

## CONTEMPORARY VIEWS – 1992

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The weather was the main topic of the year – and the resulting bacterial soft rot (which we wound up unaffectionately referring to as “The Plague”). I lost 40-50% of the bearded garden in Blanchard; others lost upward of 80%. Thousands upon thousands of dollars’ worth of stock turned to mush. We wound up digging every single plant on the place, rebuilt and sterilized the contaminated beds, left the plants out of the ground until late September, and then replanted those that had not gone ahead and rotted while out of the ground. Where the bearded irises were lacking, the Louisianas MORE than made up for. Even with a late freeze impacting some of the earliest bloom, the Louisiana bloom season was out of this world. The first-year iris bloom in the Texas gardens for the Ft. Worth convention was quite marvelous.

Contemporary Views’ award winners are reviewed first (with runnersup listed in order), then TBs by general color group. Throughout the review, the term “New Iris” is defined as those introduced within the last 3 years inclusive (i.e., this year, irises introduced in 1990, 1991, and 1992).

### AWARD WINNERS

1. The **CONTEMPORARY AWARD**, given to the Best New Iris seen. The older I get and the longer I grow irises, the more I demand that sometimes-ever-elusive feature of DISTINCTIVENESS. I’m tired of “another pretty pink” or “a high quality blue remindful of XXX”. It’s got to have some kick, something to turn my head, and THEN have something underneath it to justify my extra attention. Sometimes that mystical something can’t quite be put into words, but you know it’s there. Irises such as ‘Silverado’ (Schreiner) and ‘Honky Tonk Blues’ (Schreiner) have it, and now the Schreiner family has released another one: **SIERRA GRANDE** (1992). Take the lustrous falls of its parent, ‘Pledge Allegiance’ (Schreiner), and put them beneath billowy sky blue standards, and you have the general idea. Add a flush of rich blue to the standards’ midribs, then paint some of the style arms for good measure, and you have it. There are a few white markings around the light blue beard, but not a defect. It has a billowy form like ‘Gay Parasol’ (Schreiner), but is tight and sound, with leathery substance, moderately ruffled, and even a suggestion of lace. Tall and noble, with stalk strength to endure Texas winds. It was stifling hot when we viewed it, yet the sweltering heat actually seemed to improve the finish rather than melt the flower. Well spaced, 3 branches and spur and bottom rebranch. Healthy blue-green foliage with above average increase.

#### Runnersup:

**SOCIAL EVENT** (Keppel 1991) is a rich, classy full pink self with deeper beards on a show stalk supreme. It has deep scallop-ruffles like an old favorite of mine, ‘Michelin’ (Hamblen), but with tighter form. The ruffles are then imprinted with lace; yet the flowers have no trouble opening cleanly. All in all, the finest median released by Paul Black recently, is probably **WELL SUITED** (1990, SDB). A class act in formal, full spectrum violet, with an intensified spot in the falls approaching tuxedo, precisely banded in spectrum violet. It has impeccable proportion, form, and plant habits.

**BUNNICULA** (Innerst 1991, IB) is a soft, delicate true yellow amoena with excellent wide form. It has a mink underglow texture, as if enveloped in cotton – not unlike the effect achieved with ‘Sierra Grande’, but in pastel tones.

2. The **L’ELEGANTE AWARD** is given to the New Iris with the most beautiful individual flower seen this year. This does not necessarily address the overall plant habits, but all aspects must be acceptable to merit the variety’s receiving this award: **NOBLE PLANET** (Taylor 1991) is a Louisiana that took me by surprise. It is a soft yellow, but unlike any I’ve ever seen, in that it has an icy underglow one would normally associate with whites or light blues. Deep scallop ruffles all around, placed carefully so that the broad form is never distorted. Sturdy stalks with 4 branches with some double sockets with excellent timing.

