

CONTEMPORARY VIEWS – 1998/1999

Perry Dyer

Masochism: Noun. The getting of pleasure from being hurt or humiliated. Verdict: GUILTY. Insanity: Noun. The state of being insane; mental illness or derangement; great folly; extreme senselessness. Verdict: GUILTY. The American Iris Society accepts an invitation from the Sooner State Iris Society to host its 1999 national convention in Oklahoma. The American Hemerocallis Society accepts an invitation from the Central Oklahoma Hemerocallis Society to host its 1999 national daylily convention, in Oklahoma City – a mere 6 weeks after the conclusion of the iris convention. Now, reread Paragraph 1. Then, Fool: Noun. A silly person; dupe; see Perry Dyer! Perry Dyer, Contemporary Gardens, “accepts the challenge” to be a host garden for BOTH conventions! Then, the therapist says, “WHAT WERE YOU THINKING???”

As if the spring of 1999 weren't going to be chaotic and stressful enough, Mother Nature decides to put everything into perspective. May 5, 1999, from about 4:00 in the afternoon, well into the night, the “mother” of all tornadoes, now scientifically declared to have been an F-6 – and the strongest in recorded history, comes sweeping down the (Oklahoma) plains. 6:00 p.m. Home from work. Been watching the television, watching some of the best meteorologists in the world track the Storm of the Century. The power goes out. Start up the engine on the car and listen to uninterrupted coverage on a local radio station. The tornado passes only 3 miles due north of my house – and my convention garden to be on tour in 3 days. Another convention gardener, Sharon Beasley, was spared by only 1 mile, passing to the south of her house. At the point the tornado came through “our neighborhood”, it was as much as a mile wide! Yet, truly miraculously, neither of our homes was damaged. The gardens were left intact. Yet 44 souls lost their lives that evening in central Oklahoma – 7 perished only 5 miles west of my house. Quite a humbling experience. Events such as this tend to put the pettiness of our complaints into proper perspective....

This review will cover the 2 bloom seasons associated with the 1999 AIS National Convention – the first-year bloom in 1998, and then in 1999 the curtains-up of the actual event. Bloom was good, not great – certainly nothing of the quality of the near-perfect “Sooner State in ‘88” national convention Sooner State had hosted previously. The bloom in my garden even showed signs of freeze damage – I'm in a valley, and in a frost pocket, apparently. For I can get freezes, and freeze damage, when others in metropolitan Oklahoma City are spared. Nonetheless, many very fine new and newer iris varieties were seen, and this review will primarily deal with those convention guest plantings seen before, during, and after the 1999 national convention.

A note regarding beardless irises and Contemporary Gardens. I moved the entire garden (irises and daylilies) from my mother's (Miss Kitty's) house in Blanchard to my new abode 5 miles north of Blanchard, in the country, in the summer of 1997. There was some pretty feverish activity that summer, getting new beds carved from 4 acres of Bermuda grass and then replanting the entire garden, including a couple of hundred new guest plants for the national convention.

I love the layout of the new place, and I love the soil. However, it is very sandy creek-bottom soil. Moisture tends to go right through – as do the nutrients. The summer temperatures in 1997 and 1998 were an unfortunate precursor to yet worse summers – and intensive drought conditions – in the next 2 summers. But the Spurias seem to love it here. I've never grown them better. The Louisianas? That's another story. Especially with drought conditions, it has been nearly impossible to keep the growth going with the consistency I was able to achieve at Miss Kitty's. Also, the soil will require extensive alteration, to turn what is naturally quite alkaline soil into rich, loamy, acid soil the Louisianas so love. Consequently, I have not even attempted to maintain the “cutting edge” collection of Louisianas as I did when I was President of the Society for Louisiana Irises. Once I figure out the best way to grow them, here at the new place, I'll be back!

Contemporary Views' award winners are reviewed first (with runnersup listed, in order), then Tall Bearded by general color group, then medians reviewed by class, followed by limited reviews of Louisianas, Spurias, and Arilbreeds.

AWARD WINNERS

1. CONTEMPORARY AWARD is given to the Best New Iris seen: RUBY ERUPTION (Chapman 1997). This great new SDB plicata from our new Canadian friend and hybridizer, Chuck Chapman, is so excellent, and has made such an impact on me – and pretty much anyone else who has seen it – I have chosen it over all the Tall Bearded – and all the other classifications of irises, in this review. Well named, it is an explosion of brilliant ruby red plicata markings on a rich yellow base. The markings are bold, even exotic, and thickly applied. If the impeccable form looks familiar ... yep, you might know, ‘Chubby Cheeks’ (Black 1985) is behind it, in this case, its daddy. Glorious vigor, strong increase, superlative bloom/increase ratio. 1 branch, 2 to 3 buds. The colors are so rich and vibrant, truly it glows across the

garden, making a smashing statement. For me, although not registered as a rebloomer, I have had some “repeat bloom”, coming at the end of the Tall Bearded bloom season, in a second wave of bloom. Some object to using the term “rebloomer” with this type of repetitive bloom, so I play it safe and just say “repeat bloom”. Bottom line is – what a generous overall season of bloom! A star is born – hopefully – surely!

Runnersup:

DIABOLIQUE (Schreiner 1997) is an exceptionally well-named work of art “from the dark side”. You think surely the Schreiners have achieved the ultimate in this color range. Then here comes yet another advancement. Heavily ruffled, with wide flaring to horizontal falls which dance in the breeze. Gorgeous blue-green foliage with above average increase. Textbook perfection in stalks, placement of branching, bud count, and sequencing of blooms. The color is beyond intense, and retains its depth and glow even in Oklahoma heat. Tends to begin its bloom right at midseason, and then extends to late in the season. This is an overall earlier season of bloom than other predecessors from this line of work, such as ‘Swingtown’ (Schreiner 1996) and ‘Thriller’ (Schreiner 1988). **HEAVEN’S EDGE** (Tompkins 1996) has to be the surprise of the past 2 seasons. It was sent as an “extra” with an order placed to Chet for something else. Of course, wouldn’t you know, ‘Heaven’s Edge’ has wound up being far superior to the one I actually bought! One of the first TBs to bloom, this is a bitone-plicata, with white standards lightly stitched in light blue, atop glistening white falls boldly etched in deep blue-violet, approaching indigo. Sensational branching, with 3 branches in modified candelabra, 8 buds. The form is wide, the ruffling is moderate, with good positioning on the flower. The clarity of colors and the contrast between the light stitching of the standards and the intense deep stitching in the falls are its hallmark. **CROWNED HEADS** (Keppel 1997) is the latest and finest achievement in the quest for true reverse blue amoenas. The standards are a bold, royal blue, deeply saturated. No, the falls aren’t white, but indeed a most complementary tone of much lighter blue. Broad flowers, lightly ruffled so as not to impede the visual impact of the contrast. Excellent increase and overall plant habits. And, again, what a great name. Just when you think all the good names were surely all used up, 20 years ago....

2. The **L’ELEGANTE AWARD** goes to the New Iris with the most beautiful individual flower seen. This doesn’t necessarily address the overall plant habits, but all aspects must be acceptable to merit the variety receiving the award: **CHAMPAGNE FROST** (Keppel 1997). What a banner year for “The Plicata Man”. What? Not a plicata either? Neither was ‘Crowned Heads’. Proof positive, now, students, we should never peg someone with a label – even in this “age of specialization”. To my eye, although I love many of them, so many of the pink or apricot-orange amoena offerings appear to have a certain “coarseness” to their texture and overall presentation. Goes with the bloodline, surely. But ‘Champagne Frost’, again, well-named, has a glisten in its make-up, indeed, as if the whole flower were “frosted”. Standards are a rather “icy” blue-white, with just a suggestion of pink blush in the midribs. Then the falls are an eloquent soft (but not pale) peach, perhaps with buff undertoning which softens the effect. Heavy precise ruffling inherited from its pollen parent, ‘Overjoyed’ (Gatty-Keppel 1994).

