

# PROGRAM GUIDE

PROGRAMA / SEPTIEMBRE 24 - 27 / 2009

Monterrey

CirqueCon 2009

DRAKON

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

invoke provoke evoke







# Monterrey

## CirqueCon 2009

The Sixth Unofficial Gathering of  
Cirque du Soleil Passionates

**DRA**LiON<sup>™</sup>

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL<sup>®</sup>

SEPTEMBER 24, 25, 26 & 27

Live passionately! • ¡Vive apasionadamente!



# DRALION™

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

**¡BIENVENIDOS A MONTERREY!**

蒙特雷歡迎您

**MEXICO. STATE: NUEVO LEON**

**COORDINATES: 25°40'41 NORTH / 100° 17'01 O**

**ALTITUDE: 537 METERS / 1729 FEET**

**POPULATION: 4,000,000**

**CIRQUE DU SOLEIL VISIT IN MONTERREY :4**

**DRALION TOUR CITY STOP: 62**

**TOTAL DRALION TRAVELED MILES: 60,618**

**MONTERREY IS READY FOR "DRALION"...**

**IS "DRALION" READY FOR MONTERREY??**

**CLAIRE-MICHELLE BEZ / WANG BIN / DIMA BULKIN / BILLY CHANG / PAN CHEN / JOSE LUIS COBRANA /**

**TANG CONGYANG / REN CUICUI / BARIS DILAYER / PAN DING / JEAN- PHILIPPE DIOTTE / GENEVIEVE GAUTHIER**

**YU GONGSEN / DUSTIN HILL / ZHANG HONGWEI / ULF HAMPUS JANSSON / ULF HANNA JANSSON / CHEN KIA /**

**ZHAO JIAN / CHEN JIAN / SU JIANG / LEI JIAO / LIU JIE / WANG JINGE / WANG JUUDAN / MARJORIE JULIEN /**

**WANG JUNRU / SVETLANA KHOLODOVSKA / XIANG LI / YE LIWEI / ZHANG MINGZHI / COLLETTE MORROW /**

**VLADIK MYAGKOSTOPOV / DMYTRO NEGODIN / YI NENXIANG / CHAD OLIVER / SERGI OTS GIL/ LUIS PELEGRINI /**

**KAFI PIERRE / OKSANA POCHYNOK / STEPHEN POULIN / GERRY REGISTSCHNIG / BRENT ROMAN / ANNA ROUDENKO**

**MATASHA RUMIZ / WANG SHOUBO / LI SIQI / ANGES SOHIER / MASHA TERENTIEVA / MIAO TINGTING /**

**NEELANTHI VADIVEL / GUTO VASCONCELOS / MARIO VENDITTI / MARINA VOROBYEVA / BRUCE WANGSANUTR /**

**YI WU / SHUAI XI / XIAO XINGDONG / WANG XUERUI / ZHANG XUEXIA / WANG YAN / LIN YI / XIONG YING /**

**WANG YONG / XIAO YU / LIU YUNPENG / NIU UYU / DAVID ZEIHNER / LI ZHENGANG / XIA ZHENGQI /**

**BRUCE MATHER, YANNICK SPIERKEL, FREDERIQUE GAGNIER, MICHAEL SMITH, AND ALL THE STAFF**

**MEMBERS, MANAGERS, TECHNICIANS, CIRQUADORS AND ALL PEOPLE OF DRALION TOUR! ,**

**WE ARE WAITING FOR ALL OF YOU HERE IN MONTERREY!**

**" MI CASA ES TU CASA " YOUR FRIEND / SU AMIGO**

**RODOLFO ELIZONDO**





# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Introduction

Welcome, Passionate, to *CirqueCon 2009*.

For the sixth time we gather, this year south of the United States' border in Monterrey, Mexico.

Although we remember the very last page in our *CirqueCon 2008: Tokyo* programme book mentioned our next confirmed event would be *CirqueCon 2010: Hollywood*, we never did say that we weren't gathering in 2009 (cheeky of us...). So when *CirqueCon 2010: Hollywood* became delayed (now *CirqueCon 2011: Hollywood!*), and we received a passionate plea from Rodolfo about taking *CirqueCon* to Mexico for Dralion, we just couldn't pass up his enthusiasm!

Monterrey (pronounced with a heavy 'rrrrr') is a very modern Mexico city situated in the northeastern state of Nuevo León, approximately 150 miles south of the United States border. This state capital boasts a populace that ranks it third behind the Greater Mexico City and Greater Guadalajara metropolises and is home to many businesses, industries, universities and families. Throughout the weekend we will experience only a little of what Monterrey, and really all of Mexico, has to offer. But what an amazing weekend we have in store, all thanks to Rodolfo's hard work.

In the pages that follow you will find a schedule of our weekend activities, extensive information about Dralion (its acts, its costumes, its characters, the big top it plays under and a few of its secrets), some of our personal experiences with *Cirque* and/or Monterrey, a summary of our history and more.

Welcome to Mexico!  
Bienvenidos a Mexico!



in•v•o•k•e pr•o•v•o•k•e Ev•o•k•e



# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Welcome to Mexico

¡BIENVENIDOS A CASA, AMIGOS!


*“Impossible is only a word...”* and now I can say it’s true! As fans and passionates of Cirque du Soleil, I feel we truly believe in this amazing quote and this *CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey* will serve only to prove these words are real and magical.

My friends, I have no fancy words to thank you for coming all the way down to Monterrey from your homes in Canada, the United States and, of course, various provinces of Mexico to be part of this incredible dream. 10 years ago, when I began my journey as a follower of the sun, I never knew how far a dream could go until I desired it with all my passion and heart. Having been part of the Cirque du Soleil fandom for the past few years, experiencing many wonderful adventures thanks to my friends at Cirque du Soleil, I can truly say I believe in magic. And once you believe you will be surprised by all the things that magic can create.

I had a dream. After participating in *CirqueCon 2006: Las Vegas!* I had this amazing vision: could you imagine, after living through that incredible weekend in Las Vegas, having a CIRQUECON in my hometown, Monterrey? I laughed it off at first, for dreaming so far away, but the more I thought about it the more I found the magic lay within. After Las Vegas CIRQUECON traveled to Orlando (2007), then Tokyo (2008), and by then I knew the time was right. In March 2009, I wrote an email to Rich, Ricky, LouAnna and Keith – the CIRQUECON Team – and shared my dream of having CirqueCon in Monterrey. Ricky and Rich were very receptive and that was the start of something BIG!

The journey hasn’t been easy. We’ve had many challenges and obstacles to overcome during these months of creation to make this dream into reality. However, I never lost the faith, or the magic, because I truly believe that when you work hard and give your all to your passion, energy, faith, (and you believe in a little magic), there will be no obstacle or difficulty that can stop your dream. And as the DRALION quote says: “no matter how tall the mountain, it cannot block out the sun!”





We are going to make history. Soon DRALION will close forever, and so for the last time we experience the magic of this incredible show together. I believe we are going to make this performance an unforgettable experience for the entire cast of DRALION – we will rock the house! – but, of course, unforgettable for each of us: for making this a memory that we will keep forever in our hearts.

However, DRALION will not be the only experience to touch your heart - Mexico will also. CIRQUECON has not only made us closer to Cirque du Soleil, it has also made us learn, live and enjoy other different cultures, such as: Canada, United States and Japan. Now we Mexicans have a chance to share our culture with you. Thanks for coming to my country. Mexico is a magical land full of tradition, history, food, songs and folklore, but the best of our country is the people. I'm sure you'll be amazed with the magic of my people, my family, my land, my home: MEXICO.

Muchas gracias from the bottom of my heart for being part of this magical journey, and for believing in this dream, which I am proud to say is now a reality.

¡GRACIAS AMIGOS Y QUE EMPIECE LA FIESTA!

Su amigo,

Rodolfo Elizondo





Monterrey, NL; 21 de Septiembre del 2009

**Estimado Sr Elizondo**

Reciba un cordial saludo de parte de todos los asociados que laboramos en éste su hogar, **Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora**, es para nosotros un Honor y Placer recibirlos en este Extraordinario Evento, que en conjunto con Cirquecon nos llena de Orgullo poder ser sede.

Estamos seguro **Drailon** será todo un éxito y que lo disfrutará al máximo.

Nuestro equipo de colaboradores se encuentra comprometido para asegurarse que su estancia sea placentera y confortable.

Nuevamente, muchas gracias por elegir nuestro hotel, donde nuestro compromiso es ofrecerle la mejor de las visitas. Así mismo, tomamos en cuenta cualquier comentario respecto a su estancia y servicio otorgado.

En caso necesario, tengan la confianza de ponerse en contacto en la extensión 6001, en donde tendré mucho gusto en atenderle personalmente.

Sinceramente,

Lic. Gabriela Eisele  
Gerente General

# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

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# **EVENT INTRODUCTORY**

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# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Your CirqueCon Team

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### **Ricky “Richasi” Russo – Event Chairman**

Ricky is familiar with, and has extensive knowledge and experience therein of the Cirque du Soleil fandom through his many online projects, which include but are not limited to: Le Grand Chapiteau, the “Fascination! Newsletter”, and the CirqueFAQ. Richard Russo is also a founding member of the CirqueCon organization and was instrumental in constructing the partnership between CirqueCon and Cirque du Soleil for CirqueCon’s first event. Ricky has been a hard-core Cirque du Soleil fan since 1999 after being introduced to La Nouba, and has sought Cirque du Soleil around the world since. He has attended every CirqueCon to date and chaired our CirqueCon 2007: Orlando event.

Besides handling all the duties of “the one in charge,” Ricky built, redesigned and maintained CirqueCon’s website, wrote member communication emails, handled the membership database, created and constructed the programme book, was co-Cirque du Soleil liaison between CirqueCon and Dralion and helped our on-site coordinator (and guide) – Rodolfo – as much as possible.

### **Rodolfo Elizondo – Event Coordinator**

Rodolfo was born in Monterrey, Mexico. His journey “to follow the sun” began after seeing La Nouba one fateful night in 1999, while following another dream: working at Walt Disney World. In 2002, he founded the first Mexican Cirque du Soleil fan club now with more than 300 members. Rodolfo’s first CirqueCon was 2006 at Las Vegas and he’s never looked back, joining passionates in Orlando (2007) and Tokyo (2008). During his journey, Rodolfo has traveled to more than 21 cities around the world following Cirque du Soleil, and last summer he attended his 100<sup>th</sup> show – OVO in Montreal! Rodolfo has seen La Nouba more than 25 times since its debut and was the tour conductor in Monterrey for the artists of Saltimbanco and Quidam! Rodolfo is currently writing a book sharing all his experiences from his journey as a Cirque du Soleil fan over the past 10 years.

Rodolfo is the orchestrator for CirqueCon 2009 in Monterrey. He has done the entire on-site work and communication in Monterrey with hotel, sponsors, suppliers, ticket agents, city government, and with Cirque du Soleil in Mexico. Virtually everything experienced in Mexico is because of Rodolfo’s enthusiasm. He has also planned all the social activities for everyone to enjoy this year.

### **Keith Johnson – Treasurer**

Keith has worked in science fiction convention fandom since 1984 in numerous capacities, from Special Events Coordinator, to Secretary, to Chairman. He also led the team for *CirqueCon 2005: Montreal*, and Chaired our *CirqueCon 2006: Las Vegas* and *CirqueCon 2008: Tokyo* events. He is a founding member of CirqueCon.

Keith joined us this year as Treasurer; he was there behind the scenes handling all the membership payments sent to us via check and Paypal. He has also been a sounding board whenever needed.



# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Thank Yous and Legal

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On the behalf of everyone here behind the scenes at *CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey*, we wish to take this moment to express our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to these following individuals and organizations who have helped us greatly to put on our event this year - gracias!

### **at Cirque du Soleil:**

- *Michael G. Smith* – Senior Artistic Director for Dralion & Alegría
- *Bruce Mather* – Artistic Director, Dralion
- *Pascale Oument* – Publicist, Attachée de Presse / Dralion in Mexico
- *Frédérique Gagnier* – Publicist, Attachée de Presse / Dralion in Australia
- *Roxane Prince* – Conseillère Marketing Internet & Superviseure Club Cirque Internet.
- *Ana Cuella* – La Nouba Aerialist/Artist
- *Dustin Hill* – Dralion Trampoline Artist
- *Elisabetta La Commare* – Saltimbanco Boleadora Artist
- *Matthew Jessner* – Artistic Director / Dragone Macau

### **at Ticketmaster México:**

- *Patricia Giron* – Manager, Group Sales
- *César Rodrigo Ramirez* – Group Sales

### **at Monterrey Municipal Government:**

- *Lic. Homero Santos García* – General Tourism Coordinator
- *Lic. Humberto Dingler* – Institutional Relations Sub-director
- *Lic. Ilena Salinas* – Public & Protocol Relations

### **at Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora:**

- *Alba Cabrera* – Administrative Sales Coordinator
- *Julio César Martínez* – Sales Reservations
- *Cecilia Martinez* – Group Sales Team
- *Eloisa Carrillo* – Group Sales Team
- *Parla Segovia* – Group Sales Team

**in Monterrey:**

- *C.P. Luis Gonzalez* – OSETUR, Administrative Manager
- *Carmen Salazar Flores* – SENDA TURISMO, Group Sales and Reservations
- *Paloma Ibarra Rojas* – NUEVA LUNA, Special Events Manager
- *Jorge Montemayor Jr.* – HACIENDA SAN ANGEL, Owner
- *Susana Hernandez* – PARQUE FUNDIDORA, Special Events

**for Helping Out:**

- *Arq. Francisco Fernandez* – Graphics Design
- *Lic. Adriana Váldez* – T-Shirt Post Design
- *Posadas Herrera* – Museo de Historia Mexicana & MUNE English Guide
- *Rich Alford* – for early event support and enthusiasm. We wish you could have made it!

**GRACIAS!**

**LEGAL AND OTHER NECESSARY STUFF:**

Limitation of Liability: Each CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey! Member, or attendee, assumes the entire responsibility and liability for losses, damages, and claims arriving out of injury or damage to themselves, members of their party, belongings, or other property occurring during CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey!, and shall indemnify and hold harmless CirqueCon, its agents, Committee, service providers, and employees from any and all such losses, damages and claims.

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# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## The Elements in Monterrey











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# CONVENTION SCHEDULE

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# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Event Schedule

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### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th

Time	Location	Activity
12:00p - 3:45pm	Hotel	<b>CirqueCon Registration Area Open</b>  Join Ricky and Rodolfo at a special signed area setup within the Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora to pick up your Programme Packet, Group Meal, City Tour and Bohemia Night tickets, your Badge and other CirqueCon goodies (such as your T-shirt!). Or, just come say “Hola”, we’ll be there!
4:15pm - 5:45pm	Grand Chapiteau	<b>Activities at Dralion</b>  CIRQUECON 2009 BADGE REQUIRED  Late in the afternoon we’re kicking off our celebration at Dralion’s white Grand Chapiteau with a unique chance to see artists training on a new act added since the show was last in country – the Trampo Wall! We’ll also meet with Bruce Mather, Dralion’s Artistic Director and with 2 artists for a 15-minute Q&A. Although fast-paced, we’ll also have the opportunity to take a group foto with Bruce and the artists in front of the Dralion stage. Wow!
6:30pm - 9:30pm	Parque Fundidora / Macroplaza	<b>Horno 3 Balcony &amp; A Little Riverwalk</b>  Next, join us for a nice evening stroll around Parque Fundidora’s famous Blast Furnace (Horno 3) area and, for 40 passionates (sorry, that’s all the seats we could get!), a boat ride down the Paseo Santa Lucía to the Macroplaza! It’s a fantastic cultural kick-off to our exciting weekend in Mexico. You won’t be disappointed!  Although we won't get a chance to visit the inside of the Horno 3 museum this day (time will be made available later in the weekend for those curious about what's inside), adventurous types can ride 130ft (40m) to the top of the furnace for a fantastic 360° view of the city at night!

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th**

Time	Location	Activity
8:00am - 9:00am	Hotel	<b>CirqueCon Registration Area Open</b>  Join us for open registration in our headquarters hotel before we embark on our twelve-hour tour of Monterrey city and its environs. If you haven't received your event tickets – now's the time! There's plenty of room to spread out and chat. Come on by!
9:00am - 9:00pm	Magic Bus	<b>Monterrey City Tour</b>  <b>CITY TOUR BUS TICKET REQUIRED</b>  Right after Registration, join us for a twelve-hour tour of fabulous Monterrey. We'll visit museums, shopping plazas, natural places and more! This is a unique and customized city tour in Monterrey created by Rodolfo exclusively for the members of CIRQUECON 2009 (he also is going to be our Tour Guide). So get ready to enjoy Monterrey in a very fun and unique way!  <u>Activity Schedule</u>  9:00 AM – Meet in HQ Hotel Lobby; Board Bus! 9:30 AM – Visit to Chipinque Natural Park 10:45 AM – Visit to Atirantado Bridge 11:15 AM – Visit to Cañon de la Huasteca Mountain. 12:00 PM – Lunch at Paseo San Pedro Mall Food Court. 1:30 PM – Visit to MacroPlaza (Monterrey Downtown) 5:30 PM – Morelos Shopping Plaza 7:45 PM – Nighttime City Tour (on the bus!) 8:45 PM – Return to Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora
10:30pm - 3:00am	Nueva Luna	<b>Bohemia Night</b>  <b>MUST BE 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER</b> <b>BOHEMIA NIGHT BUS TICKET REQUIRED</b>  Phew, all that walking, riding and sight-seeing takes a lot out of you. Come join us at this famous watering hole for a little refreshment! Who said Margaritas!?! :) Join us in the lobby of the Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora by 10:30pm to catch the "Magic Bus" to Nueva Luna! Those not in the lobby by 10:30pm may miss the bus!  <u>Activity Schedule</u>  10:30 PM – Meet in HQ Hotel Lobby; Board Bus! 10:50 PM – Arrival at NUEVA LUNA 11:00 PM – Dinner/ Live Music. Party! 1:00 AM – First transfer from Nueva Luna to Hotel. 2:00 AM – second transfer from Nueva Luna to Hotel. 3:00 AM – First transfer from Nueva Luna to Hotel.