#### Runnersup:

**OBVIOUS HEIR** (Taylor 1992, LA). Just when one thinks they can’t possibly make ‘em any more beautiful, here comes another that outshines all that came before! A novice might think this was an orchid, the ruffling and rippling is so intense. A round, flat pure white with olive green diffused signals that look more like texture veining. Similar to the great ‘Acadian Miss’ (Army) in its nature, with more compact flower size and height than other Taylor whites, and with the same candelabra show branching (3 branches) as ‘Acadian Miss’. Howard Shockey has done it again: **LOVE BLUSH** (1991) is a softly seductive medley (blend) of pastel peach and apricot flushed pink, with chalky white falls carefully banded in peach lace. The only “brilliant” thing about this pastel beauty is a bright cerise-orange beard, yet the precisely formed flowers have great carrying power in the garden. Deeply channeled ruffles are close together and precisely placed all around, giving an added feeling of motion to the flower. **MISSOURI RIVERS** (Niswonger 1990, Spuria) was a majestic clump in

full bloom in the Ft. Worth Botanical Gardens. For those who live close enough, and if the Spurias and Louisianas aren't in bloom yet for the Ft. Worth National, a special trip afterwards to see this expansive collection would be worth it. This has some of the bluest-blue tones seen yet in Spurias, with a predominate patch of clear yellow in the falls, then double-banded in white and then the blue of the standards. A clean crisp look, stunning in the garden.

3. The **9-1-1 AWARD** is given to the New Iris that is the most significant hybridizing achievement or color break: **SILICON PRAIRIE** (Stanek 1991). This is the first introduction from one of AIS's fine young talents with a bright future. 'Silicon Prairie' is a color break, with all the other qualities to make it a good iris. The AIS Bulletin picture was fairly accurate, except that it is a prettier ensemble, with bluer standards and more green showing in the falls. From a very wide cross, the breeding potential is boundless, especially with 'Chartreuse Ruffles' (Rudolph) in its background. Even on a hot Texas afternoon, it retained its color contrast well. Nicely shaped, with pleasing ruffling and even a touch of lace. Very vigorous, clean plants.

#### **Runnersup:**

**FESTIVAL'S ACADIAN** (Haymon 1990, LA). Dorman Haymon picked up on the breeding potential for haloes he saw in 'Charjoy's Mike' (Arny), and this is the first generation offspring of that work. 'Festival's Acadian' is a scintillating red-purple, intricately weaved with deeper texture veins. There is a yellow halo embellishing all 6 parts. A lighter, creamy style arm just causes the eye to be drawn to the halo pattern even more. **PROFESSOR BARBARA** (Mertzweiler 1992), the first true yellow tet to be released. This leathery, wide, flat flower is a welcome change in color to the handful of choice darker tets released to date. **HELLO DARKNESS** (Schreiner 1992). Several things have really come together for the Schreiners on this one. It is quite tall (40" as a guest in Texas) but with notably thicker, stronger stalks than its predecessors. First-year stalks had 4 branches plus spur plus lower rebranch. I quit counting buds at 10, but suspect there are more, especially on established clumps. So often, dark irises blooming in this part of the country (especially those blooming in the last half of the season) burn and even curl up on the edges. Some blast in the socket and never even bother to open. Not so here. A moderately large flower, donned in soot black – not shiny-black like 'Black Dragon' (Schreiner) or 'Night Ruler' (Schreiner) – with moderate to heavy ruffling! Near-black beards. Plants are purple-based and narrower (like 'Black Dragon') but vigorous and not anemic. The advancements here are in branching, bud count, height, stalk strength, plus the ability to open in heat, even after rains.

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 (at least 4 years). **HURRICANE PARTY** (Haymon 1988), the KING OF LOUISIANAS! OK, perhaps I'm a bit biased – I won Best of Show with it at the first "mostly beardless" Sooner State show in Oklahoma City this year...with a stalk that was 44" tall with 4 open! Quite a sight, but even more impressive in the garden. It looks and behaves like a tet (but is diploid), with huge, flat, velvety, royal purple parts and a bold triangular bright yellow signal, courtesy of 'Ann Chowning' (Chowning). So much substance that, like a tet does sometimes, the falls will occasionally flip back up! Sweet potatoes for rhizomes – we dug some that weighed over 1 ½ pounds before trimming. In spite of a heavy concentration of *I. giganticaerulea* in its background (obviously!), there's enough Arkansas blood in it to make it winter hardy Up North.

