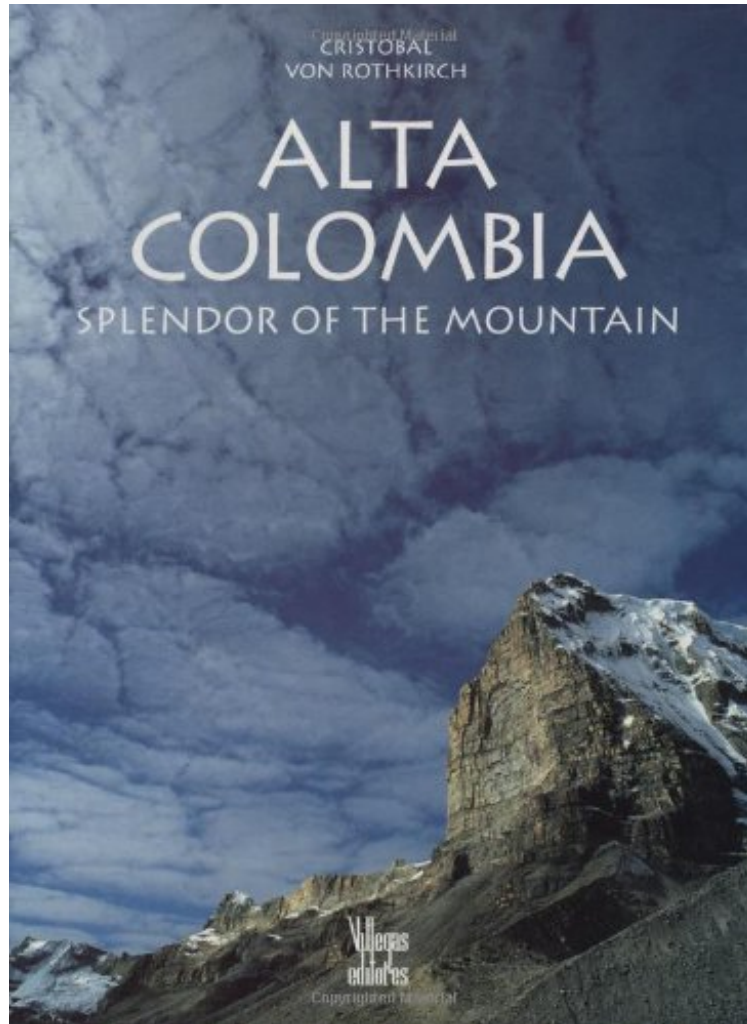


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Alta Colombia: Splendor of the mountain

Cristobal von Rothkirch, Juan Pablo Ruiz Soto
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Ever since they were formed in remote geological eras, emerging from the depths under the earth's crust, the mountain ranges of our planet have appeared to dominate the world. Magical in their silence and seemingly indestructible, mountains have been viewed by people living near them as sacred places-dwellings of gods and birthplaces of forces that rule human destinies-and colossal manifestations of elemental power. Ascending to the summits of the Andes, Cristobal von Rotkirch begins his photographic essay, *Alta Colombia*, on their slopes, in the world of the highlanders, portraying settlements and farmland, and revealing a way of life intimately linked with the mountains that remain always in view. Leaving behind the world of mankind, the photographer captures the serene beauty and vitality of the Andean forests, transparent waters, vast open spaces, and endless skies. He guides the reader through the high moorlands, with their ecosystem so critical to the conservation of the water resources of the nation. There, millions of frailejones and other species of exotic plants stand, like taciturn armies, catching the mist and regulating the balance irrigation of the basins that originate there. On the upper high moorlands, plant life disappears, giving way to ancient glacial beds and moraine and ultimately to perpetual snow. Viewing the photographs taken of these icy peaks in the clear mountain air the reader is forced to reflect on man's smallness, and to stand still, in awe of the severe beauty of land this landscape.

About the Author: Son of German immigrants, this Bogot-born photographer-mountaineer loves travel and adventure. His superb and original photography is beyond words and definitions. His artistic sensibility gives him a special sympathy for the natural and urban settings his camera captures and is reflected in his insatiable love of poetry and literature. He has climbed many of the most challenging peaks of the Andes, the Alps, and the Himalayas. Cristobal Von Rothkirch has done unique photographic essays on the mountains of Colombia and Guatemala and also captured the gritty reality of Bogot. His photos have appeared in the books *Alta Colombia*, *Cerros de Bogot*, *Historia del caf* in Guatemala, *Bogot desde el aire* (new edition), all published by Villegas Editores, as well as a variety of newspapers and magazines.