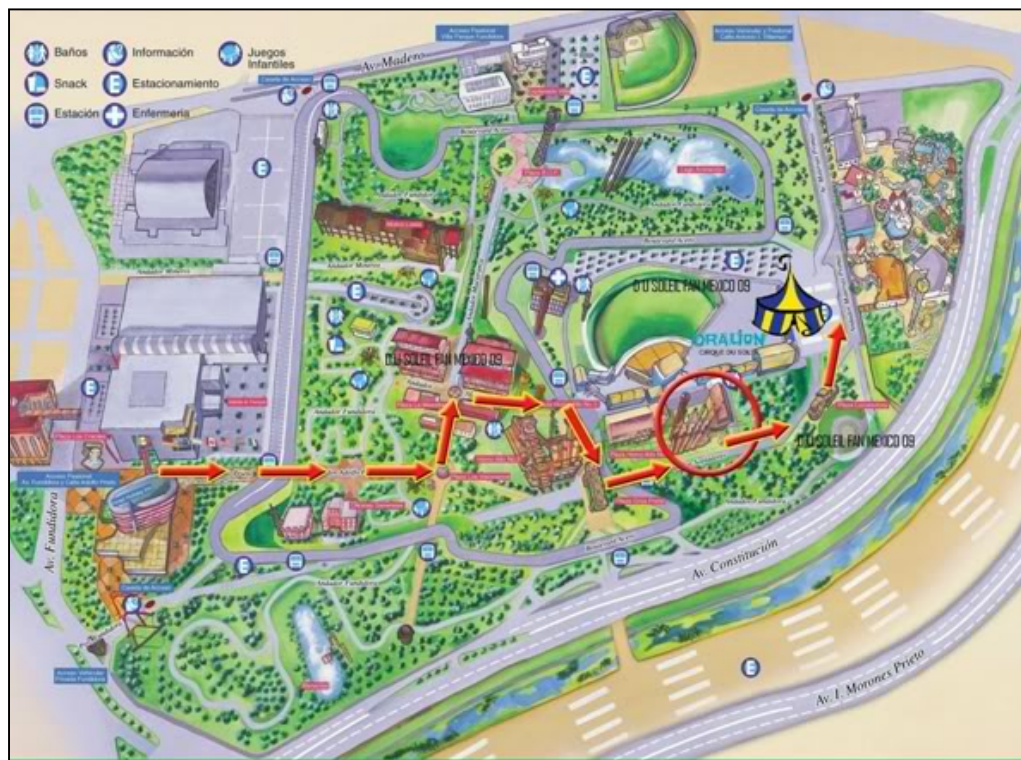
**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th**

Time	Location	Activity
9:30am - 10:30am	Hotel	<b>CirqueCon Registration Area Open</b>  If you've still not picked up your packet or show tickets come by and see us!
11:00am - 1:00pm	Grand Chapiteau	<b>Activities at Parque Fundidora</b>  Parque Fundidora is full of unique and interesting cultural experiences, including the famous Blast Furnace (Horno 3) museum. Take this opportunity to explore the grounds, visit the museum, and ride 130ft (40m) to the top of the furnace for a fantastic 360° view of the city in daylight!
1:30pm - 5:15pm	Hacienda San Angel	<b>CirqueCon Group Meal</b>  <b>GROUP MEAL TICKET REQUIRED</b>  Come eat with us at Monterrey's famous HACIENDA SAN ANGEL restaurant for authentic Mexican cuisine, buffet style! After our meal it's out to the Obispado for a magnificent view of Monterrey. Rising about 775 meters above sea level, this viewpoint is adorned with a fabulous circular esplanade with a humongous flag and pole at its center. You'll definitely want to bring your camera for this!  <u>Activity Schedule</u>  1:30 PM – Meet in HQ Hotel Lobby; Board Bus! 2:00 PM -- Group Meal at Restaurant 4:00 PM -- Transfer to Obispado Hill / Esplanade 4:30 PM -- Group Picture! 5:10 PM -- Arrival to Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora
7:00pm - 10:30pm	Parque Fundidora	<b>Group Show - <i>Dralion!</i></b>  <i>Doors open at 7:30pm.</i>  Then at 8:00pm it's off to Dralion, an extraordinary voyage through a futuristic dimension- a place without time, ruled by magical laws. A fusion of ancient Chinese circus tradition with the avant-garde approach of Cirque du Soleil thrust into a plane of existence that is neither past nor future.

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th

Time	Location	Activity
10:00am - 12:00pm	Hotel	<b>Our Kaffeeklatsch</b>  On Sunday morning, join us once again in our hotel rooms for the Kaffeeklatsch - an impromptu get-together to give us your thoughts about the weekend. Come have a cup of coffee or tea and let us know how we did and what can be improved for our next adventure: CirqueCon 2010: New York City! & CirqueCon 2011: Hollywood! Or just stop by to say “adios amigos!”

### QuickMap: Hotel to Grand Chapiteau





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# MAPS OF MONTERREY

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# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Map: Parque Fundidora

### PLANO DE UBICACIÓN

PARK LOCATION MAP



### UBICACIONES

#### EDIFICIOS PLAZAS

- 1 Centro de Exposiciones
- 2 Escuela Adolfo Prieto
- 3 Auditorio Carlos Prieto
- 4 Centro Operativo
- 5 Pista de Hielo Fundidora
- 6 Pabellón Sopladores
- 7 Pabellón Planta Eléctrica
- 8 Centro de las Artes III
- 9 Horno<sup>3</sup>
- 10 Pabellón Modelos
- 11 Pabellón de Ruedas
- 12 Centro de las Artes II
- 13 Sintram
- 14 Centro de las Artes I
- 15 Pabellón Gasolina
- 16 Pabellón Carpintería
- 17 Oficinas Generales
- 18 Oficinas del Parque
- 19 La Casa de los Loros
- 20 Hotel Holiday Inn
- 21 Cintermex
- 22 Arena Monterrey
- 23 Parque Acero
- 24 Auditorio Fundidora
- 25 Plaza Sésamo
- 26 Plaza Mirador
- 27 Plaza Circular Infantil
- 28 La Marina
- 29 El Mundo del Bebe
- 30 Plaza del Adulto
- 31 Plaza de la Luna
- 32 Juegos Destreza Sur
- 33 Juegos Destreza Norte
- 34 Lago de las Olas
- 35 Plaza de la Juventud
- 36 Paseo de las Flores
- 37 Terraza Fundidora
- 38 Plaza del Tiempo
- 39 En la Espiral
- 40 Plaza Peñoles
- 41 El Eco de la Serpiente
- 42 Embarcadero
- 43 Plaza Santa Lucía
- 44 Plaza de los Visionarios
- 45 Plaza Maestranza
- 46 Plaza de los Niños
- 47 Plaza Maquinaria
- 48 Plaza B.O.F
- 49 Lago Aceración
- 50 Plaza Fórum
- 51 Plaza Horno<sup>3</sup>
- 52 Grúa Portal
- 53 Plaza Horno I
- 54 Mirador Los Hornos
- 55 Paseo de la Mujer

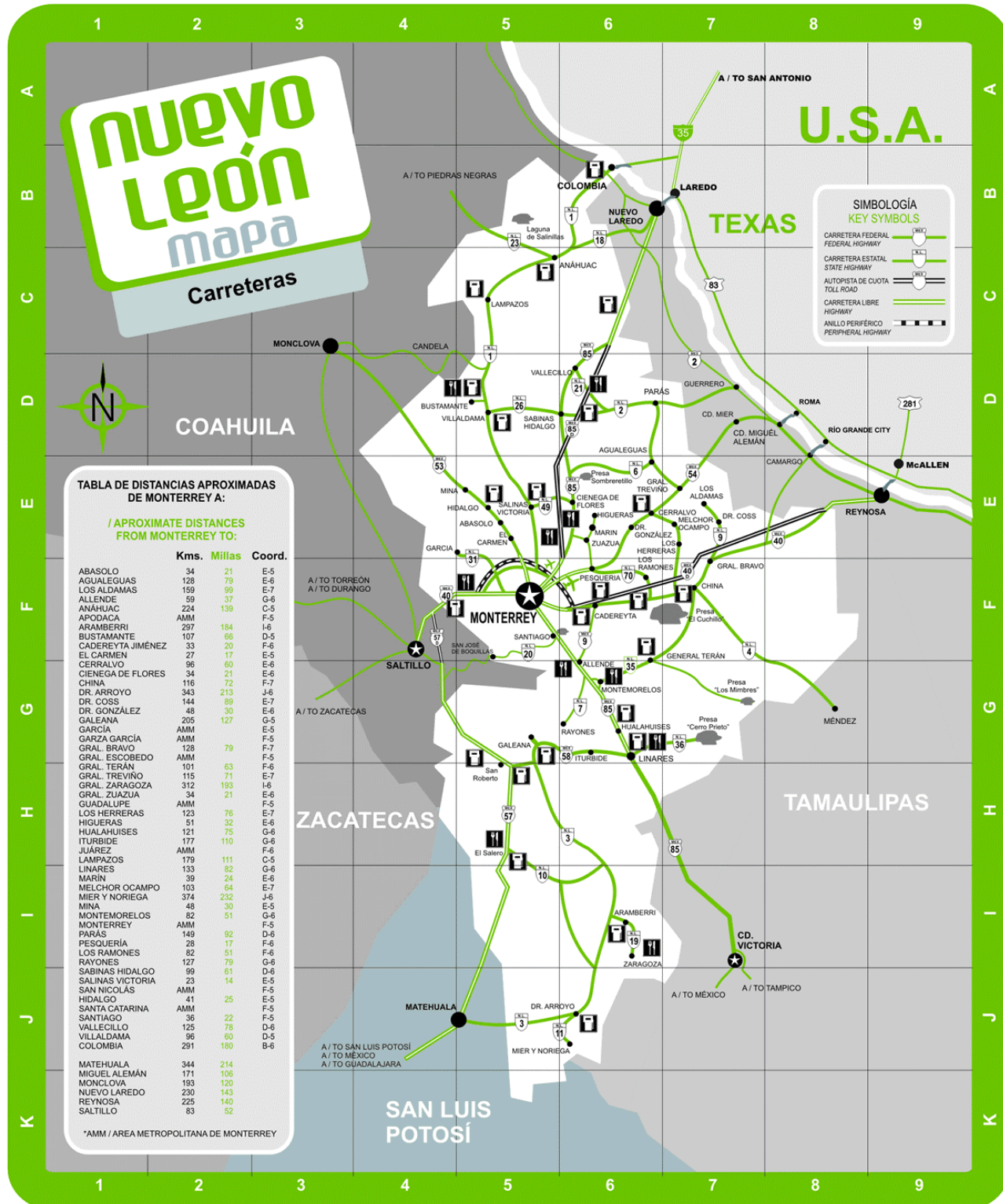


- ACCESOS
- ESTACIONAMIENTOS
- EXPRESO FUNDIDORA
- SANITARIOS
- TELEFONOS
- PRIMEROS AUXILIOS
- METRO
- SENDA DEL AGUA
- SENDA DEL AIRE
- SENDA DEL FUEGO
- SENDA DE LA TIERRA



# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Map: Nuevo León

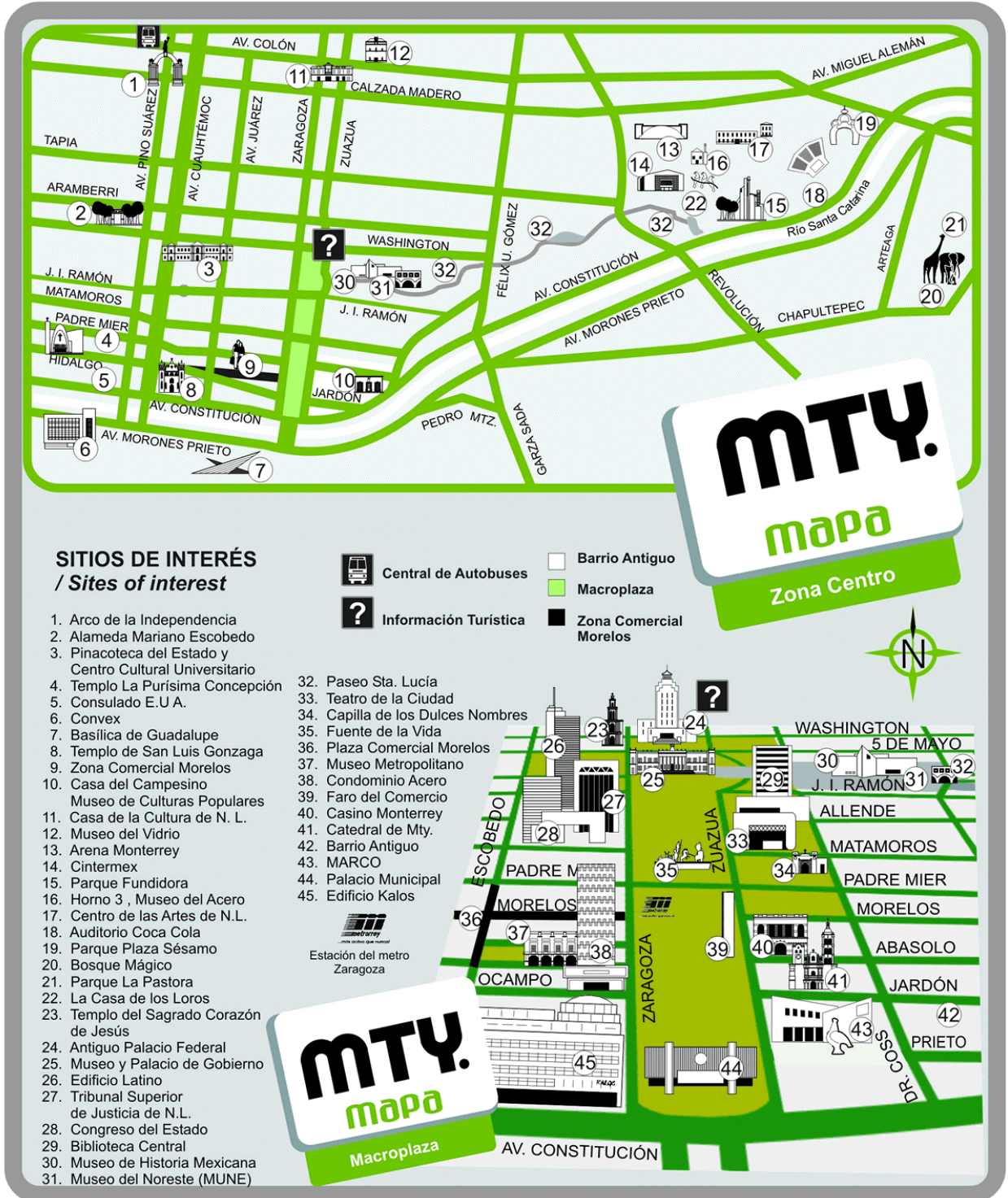


1. Torre Dataflux
2. Tunnel Loma Larga
3. Diana Cazadora
4. El David
5. Los Tubos
6. Puente La Olla
7. Centrito Valle
8. Torre Citibank
9. Oficinas en el Parque
10. Puente Altrantado



# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Map: Zona Central / Central Zone





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## **SOCIAL EXCURSIONS**

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# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Monterrey City Tour

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One of Rodolfo's favorite hobbies is taking groups of his fellow countrymen (and women) to Walt Disney World for weeks at a time for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Now he wants to take US around his home city. Monterrey is full of fantastic museums, wonderful natural sights and amazing viewpoints that are sure to dazzle. Right after Registration, join us for an eight-hour tour of fabulous Monterrey. We'll visit museums, shopping centers, natural places and more! Rodolfo has all sorts of good places up his sleeve! This is a unique and customized city tour in Monterrey created by Rodolfo exclusively for the members of the CIRQUECON 2009 (he also is going to be our Tour Guide). So get ready to enjoy Monterrey in a very fun and unique way!

### Schedule of "Monterrey City Tour"

9:00 AM – Lobby Hotel Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora  
9:30 AM – Visit to Chipinque Natural park Chipinque  
10:45 AM – Visit to Atirantado Bridge  
11:45 AM – Visit to Cañon de la Huasteca Mountain.  
12:00 PM – Lunch at Paseo San Pedro Mall Food Court.  
1:30 PM – Visit to MacroPlaza (Monterrey Downtown)

- Mexican History Museum (admission included)
- MUNE Museum (admission included)
- Palacio de Gobierno y Explanada de los Héroes.
- Teatro de la Ciudad and Capilla de los Dulces Nombres
- Fuente de Neptuno
- Monterrey City Hall
- Faro del Comercio
- Monterrey Cathedral
- MARCO Museum (Lobby visit only)

5:30 PM – Morelos Shopping Plaza  
7:45 PM – Nighttime City Tour (on the bus!)  
8:45 PM – Return to Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora

### What is included in the "MONTERREY CITY TOUR" package?

- Transportation: a private and exclusive air conditioned bus awaits to take us on our fantastic tour today. Meet us in the Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora hotel lobby by 8:45am!
- Tour Leader: Learn about the history of Monterrey in both English and Spanish. Yes, our tour leader is Rodolfo himself!
- Admission Fees: Admission to Chipinque National Park, MUNE and Mexican History museums INCLUDED!
- Snacks: Four (4) bottles of cold water and two (2) bags of potato chips are included during the tour. Wow!

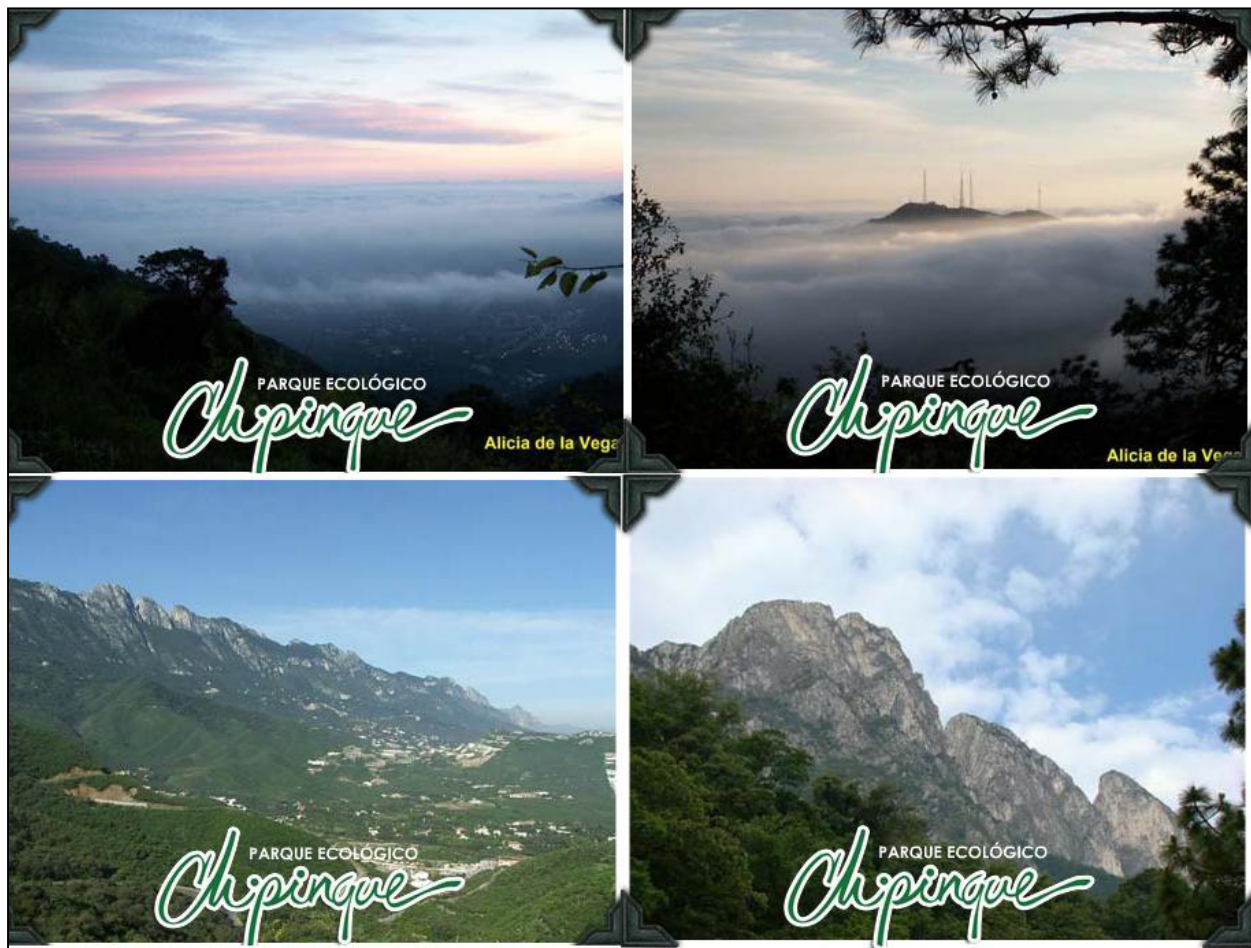


## NATURAL PARK “CHIPINQUE”

<http://www.chipinque.org.mx/>

The Chipinque is a natural park on the northern face of the Sierra Madre mountain range overlooking San Pedro and Monterrey. It's about a 15 minute drive from downtown Monterrey. Chipinque is an excursion that gives you the opportunity to enjoy direct contact with nature, in spite of being in the industrial city of Monterrey. Enjoy the splendor of the Sierra Madre Oriental Mountain Range and its magnificent natural scenery of this 4,015 acre ecological reserve.

During the summertime, when the heat in Monterrey itself can be quite strong, the Chipinque area can be a refreshing change in temperature: Due to its location in a forested mountainside thousands of feet above the city, and with the sun sometimes on the other side of the Sierra Madre range such that the park is in the shade, the temperature at this park can be significantly lower than in the city itself.