#### **Runnersup:**

I've usually got my ear to the ground and know what's coming up, but I sure missed a beat on **MAUI MOONLIGHT** (Aitken 1987, IB) and didn't get it the first couple of years it was on the market. The description is rather uneventful – a smooth light yellow self. But to grow it is a rewarding gardening experience. Perfect proportions, with wide, compactly formed flowers with just a hint of gentle waving, on 20-24" stalks that have exceptional branching, well positioned, with well-timed buds and flawless plant habits. **BROWNBERRY** (Willott 1987, BB) is another I missed initially, but should have known better, considering the high quality I was seeing from 'Picyune' (Keppel BB) offspring. It is a tight round cream-based plicata, precisely banded in rich chocolate all around. Ruffles a-plenty. Exceptional vigor, with proportions always true to the class. And, of course, that 'Picyune' (Keppel) branching and bud count. **IN TOWN** (Blyth 1988) is one of the finest of a string of lustrous neglectas from Down Under. Full and blocky, set off with stunning carrot-red beards. Show stalks, and plenty of backup buds for extended bloom. Strong plants with moderate increase. The color contrasts are bold, and then glossy sheen (with the lighter halo around the falls) sets the flower in motion.

5. The **DARK HORSE AWARD** is given 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. To think that an iris such as **SOPHISTICATION** (Hamblen 1984) could go virtually unheralded simply confounds me. In my opinion, this is the most beautiful, most elegant work ever released in 40+ years of Melba Hamblen hybridizing. It blooms later in the season, after most of the shows have shut down and the conventions have packed up and moved on. A genteel cameo pink of moderate size and modest height, truly proportionate. The falls are more creamy, then softly banded (a true band, look closely) in the

standards' soft pink tone. Not only is it beautiful, but when you add a soft powder blue beard, you have a color break. We have yet to see what all this iris has to offer via its offspring. Graceful S-curved stalks with buds so well-timed that its bloom is extended right up to the end of the season. Hard to believe a revolutionary hybridizing program never had that one iris to go All the Way. This was "Melba's Dykes". Yet it never even won an Award of Merit. And now it's too late....

### **Runnersup:**

As it blooms here, **SCREEN GEM** (Arny 1983) is the brightest, clearest, truest pink Louisiana on the market. Broad and flat like a tet, with substance and texture never before witnessed in a color class notorious for being paper thin. Paul Black's unpretentious **MARY'S LAMB** (1987) seems to have been overlooked in the SDB awards system. A small, compact, simple white, softly waved, then brushed with a delicate powder blue beard. In a world where the proportions are being stretched or even pushed beyond the limitations of the class (big flowers, fat foliage, thick clubby stalks), 'Mary's Lamb' stays within the guidelines of the SDB class. It's pretty and very floriferous with a mound of blooms, but it never overblooms itself into oblivion. One of the bluest true-blues in the kingdom is the Tall Bearded **LOYAL DEVOTION** (Waltermire 1982), a pure, crystalline clearwater blue displayed on an acceptable stalk with good bud count. The entire flower is diamond-dusted, which further enlivens the flower. Plant habits are beyond reproach.