Runnersup:

CASCADING RAINBOW (Black 1997), Border Bearded, is a tapestry of watercolors, but with the substance and endurance you expect from the work of Paul Black. Standards are a simply lovely blending of peach and salmon sherbet, with a suggestion of lilac or orchid in the midribs to strengthen the color. Then, the falls are a most unusual blending of various colors, including dusty rose (the basic color), amber, and even some peach and salmon brought down from the standards. A rather bold red-orange beard pulls the medley of colors together into a soul-soothing combo. Slender, supple, graceful stalks are inherited from its pod parent, ‘Robusto’ (Black 1984), only scaled down in height to proper BB classification requirements. Flower size is also in compliance, with tight, well-structured flowers blessed with moderate ruffling. **LAMB’S SHARE** (Jameson 1997) is another jewel that just goes to show that “size isn’t everything”. Smaller, tidy, compact flowers are remindful in color to Mitch’s great ‘Lion’s Share’ (1992), with a pale yellow base color, blending carefully into ivory-white in the falls. While ‘Lion’s Share’ has an understated elegance with its gentle waving and light ruffling, ‘Lamb’s Share’ is more elaborate in its finish, with waxen texture and deeply channeled, chiseled ruffling. Thusfar, an average grower, but within acceptable parameters to merit high praise. Speaking of luxurious.... **LOIS PARRISH** (Black 1997) reminds me of a more intense, richer, modern version of the great laced classic, ‘Grand Waltz’ (Schreiner 1970). ‘Lois Parrish’ is a full shade deeper than ‘Grand Waltz’, in a drop-dead gorgeous medium lilac (not orchid). Heavily laced, wide flowers have absolutely no difficulty in opening, in spite of all the frills. A good strong grower, much improved over its “competition” in this color and lacing.

3. Contemporary Views’ **9-1-1 AWARD** is bestowed to the New Iris that is the most significant hybridizing achievement or color break. In a world of monotony bordering on purgatory – just like tetraploid daylilies with the lacy golden edges, once a popular (and lucrative!) fad, quickly becoming even an annoyance – this award goes to the iris that piques the hybridizer in me (Translation: Wow! I wish I had bred that one!!!). For this year, as with the Contemporary Award, an SDB beats out the hundreds of guest plants seen at the 1999 National: **MINIDRAGON** (M. Smith 1998). Indeed, oh wow! Unabashed love at first sight. A clump of this, amassed in bloom, looks like a Persian rug, with its rich, silken

port wine. In some weather conditions, the colors approach a stunning burgundy black. Whichever your eye sees, it is drawn to the intense, deep tangerine beards. That's what beards are for, no matter what their coloration or intensity. They pull everything together, either through contrast or by blending in to the color scheme harmoniously. Shamefully vigorous (a damned weed, actually!), with generous floriferousness, well timed, with a subsidiary wave of bloom coming on just as the primary flush of bloom is coming to a close. Here, the stalks can be a bit "rangy", really pushing the top of the SDB class. But still a magnificent hybridizing achievement.

Runnersup:

THOR'S LIGHTNING BOLT (Dean 1998) is a simply unbelievable addition to Space Age irises. I've seen a lot of them now. I grow many of them. And I'm a big fan. But I've never seen anything quite like this. The basic color is a simple (but intense) pure purple. In the heart of the flower, things start out fairly traditionally, with a contrasty deep orange beard. But then, look out, closer inspection reveals that the beard is weirded out – forked, and then extending into a purple horn. But, the lightning bolt comes right below the beard. The fuzzy orange beard actually transforms into this V-shaped white spear-thing extending well down onto the purple falls. Absolutely revolutionary, and I can't wait to see what is waiting in the wings from the work done with this unique new iris. The only complaint thusfar is in the plant habits – for me, slow to reestablish and slow to increase. However, I reserve the right to rescind this statement, once the planting is better established! **COMPADRE** (L. Miller 1998) is yet another major advancement in the dwarfs. This cute SDB, first seen in the hybridizer's garden under seedling number, is as close to a true brown amoena as I have seen, from any classification of bearded iris. Standards are a solid cream, with just a blush of violet in the midribs sometimes. Then the falls are an attractive, rich medium brown, with hints of gold underlay. Lynda Miller, as with some of our other hybridizers, such as Barry Blyth and Paul Black, is just daring enough to try just about anything in the patch. Without folks brave (and innovative) enough to experiment and cross things that many of us wouldn't/couldn't dream of, we wouldn't see the advancements in colors, color combinations, and patterns as we have today. **MIDNIGHT OIL** (Keppel 1998) – gads! Another great name! Jet black – crude oil black. Period. Beards so deep they are all but incognito, in spite of their bushy thickness. The flowers possess a very masculine, velvet finish, and are only lightly waved (in contrast to the glossy, heavily ruffled blacks the Schreiner family tends to market). Good increase, with sensible stalks and decent branching, creating specimens which will probably never rival the likes of 'Dusky Challenger' (Schreiner 1986), but are nonetheless most acceptable. Although there are many exceptional blacks on the market now, this one wins this spot in the review because of its absolute intensity and stability of color and its resistance to adverse weather elements.

4. The **SUN BELT AWARD** is given to the Best Proven Variety, i.e., one that has been on the market long enough to be thoroughly tested in the Midwest (at least 4 years). **CEE JAY** (Lankow-Aitken 1992), I predict, will go down in iris history as one of the all-time great Intermediates – as comparable in quality and importance as 'Rare Edition' (Gatty 1980) was a decade ago. A classy iris from a classical cross of winners -- Cook-Douglas Medalist 'Chubby Cheeks' (Black, SDB) X Dykes Medalist 'Jesse's Song' (Williamson, TB) -- we have purest white base color with perfect deepest violet plicata edging, precise in its marking and dramatic in its contrast. Flawless form, with broad, rounded, horizontal falls. It took the best of each of its famous parents in its plant habits also, with abundant increase and a generous offering of bloom stalks. The IB class has quickly become one of the highest-quality classes of irises this past decade, easily rivaling any Tall Bearded on the market. And 'Cee Jay' is the "best of the best".

Runnersup:

CELEBRATION SONG (Schreiner 1993) is a "Renaissance Man" type of iris, in that it is of highest quality in both the garden and on the show bench. This bicolor has excellent contrast in colors without being overstated or bold or gaudy. Standards are apricot-pink. Falls are basically lavender, but have a definite influence of blue in their makeup, especially on cloudy days or in cool, wet seasons. Bright tangerine beards simply add the finishing touch. Gentle ruffling gives motion to the flower. Branching and bud count are without peer – 4 branches, always, double-socketed, always, with consistently excellent formal to modified candelabra placement of the branches on rather tall, sturdy stalks. A vision of health in its plant habits. **EPICENTER** (Ghio 1994) has proven itself to be dependable, year after year – not always a statement that can be said of a warm plicata in central Oklahoma. Resistant to adverse weather conditions and soft rot, and it makes a respectable full fan of foliage, rather than the skimpy foliage so common in warm plicatas for so many years. 'Epicenter' is a bold black cherry, heavily covering a salmon base ground. The standards are almost completely saturated. Excellent production, with a generous amount of bloom each year, paced well over the season. **PROGRESSIVE ATTITUDE** (Innerst 1992) is from reblooming lines, and is said to rebloom for many. However, with the hot summers central Oklahoma has experienced the past several years, keeping a plant in optimum condition to allow for repeat bloom is virtually impossible, without running the risk of rotting the plants! But the sheer health and quality of plant habits suggest the remontancy is definitely there. A clean white ground gives way to a steel blue to medium blue stitching, with

heavier concentration on the falls. Broad, beautiful form. Superb branching and bud count. For those who are breeding for quality rebloomers, I highly recommend this as a parent.

5. **DARK HORSE AWARD**: Awarded to the variety introduced within the past 10 years or so that I feel has been overlooked by AIS judges and deserves/deserved higher awards. **GODSEND** (Byers 1989), for overall quality, was the finest Space Age offering from the work of Monty Byers, even though others (true, very worthy also) went on to win the Dykes Medal. ‘Godsend’ is a crisp, clear medium pink, somewhat richer in intensity than its famous Dykes Medalist parent, ‘Vanity’ (Hager 1975). Falls are somewhat lighter in the heart, allowing the eye to focus on its stunning adornment – deep red-orange beards end with an emphatic protrusion in the form of fuzzy amethyst to violet horns. Heavy substance, beautiful wide form, ruffling, and plant habits as fine as any other Space Ager.