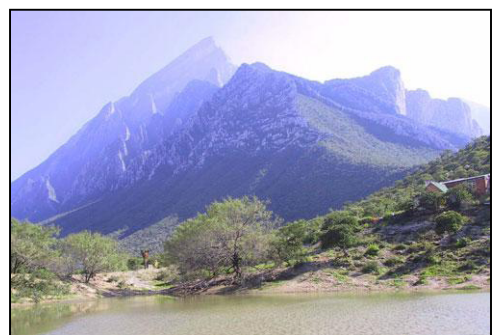
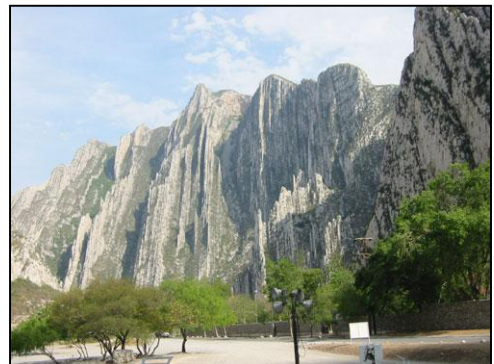
## **PUENTE DE LA UNIDAD – “ATIRANTADO BRIDGE”**

Puente de la Unidad or Viaducto de la Unidad is a cable-stayed bridge designed by Óscar Bulnes[ that crosses the Santa Catarina River and connects the cities of Monterrey and San Pedro Garza García in the Mexican state of Nuevo León. It is part of a circuit called "Circuito La Unidad", which would consist of the interconnection of a series of Avenues. It is the highest bridge in Monterrey's metropolitan area.



## **CAÑON DE LA HUASTECA**

In the state of Monterrey, to the west of the city, you will find the famous Huasteca Canyon; this is made up of 300 meters cliffs and a park. Because of the different scenery you can find here, there are many different activities or sports to practice here, such as rock climbing. Because of its many nice trails and its spectacular peaks many climbers from all over the world come here and many consider this place it's their favorite place for weekend hikes.





## **PASEO SAN PEDRO MALL – “LUNCH TIME!”**

<http://www.paseosanpedro.com.mx/>

It's time for lunch... so we will stop at “Paseo San Pedro Mall” the most modern and with an incredible architecture mall in Monterrey, where the Food Court offers a great variety of food like traditional Mexican Food, Chinese, Sea food, American and more. (Food and beverages are not included.)

With a majestic design, bold personality and modern identity, the project has a monumental dome that provides natural lighting to the interior of the mall and a spectacular translucent glass screen as the façade of El Palacio de Hierro, its anchor store, with the peculiarity of lighting it up in different and desirable colors from the interior like an urban scale lamp. Paseo San Pedro is synonymous with luxury, harmony and innovation, and it includes the most prestigious store in Mexico: El Palacio de Hierro. Because of its design, strategic location and excellent quality of service, Paseo San Pedro is described as one of the country's best shopping centers.



## **MACROPLAZA (DOWNTOWN MONTERREY)**

The Macroplaza, or La Gran Plaza, is the town square located in the heart of the city of Monterrey, Mexico. The construction of the Macroplaza required the demolition of several old buildings and houses, including a famous movie theater. The Macroplaza is the second biggest plaza in the world; it has an extension of 400,000 square meters consisting of various monuments, smaller plazas and gardens. One of the most iconic monuments of the city is the Faro del Comercio (Lighthouse of Commerce), a 70 meters tall modern lighthouse equipped with a green laser that shoots its light around the city at night!



## PLAZA MORELOS

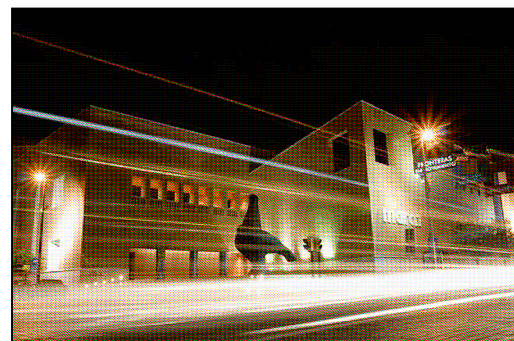
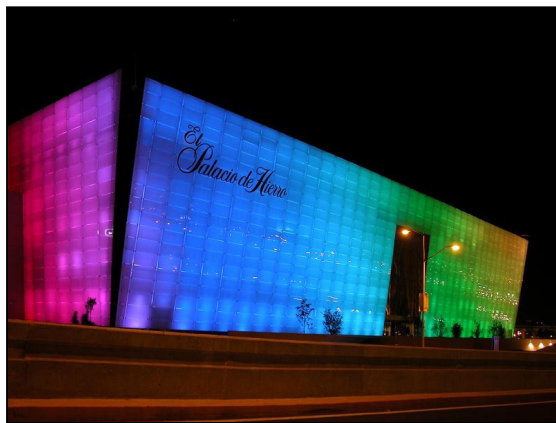
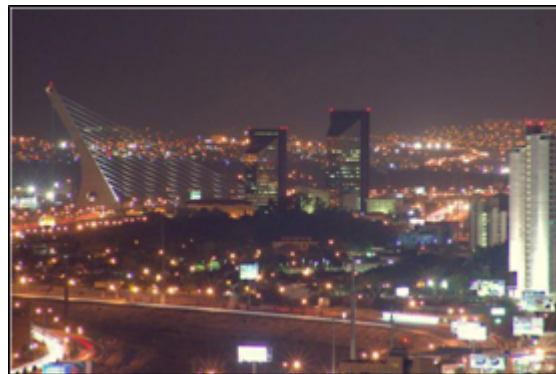
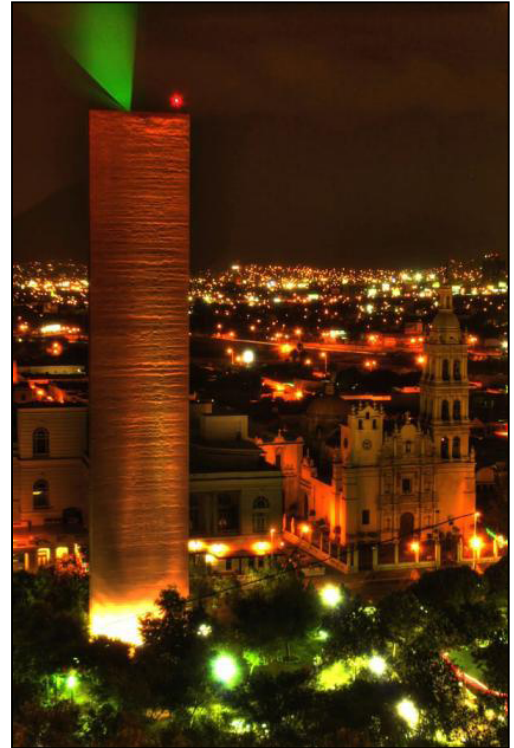
SHOPPING TIME! Monterrey shopping features modern commercial centers, crowded by locals that wish to buy the most fashionable item, handcrafts brought from all regions of Mexico, or furnishings for their houses, clear indicators of the area's prosperous economy and the people's strong purchasing power. This creates a great offer of items, and in many cases, real bargains, thanks to the competition among merchants. You will find different Monterrey shops with samples of folkloric art, silver, wood, blown glass, pottery items, and embroidered material, clay lamps and Huichol art, are some of the objects that you can acquire. There is also an outstanding variety and abundance of leather products and the area is probably the one with the biggest inventory of cowboy boots in the country. Monterrey also offers a great number of art galleries that exhibit samples of Mexican, Central American and South American contemporary painters and beautiful bronze and ceramic sculptures, which will really please collectors. The Pink Zone (Zona Rosa), next to the Macro Plaza, is the perfect place to do shopping in downtown. There is a large pedestrian boulevard there and it is frequented mainly by the locals.





## NIGHT CITY TOUR

We can't go without a look of Monterrey at night, so to end our tour we're going to take another look around the city at night! We are going to visit several parts of the city so you can see why Monterrey is the most modern city in México, then after we will take you back to the Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora Hotel.



# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Bohemia Night | Nueva Luna

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### Schedule of “Bohemia Night”

10:30 PM – Meet at Hotel Lobby!  
10:50 PM – Arrival to NUEVA LUNA  
11:00 PM – Dinner/ Live Music. Party!  
1:00 AM – First transfer to Hotel.  
2:00 AM – Second transfer to Hotel.  
3:00 AM – Third transfer to Hotel

### What's included in the “Bohemia Night” Package?

- Transportation: Bus transportation to and from the Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora to Nueva Luna Restaurant is included in this wonderful package, so don't worry about a thing! Meet us down in the lobby at the Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora promptly by 10:00pm. Return trips back to the hotel will occur in three increments, in case anyone wishes to leave a little earlier. Catch the return bus at 1:00am, 2:00am or 3:00am. Please note: if you're not on the bus by the last transfer at 3:00am you will (unfortunately) be left!
- Seating: There will be an especially reserved area at the restaurant just for CirqueCon members!
- Food: With four (4) passionates per table, we'll be treated to the Parrillada Grill, which includes Arrachera & Sirloin steak fajita and Chicken Fajita accompanied by sausage roasted in cheese, all served in a hot frying pan on a bed of onions, with peppers. Accompaniments include guacamole, chili peppers, and goaded and crisp Totopos. Mmm!
- Drinks: Two (2) non alcoholic drinks (soft drinks, lemonade, etc) are included per person. Any other extra beverages (including all alcoholic beverages) will be available by request to servers and will be at every person own expense. Tips for the extra beverages are not included with this package. Please note that, unlike the United States, many countries do charge for refills, so please keep this in mind if you are ordering a soft drink!
- Entertainment: Special live music including Rock, Pop, Salsa and North Mexican Traditional Music. Also a DJ will be playing between bands segments.



# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Group Meal | Hacienda San Angel

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### Schedule of "Group Meal"

1:30 PM – Meet in Hotel Lobby  
2:00 PM – Group Meal at Restaurant  
4:00 PM – Transfer to Obispado Hill  
4:30 PM – Group Picture!  
5:10 PM – Arrival to Hotel

### What is included in the "GROUP MEAL" package?

- Transportation: Once again CirqueCon is providing bus transportation to and from our headquarters hotel at Holiday Inn Parque Fundidora to the restaurant. Please be in the lobby by 1:30pm so the "magic bus" can be on time!
- Food: Enjoy a Mexican Buffet (all you can eat) at famous HACIENDA SAN ANGEL restaurant in a reserved area just for CirqueCon members! Buffet includes a wide selection of the most typical and famous cuisine associated with Mexico, so eat up! (Alcoholic beverages are not included).
- Sights: After our meal it's out to the Obispado hill for a magnificent view of Monterrey. Rising about 775 meters above sea level, this viewpoint is adorned with a fabulous circular esplanade with a humongous flag and pole at its center. You'll definitely want to bring your camera for this!



## **OBISPADO HILL / MEXICAN FLAG ESPLANADE**

The Mirador del Obispado (Lookout of the Bishopric) is located at the top of the Cerro del Obispado (Bishopric Hill) in the northern city of Monterrey, Mexico. It features the biggest bandera monumental (monumental flag) in Mexico. The hill and the lookout receive their name from the building constructed in the middle of the hill by the end of the 18th century, the Palacio del Obispado (Bishopric Palace).

At an altitude of 775 meters above the sea level the lookout consists of a 40 meters of diameter round-shaped esplanade with the flag pole at its center. There are benches, a small parking lot (mainly for handicapped people) and 3 French gardens. The installations are also equipped with restrooms and water troughs. It was conceived as a family walking stroll so the main road is very wide and well illuminated. The country's biggest monumental flag was inaugurated February 24, 2005 to celebrate the Mexican Flag Day. With a pole of 120 tons and 100.6 meters of height and the flag measuring 50 by 28.6 meters and weighting 230 kilograms (this is double the size of most other monumental flags) this place is a very attractive landmark for tourists as well as for locals.



# CirqueCon 2009: Monterrey

## Meet & Greet | Paseo Santa Lucía

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This year our traditional Meet & Greet will be a nice stroll around Parque Fundidora's famous Blast Furnace museum, and the boat tour around the Santa Lucia Riverwalk.

The Horno 3 blast furnace was once part of the now defunct Monterrey Steel Foundry Company and was in use from 1900 until the company's bankruptcy in 1986. Two years later the park was born. Horno 3 is a museum these days, and you can take a trip to the top of this monstrosity for one spectacular view of the city. It's 130ft (40m) from ground-level and is on a slated platform - so not only can you see all around but below you too; hold on! The incline chair (that seats about eight) will take you up to the top for about 80 pesos (approx \$8.00) and from there all of Monterrey opens up to you.

Below, while patrons explore the Foundry History Gallery (a look at the events which forged the steel industry in Mexico), the Steel Gallery (a look at a productive industrial processes, and the Blast Furnace show (a multi-sensorial show complete with stunning effects simulating the workings at No 3. Blast Furnace), you can take in the relative peace and quiet in the skies above the park. You really get a fantastic view of your surroundings from here including the fantastic 'M'-shaped Cerro de la Silla, my hotel (the Holiday Inn at Parque Fundidora) and the Grand Chapiteau itself (sitting next to Plaza Sesamo, a Sesame Street theme park.)

One of the most interesting and best modes of transportation in Monterrey is the boat on the Paseo Santa Lucia, an artificial water canal that connects Parque Fundidora 2.5-kilometers to the east with Museo de Historia/Plaza 400 (Museum of Mexican History) at the Macroplaza. On the way you pass beyond the park, through beautiful fountains and other waterworks displays, around a whirlpool maker and finally into the water-filled Plaza 400 at the Macroplaza, entertained not only by the city lights around you but by the tour guide driving the boat. Fantastico!



## MUSEO ACERNO HORNO 3

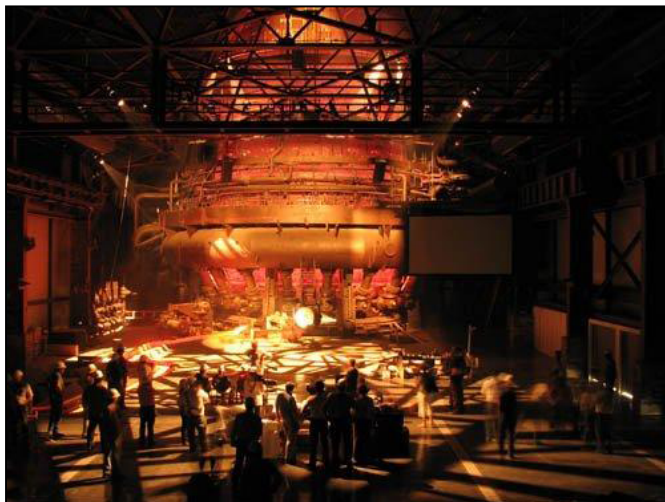
<http://www.horno3.org/>

This world-class facility tells the century-old story of steelmaking in Mexico, explains the process of making steel step by step, and allows visitors to experience the excitement of standing next to a working blast furnace spewing molten iron and smoke.

What makes the Museo del Acero so unique is that it is housed inside a seventy-meter-high blast furnace on the site of Mexico's first integrated steel mill, Fundidora de Monterrey. Horno No. 3 was built in 1967 and decommissioned when the mill closed in 1986. Today, what was once an industrial park is now Parque Fundidora, and Horno 3 Museo del Acero is the centerpiece of a green park that welcomes thousands of visitors every day.



The Museo del Acero's 16,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space offers a variety of exciting experiences that cater to diverse audiences. In the history gallery, México a Través del Acero, visitors can listen to steelworkers' stories on telephones, watch ironworkers busy on the job inside a model of Mexico's first skyscraper, and dress up as factory laborers. The playful, science-based steel gallery, La Acería, makes use of immersive environments and full body play to transport visitors to the mill or the mine. The museum's must-see attraction, El Gigante Dormido brings Blast Furnace No. 3 to life through sound effects, shooting sparks, bursts of flames, and a simulated river of molten iron. Finally, visitors can ride inside what was once the ore lift to the top of the blast furnace where they can walk along the same catwalks that workers once did, seventy meters above the ground.



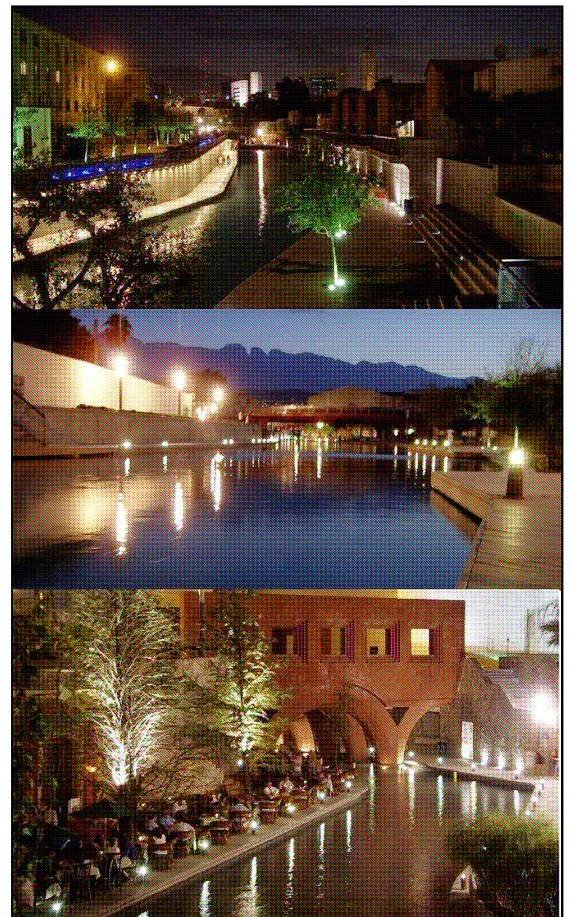
## **PASEO SANTA LUCÍA (RIVERWALK)**

[http://www.nl.gob.mx/?P=forum\\_paseo\\_stalucia](http://www.nl.gob.mx/?P=forum_paseo_stalucia)

The Santa Lucia River Walk is one of the most popular places for visitors that have come to the city for a vacation, to do business, or to participate in the great number of Congresses and Conventions celebrated during the year.

Its promenade starts at the “Ojos de Agua de Santa Lucia” where the city of Monterrey was founded. Through its lengthy passageway of 2.5 kilometers, it connects the Macro Plaza at the Mexican History Museum all the way to the Parque Fundidora. It has a depth of 1.20 meters, with a capacity of 44 thousand cubic meters of water. In the promenade you will find 10 beautiful pedestrian bridges between the corridors, and you can enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the 22 fountains located across the canal. The most famous fountain is the one located on the main lake; it is called The Waves Fountain (Fuente de las Olas).

At night, you will be sure to enjoy the diverse colors and scenic views along this beautiful river tour. You can walk or take a guided boat tour for an experience that you do not want to miss during your visit. Each place along the walkway can be enjoyed by yourself or accompanied by your family. With its tranquility, remarkable gastronomy, and the moonlight reflected on Santa Lucia’s water, this attraction is sure to entice you to visit Monterrey again in the future.







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## **ABOUT DRALION**

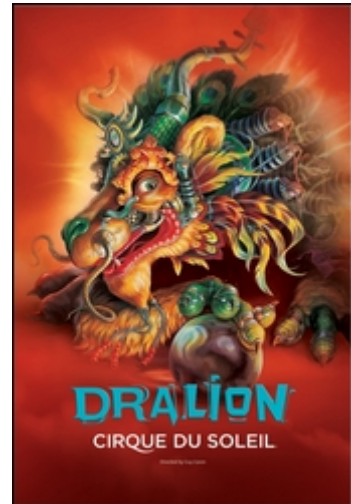
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# DRALION™

## CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

Dralion is an unprecedented fusion of ancient Chinese acrobatic traditions and the avant-garde approach of Cirque du Soleil. It is a contemporary collage of the original and the eclectic, the primitive and the post-modern. Dralion is a celebration of life and derives much of its inspiration from Eastern philosophy with its principles of perpetual discovery and harmony between man and nature. The show pays homage to the four elements - earth, air, fire and water - which take on human form and rule worlds defined by their individual vivid colors.



Dralion is an extraordinary voyage through a futuristic dimension-a place without time, ruled by magical laws. Here, the iridescent colors of the costumes are reflected in the metallic glints of a decor straight out of the cinema fantastique. The musical score simultaneously borrows from traditional sources while entering an electro-symphonic realm of a new world.