6. The **CREAM OF THE CROP AWARDS** go to the 5 varieties on the Dykes Medal eligibility list that I considered the most worthy, in order: **HELLCAT** (Aitken 1983, IB) is a rich, flowing neglecta from a very famous Dykes TB parent, 'Mystique' (Ghio). It inherited all the good qualities – strong healthy plants; show stalks supreme; high bud count from well-timed double sockets; wide blocky form with flowers in class; excellent color saturation and contrasts between standards and falls. Year after year, no matter how adverse, wet, dry, or frozen the weather – 'Hellcat' comes through. My choice last year, **EXTRAVAGANT** (Hamblen 1983), didn't make it, and it didn't again this year. A rich burnished amethyst with sienna beards that just blooms too late in the season for its own good. **ACADIAN MISS** (Arny 1980) is still the standard to judge all white Louisianas. Compact clumps with the strength of *I. giganticaerulea* and the rampant vigor and winter-hardiness of *I. brevicaulis*. If I could grow only one Louisiana, this would be the one. **CRYSTAL GLITTERS** (Schreiner 1985) still impresses me as the epitome of understated elegance, with its pastel blending of peach, apricot, and ivory, with diamond-dusting ("glitters") to give carrying power in the garden. And **DUSKY CHALLENGER** (Schreiner 1986), which went on to win the Dykes by a landslide. No great surprise, and I'm glad to see it win. It has a mystique and a stately manner in which it carries itself that simply cannot be denied. Just as impressive on the bench as it is in midday full sun.

7. The **PICK OF THE LITTER AWARD** goes to the most outstanding seedling viewed this year. It was tough to choose this year, but the winner was easy: **RHONDA FLEMING** (Mullin 1993), seen under number 84-7X. Oh! Such elegance, such health. A brilliant cross, combining the strength, form, and vigor of the Dunn plicata lines with the grace of a laced white. The result is a soft, pastel lilac plicata on a pure crystal white base, displayed on a round full flower with moderate ruffling and light lace to give it femininity. With the exception of my favorite, most nearly-perfect iris in the whole world, 'Silverado' (Schreiner), 'Rhonda Fleming' is just the most beautiful iris I've had the privilege to view in my nearly-30 years of growing irises! Falls are wide and flaring, touching at the hafts. Formal candelabra branching, with 3 perfectly spaced branches and spur, often opening 2 or 3 at once on strong stalks that can take it. The intensity of the plicata coloration will vary from soil to soil (and state to state), and it looks different under artificial lights at the show (where it has won 2 Best Seedling awards – that I'm personally aware of), but any way you view it, it's lovely, and exciting. Ron Mullin has been "tinkering" on and off for years with iris pollen, and has produced some very nice seedlings along the way. But he's so self-critical that 1993 is the first year "the public" will be afforded the opportunity to sample his work. I'm so jealous I'd like to say "ACH! BEGINNER'S LUCK" .... But when I look at how many years he has been hybridizing, I know better.

### **Runnersup** (and boy was it tough):

**PELE** (Aitken 1993, SDB). Any other year, had Rhonda not been around, this revolutionary color-break would have won hands-down. So this tells you just how good I think 'Rhonda Fleming' is!! 'Pele' was the most outstanding, distinctive guest in Blanchard this year. Brilliant, sizzling neon orange branded with a shocking, blatant purple spot in the falls. Then, a thick, bushy bright carrot orange beard sits atop the spot pattern. *Avant garde* and bold, but never garish or offensive. You would think, with such a color break as this, there would be something wrong with the iris, like weak stems or slow increase or narrow strappy form. WRONG! Incredibly, this iris has everything: Strong but not overly-thick stalks at 12" with 1 branch, 3 buds; perfectly round form; a pure tailored look, so as not to distract from the color array with unnecessary frills. Extremely vigorous with a good bloom ratio and gloriously thin, graceful foliage. **GEMSTAR** (Marky Smith 1994, SDB), seen as Seedling #903A, is a true luminata, with pure shimmering spectrum violet base color enlightened in the heart with a white beard and shoulder area. Then, there is a white "dart" extending

from the beard. Superb form and substance, with compact, rounded form with a hint of ruffling and smooth, rich saturation of coloring, making the luminata pattern really stand out. Plant habits, size of foliage, increase/bloom ratio, and overall proportions are outstanding. It produced 8 increases plus 2 bloom stalks this year, with 1 branch and 3 buds, well timed. **FIRESTORM** (Marky Smith 1994, SDB), seen as Seedling #925C, is a deep chocolate plicata, with coloring almost completely covering the bright yellow base. The standards are open but held well. Flaring falls are marked with peppering and sanding, with moderate to heavy ruffling. Excellent substance and sunfast, weather-resistant. Superb plant habits, with foliage not overly thick. A first-year planting produced 6 stalks (1 branch, 3 buds) and 8 increases. The stalks time themselves so that the season of bloom is extended – as one finishes its peak bloom, the next one comes on.