Runnersup:

GRAPES OF WRATH (Durrance 1989) was first purchased for its name’s Oklahoma connection (ya’ know, Steinbeck, Dust Bowl, Grapes of Wrath). But it has remained in the garden because of its dependable gardenability, carrying power of the rich deep grape coloration, and its resistance to the Oklahoma weather conditions which can often test the most resilient soul. It has a broad, full-formed figure, moderately ruffled, and the saturation remains intact throughout the life of the flower, no matter how hot the season may be. **WHITE LILACS** (Warburton 1984), IB. I’m amazed that any introduction from this matriarch median hybridizer could go unnoticed. The lack of notoriety for this classy cool white Intermediate is just unforgivable. Incredible placement of branching and sheer bud count, good growth. All the other characteristics are prime. But the calling card for ‘White Lilacs’ is its elegant flower. A cold-cold icy white, heavily infused with cool lilac throughout the flower. Heavily ruffled, carved into the flower. It glistens in the sunlight. **VICTORIAN FRILLS** (Black 1988) blooms quite late in the season, after most of the visitors have gone back home to make up their Want Lists for the year. Although quite short (around 30” here), it nonetheless displays excellent branching, well placed over the length of the stalk. The color is a rich, expensive medium pink, leaning more towards coral. Falls somewhat lighter, contrasted with tangerine-red beards. The lacing is moderately heavy over the wide parts of the flower. Yet it never has trouble opening. Strong plant habits inherited from its Kegerise breeding (‘Sun Blossom’ was the daddy).

6. The **PICK OF THE LITTER AWARD** goes to the most outstanding and promising seedling personally viewed during the time period of this review. **DUDE RANCH** (Black 2000) has been a pet of mine, from the days as a seedling when Paul still lived in Oklahoma City. I guess ‘Dude Ranch’ is a more attractive name than ‘Perry Dyer’, but still, folks know this is “Perry’s Pick”! Guess I’ll have to admit that, once again, Paul has really come up with a neat name to match the personality of the iris carrying the name....The color ensemble is unique and interesting. Standards are basically a rich gold, but have a flush of violet in the heart, in the midribs. Falls are a caramel in primary color, blended to a hazy violet in the center. Beards are bushy in old gold. Substance is thick-thick, and the texture is quite leathery (cowboy chaps, maybe?). It survived the transplant to the Pacific Northwest just fine.

Runnersup:

WILD WINGS (Keppel 1999) made its debut at the 1999 National here, and did it come in with a bang! A deep sultry neglecta, with standards dark violet and the falls black. Beards are a nice contrast in sienna to brick red. It has all the positive attributes Keith Keppel demands in his releases – strong, healthy plant habits, excellent branching, high bud count, quality flowers. The size of the flowers is more moderate than big and bold, but the falls are heavily ruffled and horizontal, allowing the flowers to “dance”. It has personality, period. If this is a sign of things to come from its pollen parent, ‘Romantic Evening’ (Ghio 1996), oh my! Are we in for a treat! **GOLDEN PANTHER** (Tasco 2000) was first evaluated by me while still under seedling number (#94-30-30) in the hybridizer’s garden in California. That day, Rick had several promising reselecs in this general color and line of work. But this one was the best; apparently, Rick agreed, since this is the one that “made the cut”. A dazzling blending of gold and bronze, but the predominant color is the bronze overlay. Bright golden orange beards are thick and bushy. Form is outstanding, the ruffling thick and heavy. It inherited the outstanding branching and bud count from the Ghio line of oranges (‘Guadalajara’ is its mother). If Tasco remains true to the standards he has established thusfar in his selection process, I guarantee he will be considered one of the all-time great hybridizers in the American Iris Society. **CAJUN LOVE STORY** (Haymon 2000) was seen in the hybridizer’s garden on my last trip to Lafayette for the Society for Louisiana Irises spring convention (Seedling #81-92-1). Oh, what a lovely work of art! High quality pinks, in any shade, are still a rare commodity in Louisianas. Improvement in substance and durability has been a difficult nut to crack. With ‘Cajun Love Story’, Dorman has achieved a major breakthrough in this area. The color palette is a gentle flesh pink, with hints of mauve undertoning to enliven the flower. Small, nonprotrusive signals are green to gold, and complement the color scheme. Simply presented, with gentle waving versus the elaborate ruffling of the Australian pink advancements. Do not let the delicate appearance deceive you – it is a typical Cajun – tough as nails, resilient, and dependable.

TALL BEARDED BY COLOR GROUP

REDS TO MAROONS:

WALKARA (Ames 1996) is a wonderful new addition to reds, from a virtually “unknown” hybridizer from Utah. Fortunately, it was released by the Zebra Guy, so it should get good exposure and distribution! A deep-deep red, with what appears to be a black underlay, which increases the intensity of the color saturation. Laced reds are one of the last “tough nuts to crack” in Tall Bearded irises, but ‘Walkara’ exhibits more than just a suggestion of lace – it’s there.

DYNAMITE (Schreiner 1997) is a crimson (cardinal) red of moderate intensity, with velvet texture and leathery substance. Nice contrast with bright bushy golden beards. Beautiful blue-green foliage with good increase. **VELVET**

UNDERGROUND (Lauer 1996) is a cleverly-named deep reddish-maroon with moderate ruffling. The whole flower has a fascinating “smoked” look to it to add mystery (but not muddy in the least). White to light yellow beards make good contrast.

CLASSICS: **CALIENTE** (Luihn 1968); **CREDO** (Babson 1966); **WAR LORD** (Schreiner 1968).

BROWNS:

Larry Lauer, California, is doing some nice work in the brown tones. His location is very similar to the year-round weather conditions of central Oklahoma, so most of his releases “feel right at home” here and do well. **DODGE CITY** (Lauer 1995) is a bronzed tan blending of colors, with a blue-violet flash below tangerine beards to highlight the flower. It has excellent substance and endurance, and that leathery look to the texture, remindful of the finish of ‘Dude Ranch’ (Black). **INSTANT SMILES** (Burseen 1998) is a very fine golden bronze, with deeper intensification with a definite presence of burnished saffron in the center of the falls, gradually transforming to the golden-bronze primary color. Bright gold beards are harmonious. Heavily ruffled, with good endurance in adverse weather conditions. **COPATONIC** (Blyth 1994) is a mighty unusual study in varying degrees of russets, brown, and ruby-red. Technically, it could probably be considered a variegata, in that the falls are definitely darker and redder than the rest of the flower. But the overall effect is brown. Heavy ruffling in the falls is embedded in a band of the russet-brown, the color of the standards.

CLASSICS: **MOLTEN EMBERS** (Schreiner 1969); **SUGAR BEAR** (Boushay 1976); **TIJUANA BRASS** (Schreiner 1967).

APRICOTS TO ORANGES:

VIVA MEXICO (Maryott 1996) is another with an excellent, descriptive name, for the colors are a bright, “festive” orange, with the very heaviest ruffling possible, short of overkill to the point that the flowers won’t open. Just right, deeply channeled, and they never fail to open up for you. Reported to rebloom in more temperate climates, but here, the increase and growth habits thusfar are only average, so the extra strength required for dependable rebloom is doubtful. Still, a wonderful contribution to the oranges. **IRENE FRANCES** (Richardson 1995) was one of the quiet storms of the 1999 National here. It bloomed after most visitors had left, and that’s really too bad, for this is one classy iris! From a classical cross (Ghio’s white with golden halo, ‘Old Flame’, crossed with Schreiner’s famous ‘Eastertime’), it is registered as a coral-pink, with lighter falls and a tangerine beard. In Oklahoma, it is closer to coral-peach. Either way, gorgeous, with sophisticated ruffling and outstanding texture in satin. **CITRUS COOLER** (Black 1997) is probably technically a blend, but the overall impact is yellow, but strongly infused with the peach of the standards and even a suggestion of lime green in the heart of the flower. No elaborate ruffling here – just a gentle waving. **APRICOT CANDY** (Terada 1996) is a spunky rich apricot from central California which has been impressive thusfar. Heavily ruffled, moderately laced purest apricot-orange, with only a suggestion of white in the heart of the flower, around the deep orange beards. “Comfort food” for the weary eye.