### **A VILLAGE ON THE MOVE**

Envision a self-sufficient village that moves from country to country, city to city. Transporting 140 people of 17 nationalities, 74 trailers, hauling 900 tons of equipment across Mexico... this is Dralion on tour.

Dralion is the 12th production of Cirque du Soleil. It is a celebration of the 4 elements that maintain the natural order: air, water, fire and earth. The show was launched in Montreal on April 22nd 1999; the tour traveled through North America, Europe and Japan and is now touring in Australia.

Since its beginning, Dralion has performed more than 3500 shows and visited over 55 cities.

A marvel on its own, Cirque du Soleil has five other such "villages on wheels" currently touring in Japan, Europe, North and South America with Quidam, Varekai, Corteo, Koozâ and OVO.

## THE SITE

Cirque du Soleil's mobile village includes the Grand Chapiteau (Big Top), artistic tent, box office, kitchen, school, offices and more. Completely self-sufficient for electrical power, the site relies only on local water supply and telecommunication facilities to support its infrastructure.

The infrastructure sits on an area of approximately 20 000 square meters. 74 trailers, 600 road cases, in total 900 metric tons of equipment are required to transport the entire tour throughout Australia.

Total site set-up requires seven days; tear-down takes three days. Forty technical personnel, with 100 local support crew, totaling 6,000 work hours are required to accomplish both tasks.

We are fully autonomous in terms of power. The 3 generators on site supply 1500 KW of power, enough energy to sustain a village of 500 people.

## THE GRAND CHAPITEAU

- The seating capacity of the Grand Chapiteau is approximately 2,600.
- The Grand Chapiteau is 19 meters high (approximately 61') and has a diameter of 51 meters (approximately 166'). The masts stand at 24 meters (approximately 80') above the ground.
- The Grand Chapiteau is manufactured in Bordeaux, France by Voileries du Sud-Ouest, internationally renowned for their big tops. The material used for the Grand Chapiteau is PVC canvas.
- It takes 500 stakes, driven into the ground to hold up the Grand Chapiteau (stakes are 1.5 meters (5 ft) in length).
- The Grand Chapiteau is entirely climate controlled. There are a total of 7 HVAC units on site (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) for both Grand Chapiteau and entrance tent.

## THE CHARACTERS

### HARMONY AMONG THE ELEMENTS

As the wheel of time turns, the universe, like the acrobat, searches for a perfect balance among the elements. Air, water, fire and earth assume human form and evolve into worlds defined by their own vivid colours.

### AZALA (AIR)

Azala is the goddess of Air. She is the guardian of the sun and immortality, floating above timeless space in hues of blue.

### GAYA (EARTH)

Gaya is the goddess of Earth. She possesses within her human warmth (fire) and the cool, fresh vitality of life (water). She adorns herself in ochre.

### OCEANE (WATER)

Oceane is goddess of Water. As queen of movement she controls, through the art of dance, the movement of the oceans. Her universe is green.

### YAO (FIRE)

The guide to the fiery demons, he commands the rhythm of the show. He symbolizes both good and evil. He sees life in vivid red.

### THE CLOWNS

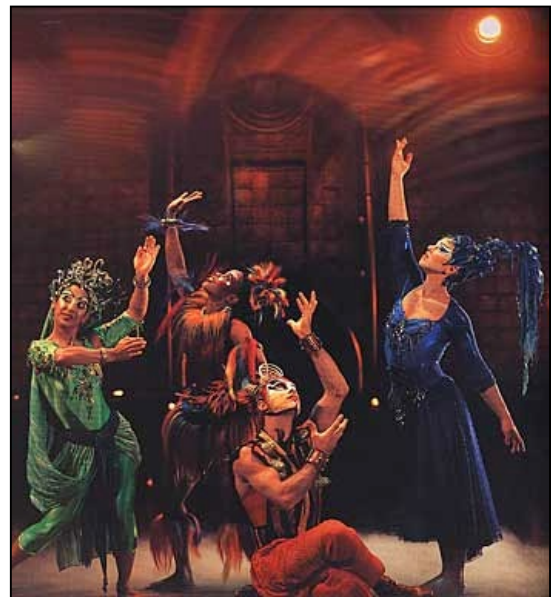
All is well in the best of worlds. However, these clever clowns manage to push this otherwise harmonious universe just slightly off-kilter.

### LITTLE BUDDHA

The Little Buddha is the chosen child. Although it possesses special powers that will allow it to eventually become an Âme-Force, it dreams of being just a regular child.

### THE VOCALS - L'ÂME-FORCE

The voices of Dralion sing an invented language to which only Cirque du Soleil holds the key. Their mysterious accents echo down through time: L'Âme-Force symbolises ultimate harmony between the four elements.





## CREATORS

Guy Laliberté, Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
Gilles Ste-Croix, VP of Creation, New Project Development  
Guy Caron, Director of Creation  
François Barbeau, Costume Designer  
Stéphane Roy, Set Designer  
Luc Lafortune, Lighting Designer  
Violaine Corradi, Composer  
Julie Lachance, Choreographer  
Guy Desrochers, Sound Designer  
Michel Dallaire, Clown Act Designer  
Sylvie Galarneau, General Artistic Director

## THE COSTUMES

Working closely with the Director and drawing his inspiration from the mythical fantasy world of Dralion, François Barbeau set out to create costumes that reflect the distinctive features of the four elements and the families of associated charters.

Each of the four elements and its associated family is represented by its own unique color. Blue is identified with air, green symbolizes water, red is for fire, and ochre represents the earth.

Over 5,000 meters of fabric were used in creating the costumes. Natural and synthetic fabrics such as silk, lycra, velvet, leather and cotton blend together harmoniously in Dralion's costumes. The fabrics come from regions around the globe, including China, the United States, Italy, France, England and Quebec.

Materials that might be considered somewhat unusual were used in accessories and to add finishing touches to costumes: horse hair, raffia, metal, window screen, emu feathers, crystal, Styrofoam, plastic, fun fur, springs and even hardware!

The artisans of Cirque du Soleil's costume workshop worked for over three months making all the costumes, hats, wigs and footwear required for Dralion to the specifications of the Costume Designer.



## THE ACTS

### SINGLE HANDBALANCING

This act is performed by a young girl who, although slight and fragile in appearance, will astound audiences with her strength and agility. She balances herself on a cane on one hand for an improbably long time, constantly changing positions. Only rarely does she touch the ground.



### BAMBOO POLES

In Bamboo Poles, six men maneuver long poles symbolizing fire. The poles are 4.8 meters (15.75 feet) long and weigh 7.5 kilograms (16.5 lbs.). The artists demonstrate a keen sense of precision and synchronization as they keep the poles 'in flight' overhead while performing acrobatic feats on the ground.



### JUGGLING

From the moment he steps on stage, Vladik captures the audience's attention. To a stylised choreography that makes the most of his incredible flexibility, he incorporates a fast-moving juggling act with hints of modern dance. Vladik's incredible precision and mastery of his art are evident as he juggles up to seven balls at the same time.



### TRAMPOLINE

Defying the rules of gravity, fearless aerialists bounce off trampolines using the futuristic backdrop both as a diving board and landing pad. They cascade perilously through the air performing spectacular stunts at a dizzying pace.



### DOUBLE TRAPEZE

In Dralion, two couples perform breathtaking acrobatic feats 6-meters high in unison and in turn on a double trapeze, with the catchers swinging back and forth. Double Trapeze is a unique act where the limits of the possible are pushed to the extreme.



### BALLET ON LIGHTS

Presented for the first time in the world by Cirque du Soleil, this act is sure to amaze audiences. Seven young women, on points, perform a ballet on light bulbs.



### **DRALIONS**

A blend of the traditional Chinese dragon and lion dances, Dralions, as reworked by Cirque du Soleil, takes on new scope here. In a dynamic and energetic tumbling sequence, the artists come on stage on wooden balls which they roll under their feet and on which they perform somersaults. Five dralions perform acrobatics around them.



### **FOOT JUGGLING**

Skill and coordination are gracefully highlighted here which a young girl balances and twirls Chinese umbrellas on the soles of her feet.

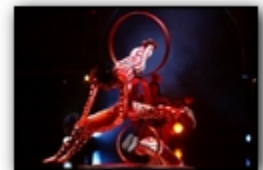


### **AERIAL PAS DE DEUX**

Pas de deux is a languorous aerial dance. A couple, intertwined, flies over the stage in a long band of blue cloth. Within the cloth, they perform various acrobatic figures that demand great feats of strength and flexibility.



As a prelude to Pas de deux, four young women perform an aerial ballet. Suspended from the set's giant claws by special harnesses, they twirl and float over the heads of their partners.



### **HOOP DIVING**

Derived from Chinese acrobatic tradition, the hoop diving act takes on a tribal flavour from the African-influenced music to which it is performed. Ten male artists dive and throw themselves like arrows through 18 wooden hoops. The hoops are fastened to a table; some remain stationary while others rotate.



### **SKIPPING ROPES**

A children's game familiar to everyone, the skipping rope takes on a new dimension in Dralion. This creation of Li Xi Ning is brought to a new level of acrobatic prowess. As long skipping ropes beat time, the artists between them perform flips, make pyramids and even form a three-person-2-meter high column.



### **AERIAL HOOP - TSYGANKA (In Rotation)**

An awe-inspiring creation of strength and agility, this exotic aerial ballet captures the passion and energy of its signature element, "fire". Suspended from a hoop high above the stage, the artist presents an evocative choreography in which the hoop and body become one in a dance of acrobatic precision.



## TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

Guided by the desire to pay homage to the structure of the human body, Stéphane Roy set himself a challenge: to devise a concept in which each set element was an essential part of a whole. From start to finish, it took six months of intensive conceptual work, four months of construction and two months of fine-tuning to produce an immense technological structure that also doubles as an acrobatic prop. Given the structure's uniqueness and complexity, setting it up under the Big Top takes approximately 50 specialized technicians about 50 hours to complete.

### THE STAGE

The floor is over 12.7 m (41.67 feet) in diameter. It is covered with Taraflex, a surface material designed to absorb shock and which is a key factor in preventing artist injuries. Shapes painted onto the floor are meant to echo the technical rings located over the stage. Strategically positioned around the stage are about 10 trap doors used both for artistic purposes—performers can use them to appear or disappear—and for technical purposes, during acts such as the double trapeze.

### THE SUN AND ITS COMPONENTS

Three aluminum rings, each performing its own unique function, hang a little over 13 m (42.65 feet) above the stage. The first is simply called the grid. It supports the technical ring while serving as a catwalk for performers waiting to make their entrance and as a work area for riggers. At just over 11 m (36 feet) in diameter, the second and largest ring is referred to as the technical ring. It is used to hang various projectors and hold up an enormous lantern. The third and final ring, dubbed "the Sun", is the acrobatic element of the set. Measuring 6.5 m (21.32 feet) in diameter, it can be moved up and down, rotated, and placed at different angles.

### THE METALLIC WALL AND ITS CLAWS

At 8 m (26.25 feet) high and 18 m (59 feet) wide, the metallic wall resembles an immense coat of mail. The wall is semi-transparent and covered with perforated aluminum. Serving as both an orchestra pit and the wings of the stage, the wall supports technical elements (the claws), technicians and artists, whether they are suspended, attached to or climbing the wall. Made of steel and aluminum, the claws are a little over 5 m (16.4 feet) long. They are enormous cantilevered hooks attached to the wall 7 m (23 feet) above the stage.



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# **CIRQUE REFLECTIONS**

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# Live to Cirque



BY: RICKY "RICHASI" RUSSO

## « Bienvenidos a Mexico »

Quidam in Monterrey



From the very first moment I stepped off the small jetliner and felt the warmth of the afternoon sun wash across my face I sensed I was in a strange, new land.

The place I left was cold, dark and still tucked in for the night. The sun here was full and bright - sharing its radiant energy with us unabated by cloud or storm, and at the same time becoming playful with a zephyr, teasing it to tottler about in excited rushes, bringing balance to the day's warm brilliance.

And on those breezes a tantalizing hint of spice. Ahhhhhhhhhhh.

In all my voyages since I'd been bitten by the travel bug in 2002, though I've visited north many times, I had yet to trek south of the border to Mexico, where I find myself now for the very first time.

And why am I here? For Cirque du Soleil of course! I'm here to see Quidam, one of Cirque du Soleil's signature shows with one of Mexico's most fervent fans of the troupe: Rodolfo Elizondo!

My exhilarating adventure began the moment I met Rodolfo and left General Mariano Escobedo International Airport (MTY) making our way into the Zona Centro of Monterrey, 30 minutes away. It was a whirlwind weekend that I shall not soon forget.



## The City of Mountains ///

Monterrey (pronounced with a heavy 'rrrrr') is a very modern Mexico City situated in the northeastern state of Nuevo León, approximately 150 miles south of the United States border. This state capital boasts a populace that ranks it third behind the Greater Mexico City and Greater Guadalajara metropolises and is home to many businesses, industries, universities and families. But for only three short weeks, Monterrey would also be home to Quidam.



Rodolfo and I scrambled into his Toyota SUV and made haste to the center of Monterrey where the blue-and-yellow striped big-top awaited us. While we had a number of hours yet to go before our performance began, neither of us could wait to steal a look at the Grand Chapiteau standing triumphantly in Parque Fundidora. And as soon as we rounded the corner of this millworks-turned-greenspace, I spotted it.

"There it is! There it is!" I said, mimicking a short clip from Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (Trekkies will no doubt recognize a similar line spoken by Khan as he tracks the Enterprise down in the Mutara Nebula.)



After spying the Grand Chapiteau and its immediate surroundings from the car, we grabbed lunch at one of Rodolfo's favorite eating establishments at the Galerías Valle Oriente. It was a buffet of wonderful Mexican cuisine: beans and rice, chicken with a chocolate sauce (chicken mole), grilled beef, salads, fruits and chips! After lunch Rodolfo took me on a whirl-wind tour of his hometown, which not only thoroughly encompassed the brightest spots of Monterrey but also a journey that I found culturally fascinating.

Our first stop was the Mirador del Obispado (Bishop's Lookout), which is located atop Cerro del Obispado, the hill of the same name. Rising about 775 meters above sea level, this viewpoint is adorned with a fabulous circular esplanade with a humongous flag and pole at its center. Besides a fantastic panoramic view of the surrounding city - you can easily spot all of downtown Monterrey and its sprawling environs from here, and Monterrey's namesake mountains: Cerro de las Mitras (Miter Hill), Cerro del Topo Chico (Small Mole Hill), Cerro de la Loma Larga (Long Slope Hill), La Huasteca, and, of course, Cerro de la Silla (or Saddle Hill), which rises above 1800-meters (or 5900-feet) - you'll also find Mexico's biggest monumental flag here.



This larger-than-life flag, which is a focal point of Mexican independence celebrations here in Nuevo León, weighs over 200-kilograms and measures 50 x 28.6 meters. That's one huge flapping green, white and red symbol of these Mexican states! And this atop a pole that stands slightly over 100-meters high and weighing over 120 tons itself. While that is impressive and a fabulous sight to see the vista of the surrounding environs is the reason to come here. And on a clear, sunny day like this day, the sky's the limit!

Next we made our way down to the Macroplaza, which is a 400,000 square meter court consisting of various museums, monuments, gardens, fountains and various other green-space accoutrements. It's anchored by the Palacio Municipal (Municipal Palace) on the south end at Constitución Avenue and the Antigua Palacio Federal (Antique Federal Palace) on the north end at Cinco-de-Mayo Avenue. The Macroplaza features a number of monuments and other pedestrian zones, but the one item that fascinated me most was Fuente de Neptuno (the Fountain of Neptune), a beautiful bronze fountain that represents Neptune, the Roman god of the Sea (also formally known as Fuente de la Vida - the fountain of Life). After snapping a few pictures - I really love fountains - we made our way underground and I got to experience the metro system first hand.



We ducked underground at Zaragoza station (a stop on Line 2, or the Green Line) and rode it four stops up to Cuauhtémoc, switched lines to Line 1 (the yellow line) and took it all the way out to Estación Parque Fundidora, which is about 2 blocks from the Parque and, of course, is the site of the Grand Chapiteau. Metrorey is one of the more modern systems I've ever used (opening in 1991 and 1994 respectively) and it has a unique identifier for each of its stations, which I found very interesting: a logo.

The one at Cuauhtémoc, for example, is a stylized headshot of the important Aztec ruler of the same name. Parque Fundidora's logo has trees to represent the park. Other more interesting ones include: a phonograph for Edison station; a canon for the Felix U. Gomez station (since he was a Mexican Military General); a stylized headshot of Simón Bolívar (a liberator), for the station of the same name; a pictograph of a train under maintenance for the Talleres station, a flame and atom diagram for the Universidad station, and an obelisk to mark the Fundadores station.

We took our leave of the metro and made our way across the road into Parque Fundidora, the sun still shining brightly overhead. Our destination at the parque, of course, was the Grand Chapiteau. And once we got on-site we immediately took more pictures of us next to the advertisement banners in all sorts of wacky stances and poses and—Oh, wait... did I neglect to mention that earlier?!



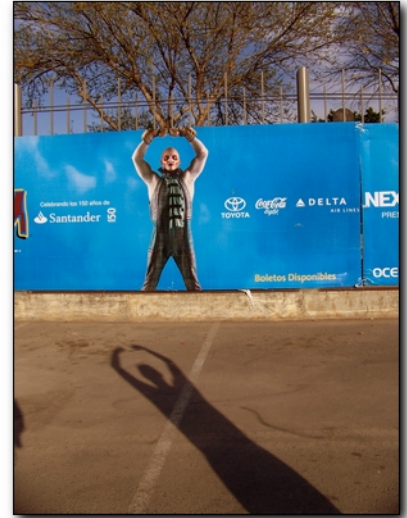
Banner pictures on-site were just a continuation of this morning's antics that were truly a three-ring circus all on its own. Let me explain:

On our way up to the Mirador del Obispado earlier in the morning, I spotted one of the very, very few advertisement banners for Quidam in Monterrey; crazy Rodolfo immediately slammed on the brakes and whipped out his digital camera. Snap! Snap! Flash! Snap! The next thing I know the SUV lurches round and comes to a rushed stop into a driveway nook about 10 paces from the banner. Rodolfo was already on foot before I could say "¿Qué tal?" ("What's up?"). At first I wondered what he had stopped for but then it hit me. He was going to get personal, up close shots!

The two of us then posed with glee in front of this particular banner, featuring the headless one himself (Quidam), holding his signature green umbrella. We took turns placing ourselves in front of the banner and then in place of the character (assuming the role). It was a blast! Some shots required us to stand in the middle of the road, which while not a busy thoroughfare, was still quite steady with traffic. But anything for Cirque du Soleil... right Rodolfo? (¡ay caramba!... he's trying to get me killed...)



The site itself was also covered with banners in several varieties: one with Quidam, one featuring Steven Ragatz as the character of Father, Olga Pikhienko the Hand-balancer (who was not going to be performing for personal reasons), one of Mark Ward being quirky John, and one of Viktor Katona as Boum Boum, the gloved one. And naturally we took our pictures with these banners too - again with Quidam pretending to hold his umbrella, one with Olga pretending to hold up her canes, and a third with Boum Boum. The third one I took a little differently: rather than stand next to the banner holding up my arms in the same pose as the character, I used the setting sun as a backdrop, and took the shot of my extended shadow on the ground in the same arms-over-head pose. It really turned out to be a neat picture!



Before long we made ourselves leave the Grand Chapiteau (Quidaaaaaaam!) and continued our explorations in the park. Our next stop was Horno 3 at the old Monterrey Foundry. This blast furnace was once part of the now defunct Monterrey Steel Foundry Company and was in use from 1900 until the company's bankruptcy in 1986. Two years later the park was born. Horno



3 is a museum these days, and you can take a trip to the top of this monstrosity for one spectacular view of the city. It's 130ft (40m) from ground-level and is on a slated platform - so not only can you see all around but below you too; hold on! The incline chair (that seats about eight) will take you up to the top for about 80 pesos (approx \$8.00) and from there all of Monterrey opens up to you.