## **TALL BEARDED BY COLOR GROUP**

### **REDS TO MAROONS:**

Not many stood out this year, but one that showed potential on first-year bloom in Texas: **UNFORGETTABLE FIRE** (Schreiner 1991). It is a tall, well-branched oxblood red with a velvet finish. I found it to be a bit rough, and others from the Schreiners have better form, but the 40" stalks are thick enough to support large flowers, and it has good plant habits. Bill Maryott has had a succession of high-class maroons and wines, but **ALMADEN** (1990) has had the best plant habits. A lightly waved wine-red with self to bronze beards, a bit coarse in the shoulder area but not offensive. **STERLING BLAZE** (Innerst 1988) can be a slower increaser (and slow to reestablish after transplanting), but the blocky garnet to flame red flowers have superb, leathery substance that are wind and water-resistant.

**CLASSICS:** **INFERNO** (Schreiner 1975); **LA SEDNA** (Peterson 1977).

### **BROWNS:**

A weak class – still so few worthy additions each year to review. We anxiously wait to see if **BRONZETTE STAR** (Kegerise 1992) will be as good here as it was up north. **VERISMO** (Hager 1987) was outstanding. A very satisfying shade of solid medium brown, somewhere in intensity between the copper of 'Brass Accents' (Schreiner) and the richness of 'Dutch Chocolate' (Schreiner), both of which are in its heritage. It is a self, not a blend. Quite tall, with good branching and a looser, more billowy form that never collapses. Sometimes an inconsistent grower here, but was doing well this year. Most importantly, it is sunfast here in the Okie heat. It needs to be, for sure, because it is a mid- to late-season bloomer. Watch for **Paul Black 8774**, with its golden-bronze standards and leathery caramel falls, horizontal and moderately ruffled. Deep gold beards merge the two colors. Stalks have 3 branches, often displaying 2-3 open at once. [**NOTE:** This seedling was named **DUDE RANCH** and introduced in 2000].

**CLASSICS:** **CAROLINA HONEY** (Powell 1972); **NEON RAINBOW** (Schreiner 1971); **TUCSON** (Hager 1970).

## **APRICOTS TO ORANGES:**

**SOFT CARESS** (Gatty 1991) is a wonderfully named pastel jewel that looked good in all the Texas gardens – very consistent. Could be put on the “L’Elegante Award” list for this year. A delicate but sound pale to pastel peach with chiffon texture and pristine ruffling. The falls have a bit more ivory in their makeup and just a hint of an apricot band to outline its superior, blocky form. Soft coral beards. Notably strong, healthy, vigorous plants, with no signs of watery foliage, virus, or leaf spot. One of the most pleasant surprises in the 2 trips to Texas was the consistent performance of **FEMININE FIRE** (Ernst 1991), a warm pink with much more apricot in its pigmentation than shows in the Cooley’s picture. The “fire” must be the corduroy texture veining. The veining is in apricot, which is what enlivens the flower. Full and blowsy like the catalog shot, but with nicer, deeper ruffling. Makes an outstanding show-clump. **STATUS SEEKER** (Gartman 1990) is a lively designer coral, high-class with a high gloss with an undercoating of salmon that adds brilliance to the flower. Flashy, billowing ruffles and a bright coral beard. **FRINGE BENEFITS** (Hager 1988) continues to amaze me at the ease and grace such a heavily laced flower opens – consistently, no matter what the weather, never tearing or twisting, never stressed. A pastel apricot-peach to watch for is Keppel 86-27D. Standards are closed (almost conical) and falls have hafts so wide they touch, with deep pleating and ruffling and even a touch of lace. Strong stalks are 3’ tall with 3 well placed branches.