CLASSICS: **BRIGHT BUTTERFLY** (B. Jones 1967); **GLAZED ORANGE** (Schreiner 1969); **PEACH FLOAT** (O. Brown 1973).

PINKS:

PRINCESS OF PINK (Terada 1995) is another nice new offering from a relative new hybridizer in central California. Standards are a rich solid medium pink, perhaps a tone deeper than its mother, ‘Beverly Sills’ (Hager). Falls are glistening white, but then heavily saturated with the pink from the standards. Wonderful form and substance, with strong plant habits from its mother, too. While Howard Shockey made his “claim to fame” with those shocking, intense signals in his arilbreds, he should be known to TB growers as a breeder of elegance supreme. **CRYSTAL MORN** (Shockey

1995) is this decade's version of another Shockey beauty queen from earlier years, 'Crystal Dreams' (1989). Standards are a shimmering light pink, blushed at the edges in soft violet. Falls are white, but encased in the coloration of the standards. Cerise to shrimp beards. Elaborate ruffling seals the deal. A slow grower, admittedly, so if you intend to order it, don't wait until August, because there won't be as much stock available from the dealers. Nonetheless, a dependable bloomer, each year, just not as much plant propagation. **PINK QUARTZ** (Wood 1998) is another fine contribution from a California hybridizer who specializes in pinks. This is a rich pink, totally self, with a shimmer in its makeup, as suggested by its name. Superb plant habits, with consistent growth and good increase.

CLASSICS: **CARVED ANGEL** (Rudolph 1975); **MEMPHIS DELIGHT** (Kegeise 1977); **PARTY GIRL** (Luihn 1977); **SCHIAPARELLI** (Moldovan 1972).

LAVENDERS TO VIOLETS:

FASHIONABLY LATE (Keppel 1998) is a cleverly named late-blooming rose-violet to old rose with deep red beards, heavily ruffled with a touch of lace. Although a season extender, it managed to make an early enough appearance at the 1999 National for the folks to see. Wonderful show stalks, with 3-4 branches in modified to formal candelabra.

ENCHANTING TIMES (Taylor 1995) has many fine assets, but the strongest is its husky plant habits. Big – huge – plants nonetheless produce an impressive number of increases each year. Then the stalks are right in line – tall, thick, sturdy, never disappointing. The color? A soothing deep orchid, with the centers of the standards and the falls gracefully transforming to a lighter color as the flower ages (and gets even larger), leaving a band of the initial coloring. **FASHION STATEMENT** (Gatty-Keppel 1997) is remindful in some ways of 'Fashionably Late', but with more lilac in its makeup and an overall lighter shade. Blooms a full 2 weeks earlier than 'Fashionably Late'. Also a very strong plant habit with good branching and bud count.

CLASSICS: **CRINKLED JOY** (Schreiner 1967); **RASPBERRY RIPPLES** (Niswonger 1969); **SYMPHONETTE** (Noyd 1969).

DEEP VIOLETS TO BLACKS:

BLACK FALLS (Nebeker 1996) is another great iris from a relatively unknown Utah hybridizer, which fortunately Brad Kasperek has offered to introduce for. If you like 'em black, try this one. Definitely not a self, in that the standards are obviously a deep-deep violet. But those falls! Rich solid black, with a satin sheen instead of the velvet texture you often see in black TBs. Wonderful ruffling, decent stalks and bud count, good growth habits. I'm a big fan! **THUNDER SPIRIT** (Schreiner 1996) has been virtually unheralded thusfar. So many good representatives in this color, and most of them coming from this same hybridizer! 'Thunder Spirit' is more of a deep-deep indigo rather than true black. But it has the same intensity and deep ruffling as you see in the Schreiner blacks. The only questionable characteristic so far here is that it seems to be inconsistent in its plant habits. We shall see. A duo from Keith Keppel show great advancements in red-bearded black attempts. Flip a coin. They're both fine: **LOCAL COLOR** (Keppel 1996) is technically a neglecta, with deep purple standards and deeper falls closely approaching black. The overall impact says "black", so it is reviewed in this section. Beards are brilliant orange (the hybridizer describes as "orange vermillion"). There are a few white lines in the hafts, but not offensive. Form is simple, reasonably wide, and most acceptable. Plant habits are exceptional, with tall, bold stalks. Down the row, and not to be upstaged, is its sister, **NIGHT GAME** (Keppel 1996). Keith describes the standards as "eggplant" – very descriptive. The falls are, again, near-black, but with more of a velvet finish, whereas 'Local Color' tends to be more glossy. Beards are "brick orange", even more unusual than those of "Local Color". The overall impression of 'Night Game' is more somber, moody, maybe even dark and ominous. Wonderful!

CLASSICS: **GRAND ALLIANCE** (Plough 1965); **MATINATA** (Schreiner 1968); **TUXEDO** (Schreiner 1965).

BLUES:

In a "sea" of good blues, I'm limiting my comments to a trio this year: **COLOR ME BLUE** (Schreiner 1997) is set in light blue, yet still has undertoning and texture veining to give life to the flower. It is a full shade lighter than its mother, 'Delta Blues' (Schreiner 1994), and at least 2 shades lighter than its father, 'Riverboat Blues' (Schreiner 1991). Ruffling is substantial but not ridiculous. Color is soothing. **BLUE CHEER** (Lauer 1997) is a heavily ruffled medium blue, with somewhat different white showing through in the shoulders (versus "zonal" around the beard, as is common with many medium to dark blues). It is a husky looking flower, with somewhat leathery substance. **ELECTRIC SHOCK** (Messick 1996) is a wonderful concoction of degrees of blue which I had "missed" in its first years on the market. Ooh! The base color is white, but is heavily overlaid with electric blue, with an even heavier concentration in the standards, suggesting a

reverse blue amoena. It's "stick your finger in the socket" good! Unique, with strong flower and plant attributes to "qualify it" for high awards.

CLASSICS: CROWN STERLING (Moldovan 1972); MUSIC MAKER (Waters 1963); QUIET KINGDOM (Boushay 1977); ROYAL REGENCY (Schreiner 1977).

WHITES:

ARCTIC EXPRESS (Gatty-Keppel 1996) sets the modern standard in pure whites. Cold, shimmering, shivering ice-white, with pure white beards, with a touch of yellow in their makeup, only in the heart of the flower. Ruffles galore – aesthetically, because it is a true self, the presence of such overstated ruffling is acceptable, in that it doesn't interfere with the color array. Stalks? It has already won Best of Show in a couple of highly competitive Oklahoma shows. Four branches, double-socketed, with excellent sequencing of the high bud count. SUDS (Burseen 1996) was a convention guest, and shows great promise as a nice addition to heavily laced whites. Rather than a self beard, it has a contrasting bright yellow beard, and yellow coloration carrying over to the hafts. Similar to 'Goldkist' (Black 1993), but certainly without the intensity of saturation. Fairly short, with decent stalks and branching somewhat close to the stalks (but not to the point of being defective). In my garden, it has been a weak grower so far. This is certainly not the norm for Burseen introductions, so maybe my plant of 'Suds' was a dud??? QUEEN OF ANGELS (Schreiner 1995) carries on the tradition of heavily laced cold whites from the 'Laced Cotton' (Schreiner) line (with plicatas in the pedigree). As with some of their other releases, it has gorgeous form, with exotic heavy lace, a tint of lavender, and is extremely late blooming. Predecessors tended to be weak in growth, with even watery foliage. 'Queen of Angels' appears to be an improvement in this area.

CLASSICS: BRIDE'S LACE (Julander 1978); LACY SNOWFLAKE (Schreiner 1977); STARTLER (Schreiner 1978).

CREAMS TO YELLOWS:

ALPINE REGION (Blyth 1996) has been lovely for me for several years now, but is a virtual unknown "out there", which escapes me. Actually quite similar to 'Lamb's Share' (Jameson), except with a somewhat larger flower. Standards are softest yellow; falls are more of a glistening white with shadings of the soft yellow standards' color. Waxy substance, with well-placed deep ruffling. PHAETON (M. Smith 1997) is an intense golden yellow, pure self, with golden-orange beards. The saturation is good, with carrying power across the garden. It has impressive branching, with 3-4 branches, 10 buds. FLORENCE FISHER (L. Markham 1995) has been a pleasant surprise from a talented New England hybridizer. It is a gentile creamy white with shadings of pale yellow. Stellar plants habits from its father, 'Vanity' (Hager), well known in cold climates for being a dependable healthy pink.