Below, while patrons explored the Foundry History Gallery (a look at the events which forged the steel industry in Mexico), the Steel Gallery (a look at a productive industrial processes, and the Blast Furnace show (a multi-sensorial show complete with stunning effects simulating the workings at No 3. Blast Furnace), Rodolfo and I were taking in the relative peace and quiet in the skies above the park. You really get a fantastic view of your surroundings from here including the fantastic 'M'-shaped Cerro de la Silla, my hotel (the Holiday Inn at Parque Fundidora) and the Grand Chapiteau itself (sitting next to Plaza Sesamo, a Sesame Street theme park.)

On the way back to the car, which was parked at the far end of the Macroplaza, Rodolfo and I took one of the most interesting and best modes of transportation in Monterrey: a boat on the Paseo Santa Lucia, an artificial water canal that connects Parque Fundidora 2.5-kilometers to the east with Museo de Historia/Plaza 400 (Museum of Mexican History) at the Macroplaza. Between the group of school kids singing and playing for the park crowd as we waited to get on the boat, and a dinghy filled with a Mexican instrumental quartet, and traversing this waterway in the twilight of sunset was such a delightful and relaxing cap to our afternoon. On the way you pass beyond the park, through beautiful fountains and other waterworks displays, around a whirlpool maker and finally into the water-filled Plaza 400 at the Macroplaza, entertained not only by the city lights around you but by the tour guide driving the boat. Fantastico!



But before running off to our vehicle, Rodolfo and I make one final stop along the Macroplaza: to the Palacio de Gobierno on the Explanada de los Hèros. This is the official seat of the Governor, or at least where his office is located, but it also serves as a Museum of local history and political development. The whole story of Nuevo León is adorned on the walls: you learn about what the early inhabitants were like, see some important artifacts of state, and see how the people of the region used to live.



One of the nice things you'll learn here is the meaning behind the coat of arms. Since my Spanish was rather rusty, I could not appreciate the full story so I looked it up later. According to the Encyclopedia of Mexican States, "The coat of arms of Nuevo León is made up [of] four squares. Six bees representing the hard-working nature of the local citizens are at the top. The upper-left square features a picture of the sun over La Silla Hill (a landmark that often symbolizes the state) with an orange tree. In the upper right-hand square a crowned lion is [featured] ready to attack. In the lower-left there is a picture of the San Francisco convent. On

the lower-right five smoking chimneys represent area industry. The weapons around the border represent both native warriors and Spanish conquerors." And then there's the state's motto: *Sempre Ascendens* (Always Rising). Cool!

Seeing the palace lit up at night is just as brilliant. And if you're looking to connect with the young locals, the surrounding esplanade is a wonderful place to hang out. Also be sure to look for a statue of a stylized horse... he's very popular!

Then, after checking into my hotel and resting for merely a moment, Rodolfo and I were back on foot across the *parque* toward the Grand Chapiteau...

We were ready for Quidam.

### **Quidam... Quidam! ///**

Tendré alguna vez la valentía de mi indignación?  
Me hubiera gustado no morir.  
Me hubiera gustado no crecer nunca.  
Hubiera querido romperme el alma.  
Hubiera querido desterrar todas las penas enterradas.  
Deso que lo quieran con locura.  
Me hubiera gustado rasgar con una voz áspera la superficie demasiado lisa de nuestras buenas intenciones.

From the moment John quietly appears to us and slips into his purple coat hanging neatly upon the coat-rack on stage, we're not quite sure what to make of this zany world we find ourselves in.

Many words have been used to describe Cirque du Soleil's Quidam over the years - artistic, cinematic, poignant, touching, agonizing, disturbing, striking, alluring and beautiful - and regardless of which of these words you choose, it is hard to deny that Quidam is one of those quintessential productions that strikes a raw emotional chord within each of us, one that is too hard to dismiss.

Quidam, which comes from the Latin for "a nameless passerby" marks Cirque du Soleil's ninth production, premiering in Montreal on April 23, 1996. Since then it has been heralded as one of Cirque du Soleil's quintessential productions, showing us that we are all Quidams. "It could be anyone, anybody," the show's programme allows. "Someone coming, going, living in our anonymous society. A member of the crowd, one of the silent majority. One who cries out; sings and dreams within us all."

In the world of Cirque du Soleil's Quidam, the one who cries out is Zoë, a young girl who fumes because she believes she's seen everything there is





to see, experienced all there is to experience. For her, the world has lost all meaning. Her anger, sharp and unforgiving, shatters her little world and soon she finds herself in the universe of Quidam. Within this realm she finds she is not alone - Zoë is joined by a joyful companion (Target) and a more mysterious character (John) that will attempt to seduce her with the marvelous, the unsettling, and the terrifying.

We find the space before us is set as a typical family sitting room - two slanted, metallic chairs, a curvy floor lamp, a birdcage (with a red ball perched in the bird's spot), an old-style transistor radio sitting comfortably upon a side table, and a swirl-patterned throw-rug are dotted about - and we watch as John busies himself about this rather unremarkable room.

The radio catches John's eye, however, and he saunters over, flipping it on and filling the big-top with a nice, light tango. Satisfied with his selection, John then proceeds to run amok: carousing with audience members as they come through the doorway, playing with their hair (or lack-thereof in some cases), taking patrons on a wild goose chase, eating others' popcorn and generally being a playful nuisance.

When John returns to the radio and attempts to find something new to lift our spirits we see what kind of a ham John really aspires to be.

Passing through the frequencies, he lands upon a station playing the soothing notes of "Kumbalawé", a song from Saltimbanco, an older (chronologically speaking) Cirque du Soleil show.

When that does not elicit a response from his audience, he turns the dial and blasts the harsh overture of "Eclipse" from Nouvelle Expérience (an even older Cirque du Soleil show, chronologically speaking).

Satisfied that he's once again captured our attention, he changes the dial quickly and finds a station playing the title song from Alegría. Everyone in the big-top recognizes this song and they begin to clap and cheer. John doesn't think highly of this, however, and he clamps his nose shut in disgust (pee-you!) then mock gags himself with his index finger. (I love it!)

Eventually John advises us of the rules to be followed under the Grand Chapiteau (en español) and then the world turns dark and still.

Until...

\*click\*

The floor-lamp in the middle of the room suddenly flickers to life and we find ourselves in observance of Zoë and family on a typical day, seated comfortably in their sitting room (the room we saw as we entered the Big Top). Dad is content reading his newspaper and avoiding everything around him. Mom is expressionless, vacantly staring out into the nothingness of space while clutching that old transistor radio. Zoë, the child, is bored and in her attempt to

gain her parents' attention, hopscotch's across the floor in front of them. But when they pay her no notice, Zoë becomes despondent and she wanders around the room - tracing a message on an imaginary window, running her finger across the family bird cage. But just when she thinks about turning off the light and returning to her room to sulk...

There's a knock on the front door.

Startled, Zoë runs over to see who it could be, but what she finds on the other side frightens her - there's a headless man with an umbrella on her doorstep! This man enters and she backpedals into the room. She watches him silently then with a flash of lightning and a rumble of thunder, he drops his hat in the middle of the room and leaves.

Frightened, yet undeniably curious, Zoë picks up the hat, holds it up to her ear and smiles at the whimsical sounds coming from within. Checking Mom and Dad to see if they're watching, she tentatively places the hat upon her head. In the moment the hat comes to rest upon her brow, Zoë's world comes alive - Mom, Dad and the entire living room slowly float away and Zoë (with us) becomes swept up into the universe of Quidam!

For those unfamiliar with the show, the performance is broken up into two one-hour halves with a 30-minute intermission between the two, and flows in the following manner: German Wheel, Diabolos, Aerial Contortion in Silk, Skipping Ropes, Aerial Hoops, (Intermission), Hand Balancing, Spanish Webs, Statue (Vis Versa), Cloud Swing, and Banquine.

All too soon the red proscenium-like curtains of Quidam float into place, signaling that the end is near. Zoë makes her re-appearance through a man-hole with the assistance of our resident clown (who is very funny, btw!) and she rejoins her family, who has finally taken note of the wondrous world around them. The Generics, androgynous characters dressed in white that appear in and disappear from the world of Quidam at will, have reappeared and have begun (with the assistance of John and Fritz) an energetic, ballet of happiness - dancing with each other, playing with one another and hopping, skipping and jumping around.

But a loud thunder crack sends them all to the stage where they lay motionless, lifeless and the Family is puzzled and insecure.

Quidam, who had been watching the final scene unfold from the depths of the stage, steps forward now to reclaim his blue bowler hat from Zoë; she is startled and becomes exasperated - she realizes he has come to take this fantastical world away from her! But a glance to the side shows her that the journey is not yet over - her family appears reanimated and full of life, which is what she wanted most. So, very reluctantly Zoë displaces the hat from her head, holds it in her arms and looks around one last time. Her white-garbed friends, who have been laying there lifeless, are now staring directly at her! She gently hands Quidam the hat, re-joins her newly-restored family and begins to sing (the signature song of the show.)

John removes the dad's shoes and returns them to him (he stepped into them just after the living room floated away, figuratively taking his place) and the Generics come alive, slowly filling the edges of the stage. And once encapsulating the entire stage - and thus closing off the world of Quidam to us - they move to zipper away their hoods to reveal who they really are... the colorful artists in the show!

Wow!

Although our performance was not status quo, and many of the traditional pieces, character and story queues, and even a couple of the acts were missing (both Hand-Balancing and Statue were out, but Steven Ragatz's juggling act was in); experiencing Quidam again under the Grand Chapiteau was a treat unsurpassed and the show still managed to rend my soul on more than one occasion. It was hard to leave the big top at the show's finale.

After the evening's performance, Rodolfo and I hung around the sites exit to see if we could chat with some of the artists who were quickly trying to escape to catch their shuttle bus that would take them back to their hotel. (We came to find out there were only two shuttle runs: just after the show and then an hour later. Most of the artists and crew didn't want to be left behind for that second shuttle!); a few stopped and chatted with us. Most of these artists were friends of Rodolfo's and were glad to see him, but couldn't stop for a long conversation, so after a quick hand-shake and congrats on a good show, they were off again.

Many artists went by in a blur and thus the names of many escape me, but we did see Olga walk by, the German Wheel artist, the man who played Boum-Boum, the entire Spanish Webs gang and countless others. Once the bus took off so did Rodolfo and I.

## **Now I've REALLY Been to Mexico ///**

Come Sunday morning, as the two of us set off once again to explore the Macroplaza of Zona Centro, my guide said something very peculiar to me: I had not yet been to Mexico.

What?

"You've not been to Mexico," he said "until you've been to Vips!"

Okay, vamanos!

Vips? What is a Vips?





VIPS, as it turns out, is a Mexican eatery chain owned and operated by Wal-Mart Mexico that specializes in breakfasts, lunches and dinners with - what else - a Mexican flair. It's one of Mexico's more famous chains (you can find more information at <http://www.vips.com.mx>), and it is said you've only really been to Mexico once you've eaten at a VIPS. Why? Because everyone has eaten at VIPS and, like McDonalds, they're everywhere! Well... almost. I had a more traditional Mexican breakfast of soft tortias and salsa with melted cheese and sour cream on top, but you could get more traditional North American breakfast items such as: eggs, pancakes, waffles, bacon, etc. Why would you, though?

And while we waited for our food Rodolfo and I reminisced about Quidam.

Both he and I were disappointed that the Statue act was missing from the previous night's show. While we didn't know why it was missing, we both agreed the act was a seminal piece of Quidam and it's hard to see the show continue in its absence. So many pieces of Quidam's theme and story congregate based on this presentation so most of the second-half of the show was quite disjointed. At least, we both said, we were able to see Ragatz perform his juggling act and hear "Rivage" live under the big top again.

We also talked about how we royally scared Boum-Boum. As a finale to the Diabolo's act (which comes just prior to Tissue (or Aerial Contortion in Silk), a joyful celebration commences with streamers of blue and white raining down upon the stage and a dance and a jig by a few of the Egare class of characters. But Boum Boum, the ghastly gloved figure, makes a short life out of the celebration - he hates it - and comes right on point to bellow a gut wrenching scream of anguish, silencing the world around him. What causes this piercing call for help I do not know, but just as soon as he was done with his scream, Rodolfo and I yelled right back. This appeared to take Boum-Boum off guard; he became frightened and immediately ran away like a scared little boy! (Actually, if an audience member does yell back he will run away, rather than stand triumphant and defiant. But it was fun!)

And speaking of the Tissue act, it's another one of our favorite parts of the night's show. At that time of the show the world of Quidam turns stranger yet, and even more dark:

John re-appears with a megaphone in his hand, barking gibberish orders to various personages left on stage. Zoë sits dejected on a giant swing, slowly swinging herself back and forth observing the chaos around her. Her father is suspended in mid-air, unaware that he is so, and takes the paper from around his face and tears it up, allowing its torn pieces to fall below him. And at the sound of wind, Fritz gets down on all fours and howls at the moon. And through this fantastical kaleidoscope of abstraction, a strip of red silk floats into view and unfurls across the stage; swept up within it is the contorted body of Isabelle Vaudelle, contortionist extraordinaire.

She climbs, twists, and slides through the silk slowly and deliberately at first, but thunderclaps signal a tense change and her movements become fast, chaotic and violent. And just when it seems she can not hang on any longer, her body suddenly drops and she becomes entangled within the silk. Her body flails for a moment... and again... and then becomes limp and lifeless. She has hung herself in the red silk.

The moment her body began to flail, goose-bumps trickled down my arms and I trembled in uncontrollable shivers. Vaudelle's given sacrifice in congruence with the hauntingly beautiful "Let Me Fall" wrenched at my insides. I stared, transfixed with mouth agape (for the first time), watching the entire scene unfold. This act has never affected me so, but it was just so powerful and so sad and so poignant, especially when the father came and carried her away from her misery, I couldn't help it.

If the phantasmagorical yet enormously powerful opening of the show doesn't touch you emotionally (doesn't that give you chills? It does me!), or the hauntingly beautiful tissue act, perhaps the melancholic conclusion to the first half of the show will touch you (it's probably the third best emotional moment for me in the entire show):

A thunderclap tears through the big-top. Rain is falling somewhere just off stage, the sound of a small hand-bell chimes in the distance, and a haunting male voice fills the void. Ominous creatures dressed in white appear and fill the stage, taking their rest. Zoë's Mom is off to the side clutching onto a huge red balloon while Zoë's Dad is dangling overhead with the birdcage in his hand seemingly ready to encapsulate something. At the sound of another chime Zoë looks up and is compelled to release her balloon; she does so and her father captures it, receding into the darkness. And then the entire sky is filled with red as the male voice comes to a crescendo, and the nameless quidams stir releasing their own troubled souls.

One day I'm going to bring my own red balloon to let go right along with them...

Oh, food!

With our bellies full, we set off once again to explore the Zona Central of Monterrey, but unfortunately the weather wasn't nearly as cooperative (or nice) - it turned cloudy, windy and cold. The worst part of it, though, was being ill prepared for the dip in temperature. All I had with me were short-sleeved T-shirts and shorts - typical Florida (and all points south) attire!

Brr!

Regardless of the weather, the two of us ended up on the streets of Monterrey, walking to our second destination of the day: MARCO.

MARCO, short for Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (or the Contemporary Art Museum of Monterrey) is located on the corner of Zuazua and Ocampo Centro and offers temporary exhibits of the most outstanding new Latin American contemporary art around. Rodolfo took me on a tour of the "Mexican Room" where he showed me some outstanding paintings and drawings from such Mexican artists as Diego Creek, Carlos Mérida and Left Maria,



many of which touched upon the various socio-political topics of the time. But political paintings weren't the majority here: wonderful mosaics of nature and pencil-art were also on display. I highly recommend MARCO to experience the very singular and distinct style of Mexican art. It's great!

Next up was the Museo de Historia Mexicana (or the Mexican History Museum). This place is a treasure trove of exploration, art and enlightenment for those interested in the history of this land. At this museum you'll find temporary and permanent exhibits divided into five areas which represent important periods in Mexican history: The initial creation of these lands ("Earth"), the Aztec and Mayan civilizations ("Ancient Mexico"), the Spanish conquistadores and the arrival of the Europeans ("The Viceroy Period"), the Spanish/American wars ("19th Century") and modern democratic Mexico ("Modern Mexico").

While I am not usually a museum-goer, this particular museum brings out a fascinating tale and places Mexican history into perspective, a story that an outsider seldom appreciates.

For example, did you know that every schoolchild in Mexico must learn to count via the old Maya way using the dots and bars system? While simple on the surface, the Maya system of counting used a base-20 counting system intermixed with a base-5 system. Numbers one through 19 are relatively easy to discern, but after 19 the system changes. Rather than writing them using the same bars and dots, now they are written in powers of twenty. Wikipedia explains it thusly: "For example, thirty-three would be written as one dot above three dots, which are in turn atop two lines. The first dot represents "one twenty" or "1×20", which is added to three dots and two bars, or thirteen. Therefore,  $(1 \times 20) + 13 = 33$ . Upon reaching 400, another row is started. The number 429 would be written as one dot above one dot above four dots and a bar, or  $(1 \times 400) + (1 \times 20) + 9 = 429$ ."

Besides learning how to count Maya style, I also learned about Mexico's tri-color flag and the significance (and story) behind the coat-of-arms featured prominently in its center:

The flag's colors actually have two meanings these days. Originally the colors stood for Independencia (Green), Religión (White), and Unión (Red), but now stand for Hope, Unity and Religion



respectively. The coat-of-arms is a scene inspired by an Aztec legend regarding the founding of Tenochtitlán (the ancient capital of the Aztec civilization where Mexico City now stands). According to legend, the nomadic Aztecs wandered throughout the Mexican lands searching for the sign that would indicate where their capital would be built. The sign, said war-god Huizilopochtli, was to be an eagle holding a serpent perched atop a nopal (a form of cactus) in the middle of a lake. After many years of wandering the tribe found this promised sign in the middle of Lake Texcoco and founded the city we know today as Mexico City. And it's this image we see as the country's coat-of-arms.

But...

Much like the finale of Quidam, all too soon my journey had to come to a close. And once I'd learned a bit about Mexican history at the Museo de Historia Mexicana, it was time to return to the airport and depart Monterrey.

I wish to wholeheartedly thank Rodolfo Elizondo for being my friend and guide during my quick stay in Mexico. I wish above all else I could've had more time there, seeing the show again and tour more of Monterrey; alas it was not meant to be. But I do know this: I will not hesitate to travel to Monterrey or anywhere in Mexico in the future.



So the next time Cirque is in Mexico I may just catch a plane!

{fin}

*This article - « Bienvenidos a Mexico » - is a special excerpt from "Live to Cirque", a self-published collection of stories chronicling my adventures undertaken in concordance with Cirque du Soleil and the experiences found therein over the past ten years. For more information pertaining to this article or other "Live to Cirque" experiences, please visit the CHRONICLES section of my website, [www.Richasi.com](http://www.Richasi.com).*

# Monterrey: a Cirque du Soleil fan City!

BY: RØDØLFØ ELIZØNDØ



Welcome to Monterrey! We are really happy to have you here at home. Monterrey is a very unique city in Mexico, different and best of the city is their people! As part of the celebration of the sixth edition of the Cirque Con at Monterrey we want to share with you a little bit of the story of Cirque Du Soleil in our city. For Cirque du Soleil, Monterrey means a very special city since here they have had different experiences that have marked Cirque!

Dralion it's the 4th production that visit us!

1. SALTIMBANCO at Gran Carpa Fundidora from Aug 4-Sep 11, 2005
2. DELIRIUM at Arena Monterrey from April 26 –May 1, 2007
3. QUIDAM at Gran Carpa Fundidora from Jan. 26-Feb. 11, 2008
4. DRALION at Gran Carpa Fundidora from Sept. 17-Oct. 11, 2009



Hola amigos. I'm so happy to share with you one of my best experiences with Cirque du Soleil here in Monterrey. This is the third largest city in Mexico and is the most important industrial and economical power in Mexico. Worldwide recognized for being one of the most important cities for business and also for the hospitality of the people. Monterrey is surrounded by several mountains, so the views in Monterrey are just amazing.