**CLASSICS:** **GEORGIA GIRL** (Sexton 1971); **GREENAN CASTLE** (Beattie 1971); **TANGERINE SUNSET** (Marsh 1972).

## **PINKS:**

**BUBBLE UP** (Ghio 1989) has been a most pleasant surprise, especially in terms of bud count and plant habits. An exuberant medium to deep pink with an all-too-rare underglow of salmon, capped with deep coral-pink beards. So deeply ripple-ruffled one wonders how in the world it ever opens. Big blocky flowers with a classical look that Ghio has become famous for, but the bubble ruffles are his trademark. Contrast this with the small-statured **TOOTSIE** (R. Nelson 1990), a compact, tidy apricot-pink with bright, thick bushy bright coral beards. Well proportioned, it is a small-tall at 28-30”. Actually, it comes closer to being a good Border Bearded than many BBs on the market today! **PINK BLOOMER** (Durrance 1992) inherited many features of its pod parent, ‘Love Scene’ (Rudolph), such as shorter, thick stalks, thick sheaths, modified candelabra branching (3 branches) and, most notable, coral beards most definitely tipped in blue. It has more of an apricot hue in its light pink color than the Rudolph blue-pinks. The best of several Joe Gatty pinks being guested in Ft. Worth was **FROSTING** (1993), a fully saturated, luxurious blue-pink like the Rudolph pinks of old. It has a shorter (30”) graceful S-curved stalk with 3 well spaced, wide candelabra branches. Standards are open with even heavier lace than the falls. Beautiful purple-based foliage with generous increase.

**CLASSICS:** **CARVED CAMEO** (Rudolph 1972); **CHERISHED** (Corlew 1973); **MICHELIN** (Hamblen 1973); **PINK PERSIAN** (Buckles-Niswonger 1975).

## **LAVENDERS TO VIOLETS:**

**APLOMB** (Ghio 1992) had growth habits and increase far superior to earlier releases in this bloodline. A husky, well-shaped smoked cranberry but with a silky sheen that sets the color aglow. A few haft marks around the sienna to burnt coral beards, but not offensive. Strong, tall stalks had 2 well spaced branches with double buds in the sockets. **O.K. CORRAL** (Black 1992) is remindful in color and form of its mother, ‘Extravagant’, but with more of a pearly white in the center of the falls. The basic color is a full burnished amethyst, strongly contrasted with thickest bushy deep amber to orange beards set against the lighter heart of the falls. Fairly short and late-blooming. A muted montage of lavender-orchid tones is found in **JOYOUS MORN** (Schreiner 1992). A mauve-rose, with diamond-dusted falls a tone lighter, with apricot undertoning, honey at the hafts. Seen late in the afternoon after a hot day, and it had not faded. Small burnt orange beards not as thick as those found on ‘O.K. Corral’. Slightly ruffled and laced, with rather plain oval falls and conical standards. **TWILIGHT BLAZE** (Keppel 1992) is an unusual affair in muted lavender, contrasted with bright carrot orange beards. Standards are swirled and closed. Falls are wide and blocky with texture veining and a chiffon look, with just a hint of a deeper halo. Formal candelabra branching with 3 wide branches and double buds. **THRILLER** (Schreiner 1988) blooms about as late in the season as the best from Opal Brown or Melba Hamblen. Yet its intensification of color holds up well in the late-season heat. It is a passionate plum to cerise that glows across the garden.