CLASSICS: GOLDEN PLUNDER (Fay 1966); LAUNCHING PAD (Knopf 1967); LIME FIZZ (Schreiner 1969); ROYAL GOLD (Hamblen 1966).

PLICATAS:

FIGURE HEAD (Tompkins 1996) was the "other extra" from Chet, received when I got 'Heaven's Edge'. This is a totally different plicata, and in many ways just as worthy. A cream base is almost completely saturated with burgundy, deep bronze, and chestnut striations and washing in a unique, tantalizing pattern. Excellent substance, retaining the rich coloration in blazing Oklahoma sun. TANZANIAN TANGERINE (Kasperek 1995) is a fun, zany tangerine-based plicata, with reddish-wine stippling in the falls. Flower size is smaller, tidy, and nicely shaped. Stalks are "wow", tall, somewhat willowy (goes well with the smaller flowers) with branches and buds galore. No color breaking here – "just" a colorful, sensational plicata! ESTABLISHED POWERS (Innerst 1996) is remindful of an improvement on Sterling's 'Progressive Attitude', with pure white base color, carefully banded/stitched in almost a steel grey to light blue. Light blue beards are heavily tipped in deep bronze, making for an interesting combination. SCREEN PLAY (Keppel 1996) is a bright, colorful fancy plicata, with a creamy white base with rich rosy-orchid to ruby stitching. The standards are almost solidly colored; the falls have a precise 1" band of plicating. Orange beards just set off the whole ensemble. Lovely form, with gentle ruffling on wide parts. Impressive plant habits. SARA'S BEAUTY (Pinegar 1996), from Utah, was a pleasant surprise in the convention guests. Basically a traditional white ground plicata, stitched in medium violet. But, within the stitching, we find a complex series of dotting which gives an eerie look to the flower. Coming from 'Daredevil' (Keppel), it suggests a burnt orange beard, but is tipped with violet, and blends in with the plicating. Another impressive convention guest was from the East Coast: MAGIC PALETTE (Fan 1997). I think of it as a contemporary version of the great variegata-plicata, 'Caramba' (Keppel) from 20 years ago. Standards are rich sulphur yellow, with just a suggestion of plicating briefly appearing in pale violet. Then, the falls are warm yellow, joyfully sanded and streaked in

bold reds and chestnut coloring. Wonderful form, with strong, healthy plant habits you know this hybridizer will insist on in his releases.

CLASSICS: APRIL MELODY (Gibson 1967); BLUE PETTICOATS (Schreiner 1965); JOLIE (Schreiner 1967); WILD APACHE (Gibson 1965).

AMOENAS, REVERSE AMOENAS, AND NEGLECTAS:

FATAL ATTRACTION (Kerr 1996) is the new star of neglectas. Standards are medium to deep blue, with a haunting deeper infusion at the base of the midribs. Then the falls are a sensuous blue-black velvet, heavily ruffled and nearly horizontal in placement. “Sophisticated” is the best way to describe this dark beauty. The only complaint I lodge, thusfar, is its propensity to be a really slow increaser, and has a bit of difficulty in reestablishing when planting or transplanting. But then, I’m told (Miss Kitty!) that patience is a virtue (Miss Kitty!). **MIND’S EYE** (Blyth 1994) is a charming addition to the quest for true apricot amoenas. There’s still some coloration in the standards’ midribs in this one, but we’re obviously getting there. The falls are warm apricot, then distinctly edged in a narrow white band. Beards are brilliant red, setting the flower afire. Wonderful form, nice texture. **TOKYO BLUES** (Terada 1995) is a beautiful blue amoena with waxy texture inherited from its mother, ‘Edith Wolford’ (Hager). White to palest blue standards are contrasted with saturated medium blue falls, moderately ruffled with beautiful form. **VANILLA ROUGE** (Barnard 1995) is a soft peach amoena, with warm white (vanilla) standards and white-based falls heavily flushed and washed with peach (rouge). Quite short, and a more gentle presence versus the bolder look of some of its peers. **WATERWORLD** (Lauer 1996) is a shimmering light blue amoena, with pure white standards atop light blue falls with lavender undertones. Moderate to heavy ruffling gives motion to the flower.

CLASSICS: REPARTEE (C&K Smith 1968); RIVER HAWK (Plough 1979); SNOWLINE (Schreiner 1968); VIKING ADMIRAL (Burger 1973).

BICOLORS AND VARIEGATAS:

A couple of releases from Down Under have been most impressive: **PAGAN MIRTH** (Blyth 1994) is technically a variegata, with smoky lavender in varying degrees of depth, shot through with strange and haunting brown influences. Falls are rich, sultry red-brown with thick velvet texture, complete with burnished bronze beards. Very early blooming, but has a good sequence of bloom to assure plenty of flowers well into midseason. **CAFÉ RISQUE** (Blyth 1996) is similar in colors, but a more festive look, versus the somber mood of ‘Pagan Mirth’. Standards are lighter, in “iced lavender”, with somewhat brighter but nonetheless intense falls in burgundy, with a thin edging of the standards’ color. Also one of the first to open the TB season. **SCHUBERTIAD** (Jameson 1997) is a lovely thing, an extension of the work Melba Hamblen explored during her hybridizing career. Standards are smooth medium apricot. Falls are medium lavender-violet, flushed with the apricot of the standards, with more apricot intensity in the shoulders and a flash of blue below bright orange beards. Silky texture, outstanding form and substance. One of the prettiest new bicolors on the market. **TWO SIDED COIN** (Ernst 1996) reminds me of a more subtle version of ‘Edith Wolford’ (Hager) – one of its parents – with improved overall growth habits and performance. Standards are a soft, feminine light yellow. Falls are a tasteful blending of blue to lavender, with a presence of yellow in the shoulders.

CLASSICS: GLACIER SUNSET (O. Brown 1966); LOUDOUN LASSIE (Crossman 1972); MILESTONE (Plough 1965); ROMAN WALK (Blyth 1978).

POTPOURRI:

LET’S BOOGIE (Schreiner 1997) is a wild, even gaudy carnival of bright colors, certainly different from what you normally see from the Schreiners. It’s a fun, zany affair, with peach standards with some cream blended in to calm things down a bit. Then, those falls! They are a joyous red-purple, complete with cream belly stripe, smack-dab down the center, extending from bright tangerine beards. The base color is actually more of a swirl of color, with marbling and washing instead of a solid look. Outrageously wonderful branching on thick, tall stalks, with 4 branches and 10 buds. Hardy plants habits too. **OWYHEE DESERT** (Pinkston 1997) made itself known during the 1999 convention, and had been popular ever since. If it needed to be “classified” I’d consider it a brown amoena, with white standards and an unusual blending of rusts, russets, and brown (get it, “desert” colors?) in the falls. There’s a charming white spray pattern cascading from the beards, so attractive you wouldn’t dare call them haft marks. Distinctive and personable. In Oklahoma, it is considerably shorter than the registered 3’, but no matter the height, you will notice it! **FLYING CARPET** (Black 1997) is perfectly named, for the colors are rich as a Persian rug, and the stalks are TALL, as much as 4’ in height, willowy without toppling, with exceptional branching and placement. Standards are bright medium yellow. Then the falls are a menagerie of blended yellow, fuchsia, red, purple, and rose, with deeper saturation of rose at the edges. Bright

yellow beards blend in with the small degree of yellow showing through in the falls. Simple form, with just a light amount of ruffling to “give flight” to the colorful flowers. I thought of marrying it up with ‘Let’s Boogie’, but I don’t know if I could take the results!

CLASSICS: **CAMBODIA** (Babson 1966); **OLD FLAME** (Ghio 1975); **PINK ‘N’ MINT** (Schreiner 1979).