The first visit of Cirque du Soleil to Monterrey was in August 2005 with Saltimbanco. We were the first stop in Latin America after Paris, France. The set up and beginning of Saltimbanco in Monterrey has been one of the biggest challenges in the history of Cirque, because the hurricane Katrina was in the way to Monterrey, so the original site of Saltimbanco was completely destroyed, so in less than 24 hours they needed to find a new site for the Grand Chapiteau and set up everything on time for the premiere. Teamwork was the key and Cirque Du Soleil made on time. Saltimbanco had sold out shows in Monterrey. So they made a great debut in this economical powerful city. The whole Saltimbanco team really enjoyed Monterrey. In Cirque Club they wrote this about Monterrey:

*Monterrey, the beginning of a new adventure for Saltimbanco*

*After a well deserved vacation, Saltimbanco's next destination was Monterrey, the third largest city in Mexico. Getting there was not an easy task for those scheduled to arrive on July 20: hurricane Emily decided to head towards Monterrey, so the airport closed. While most people were stuck in the U.S. or other cities in Mexico, Emily was paying our site a visit. On July 21, Saltimbanco no longer had a site: half of it had been washed away by the Santa Catarina river. Action plan: we needed a new location and fast! Well, a miracle happened and we had a new site within two days and were able to start rebuilding our "village on wheels" in the beautiful Parque Fundidora.*

*What did we do in Monterrey?*

*While some people enjoyed "extreme shopping Mondays" and "extreme dining" experiences, tasting all kinds of food including chapolines (crickets), worms, and drinking tequila, others went for "extreme challenges" like jumping off a 12-metre cliff or rappelling down a 50-metre waterfall at its maximum water flow.*

*Why did we like Monterrey?*

*The site is located in a beautiful park, there is an exciting nightlife, good restaurants and amazing food. There are very friendly people everywhere, beautiful mountains and hiking trails, and much more. Most people will leave Monterrey very fit thanks to the tennis, yoga, Pilates, jogging and rollerblading: Saltimbanco really got into shape here!*



*While Saltimbanco didn't get off to an easy start in Mexico, the difficulties we encountered proved what a good group of people can do in the most problematic circumstances. We are ready for Mexico City; I just hope Mexico City is ready for us!*

**2007: DELIRIUM...an unforgettable experience!**



After Saltimbanco in 2005, Monterrey was selected by Cirque du Soleil to be the only city in Latin America to receive DELIRIUM at the Arena Monterrey in April 2007. DELIRIUM had sold out weekend in Monterrey that an extra show was added on the next Monday. The "DU SOLEIL FAN CLUB MEXICO" had an incredible experience... something like a Mexican Cirque Con at Delirium, because before the show, we had the chance to have an incredible backstage tour, where we had the opportunity to see lots of the aspects that are not seen in a show like this. One of the best moments was when the technicians of the show invited us to take the rolling seats and we went under the stage. We saw how all areas communicate to have everything and everyone ready in the show. After this amazing experience we saw the show and after the show we had at the stage a meet & greet with all the cast of Delirium and at the end we had a group picture. It was truly a great moment.

**2008: QUIDAM in Monterrey: a magical journey!**





The wait was over. Finally after some delays of Quidam in Mexico City, (It was extended 2 weeks, so first weeks of Monterrey were delayed also) QUIDAM arrived in Monterrey the third week of January 2008. One of the things I loved from Quidam is that is one of the show where I have lots of friends, who I met in Long Beach, California before. Ana Cuellar is from Monterrey and she is a close friend of mine and she is a performer of La Nouba. In the last 3 years has been in the Aerial Ballet in Silk, where sometimes she had the opportunity to be the back up of the flying solo. Before Ana joined La Nouba, she had her General Formation twice in Montreal and she was trained to join QUIDAM, but in the last minute she got a contract for La Nouba, even she never joined QUIDAM, she really had a special love for QUIDAM. So for the first week of Quidam in Monterrey, La Nouba were on vacation and Ana decided to come to Monterrey so see friend and family and of course to see her dream come true... to see QUIDAM at her homeland.

The first surprise I planned with Ana was a special welcoming for our friends Xuxu and Tony (both performers of Spanish webs at Quidam) that Ana met in Montreal during the General Formation. So the plan was this: I will go to the airport to pick up them after their week off in Cancun to take them to the "hotel". They know that Ana was in Monterrey but they didn't get any news from her in the previous days. So after I met them at the airport, I told them an apologize message from Ana that she was really sorry for not meeting them in Monterrey, that in the last minute she got extra training in La Nouba, so she couldn't make it. They were really sad and while I was driving to "the hotel" I told them that due the traffic jam was terrible, I was taking a "shortcut" to arrive faster. Of course I wasn't driving to hotel; I was driving directly to Ana's house where she and her family were waiting for us in a big a surprise party.

I can't explain how magical and wonderful the surprise when we arrived at Ana's house. It was an incredible and unforgettable time. Of course, I had to pay all night for lie to them... I was the center of the party for being the head master of the plan for the surprise. Ana's mother prepared some delicious Mexican food, including the famous fried bean with cheese and chips. We had a nice dinner and a great pictures time. After several hours and after several talks and once my trust were recovered and they believed that I will take them to the hotel and not to other place... we drove to the hotel site of Quidam in Monterrey. In our way, they said this was a complete different arrival to a city, that never before had something like they just lived in Monterrey... they said they felt like being at home... and I just told them... Bienvenidos a casa... and this is just the beginning!

#### Dress rehearsal with Ana

QUIDAM was set up once again in the Parque Fundidora, but in a different location from Saltimbanco. Now was in the parking lot of Sesame Street Theme park. It was a day in the afternoon that I spent in Monterrey with Ana. Xuxu and Tony were complete busy getting ready for the Dress Rehearsal. I went with Ana to a photo session at the newspaper studio for a coverage report of Ana as Monterrey's

represent in Cirque Du Soleil . We finished around 7Pm and she asked me to go and see the site of Quidam at Parque Fundidora. We arrived to Quidam's location and we saw people arriving (almost late) for the dress rehearsal.

While everybody was running, Ana and I were taking pictures in all the incredible graphics and pictures of Quidam all around the site, while I saw an old friend from Saltimbanco... Fernando Cardena (Ferran). He is from Spain and he was also a Head Usher Manager in Saltimbanco and now again in Quidam. It was a great moment, specially because he recognized me immediately and also Ana did because when she came on



vacation in 2006 to Monterrey, Saltimbanco was playing in Mexico City and Ana and I traveled there to see Saltimanco and Fernando gave us the best seats in the house that time.

After a short conversation with Fernando we walked to the main entrance and we stayed a few more minutes for taking more pictures, and in that moment, we hear the introduction music of QUIDAM... the first presentation of the show in Monterrey... Ana and I were really excited and after some moments we began to walk to my car while I hear somebody was saying my name... It was Fernando and he run to gave us a special ticket to join the dress rehearsal... WOOOW We couldn't believe it! We really thank Fernando (GRACIAS FERNANDO) and we step in the Grand Chapiteau and QUIDAM WAS THERE...IN MONTERREY! It was for me a "dream come true moment" when I sit and begin watching QUIDAM... before I traveled by air and land to see this show, and now... it was at home! It was an incredible dress rehearsal...after the show Ana and me thought Quidam was really in a good shape... an excellent cast was playing Quidam in Monterrey.

#### Quidam's Premiere party in Monterrey

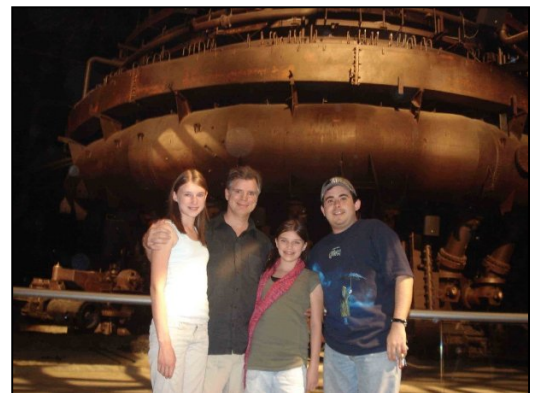
Finally after years of waiting, the premier of Quidam in Monterrey was here. This was a complete private event, but we got really great seats thanks of our friends Xuxu and Tony from Spanish webs (close friends of Ana, because years ago they had general formation together in Montreal.) It was a really bad weather day...it was cold and rainy so much. The show was INCREDIBLE. Having Ana next to me watching a performance of Cirque Du Soleil is amazing because they are even more bewaring of details of everything. After the show we moved to the Premiere Party.



The site of Quidam was located in a former metal factory that now is a natural and beautiful park and one of the main icons of Monterrey. (It's Monterrey's Central park) so due the rain, the premiere party was relocated to one of the very old factory houses... imagine a very old machine room, with a very nice lighting and music, tequila and cerveza plus a delicious Mexican Buffet... what a great party! Also the building had several floors under, and most of the floor is done with crystal! I had the chance to meet, talk and party with most of the cast of Quidam, where I met before in California... but now they were here at home. Party ended around 6:30AM... then get ready to be back at work at 8am. No problem, it was a once in a life experience.

### New friends at QUIDAM

During the premiere party, I had the chance to met one of my close friends at Quidam; The Bangs Family. They are a family from Ottawa Canada: Bob, Lauree, Tessa & Ella. Bob is the father and is in Quidam as the tutor of Ella. Ella is playing Zoe role at Quidam since the beginning of the Mexico Tour of Quidam. She is one of the youngest Zoe artist and I can tell that her voice is amazing, and ever better because she is



an 11 years old girl! Just like Zoe. Lauree is working at Quidam in an administrative role and Tessa is the other sister of Ella. They are amazing. From the moment we met before they arrival to Monterrey by email, it was a kind of magic. We plan to have several activities here in Monterrey and I wanted to take to all of them, but sadly, Monterrey was one of the smallest seasons of Cirque Du Soleil... just 3 weeks and no more! (Really sad because in 2005 Saltimbanco had 7 sold out weeks! ) So for this reason, they will just have one or two days off to enjoy the city. On that week we plan something unique: a visit to the Arena Coliseo to see a real Mexican Lucha Libre (Free Wrestling).



### Lucha Libre

Tuesday is the “nice night” of Lucha Libre, so I took Bob, Tessa and Ella to the Arena. Previously we had a stop at the Horno 3 Museum that was next to the side of Quidam. We had the chance to see a light, laser and music show in the old metal oven of Fundidora Metal Factory. We went to the balcony to have a great site of the city. Then Lucha Libre... we were almost in first row (for safety reasons I didn't take that row) ... and fights



began...WHAT A NIGHT! I was little afraid about the reaction of Tessa and Ellas watching so intense and some “violence” on the ring, but I was totally wrong... They Loved! It was great because after every fights, Tessa and Ella wanted to go and have a picture with the fighters... Wow what a great night!

### A Day of with QUIDAM



Monday Feb 5, 2005 was a holiday day in Mexico, so I have a day off on that day, as well as Quidam, so the Bangs family and I planned to have a intensive tour for all Monterrey “must to see “and I was selected to be the tour leader. I met them very early at the hotel and later more staff and artist begun to join us, so finally we were a group of more than 15-20 people, so we changed the plans, rented a special bus – van and lets go... I have an Educational Field trips agency, so I have being a tour leader for almost 9 years taking students to several cities and places, but this time was a different group...QUIDAM! I was the tour leader for QUIDAM! I took them to the Garcia Caves then to the Huasteca Mountains and then for lunch they ask me to take them to my best taco restaurant, nothing expensive, they wanted to try something really local, so I took them to EL RINCON DEL TACO... and we had a lunch like never before! I could believe I have staff and artist from Quidam



eating in my most favorite restaurant in Monterey! After that I took them to the Cola de Caballo Waterfall and we spend the rest of the afternoon and night there. One of the restaurant let us be at the roof of the house, so we had a great time there, enjoying the views the site, the weather and of course the margaritas an tequilas. What a night!

#### Backstage at QUIDAM



I was so lucky to be invited my mother and me by Xuxu and Tony to see the show in the Tapis Rouge in the backstage at the artist tend. WOOOW what a great experience... it was so magical to see all the details and how all the artist prepare to perform in the show. Since I was seating ting in the big sofa where is the TV that has the show in live, I had the chance to talk and meet with all Quidam cast... One of the activities I loved to do was to help the Chinese girls to prepare all the blue rolls they use in their act. Also I have the chance to meet and talked with Olga Pikhienko who was part of Quidam tour on that time. During the intermission we had the chance to take pictures with several of the artist and cast of Quidam. But my friend Xuxu made something that really made cried... I can say this was one of my best moments with Cirque Du Soleil... after the end of the show, when all the artist were coming back from stage, the stage manager made a request to all artist to get together for a group picture for a special friend of her and of QUIDAM... it was me RODOLFO! So all the artist got together and they had me at the center and we took a picture... I can't express with words how wonderful this experience was to me.

### Ricky "Richasi" Russo in Monterrey!

I have to say that one of the most incredible things of being a loyal fan of Cirque du Soleil is the friends I have now thanks for following the sun, and one of the most important activities that I participated as a fan is of course the CIRQUE CON... where met lots of friend from different parts of the world. It's so nice to meet people from different backgrounds but all with one thing in



common: CIRQUE DU SOLEIL. I have to say that all the people behind the planning of the CIRQUE CON are amazing; Keith, Lucy, Ricky and Rich... and for me was a pleasure when Ricky told me that we wanted to come from Orlando to Monterrey to see Quidam, and he finally did it. Before we attend Quidam, in his really short visit and first one to Mexico, I took him to all must to see and eat things in Monterrey. We had a great time! Because I work as a tour leader in Monterrey and other cities, I gave Ricky a great view of my city of Monterrey. (PLEASE... When you come to Monterrey let me know... I love to take friends to see my city! ) And in his last day we went to see QUIDAM! Also, one of the funniest things we made was to take some pictures at one of the advertising walls of Quidam, located in very car traffic avenue, it was little crazy because to get a nice picture of the whole wall, the camera need to be in the middle of the avenue! ... at the end nothing happened and we took some really nice pictures. As I told Ricky, for me was like a small CIRQUE CON in Monterrey, because during the 3 weeks of Quidam I have the chance to see and had a great time with so many friends from Cirque Du Soleil.

### A magical closing... the final performance...

It was sad because on that Sunday, Ricky left Monterrey so he missed the chance to see the last performance of Quidam in Monterrey. For me was a really special day, it was the end of and incredible adventure with Cirque du Soleil in my home. Since the moment I took the pictures of the first advertising walls, the moment when they began to pre-setup the site, the rising of the Grand Chapiteau just to begin... plus all the adventures I had with QUIDAM... it was now time to close all this adventure, and of course I had to be there in the last performance of Quidam in the first row... so experience in first hand (maybe for the last time in the Grand Chapiteau, QUIDAM).

The show was complete sold out. The governor of the State of Nuevo Leon and other very important figures of the city were on that show. I felt like artist were giving their best to have and incredible last performance of QUIDAM. It was a complete different experience being alone watching the show... after all, it was like a gif from life that said to me ...Rodolfo enjoy this! I have no words to explain how much means to me Cirque du Soleil, and even more Quidam and much more having them at home. Intermission ended and the last and second part of QUIDAM begun. At that moment I had no idea that the most magical moment with Cirque Du Soleil was just minutes before to happen and what a great gift from QUIDAM I was about to receive.



TOTO it was the only clown in Quidam, he is from Argentina and of course he made and incredible clown performance in Mexico with Quidam. In the first act, he made the routine of the car, where he invites a lady to join him and have an incredible romantic night in the cart. For the second act, he had the routine of a movie filming, were he chose several victims from the audience to perform this act. First the lovers, then the second lover that arrives just then the other lovers are kissing and the Hollywood sign a man who counts the scenes. I was just really concentrated in watching the beginning of his act and suddenly, I felt all the lights over me... I just saw Toto coming to me, he took away my cap and took my hand and took me to the QUIDAM STAGE TO PERFORM THE SECOND LOVER BEHIND THE DOOR!!!!!!!

I WAS IN QUIDAM'S STAGE..... IN MONTERREYY!!!! WOOW I WAS IN A COMPLETE SHOCK!... I WAS SO NERVOUS THAT EVEN I HAD SEEN THE SHOW MANY TIMES BEFORE... MY MIND WAS OUT!

I remembered that while I was waiting for my part, standing behind the door holding the flowers, Zoe (that was Ella my friend) was seating close to me, and I just saw her in her eyes and she was really excited to see me there... then before I began to act I thought... THIS IS MY MOMENT... I WILL ACT AND PLAY AT QUIDAM STAGE... so this is my time, my chance.... So I said... Just do it like you wanted! My time came... I step in to the door (after my first time when I cross the door and I forgot to open it) and well, I just remember that made a big jump and I made a big scream and use my gun to vanish all from the scene then I don't how but I finished jumping and lying all over the stage!!!!!!!!!!!! WHAT A GLORIOUS MOMENT! I have no words to explain the magic, felling and wonderful that this experience was to me... when Toto took me back to my seat all the people around me were so excited and told me that I was done an incredible job, that everybody exploded in a great laugh.

The minutes after this experience were unforgettable . the way to “come back to earth” after an experience like this was amazing.... What a great way to finish this incredible experience with QUIDAM in Monterrey!

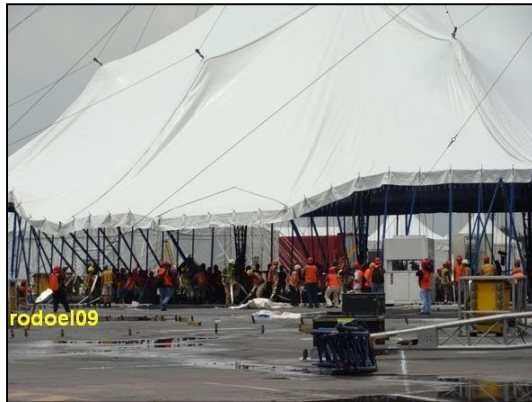
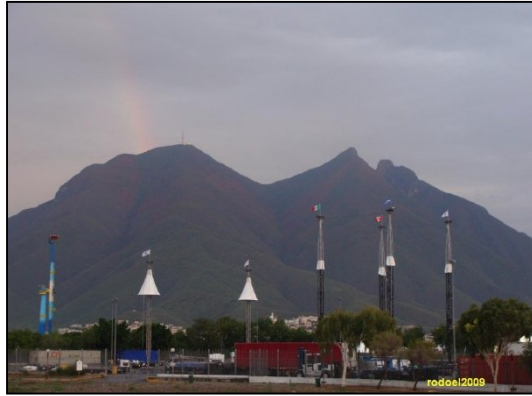
After the emotional ending...hundreds of workers began immediately the tear down of the Grand Chapiteau..Bob came to me over to take me back stage for a quick photo with Ella as a Zoe and when the artist saw me, they just said ...RODOLFO you MADE IT! You ROCK!!!!!! Some of them told me that when they saw Toto took me to the stage they think I will be maybe not so good because I knew the routine for all the time I saw the show... but they agreed they were all wrong and they really loved my performance... (I thank all my theater teachers!) ... After I left the site and I remember I was driving to the hotel of QUIDAM , I just saw all the lights of the site turn off. That was the time to close another chapter of my journey of a Cirque du Soleil fan... following the sun... this time, the sun came home... but I know that after a chapter is close , the next one is even better...and the story goes on... because IMPOSSIBLE IS ONLY A WORD!

### **2009: DRALION, THE BEGINNING OF THE DREAM**

The new chapter of Cirque du Soleil in Monterrey begun in August 24, 2009 when the first trailer arrived to the Parque Fundidora with the equipment of DRALION. The journey of DRALION to Monterrey was not easy, since it had its transfer from Auckland, New Zealand. Some were send by boat, air and land. The White Grand Chapiteau came from Montreal and some other elements. The Big Top was raised on Saturday Septembe 5, 2009 and the side was totally ready on Sunday Sep. 12, 2009. What is coming next is just about to be written. WELCOME DRALION TO MONTEREY!







## *Two Anniversaries, One Celebration!*

BY: R⊕D⊕L⊕F⊕ ELIZ⊕ND⊕



The summer of 2009 marked a very unique time for Cirque du Soleil: the celebration of its 25th anniversary of invoking our senses, provoking our imagination and evoking our emotions. But that was not the only celebration occurring then. For me, it marked the 10th anniversary as a Cirque du Soleil fan, but this wasn't the only milestone happening - since I always keep my Cirque tickets I have a record of the number of shows I've seen, when and where. Upon checking I realized the next two performances would be number 99 and 100! So with these two big reasons to celebrate, I decided to make a trip to New York City to see Koozå and later to Montreal for Cirque's newest production, OVO. I have to say in preference, every trip that I have done (even trips I undertake as part of my job as tour leader) Cirque du Soleil is always somehow involved. There is magic between Cirque and I and it seems that I'm not just following Cirque, but Cirque is following me!

