectabile* at an orchid show last year, I nearly freaked out. I remember saying to myself, ‘What an ugly flower.’ I thought the plant had rotted as all the flowers (at least to me) look deformed and, actually, quite dead. But according to the grower of this species, this was *Den. spectabile* and how it looks normally. Remember the science fiction-horror film *Alien*? This was the first thing that came to mind when I saw the flowers generated by this *Dendrobium* species. It looked like something extraterrestrial.”

Two of the photographs shown with the online story are reproduced here. Both of these portraits underwent some Photoshop enhancement: I used a Clone Stamp Tool to isolate the background from the individual flower, in the first instance. I then used the Soft Healing Brush Tool to further clean up any background distortions so that a clear black background would remain. As for the flower itself, I used Auto Levels for color contrast and the unsharp masked feature to sharpen and better define the image.

Information on the images:

Camera: Nikon D70

Light Source: On camera flash

Aperture: 5.6

Lens: Nikon 105 Micro Lens

Metering Mode: Spot

Shutter Speed: 1/125

— *Winston D. Munnings, PO Box 560667, Pinecrest, Florida 33256 (e-mail wdmunnings429@gmail.com; Web site www.WinstonDMunnings.ImageKind.com).*

Two views of *Dendrobium spectabile*.