COLOR BREAKERS:

So many fun things on the market now. Those working with them have been very perseverant at overcoming major defects from the early representatives, such as short clubby stalks, limited bud count, and questionable growth habits (bordering on “annoying”). **Significant** advancements are being made. As with Space Agers, this style of iris is quickly becoming a group which **must** “be dealt with”, and I encourage support (i.e., VOTES) when you find worthy new representatives. Have you forgotten what yo’ mama told you? “Variety is the spice of life”.... Speaking of spice: **SPICED TIGER** (Kasperek 1996) is a magnificent new color breaker, which is basically a variegata type in color layout. Standards are brown sugar with yellow blended in and just a few splashes of an unusual silvery-white. But then the falls are a bold mahogany primary color, randomly streaked with the silver-white look from the standards. There is some yellow blended in, primarily at the shoulders, to smoothen out the overall impact aesthetically. Branching is fair, on rather short stalks, but the bud count is acceptable, and this is most definitely a **major** breakthrough. **GNUS FLASH** (Kasperek 1996) is just the opposite in stalks and plant habits. Here we have tall, rather flexuous stalks with outstanding branching and bud count, supporting moderately large flowers with light tan standards, streaked silver, atop medium to deep violet falls with random streaks and splashes of cream and silver.

AUTUMN YEARS (Ensminger 1996) is a very sophisticated flower, with a base color in buff to old gold to bronze, then carefully marked with deep violet and garnet splashes throughout the flower. Leathery substance and sunfast. **INFERNAL FIRE** (Richardson 1994) is similar, but with richer colors and bolder, more dramatic patterning. The stripes and streaks are deep garnet and magenta. The major breakthrough here is the branching and bud count. Although still basically short, it carefully places **four** branches, rebranches, with double sockets at most positions. **VERY VARIED** (Ensminger 1993) is a true BB, and a very fine representative. Remindful of its pollen parent, the famous ‘Batik’ (Ensminger), but with thinner, more graceful (BB) stalks and more compact flowers, in correct proportions to the class. Base color is rich, royal purple, then dramatically streaked in clear white. Very impressive!

SPACE AGERS:

All kinds of creative, innovative work happening here. The floodgates have opened – we’re finding appendages on things never seen before! **APOLLO ONE** (Sutton 1997) is probably my favorite of recent Sutton releases. Small flowered, but the presentation has a strong impact in the garden. This is a red-purple on white plicata, with the plicating in sanding and stitching as a fancy plicata. Then, consistent horns in the color of the plicating. Straight out of ‘Sky Hooks’ (Osborne), it inherited the wonderful placement of branching and fine bud count. The famous ‘Thornbird’ (Byers) is and always will be controversial. One of those “love-it or hate-it” kind of irises – or one that some “love to hate”. The colors can be very coarse, but those dramatic deep violet horns popping up out of the middle are certainly unforgettable. **BONNIE DAVENPORT** (Burseen 1997), from ‘Thornbird’ (pollen parent), is a much more refined offspring with more consistent appearances of the appendages. When well grown, the horn further extends to a tan to cream spoon flounce. A classy iris, named for a classy lady! **BUGLES AND HORNS** (Sutton 1997) is a heavily ruffled, filigreed white, with yellow beards ending in white horns and flounces. It is tall and stately, with strong stalks, well branched. **GOLDFINGER** (Sutton 1997) is a nice advancement in gold to yellow Space Agers. Standards are golden yellow, blended with lemon at the edges. Falls are white, but heavily edged with the color of the standards. Bright orange beards give way to horns, leading to golden-yellow flounces. **TO THE POINT** (Black 1998) is a tall, well branched smooth lavender self, with golden beards transforming into 1” horns. Cute name, very descriptive. No silliness here – just “get to the point”. Paul says the horns will sometimes extend to flounces. For me, it hasn’t yet, but you simply can’t ignore those horns!

Great strides have been made to stabilize the adornment factor in Space Agers, so much so that I’m very critical of any new release that exhibits the defects of old. But I have to take exception occasionally and recognize some that are just so wild and zany, they just cannot be denied! Enter **TOO MANY FLOUNCES** (Dean 1997), oh wow! Cleverly named, indeed, this thing is basically a bicolor, with rather muddy yellow standards (sorry) atop strange rose-colored falls, blushed lighter in the heart. But then the adornments. Holy cow! There is a yellow beard, but you won’t notice it. Literally **stacked** on top of one another is a series of rose flounces anywhere from two to **six** deep! I’ve never seen anything like it, and the curiosity in **my** hybridizer’s genes intends to use it extensively to see what-all can come from all this! Perhaps gaudy, certainly inconsistent, and, let’s be polite, “rather difficult” plant habits, the potential for hybridizing, and the sheer **novelty** of ‘Too Many Flounces’ make it a worthy, innovative conversation piece I wouldn’t be without! Note that it is

the pollen parent to one of this year's 9-1-1 Award nominees, 'Thor's Lightning Bolt' (Dean). The results of just this first generation out should suggest that there are wonderful things to come from all of this!

MEDIANS BY CLASSIFICATION

MINIATURE TALL BEARDED:

Several nice MTBs were sent to the 1999 convention and were blooming well during the tour. You old-timers will probably remember that one of the all-time greats in MTBs, 'Bumblebee Deelite' (Norrick), won the Out-of-Region Cup at our last convention, in 1988, and set the stage for an explosion of popularity which has not waned, a decade later! **MINI WABASH** (Probst 1996) is a clever dark violet amoena, with pure white standards and rich inky blue-violet falls. The falls are actually white based, heavily overlaid with the blue-violet in deep veins and washing extending from the soft yellow beards. But the overall impact is that of an amoena. **BAUBLES AND BEADS** (L. Miller 1997) is also well named, from an Indiana hybridizer who is truly making her presence known in the advancement of MTBs. Pert, tiny flowers are a variegata, with clean, bright gold standards contrasted by bold red-black falls. Bright gold beards pull everything together. Wonderful, proper proportions, with excellent growth habits. **IN FASHION** (Fisher 1995) is a sophisticated offering from a Region 22 hybridizer who has devoted all his efforts to MTBs. Ken's critical eye for selection is his trademark, remindful of the work the pioneer, Mary Louise Dunderman, did with her MTB hybridizing. 'In Fashion' is a royal purple to violet self, amazingly clean at the hafts. Then, bright, pure white beards give dramatic contrast. Tight, dainty proportions, with wonderful placement of branches. **MERIT** (Fisher 1996) is another fine release, so high in quality, I predict it will be grown for many years to come. Basic color is white, but the falls have a lavender spot around the orange beards, then gradually transforming to a brown edging. Very difficult to describe. You're gonna have to trust me on this one!

APRICOT DROPS (Aitken 1995) is an offspring of the revolutionary SDB, 'Pele' (Aitken), and is a good example of the diversity 'Pele' brings to its children. Crossed with a tetraploid MTB, 'Abridges Version' (Hager), 'Apricot Drops' is a charming little apricot self, with a suggestion of a deeper spot pattern in the falls, around orange beards. Stalks are thin and graceful, as they should be, and have simply incredible branching and bud count. This is truly properly classified (not an IB in any way), and a major advancement in MTB work. **ORILLA'S RING** (Witt-Aitken 1991) was a "sleeper" for me, which I finally discovered at one of the Sooner State median shows, entered by Louise Carson, our "resident specialist" in MTBs (she has shook up more than a couple of shows with her MTB entries!). Warm, soothing butter yellow in the standards. The falls are white, with butter yellow concentrations at the edges to set the base for very discreet brown plicata markings, very subtle. Form and substance without peer! A wonderful addition to the class. If you haven't "discovered" this one, it's never too late....

CLASSICS: PAINTED ROSE (Roberts 1965); **QUIRK** (A. Brown 1972); **SNOW FIDDLER** (Dunbar 1972).