### **NEW YORK: KOOZA!**

June 11, 2009 - Arrived in New York City and after seeing a few musicals, finally the day came to see KOOZA again now in my favorite city: New York. I have to say that I really enjoyed KOOZA! Its amore mature show and I absolutely a wonderful show. Of course the magic begun since the moment I have to take the ferry to the site. During this visit, I have the chance to see old friends at Kooza and we had dinner in a great location at NYC. This was just the beginning.



## **MONTREAL: THE BIG GIFT FROM CIRQUE DU SOLEIL!**

July 12, 2009 - I didn't sleep that night since I was afraid to over sleep and to not take the taxi cap to La Guardia Airport on time. I flew to Montreal very early in the morning. I arrive to my hotel around 11 AM and I just have a snap to recover some energy. It was Friday and I was just spending 3 days in Montreal, so I wanted to catch my friends at IHQ of Cirque du Soleil. I have to say that I was really tired and in some moments I was thinking that would be better if I call them on Saturday and have lunch or dinner. I didn't know what happened inside me, but I decided to visit them... I was in Montreal... not all the days I'm there (specially now that Canada requires Visa to Mexicans) so I took the subway in my way to the IHQ.



I arrived and I was surprised to see so many people and everybody running. I arrived to the front desk and when I ask for my friend David Fillion, this lady recognized me immediately. "Ohh yes you are Rodolfo, the fan from Mexico!", she said. "I'm glad you came today! " While she was calling David, I was thinking why she said that. I had no idea until that moment, but soon I found out why. When David came he was extremely happy to see me and he was really surprised specially because he told me that from several days ago he was trying to call me, but my cell phone wasn't working in US neither Canada... then he said was looking for because he have me in the invited guest to the "Flames Soleil". I asked David what was that and he said: "Rodolfo, today is the biggest party for the 25th Anniversary! WELCOME TO THE CELEBRATION!" I have to thank God and to the magic that made me wake up and walk to the iHQ. I was totally in shock, and then a lot of noise was coming from the building. Guy Laliberte was in town for a small period of time, because he was on the training for his travel to the space. Even with my shock and my elemental French, I really enjoy his conference. And then the party began.



I have no words to explain what I really experienced on this party. All people from Cirque du Soleil were there... and the party begun. All the party took place in the patio of the IHQ. Food and beverages everywhere... it was like a gigantic Tapis Rouge. Also it had several circus activities where everybody could participate, like a trapeze, some clown performances and juggling. I was there.



The magic begun when some friends from different shows recognized me. => I simple couldn't believe it. Did I where in a dream? .

Then the big moment of the day: I was on my way to get a new beverage when I saw Guy Laliberte watching a performance of some artist during the party and I approach him and I have an incredible conversation with him. I couldn't believe... the person who begun all this. He was totally incredible and accessible. He was really surprised with my story as a follower of CDS. My dream came true. I have just met Cirque du Soleil owner and creator: Guy Laliberte.



There were a lot of things that happened on that magical night. I met also Debra Brown and we spent several minutes talking and sharing experiences. Night arrived and the CDS 25 anniversary performance begun. Drums and a parade of characters from all the shows were there. We the audience create a circle in the middle of the patio where all the performers began their routine. But the best part was when 3 singers step in to some kind of tables and one of those singers was FRANCESCA GANON as the White singer. Oh my God! Simple unbelievable! The performance was a very intense and with full energy that exploited in an avalanche of emotions and celebrations.



After the presentation my dream came true: I wanted a picture with Francesca Gagnon as the White singer. I have wanted this since Alegria was in Mexico but on that time they didn't let me to take the picture. But now that dream became true! After all this we walked into one of the studios inside IHQ that was converted in the biggest disco I have ever seen! What a night! Suddenly I saw my watch: almost 4 AM! So it was time to go back home and relax and recover energy for the next day at Montreal. On that night I couldn't sleep. I believe it was just a dream. But it wasn't a dream, it was real. =>





Next day, after relaxing I made my way to the Grand Chapiteau in Montreal to enjoy my 100th show and what couldn't be better than seeing my 100th show of OVO, the news production of Cirque du Soleil, in the afternoon show. For my surprise, I was seated at section 200 just on the second row right in the middle. For my surprised, the person that was seated in front of me during OVO presentation was Guy Laliberte with his family. I really enjoyed OVO even that is a really different show.

And that was the end of this incredible adventure and celebration at Cirque du Soleil and my celebration of being 10 years in a row a fan of Cirque du Soleil. I want to thanks all people involved in the creation of this amazing experience. MUCHAS GRACIAS.

Now, another chapter of these magical experiences is just about to begin here in Monterrey with DRALION with this incredible CIRQUE CON. Thanks for believe in my dream and now even better that our event is about to begin.

WELCOME TO MONTERREY!  
Su amigo Rodolfo Elizondo.



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# **CIRQUECON HISTORY**

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# CirqueCon 2004 VANCOUVER

*The First Unofficial Gathering of Cirque du Soleil Passionates*

**Friday, May 21, 2004 to Sunday, May 23, 2004  
Douglas House & Cambie Lodge Bed and Breakfasts  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada**

*And so the journey begins. Or continues.  
Traveling far across the continent we are called by some  
unheard, un-vocalized scream.  
We come from British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana,  
California, Louisiana, Georgia, Virginia, Florida and even Mexico.  
We stand ready for the amazelements that lie before us.  
Yet fear what we may discover there.  
At this time and this place we have chosen to gather.  
To find our way through the darkness to where others stand bathed in light.  
To be with them, and in so doing, be together.  
Laugh and cry together. Experience. Together.  
And part knowing we have found our kind.  
We stand together, yet we all stand alone.  
We are Quidam. Yet we are all Passionates.  
Welcome!*

**OUR FIRST STEPS** – It all began with a proposition by Cirque fan Jeff “sfogviper” to come together during Quidam’s Vancouver, BC run. Seattle fan Keith Johnson, who was already planning a gathering for his family and friends, suggested combining the two groups and the idea was well received. Fascination! (the unofficial Cirque du Soleil newsletter) publisher and Orlando fan Ricky “Richasi” Russo brought the newsletters’ sponsorship to the endeavor, enthusiastically lending his support, and CirqueCon was born.

**THE BED AND BREAKFASTS** – What if we all roomed together in the same facility? Keith, who had previously organized group outings, suggested two special Bed and Breakfast lodges that he thought we be just perfect for us. The Douglas House and Cambie Lodge ([www.dougwin.com](http://www.dougwin.com) / [www.cambielodge.com](http://www.cambielodge.com)), cozy turn-of-the-century houses, were right next to each other in a quiet residential neighborhood about a mile south of the Grand Chapiteau; very close to the cosmopolitan downtown of Vancouver. The intimacy, character and charm of these two homes-turned-inns and their closeness to the Cirque tent-grounds (not to mention reasonable rates and free on-site parking) made them perfect choices! With attendees making their own airfare arrangements (many flying into Seattle and carpooling up), and also buying their own tickets to Quidam, having nearly everyone stay together created a sense of community. It was also our combined numbers that lead Cirque to take notice and contact us.

**THE PROGRAM PACKETS** – In addition to the special weekend we experienced, we put together small packets of information and mementos as gifts for our attendees. Each person received: A Program with articles and information, two CD’s chock full of rare music by Cirque and its musicians (a third was made for Montréal.) full-color name badge with lanyard, a spread of food and wine at our Friday “Cocktail Hour,” and all the planning, research and communication, both on-line and via phone and email, necessary to make the trip happen and answer questions.



## OUR SCHEDULE –

### FRIDAY, MAY 21

Time	Location	Activity
5:00pm – 6:00pm	Douglas House B&B Kitchen	<b>Welcome to CirqueCon “Cocktail Hour”</b>  We invite everyone who's in town (and not attending a show) to stop by our headquarters Bed & Breakfast for a little "get to know you." We'll have a few munchies and some Cirque Du Rose wine for consumption. We'll also have space for you to show off your rarest Cirque collectible. We'll have older programs, Cirque du Soleil wallpaper books, and other Cirque memorabilia you won't find elsewhere.

### SATURDAY, MAY 22

Time	Location	Activity
1:30pm – 3:30pm	Quidam Backstage Entrance	<b>Special Welcome from Cirque du Soleil</b>  A very special event for CirqueCon Vancouver members! A tour of the Quidam site, Tapis Rouge, and a free gift!
4:00pm – 6:00pm	The Old Spaghetti Factory	<b>CirqueCon Vancouver Group Dinner</b>  We'll have seats in the same area but probably not at one big table. We'll eat and party and prepare for the show. After dinner folks are free to tour Gastown, return to the Bed & Breakfast to dress for the show, or head straight to the tent to be there when the gates open at 7:00pm.
7:00pm – 11:00pm	Grand Chapiteau	<b>Cirque du Soleil: Quidam</b>  At some point while on the Cirque grounds we'll want to gather to take a group photo, so bring your cameras (just don't use them inside!). After the show, don't leave the tent! Cirque will have another exciting event for us at approx. 10:30pm - a special post-show Question & Answer session with Cirque artists, including autographs and photos!

It was an incredible weekend for our 30 members which spurred us on to consider other trips. Of course our final numbers told the story: 31 total members, all of whom attended Quidam; 11 rooms rented at the “headquarters” Bed & Breakfasts; 4 rooms rented by members at other places, for a total of 15 hotel rooms, approximately 33 room nights. Quite impressive for a first-time ad-hoc fan event!

For more details on how CirqueCon was created, a fun history of our trip, and some local press we got check out “Our History” section of the CirqueCon website. You can also see photos from the weekend in our “Photos” section.



# CirqueCon 2005 MONTRÉAL

*The Second Unofficial Gathering of Cirque du Soleil Passionates*

**Friday, April 22, 2005 to Sunday, April 24, 2005**

**Marriott SpringHill Suites Vieux-Montréal**

**Montréal, Québec, Canada**

*And so the journey continues. Or begins anew.*

*We heed the call, that whisper on the wind.*

*Louder this time, reaching farther.*

*So again we gather. Together.*

*Old friends. New friends. Faces never before seen, yet souls familiar.*

*Again we bond with fellow Passionates.*

*Bearing witness to that which is newly created, still forming, unexplored.*

*Wrapping ourselves in its warmth. Together.*

*And the creators welcome us. Inviting us to peek behind their mask.*

*What mysteries will be revealed?*

*We come from far away. But we know where we are.*

*We are home. Together.*

***Bienvenue!***

**THE INVITE** – During the group dinner at CirqueCon 2004: Vancouver, André Belanger, Internet Marketing Manager for Cirque du Soleil in Montréal (who had made the trip from Cirque International Headquarters to be with us that weekend,) made a very vocal suggestion that the following year we should gather again for the premiere of the newest traveling show – in Montréal! With such an open invitation, who were we to say no? In the end 130 total people joined us – 60 purchased our Standard membership representing 90 people. Our members came from more than half of the United States, all the Canadian provinces that touch the US except Manitoba, three locations in Mexico, as well as Australia and Germany.

**WHERE TO STAY?** – Working with Tourism Montréal, we secured rooms with The Marriott SpringHill Suites Vieux-Montréal on rue St-Jean-Baptiste. It offered plenty of rooms, all the creature comforts of a large international chain, an impressive list of amenities, and was less than one-quarter mile from the Cirque tent site on Jacques Cartier Pier! The standard suites went for approx. \$145.00 USD per night, with roomier deluxe suites going for approx. \$165.00 USD per night, with all taxes included! All in all 42 rooms were rented at the SpringHill Suites for a total of 144 room nights.

**SPECIAL TICKET OFFER** – Cirque du Soleil graciously offered an exclusive block of tickets for our “official” show at 8pm on Saturday, April 23, in Section 205 near the soundboard, and we sold 66 of these tickets (43 purchased tickets elsewhere for a total of 109 total tickets purchased.)

**EATING TOGETHER** – Our venue, the Restaurant du Vieux Port, was just down the block from our hotel, less than one minutes walking distance! The restaurant offered us a “group menu” of: Choice of soup or salad, Choice of Beef Striploin, Grilled Chicken Breast, or Filet of Soul Provençale entrée, and Dessert, along with Coffee, Tea, or soft drink. The total cost per person, including all taxes and gratuity, was \$31.00 USD. The dinner was very successful, with more than 60 Cirque Passionates spread amongst several tables in a large room, enjoying their meals and talking animatedly.

**OUR SCHEDULE** – Our event turned out to be another once-in-a-lifetime weekend for over 100 “Passionates.” As for what we did? See our schedule!

### FRIDAY, APRIL 22

Time	Location	Activity
3:00pm – 5:00pm	TOHU – La Cité Des Arts du Cirque	<b>TOHU Tour</b> A combination of dream merged with reality, TOHU is creating a “hub” of circus performing arts in Montréal. This tour will cover all aspects of the site, from environmental considerations to their burgeoning circus memorabilia and art collection.
6:00pm – 7:30pm	Marriott SpringHill Suites Rooms 524/252	<b>CirqueCon 2005: Meet and Greet</b> We invite everyone to our room for a little “get to know you.” We’ll have munchies and such for consumption. Have a Cirque collectible you’d like people to see? Show it here!
8:30pm – 10:00pm	La Basilique Notre-Dame de Montréal	<b>“And Then There was Light” (Field Trip)</b> Take in this interesting presentation on the history of Montréal and the Basilica in words, lights, projections and sounds. Images are played across large screens and canvas sails strung throughout the sanctuary.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 23

Time	Location	Activity
11:45am – 4:00pm	Cirque du Soleil International HeadQuarters	<b>Cirque International Headquarters Tour</b> Where all the magic and wonder is created! Cirque du Soleil has opened its doors and has also offered us the opportunity to shop at their Headquarters Boutique! This is the first time the IHQ Boutique has been open to non-employees – ever! It is similar in “style” to the boutiques on tour, with everything out and available for handling, and at a 15% discount!
5:00pm – 7:00pm	Restaurant du Vieux Port	<b>CirqueCon 2005: Group Meal</b> Gather with other Passionates to eat, drink, and talk of our shared “passion.” A perfect way to prepare for the wonders to come.
7:00pm – 10:30pm	Le Grand Chapiteau @ Jacques Cartier Pier	<b>Cirque du Soleil’s Corteo</b> We will watch as Cirque “combines the passion of the actor with the grace and power of the acrobat to plunge the audience into a world of playfulness and spontaneity situated in a mysterious area between heaven and earth.”
11:30pm	Restaurant du Vieux Port	<b>“Time for Desert”</b> After the show ends, some of us may go back to the Restaurant du Vieux Port (open till Midnight), or even other places in Old Montréal, to have dessert or coffee and “de-compress.”



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Thursday, September 21, 2006 to Sunday, September 24, 2006  
Treasure Island Hotel and Casino  
Las Vegas, Nevada, United States

*The loudest call comes from far away.  
Echoing across the desert, rebounding off the canyons.  
But crystal clear.  
Once again we heed the voice.  
Gathering with fellow Passionates in our greatest number.  
Bearing witness. Together.  
A flower in the desert. A liquid oasis.  
The lure of the sensual. A glimpse into the void.  
Universal love.  
With our hosts revealing more of the mystery.  
What happens here...  
Living. Passionately.  
...Will be remembered forever.  
And we will experience it. Together.  
Welcome!*

**FINALLY** – It's been called everything from "Sin City" to the "City of Lights," and in 2006 Las Vegas at long last also became our special playground. We debated the city as a destination for the next CirqueCon during the Meet & Greet Cocktail Hour at CirqueCon 2004: Vancouver. We were set to take our traveling circus to Cirque's flower in the desert when André Belanger, Internet Marketing Manager for Cirque du Soleil, invited us to visit Montréal instead! Having experienced the premiere of a new traveling show, as Cirque's guests, the time felt right to take on Las Vegas and its multitude of shows.

**OUR MEMBERS** – Our membership numbers were also quite impressive: 162 memberships were purchased for a total of 190 people representing 22 of the 50 United States, 2 Canadian Provinces, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Scotland, England, and Australia. Truly an international convention of Cirque Passionates!

**TAPIS ROGUE** – Cirque's Resident Show division (headquartered in Las Vegas) went above and beyond and rolled out the red carpet for us, surprising and exciting our members with remarkable, unprecedented access to their theaters, artists and managers. They also handled ticket sales for each of the five "official" CirqueCon attended shows --- «O» – Sep.21.2006 @ 10:30pm, LOVE – Sep.22.2006 @ 7:30pm, Mystère – Sep.22.2006 @ 10:30pm, KÀ – Sep.23.2006 @ 6:30pm, and Zumanity – Sep.23.2006 @ 10:30pm --- to which they have our heartfelt thanks, not to mention throwing one fabulous Meet & Greet at their offices! And Ground Zero for all our activity: Treasure Island (TI) Casino-Hotel.



**OUR SCHEDULE** – If we thought Montreal was an once-in-a-lifetime weekend; Las Vegas took it up a notch and then some! As for what we did? See our schedule!

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Time	Location	Activity
10:00am - 2:00pm	T.I.	<b>CirqueCon Registration Table Open</b>
3:00pm - 5:00pm	MGM	<b>Activities in the KÀ Theater</b> <p>We start our weekend off with a bang! We first journey to the MGM Grand and the KÀ Theatre, where we will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch a rehearsal from Section 202.</li> <li>• Have a Q&amp;A and Photo Op session with artists, technical staff, and coaches following the rehearsal.</li> <li>• We will then be able to watch show set-up as it begins.</li> </ul> <p>And at some point during the afternoon, attendees will be given the rare opportunity to look into the void!</p>
6:00pm - 9:00pm	Cirque RSD HQ	<b>CirqueCon 2006: Las Vegas! Meet &amp; Greet</b> <p>Early evening is the perfect time for our “Meet and Greet”. It's the place where members meet old (and new) friends, receive their membership packets, and sample local foods as well as tidbits brought by other members. This year's Meet &amp; Greet is very special, as it will take place at the Cirque du Soleil Resident Shows Division (RSD) Headquarters!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSD Staff will be on hand to answer questions.</li> <li>• Cirque du Soleil Senior VP of Live Shows, Michael Bolingbroke, will be visiting and talking with us (his department oversees resident/touring shows and marketing!)</li> <li>• There will be a free raffle for Cirque stuff, which everybody can enter!</li> <li>• And there will be an auction of special Cirque du Soleil memorabilia gathered specifically for us (and appealing to our Cirque collector sensibilities) to benefit Street Teens.</li> </ul>
10:30pm - 12:00am	Bellagio	<b>Group Show - «O»</b> <p>We gather at Bellagio to witness the spectacle that is «O». What some call “the ultimate Cirque experience” will awe us with its beauty and elegance. But that isn't all...</p>
12:00am - 1:00am	Bellagio	<b>Activities in the «O» Theater</b> <p>Following the show stay in your seats for our special Cirque du Soleil activities...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artists will come out for photo ops and a Q&amp;A!</li> <li>• Sit on the ledge of the pool for a group photo opportunity!</li> <li>• Finally, each attendee will be able to retrieve water from the «O» pool in a specially-provided vial.</li> </ul> <p>How cool is that?!? And that's just the first day!</p>

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Time	Location	Activity
10:00am - 2:00pm	T.I.	<b>CirqueCon Registration Table Open</b>
2:00pm - 4:00pm	T.I.	<b>CirqueCon Group Meal - Dishes Buffet</b> Gather with other Cirque Passionates (in an especially reserved area) to eat, drink, and talk of our shared “passion.” A perfect way to prepare for the continuing wonders to come, and just steps away from our activities at the Mystère Theater. Dishes features Barbeque, Asian, Pasta, Pizza, Salad, and Bakery stations, with something for everyone.
4:20pm - 6:00pm	T.I.	<b>Activities in the Mystère Theater</b> Friday the 22nd brings us the unexplored and the familiar. Meet in the TI’s Mystère Theater for the following activities... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will watch a rehearsal with a member from the artistic staff to explain what's happening and to answer questions.</li> <li>• After the rehearsal, watch set-up as it begins with a member from the technical staff available to answer our questions.</li> </ul>
7:30pm - 9:00pm	Mirage	<b>Group show - LOVE</b> The power of the words and music of the Beatles combined with the artistry of Cirque du Soleil in a brand-new production.
9:00pm - 9:30pm	Mirage	<b>Activities in the LOVE Theater</b> Following the show, stay in your seats. We will meet in Section 200 to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the change-over between shows.</li> <li>• Members of the artistic staff will be available for a brief Q&amp;A.</li> <li>• A Cast photograph will be provided to each attendee!</li> </ul>
10:30pm - 12:00am	T.I.	<b>Group Show - Mystère</b> Catch a free tram next door to our “headquarters” hotel, the Treasure Island (T.I.), to take in the 10:30pm performance of Mystère, Cirque's first (and some still say best) Vegas resident show.
12:00am - 12:30am	T.I.	<b>Activities in the Mystère Theater</b> Following the show, stay in your seats... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Again we will step onto a Cirque stage for an exclusive group photograph of CirqueCon members with “Alice,” the snail! This photo will be taken by a professional photographer and will be provided to each attendee on Saturday.</li> </ul> And we're not through!