**CLASSICS:** **JILBY** (Gaulter 1965); **VIOLET FAVOR** (O. Brown 1971); **WARM LAUGHTER** (Schreiner 1970).

## **DEEP VIOLETS TO BLACKS:**

In the blacks, the star is now **BEFORE THE STORM** (Innerst 1989) for those who like the black patent leather look versus the soot black of 'Hello Darkness' (Schreiner). Magnificent growth habits, with strong vigorous plants that are disease resistant. Large blocky flowers are architecturally very sound and have just enough waving and ruffling to draw added attention. Similar, but with a smaller flower and more ruffling, is **NIGHT RULER** (Schreiner 1990). The sheen in the falls is lustrous, but actually there tends to be more of a two-tone effect here, in that the standards are more of a spectrum violet rather than a true black self. Beards are jet black and stunning. Much more ruffling than any other black on the market today. In the deep violets, **DAVY JONES** (Hager 1990) looked very good on first-year bloom in Texas. Its gigantic size was one of its selling points when released, and Mr. Hager didn't lie. Bombastic, and amazingly sound structurally, even though it is so huge. A deeper 'Titan's Glory' (Schreiner), but not quite as deep as 'Dusky Challenger' (Schreiner). But it has the strong plant habits and outstanding branching as 'Titan's Glory'. The falls are so wide they overlap!

**PAT LOUGHRAN** (Durrance 1989) is a full spectrum violet in the style of 'Silent Majesty' (Hamblen), perhaps a bit wider in the falls. Well placed heavy ruffling with excellent substance and a silken sheen. Beards are nearly black, tipped mustard only in the heart of the flower. **SILK SILHOUETTE** (Gartman 1992) looked very promising, although the form seemed a bit loose to me this year. It is quite heavily ruffled, especially on such a large flower and has silky texture and a deep, near-black beard. A rampant grower, among the strongest in the garden.

**CLASSICS:** **BLACK MARKET** (Plough 1974); **MIDNIGHT SPECIAL** (Sexton 1973); **WALTZING WIDOW** (Roach 1973).

### **BLUES:**

The shocker in Texas had to be **BLUE IT UP** (Ernst 1991), a smaller flowered rich true blue with outstanding shape and leathery substance as is found in 'Breakers' (Schreiner) or 'Sailor's Dance' (Schreiner). It was performing exceptionally in every garden viewed in Texas. **BLENHEIM ROYAL** (Schreiner 1990) was outstanding in Texas, Tulsa, and the home garden in Blanchard. A lustrous, leathery blue, remindful of an improved 'Sailor's Dance', with far superior form – a flatter, blocky look, with heavy, well positioned ruffling. Often opens 3 at once and has backup buds. **FLY WITH ME** (Aitken 1990) was also very nice in both Texas and Oklahoma. It is a perfectly rounded, heavily ruffled, tight medium blue with a mink overlay so intense that the flower is almost smoky (but not dirty or muddy). Superb stalks, and a healthy grower. **OCEAN PACIFIC** (Ghio 1988) was looking good in several gardens this year. A heavily ruffled ocean-blue in a full-blown, attractive style. The stalks have supreme branching, modified candelabra well placed on the stalk. Paul Black had a row of **PENCHANT** (Harding 1986) in full bloom all at once, and it's no wonder this ruffled blue from Down Under has done so well (it won the Australasian Dykes Medal, beating out all those Taylor Louisianas!). Remindful of a larger version of its parent, the timeless 'Full Tide' (O. Brown), with the same show stalks supreme. In spite of our terrible bloom season, each and every stalk looked exactly the same and they were splendid!

People have been so busy checking out the Gatty pinks that I feel his **ROYAL ELEGANCE** (1988) has been overlooked. Gigantic cornflower blue with thick substance and a nice sheen to it. The ruffling is intense, especially for such a large flower. Truly well proportioned, it makes large plants with plenty of increase. **YANKEE PRIDE** (Maryott 1989) has also been overlooked, and it blooms very late in the season here. Closest in color to 'Sapphire Hills' (Schreiner) or maybe a touch lighter like 'Tide's In' (Schreiner), it has closed, tight form and a very nice stalk. **SUPERMAN** (Maryott 1986) doesn't have quite the contrast in color between its principal color and the reddish beards as does its main competitor, 'Skyblaze' (Keppel), but nonetheless is a very nice attempt at a red-bearded blue. Big blocky form, and an attractive lightening in the heart of the flower around the beards. The beards are fat and bushy, but are more tangerine than red. **KATHLEEN KAY NELSON** (Hager 1993) was a very large flowered deep blue with a white beard and zonal patch in the heart of the flower, not quite as noticeable as some of the work being done by the Schreiners.