BORDER BEARDED:

ROMANTIC INTERLUDE (Varner 1997) was one of the stars at the convention, and I hope it got enough attention to make a difference. Terry Varner, from Ohio, is a protégé of Mary Louise Dunderman, and the bulk of his efforts have been an extension of her well-disciplined work with MTBs. But he does "dabble" in other areas, and 'Romantic Interlude' is one of the finest, perfectly proportioned BBs I have seen in years! Clear, clean medium yellow standards. Shimmering white falls have a distinctive, precise band of yellow. Deep yellow beards. It is ruffled, well formed, with slender, graceful stalks with exceptional branching. Growth habits are splendid, with above average increase, and size of foliage in proper proportions for a good BB. With a very complex, innovative parentage, 'Romantic Interlude' will be as important to BB advancement as 'Tulare' (Hamblen) was, 30 years ago. **GROBSWITCHER** (Innerst 1995) is a colorful addition to the class. A brilliant, screaming peachy-orange with big fuzzy deep orange beards. Heavily ruffled, with even some lace. It appears to be right at the top of the class, but thusfar has remained in class and is most worthy. **HULA HOOP** (Shoop 1995) was first seen in the Pacific Northwest. Here, it is just as colorful, or more so, with the iron and other trace elements which naturally appear in much of Oklahoma's soils. 'Hula Hoop' displays its colors in a way George made famous. Standards are scintillating lavender. Falls are dazzling white with a distinctive "hoop" in bright yellow. Then, pow! Brilliant tangerine beards set the flower aglow! Decent branching and bud count. Plant habits? Thusfar, tends to be a slower grower (as is common, unfortunately, with many BBs), but not to the point of being a defect.

CLASSICS: BABY SHOWER (Ghio 1967); BOY SCOUT (Reynolds 1968); CRYSTAL BAY (B. Jones 1966); DRESDEN FRILLS (Rudolph 1969).

INTERMEDIATE BEARDED:

So many wonderful things on the market now, and I'm adding as many to my collection as the budget will allow! Where to start? LONDONDERRY (Keppel 1996) is perhaps the best from several selections made from a "ka-ching!" cross – you know, one of those gifts from The Maker where you have so many sisters worthy of release, high-quality, diverse, how do you draw the line and make the final cut? Ah, such toil. 'Londonderry' is an eloquent blending of pastel pinks and lavender, with crystalline white in the centers of the falls. Rather than contrasting, the beards are cool white, tipped tangerine only in the heart of the flower. Ruffles supreme with impeccable form, silky texture, and substance supreme. As understated as 'Londonderry' is, TANTRUM (Keppel 1997) brings out the "wild side" in Keith's personality! "Chrome yellow" standards are marked with brown. Falls are similar, but with "louder" chocolate brown and oxblood red. A festive new plicata with all the attributes Keith demands and you expect in his work. When I see it, I think of a temperamental tenor, having a "diva" temper-tantrum because he doesn't like the tempo the conductor has chosen!

IMPERATIVE (Black 1997) is a scaled-down version of the neat work Paul is doing with red-bearded blacks and neglectas. Standards are rich, deep purple. The falls are a full degree deeper, approaching black, giving an impression of a neglecta. Then, amidst it all, shocking bushy burnt orange beards. What a statement! EMBLAZONED (Black 1996) is a scintillating saffron plicata, with medium brown banding on both the standards and falls. The color of the standards' plicating is lighter than the falls, but there is more of it. In the falls, the band is narrow and precise. Tidy and compact, with smaller flowers and stalks at the lower limit of the class – a nice look. LASER PRINT (Black 1997) is an advancement Paul is working in the luminata/fancy plicata pattern in IBs. Here we have standards in white, widely banded and heavily washed in violet. Falls are also a white base, but with a deeper violet banding, and a marbling or wash over the center. Simply wonderful branching and bud count, which appears to be a strong point in this whole line of work, as all I've seen to date have these attributes. And what a clever name – Paul is good at it!

CLOUD MISTRESS (Blyth 1995) is one of my favorites from a large collection of innovative IBs released by Barry in the mid-90s. There we have a glistening, frothy white with a distinctive tangerine-red beard. Reminds me of a modern version of 'Cheers' (Hager), the first really decent red-bearded white IB. This has been a difficult area to improve upon, and 'Cloud Mistress' is a major accomplishment. OPALETTE (Blyth 1993) is a pearlescent, delicate blend of cream and ivory, gently blushed with soft pink. Standards are open but usually hold well. Plant habits are exceptional, with serious increase each season. Then, to wake things up a bit, HE'S A PIRATE (Blyth 1994), certainly at the opposite end of the spectrum. From a daring cross – the famous parent, pink SDB 'Chanted' (Blyth) X the stunning 'Electric' (Blyth TB) – Barry got a sultry, naughty bitone, with deep burgundy wine standards and deeper, near-black falls with cherry underlay. Wonderful color! Superb substance to allow the flowers to retain their intensity throughout the life of the flower. SONORAN SANDS (Tasco 1996) is a fun new plicata from California, reminding me of a modern version of the great IB classic, 'Swizzle' (Hager 1972). Golden yellow standards are solid, with no markings. Then, the falls are one shade lighter, smartly stitched and sanded with rusty brown, with heavier concentration of markings at the shoulders, just like 'Swizzle' did. Smaller flowers on rather flexuous, well branched stalks. Works for me!

And, to conclude this section, a dynamic duo from dynamo hybridizer, Marky Smith from Yakima, Washington:

FATHOM (1997), I have said from the first time I saw it, has "everything" my own Sass-winning blue, 'Silent Strings', lacked (of course, 'Silent Strings' was introduced 20 years ago...). A clear, shimmering medium blue, about the color of 'Loyal Devotion' (Waltermire) or 'Color Me Blue' (Schreiner), in a total self with no undercoating to interfere. Well shaped, with proper standards under control ('Silent Strings' standards tended to be open) and wonderful branching and bud count ('Silent Strings' was, frankly, short and stubby!). But there are similarities too, namely, rampant growth habits, dependability, and carrying power of the color in the garden. And then SAILOR (1996), a tidy neglecta-plicata, reminding of some of the early work Keith Keppel did in the pattern, in both the TBs and medians. 'Sailor' has a white ground in the standards, stitched in clear light blue. Falls have more white showing through, with bolder, thicker deep blue to violet plicata banding. Exceptional form, ruffled, with more than adequate branching and bud count. Yep, another winner!

CLASSICS: ARCTIC FANCY (A. Brown 1965); DRUMMER BOY (Schreiner 1963); ORIENTAL BABY (Guenther 1964); PALE CLOUD (Keppel 1969); RASPBERRY ACRES (Greenlee 1968).

STANDARD DWARF BEARDED:

So many to talk about, so little space left to do it in (I try to limit Contemporary Views to 16 pages). **WEBMASTER** (Keppel 1997) has the marking and intensity of its mother, ‘Firestorm’ (M. Smith), but in more of a wine plicata on yellow versus chocolate brown. Brown infiltration is evident, however, giving an ever richer appearance. Wonderful form, broad and rounded. For me, its sister, **RINGER** (Keppel 1997) is a much better grower and performer, a chocolate brown on yellow plicata, with a clearer banding in the falls than the sanding of ‘Firestorm’. Both are distinctive; both are worthy. **HOODLUM** (Keppel 1997) is a very nice advancement in luminatas, with deep port to violet color, washed with white in the heart of the falls, around the bronze beards. Wonderful form from its parent, ‘Privileged Character’ (Black), and an overall better performer. 1 branch; consistently produces 3 buds per stalk. **BEE MUSED** (Black 1997) is a clever name for a cutie from unknown parentage (get it? Perhaps a bee pod?). It is a rich medium purple self with distinctive busy white beards in contrast. Tight, dainty flowers, heavily ruffled. Speaking of musing.....**MUSE** (M. Smith 1997) is another interesting child from the great and versatile ‘Chanted’ (Blyth), which is going to go down in SDB history as one of the most important parents ever, I do predict. ‘Muse’ is actually kind of an odd thing, with dusky mauve-pink standards and smoky peach falls. Then, as the flower ages (from about Day 2), the smoky overtones tend to disappear, leaving the principal colors which have been hiding out in the mist. When you see this, I say that good judges don’t call the event “fading”; rather, I use the term “transforming”, for either version of the flower you see is acceptable and attractive. Through it all, we have distinctive smoked deep pink beards. Well, I missed one – just now discovering the joys of **LOW LIFE** (Aitken 1995), another smartly named one, in that it is a port wine-red on cream plicata, spittin’ image of the great TB classic, ‘High Life’ (Schreiner 1964). Sensible growth, with dependable stalks right at 12”, sometimes with a branch, sometimes not, 2-3 buds. Rich colors hold well throughout the life of the flower.