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**

Time	Location	Activity
10:00am - 2:00pm	T.I.	<b>CirqueCon Registration Table Open</b>
3:00pm - 5:00pm	NY-NY	<b>Activities in the Zumanity Theater</b>  We start our afternoon off at New York-New York with activities at the ZUMANITY Theater. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Watch the transformation of performers into their sensual on-stage characters as Zumanity takes you on a journey from reality to fantasy.</li><li>• Wardrobe and artistic representatives will unveil secrets behind the stunningly outrageous costumes and make-up designs. Performers will be available to answer questions and chat with event attendees.</li></ul>
6:30pm - 8:00pm	MGM	<b>Group Show - KÀ</b>  Our evening begins at 6:30pm at the MGM Grand. This powerful spectacle dazzles with its high-tech storytelling.
10:30pm - 12:00am	NY-NY	<b>Group Show - Zumanity</b>  Finally, we walk across the street to New York-New York for the 10:30pm show of ZUMANITY, ANOTHER SIDE OF CIRQUE DU SOLEIL. Be prepared to be provoked! Or, if you're lucky, evoked!
12:00am - 1:00am	NY-NY	<b>Activities in the Zumanity Theater</b>  After the show, stay in your seats. We'll be treated to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Meet and Greet with the artists in the theater lobby!</li></ul>

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**

Time	Location	Activity
10:00am - 12:00pm	T.I.	<b>Our Kaffeeklatsch</b>  Join us in Keith and LouAnna's room for our version of an "Onions and Roses" panel, where members are encouraged to give their compliments and suggestions. Come have a cup of coffee or tea and let us know how we did and what can be improved. Or just stop by to say "good-bye!"





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**Thursday, August 9, 2007 to Sunday, August 12, 2007  
Port Orleans: French Quarter | Walt Disney World  
Orlando, Florida, USA.**

*For the fourth time we gather, this year in the heart of the “Sunshine State” - Orlando, Florida, USA. You are but one of the untold thousands upon thousands of visitors that inundate this city every day to visit Florida's beaches, its theme parks and to enjoy the state's iconic weather. So let me, a resident of this fantastic state, and one of the thousand thousands that live here, be the first to welcome you to my home and playground.*

*We chose Orlando as the location of this years' event due to its designation as a world-class destination, for its world-renown theme parks (especially Walt Disney World,) its warm weather, and because it's the only place you can find Cirque du Soleil's only other resident show (at present) outside of Las Vegas -- La Nouba. We felt that by merging the playful atmosphere of a world-class theme park and our passions for Cirque du Soleil, everyone could have a Zippity-du-Soleil time.*

*The Walt Disney World Resort is a wonderful location in which to host a CirqueCon event. Here exists the available synergy between Cirque du Soleil's La Nouba coupled with the playful excitement of Disney World. Thus, we give you CirqueCon 2007: Orlando - where families and passionates alike can come together as one!*

**OUR FELLOWSHIP** – This year 39 full paid memberships were purchased representing just over 50 passionates with us on-site. While these membership numbers may not sound as impressive as the 190+ folks who joined us in Las Vegas; despite the contrast, we found the group in attendance this year was great, fantastic and enthusiastic! It really was a wonderful, intimate gathering of friends!



**EPCOT DESSERT PARTY** – One of the first scheduled events of our weekend was a scrumptious Dessert Party at EPCOT, Walt Disney World's Experimental Prototype City of Tomorrow, on the evening of Friday, August 10th. Prior to the event we tantalized our members with the following possibility:



*If you're a regular Disney Park visitor, you've seen privileged groups having special VIP parties behind closed doors with delicious looking foods to eat and impeccable service from Disney cast members catering to their every whim. Well, how would YOU like to be a Disney VIP too?*

*Doesn't having a "group only" area at Epcot just for us, desserts and drinks to sample as we mingle with our fellow Passionates in our very own exclusive spot to watch Illuminations: Reflections of Earth (Epcot's night-time fireworks extravaganza) sound like great fun?*

35 passionates thought so too and joined us at Epcot for sweets and fireworks at the Lower Terrace within the United Kingdom Pavilion in EPCOT World Showcase. And there we ate: A Variety of Miniature Stemware Glassed to include Classic Tiramisu, English Trifle, Fresh Fruit and Berries; Pastry Selections in Miniature to include: Fresh Fruit Tartlet, Vanilla Cream Filled Pastry Horns, Chocolate Éclairs, Chocolate and Pistachio Cannoli.

It was fabulous!

**SPECIAL CIRQUE ACTIVITIES** – Our second event was held the following afternoon at the Cirque du Soleil Theater. We gathered Saturday morning by the Box Office for a Q&A with the Theater Manager (Richard Dennison) and Production Manager (Robert Shuck). But before our festivities could begin inside the theater, Cirque opened the doors to La Nouba's boutique early just for us. And boy did our passionates spend a fortune! (Aye, our credit cards!)

Once our wallets were lightened and our arms full of souvenirs, we filed into the La Nouba Theater to speak with our hosts. Both Dennison and Shuck were very gracious to us, spending over three hours talking and taking us on tour of the facility. I don't think there was an inch of the building spared by our tour - our group (split into two) visited the light booth, walked behind the background on the third level, went

downstairs to see the basement and the lifts and up into the grid to see the inner workings of the automation equipment, the costume department, makeup area, and the dressing rooms. And, of course, at the end of the tour the groups came together on stage for a group photo with some of the cast and crew!



**GROUP MEAL** – Our third event was our Group Meal. The House of Blues out-did themselves here with this wonderful plated meal event. 33 attendees came to the Group Meal and no one left hungry - how could you with a three course meal! Check out our menu!

\* FIRST COURSE \*

House of Blues Salad  
Traditional Salad with Iceberg Lettuce, Red Cabbage,  
Red Onions, Diced Tomatoes, Croutons and Ranch Dressing  
-AND-  
Rosemary Corn Muffins (2 Per Person)  
With Maple Butter

\* SECOND COURSE \*

Creole Jambalaya  
With Shrimp, Chicken, Andouille Sausage, Tasso Ham and  
Roasted Green Onions  
-OR-  
Cajun Meatloaf  
Wild Mushroom Gravy, Mashed Potatoes and Sautéed  
Vegetables  
-OR-  
Grilled Marinated Rosemary Chicken Breast  
With a Savory Andouille-Corn Bread Pudding, Pinot Noir  
Reduction and Sautéed Vegetables

(Vegetarian option available upon request)

\* THIRD COURSE \*

Sinful Triple Layer Chocolate Cake  
Served with Chocolate Sauce and Vanilla Ice Cream

And, of course, the show itself, which is always a real treat to watch!

**OUR HOTEL** – Disney's Port Orleans: French Quarter is one of the World's "moderate" resorts, New-Orleans-inspired with the magical Touch of Mardi Gras, sitting on the banks of Disney's own Themed river: the Sassagoula. The resort is described as "an enchanting combination of amenities and value," that features "charming facilities, delectable dining and lively locales to enchant and entertain your entire family."



What made this resort our best option is that it's not far from Downtown Disney (where La Nouba is performing,) it has a wonderful selection of amenities (below,) and access to Disney's legendary transportation alternatives, including direct access to Downtown Disney via Water Launch (just get on a water launch and go straight to La Nouba!!)

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 9

Time	Location	Activity
6:00pm - 8:00pm	Hotel	<b>CirqueCon Registration Open</b> Join Rich and Ricky in room 4234 at our official HQ hotel - Disney's Port Orleans: French Quarter – to pick up your programme packet, Epcot Dessert Party tickets, House of Blues Group Meal ticket and your La Nouba show ticket!
8:00pm - 12:00am	Downtown Disney	<b>A Little Early Disney Magic</b> We're kicking off our celebration with a little early Disney Magic. After you've checked in and settled, we're packing up the registration items and heading out to Downtown Disney West Side for a sneak peek at the La Nouba theater, grab a bite to eat and wander the shops of Downtown Disney... We don't have anything scheduled or planned, so enjoy the night!

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 10

Time	Location	Activity
9:00am – 10:30am	Hotel	<b>CirqueCon Registration Area Open</b> On the morning of Friday, August 10th, join us as we make an impromptu registration area within our rooms (from 9:00am until 11:30am). Feel free to stop by and pick up your Epcot Dessert party tickets, your programme packets, to say hello or to just mingle with other passionate.
10:30am – 8:30pm	WDW	<b>Disney Magic!</b> After we've closed for the day, we're off to partake in the magic of the Walt Disney World resort -- Relax. Park Hop. Enjoy the Hotel. Go Swimming. Take a walk on the Boardwalk. Get a sundae at Ghiradelli's. See a movie at AMC 24. Splash at Typhoon Lagoon. Putt on one of several Disney golf courses. Whatever. You name it! The day is yours! Carpe Diem!
8:30pm - 9:30pm	WDW	<b>Epcot Dessert Party</b> Good Evening and Welcome. Our Dessert Party begins at the United Kingdom Pavilion, Lower Terrace at EPCOT World Showcase. A “group only” area has been reserved just for us to mingle with our fellow Passionate, with desserts and drinks to sample, as the spark of a thousand fireworks cast their brilliance over the waters of the World Showcase Lagoon. Epcot's night-time fireworks extravaganza: Illuminations 2000 Reflections of Earth is the perfect night cap to a magical Disney day.
9:30pm +	WDW	<b>More Disney Magic!</b> Not quite ready to tuck in? Don't worry! You can let out that child inside you at Fantasia Gardens Mini-Golf located across from the Disney/MGM studios, hop over to Pleasure Island for the night, or, check out the Extended Magic Hours at the Magic Kingdom – the night is yours, do with it as you please!

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 11

Time	Location	Activity
	Hotel	<b>CirqueCon Registration Area</b>
11:00am - 2:00pm	Cirque Theater	<b>Activities in the La Nouba Theater</b> This is the day we've all been waiting for. Join us once again Saturday morning as we open our rooms for registration purposes, then, assemble out front of the Cirque du Soleil theater for a morning of circus delights! A Q&A, a tour of the facility and more!
6:30pm - 8:30pm	House of Blues	<b>Group Meal @ House of Blues</b> At 6:30pm join us at the House of Blues for our group meal! Enjoy a three-course meal including salad and corn bread, a selection of Rosemary Chicken Breast, Cajun Meatloaf or Creole Jambalaya, and chocolate cake for dessert!
9:00pm - 12:30pm	Downtown Disney	<b>Group Show - La Nouba!</b> Then it's off to La Nouba at 9:00pm, where, once upon a time a door opened and two worlds collided. Dreams clashed with reality. The mundane mixed with the marvelous. It was no longer possible to tell where one world began and the other ended. This new place was called La Nouba... Stick around because you'll want to be in on the group photo with a few cast members and party with the cast in the Green Room!

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 12

Time	Location	Activity
10:00am - 12:00pm	Hotel	<b>Our Kaffeeklatsch</b> On Sunday morning, join us once again in our hotel rooms for the Kaffeeklatsch - an impromptu get-together to give us your thoughts about the weekend. Come have a cup of coffee or tea and let us know how we did and what can be improved for our next adventure: CirqueCon 2008: Tokyo! Or just stop by to say "good-bye!"







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**Thursday, November 6, 2008 to Sunday, November 9, 2008**  
**Hilton Tokyo Bay | Tokyo Disneyland**  
**Tokyo, Japan**

*Something in the air  
Calls again to those who hear  
Whispers to the heart*

*A new creation  
Born and grown in island soil  
Digging deep roots there*

*Evoking such joy  
Anticipating wonder  
Hearts flutter swiftly*

*Souls gather again  
Share the same unfolding dream  
Passionates living*

*Discovery waits  
Seizes the soul and shakes hard  
Wonder falls like rain*

*Coming together  
In the autumn of the year  
Bring your umbrella!*



For the fifth time we gather, our first time off the North American continent. It has been an extraordinary experience planning an Event in a country so far away from our home base. We continue to be amazed by the kindness of our friends at Cirque du Soleil who once again have gone above and beyond our expectations. This beautiful country holds the promise of many surprises, both big and small.

As CirqueCon reaches its quintessential event we find we have somewhat of a “core” of Cirque Passionates that will gladly follow us wherever we might choose to go. That core has changed from our first event in 2004; the faces of that first event are different from this one. In the intervening time many friendships have been made, as Passionates have bonded with others of like mind.

**OUR MEMBERS** – We had an extraordinarily strong showing for such a distant location: 43 on-site members with 45 paid memberships (several Passionates, though they cannot join us in Tokyo, still wish to be part of our group!), 11 hotel rooms at the Hilton Tokyo Bay coming to 45 room nights total. Our members come from one-fifth of the United States, Japan (of course!), Mexico, Canada, Australia, Germany and even Russia. WOW! We are truly humbled by the faith you have put in our small committee.

**GROUP MEAL / RAINFOREST CAFÉ** – One of the highlights of CirqueCon is when Cirque fans gather at a local eating establishment, enjoying a meal and getting acquainted (or re-acquainted) with each other. It's something that brings us together as a community. This year we were fortunate to find a Tokyo location of a famous American franchise close to the Cirque Theater in the Tokyo Disney Resort! And we reserved the "Cave" room especially for us! We had...

1. Our choice of four of the following.
  - a. Entree: Rice Pilaff, Dry Curry or Curry and Rice
  - b. Salad: Mixed Salad or Caesar Salad
  - c. Pasta: Meat Sauce Pasta, Tomato Sauce Penne or Cream Pasta
  - d. Sandwiches: Tuna Sandwich, Egg Sandwich or Ham Sandwich
2. An assorted selection of deep-fried foods (Squid, cheese potato, white fish, and waffle potato fries); two kinds of pizza (Tomato sauce, mushroom, olive, tomato, mixed cheese, smoke chicken, or Pepperoni); Stewed Hamburg (hamburger steak cooked with tomato sauce) and Teriyaki Chicken.
3. Drinks: Oolong Tea and Orange Juice

**SPECIAL CIRQUE ACTIVITIES** – Our fun with Cirque du Soleil began on the afternoon of the 7th, as passionates all funneled into the ZED Theater two by two. Inside we watched a rehearsal with members from the artistic staff to explain what was going on (which wasn't necessary – we know a flying trapeze when we see it!), but we did appreciate the time spent with us answering our questions and pandering to our curiosity about all things Cirque. Following the show, we stuck around for what is becoming a CirqueCon tradition: stepping onto the stage for an exclusive group photograph with some of the ZED cast!

**TOKYO DISNEY RESORT** – The Resort encompasses two Disney Theme Parks; Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo DisneySea. The entire resort is currently celebrating Tokyo Disney Resorts 25th Anniversary. In addition, starting November 7, both parks festoon themselves in beautiful Christmas decorations; Tokyo Disneylands' "Christmas Fantasy" and DisneySEAs' "Harborside Christmas". From a shows and parades point of view, in typical Disney fashion there are lots! Tokyo Disneyland includes a daily parade as well as their version of the "Electrical Parade," with other shows and events all day long. DisneySea also has shows and events, including the daytime show, "The Legend of Mythica" and the evening spectacular, "BraviSEAmo!"

We took full advantage of our Disney neighbors by having a CirqueCon DisneySEA exploration day complete with lunch at Magellians. The atmosphere recalls the glory days of oceanic explorers, with a deeply detailed décor that screams refinement. The food is Western-style. Ricky and Rich hosted a table of 8 at 11:00am, Keith a table of 8 at Noon, and Lucy a table of 8 at 1:00pm.

#### OUR SCHEDULE –

#### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7th

Time	Location	Activity
10:00am - 11:30am	Keith & Lucy's Room - Hilton Tokyo Bay	<b>CirqueCon Meet &amp; Greet</b> With many folks arriving at all hours Thursday, we moved our signature Meet & Greet to Friday morning. It's the place where members meet old (and new) friends, receive their membership packets, and sample local foods as well as tidbits brought by other members.
2:30pm - 3:30pm	ZED Theater	<b>ZED Special Activities</b> We will watch a rehearsal with members from the artistic staff to explain what's happening and to answer questions. Special surprises are also in store!
4:00pm - 6:30pm	Rainforest Café Ikspiari	<b>CirqueCon Group Meal</b> Gather with other Cirque Passionates (in an especially reserved area) to eat, drink, and talk of our shared "passion." A perfect way to prepare for the continuing wonders to come.
7:30pm - 9:30pm	ZED Theater	<b>Official Show - ZED</b> This is what we came to see! ZED is "a living poem, a timeless evocation that draws on the Tarot and its Arcana, an imaginary world that conjures the vitality of the human condition and holds up a mirror to our true selves."
9:30pm - 10:00pm	ZED Theater	<b>ZED Special Group Photo</b> Following the show, stay in your seats for what is becoming a CirqueCon tradition. We will step onto the ZED stage for an exclusive group photograph of CirqueCon members with some ZED cast members!

### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8th

Time	Location	Activity
8:30am - 10:00pm	Tokyo DisneySEA	<b>CirqueCon Outing to Tokyo DisneySEA</b> Join fellow Passionates at this unique Disney park. State-of-the-art attractions to be found nowhere else in the world beckon!
11:00am, 12:00pm, 1:00pm	Magellans @ DisneySEA	<b>Lunch with CirqueCon at Magellans</b> For those who have pre-registered, gather at Magellan's (at your reserved time) for a comfortable and luxurious lunch at the premier restaurant in Tokyo DisneySea. The atmosphere recalls the glory days of oceanic explorers, with a deeply detailed décor that screams refinement. The food is Western-style. Join Ricky and Rich for a table of 8 at 11:00am, join Keith for a table of 8 at Noon, or join Lucy for a table of 8 at 1:00pm! Seats are limited!

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9th

Time	Location	Activity
9:30am - 11:00am	Keith & Lucy's Room - Hilton Tokyo Bay	<b>Our Kaffeeklatsch</b> Many conventions have some version of an "Onions and Roses" panel where members are encouraged to give their compliments and suggestions. This is ours! Come have a cup of tea or coffee with us. Or just stop by to say "good-bye"!

Live Passionately!  
情熱で生きる!

*And so the journey begins. Or continues...*

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# Monterrey

## CirqueCon 2009

The Sixth Unofficial Gathering of  
Cirque du Soleil Passionates

# DRAKILION

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

SEPTEMBER 24, 25, 26 & 27

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# CIRQUECON

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The Unofficial Gatherings Of Cirque du Soleil Passionates

## Upcoming CirqueCon Adventures

2010



2011



We have two very exciting adventures coming in 2010 and 2011 which will take CirqueCon Coast-to-Coast!

Join us in the spring of 2010 as we will tentatively journey north and east to The Big Apple for one of Cirque du Soleil's latest productions: Banana Shpeel. (And just maybe Cirque Tour 2010 in Montréal!)

Then we're back on the western frontier in 2011 as CirqueCon breaks into the movies with another of Cirque's newest productions: Cirque Kodak in Hollywood, California!

Learn more at...

**[www.CirqueCon.com](http://www.CirqueCon.com)**