I have been concentrating, in both the SDBs and IBs, on the work of Barry Blyth, and have amassed respectable collections in each class. Here are some of my favorite Blyth SDBs: **CHANTILLY DANCER** (1994), a tidy lavender-pink on creamy white plicata, with most of the plicata marks (in deeper lavender-pink) appearing in the falls. As with its daddy, it gets a bit tall, especially on the later bloomstalks in the clump, but still a lot of fun. The parent? ‘Chanted’. **KISS ME QUICK** (1996) is similar, but without the lavender influences. Standards and plicata edging in the falls is a pretty, light pink, very clear and crisp. As with many in this bloodline, standards are open, but generally well held. The parent? ‘Smoky Trail’ (Blyth). Wait, back up. The parent of ‘Smoky Trail’? ‘Chanted’. **HOTSEAT** (1996) is far from subtle – or timid. Standards are a solid, rich apricot-orange; the falls a warm (creamy) white, with a distinctive plicata edging in apricot-orange. Form is *c’est magnifique*, tight and rounded, ruffled. The parent? ‘Scion’ (Blyth). Wait, back up. The parent of ‘Scion’? ‘Chanted’! **CELSIUS** (1995) is a brazen, bedazzled concoction, with golden-yellow standards, somewhat softer lemon-gold falls, which are then tattooed with a predominant deep red-brown spot pattern. Shape of falls is more oval, an attractive change of pace. To further stir things up, the beard is deep (navy) blue. The parent? ‘Zing Me’ (Blyth IB, and you can sure tell it). Hey, what about the “other side”? Oh. **CHANTED!** Well, surely the strangest, saved for last: **ROCKABYE** (1993) is a confusing, wonderful mixed-up medley, with rosy colored standards, but infused with tan and brown. The falls are basically the same color, but with an imposing rosy-brown spot pattern that sure looks like the spot patterns you see in *I. pumila*! The whole situation is simply unbelievable. OK, one more (I don’t think it has ‘Chanted’ in its background). **IMBUE** (1996) is perhaps my favorite of the lot, in spite of my apparent obsession with ‘Chanted’. ‘Imbue’ is pure class, in what I refer to as a “barely-plic”. Standards are warm gold, with just suggestions of bronze plicata markings in cooler weather. The falls are wide, ruffled, and rounded in white, with a distinctive mustard gold edge and, again, hints of brass plicata markings, especially at the shoulders.

CLASSICS: **ANGEL MUSIC** (A. Brown 1968); **BLOODSPOT** (Craig 1966); **BLUEBERRY MUFFINS** (Warburton 1963); **CIRCLETTE** (Goett 1963); **GREEN SPOT** (Cook 1951).

MINIATURE DWARF BEARDED

A sister act from the Willotts, from *I. pumila* breeding, have been very impressive, and in spite of the temperate climate of central Oklahoma, have performed and bloomed well: **INKY ELF** (1996) is a tiny deep violet, with even deeper spot in the falls. Truly, the color is like indelible ink, rich, and well-preserved. **WEE NOBLE** (1996) is more of a royal purple,

with deep standards, but falls even one tone deeper, with no apparent spot pattern. Here, it is the better overall performer of the 2.

PURPLE PUMA (Kasperek 1998) is a touch taller, but still within proper height for an MDB. Flower size is also in class, just a bit lighter in purple than the 2 Willotts, with even a hint of ruffling. Cute! And, yep, another clever name (get it? “Puma”, “pumila”....). Brad, you little devil, you.

CLASSICS: **DITTO** (Hager 1982); **GARNET ELF** (Hamblen 1977).

ARILBREDS

NOTE: All arilbreds reviewed this year are half-breds (OGB).

I finally got my hands on **JONNYE’S MAGIC** (Rich-Whitely 1992), so popular you’d better get your order in early for it, because most of the dealers who carry it sell out every year! From a mind-boggling complex pedigree, remindful of some of the parentage strings of the great Ben Hager. The aril veining in this jewel is more heavily concentrated on the edges of the petals – like a plicata! Whether or not, technically, it is, I could care less. It is distinctive, and impressive. Base color is white; the veining a brilliant violet. I’ve never met a “Shockey” I didn’t like, and that includes **QUEEN SHEBA** (1993). It is basically light orchid-violet, gradually transforming to an even lighter color as the flower ages (and expands its cells!). Then, ka-bamm! A bold, stunning, dramatic dark burgundy-ruby signal, predominating the recurved falls. From Germany, **ANACRUSIS** (Mathes 1992) is a deep-deep oxblood black, even deeper in the falls. The saturation is beyond intense; the attraction irreversible! And, from England (!), **WINE AND LILAC** (Wilson 1995) is a colorful addition. The “lilac” is on top, clean and clear, with even a hint of blue veining in the midribs. The “wine” comes in the form of a huge burgundy spot, dominantly positioned on perfectly recurved lilac-rose falls (deeper than the standards). Stunning! Magnificent form and weather resistance.

SPURIAS

A trio from Jenkins has performed exceptionally well for me the past 2 seasons: **CLARA ELLEN** (1993) is perhaps my (current) favorite. Standards are vibrant light purple (not orchid, not lavender). The falls are that rich butter yellow you find in Spurias, but then gracefully marked on the edges in the color of the standards. Heavy ruffling and crimping, and waxy substance. Flower retains its color intensity through the life of the flower. **SUNSET COLORS** (1994) is similar, but in more somber colors with mauve undertones. There is more yellow in the falls, but in 2 different shades, gradually becoming deeper and more intense at the edges. Mr. Jenkins is diverse in his work with Spurias, and has started to release some real cuties, with smaller, even dainty flowers, and shorter stalks. My favorite to date is **POPPED CORN** (1993) – what an incredible name – can you believe it hadn’t already been taken?! Standards are warm creamy-white; the falls, deep buttery yellow, precisely edged in clear white. Tight, intricate ruffles galore, and stalks a full foot shorter than the norm (under 3’). Superb proportions, clever, and most worthy.

LOUISIANAS

Kevin Vaughn is world-famous for his work with hostas. Now he is concentrating his efforts on daylilies and Louisiana irises. To mark his debut in this world: **BEALE STREET** (1997) is a tall, imposing medium to deep blue with heavy ruffling and flare. The broad flowers possess even heavier texture veining, giving added vitality to the flower. Superb placement of branches, with a long season of bloom. And, another clever name: **RED VELVET ELVIS** (1997) is a luxurious deep red with (surprise!) velvet texture. The style arms and falls are so deep in saturation they closely approach black. Yet, I have to wonder if there’s a “Black Velvet Elvis” waiting in the wings in Kevin’s seedling patch – surely! An orange-yellow spear signal is there -- from its parent, the famous Debaillon winner, ‘Jeri’ (Bertinot) -- but the style arms are so predominant, the signals are even partially hidden! Rich, wonderful, with impeccable plant habits and performance. **DELTA TWILIGHT** (Dunn 1996) was a convention guest, which unfortunately bloomed after the folks had gone home. Well named, it is a moody blend of soft lilac, blue, gray, and mauve, with gently ruffled broad flowers. The whole presentation of the flower is a hauntingly beautiful mystique. From Australia, **CRUSHED ICE** (Pryor 1997) is a tall, cold icy-white, with heavy ruffling shivering in the hot Oklahoma breeze. Quite noticeable texture veining adds drama to the flower. **KITCHEN MUSIC** (Morgan 1996) is a festive affair from our friend in Arkansas. It is a variegata color pattern, with clarity of color the envy of its TB counterparts. Standards are clear yellow, with a hint of red stain in the midribs. Falls are a bright, joyful red, contrasted with a stunning yellow-orange steeple signal. Beautiful deep green foliage, and healthy through and through.

CLASSICS: ANN CHOWNING (Chowning 1977); BROWN PATCH (Army 1976); CHARJOY'S MIKE (Army 1977); CHARLIE'S EVANGELINE (Army 1976); EOLIAN (Army 1969); INEZ CONGER (Army 1973).

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