**CLASSICS:** **SAILOR'S DANCE** (Schreiner 1973); **SWEETWATER** (Woodside 1974); **VIRGINIA SQUIRE** (Gaulter 1973); **WATERSCAPE** (Keppel 1972).

### **WHITES:**

**PURE-AS-THE** (Innerst 1989) was the shining star here. Finally, a heavily laced white that is a finished product. Plant habits are exceptional, with vigorous, disease-resistant plants that don't "go bald" and don't have watery foliage. Elegance supreme, with nicely formed florets adorned with intricate lace. Not as heavily ruffled as some, and this may be one of the prime reasons it opens flawlessly. **MY VALENTINE** (Hager 1987) is another one of those late bloomers that has been missed. Broad expansive flowers are blocky and lightly to moderately laced, with hafts nearly touching. Yet, with the lace and the diamond-dusted chaste white, it projects femininity. The beards are a soft coral in harmony, and this year they approached pink. Outstanding formal candelabra branching and a modest grower. New for this year is **GOLDKIST**

(Black 1993), a personal favorite of mine. Actually, it's a bit difficult to describe. Chalky white base color, with a heavy intensification of golden yellow in the shoulders. There's an unusual "webbing" of purple veining around the gold beards that really makes the flowers dance. Heaviest leathery substance and bubble ruffling so deep you'd swear it had come from Santa Cruz! **Hooker Nichols 8729C** is an expansive blocky pure white with white-based beards heavily infiltrated with deep tangerine to really-red. A nice, finished look displayed on formal candelabra branching, with 3 open at once. There is just a hint of yellow deep in the heart, but doesn't distract from the red bearded white effect.

**CLASSICS:** **LADY MARIE** (Muhlestein 1975); **PRINCE OF PEACE** (Sexton 1980); **SKATER'S WALTZ** (D. Palmer 1970); **TUFTED CLOUD** (Schreiner 1971).

### **CREAMS TO YELLOWS:**

Several fine new ones were seen this year, but the older **SUMMER GOWN** (O. Brown 1988) was impressive all over Oklahoma. It is a strange shade of light yellow, muted, almost like a tanned undercolor, but not muddy. Show stalks supreme and (of course!) a late-season bloomer. **SUN POLKA** (Magee 1991) was tall and bright, here and in Ft. Worth. A cheerful sunny yellow with a large area of shimmering white in the center of the falls. Well proportioned, with big foliage, good branching on tall, thick stalks and huge prominent flowers, lightly swirled and ruffled.

Two very fine "reverse amoenas" in yellow, but with an overall effect of yellow – thus reviewed in this section – are: **SUNKIST FRILLS** (D. Palmer 1987) will never win major awards or ever win a Queen of Show either. Even though a slow grower and sometimes hard to establish, it is a beautiful piece of artwork from one of the best, the late Dorothy Palmer. Short of stature with modest branching and usually only 5 buds (but they time themselves well, rarely ever opening more than 1 at a time), this late-season beauty is a classic in form, substance, and finish. Heavily ruffled with crocheted lace. Brilliant deep yellow sunshine standards and cold white falls with a gorgeous, prominent banding of the standards' color. Leathery substance. I found the average bloom lasts at least a full day longer than any other in the garden. Just the opposite in nature and performance is **FIRST INTERSTATE** (Schreiner 1991), a tall, demanding extrovert with the same general color description as 'Sunkist Frills', except with more shimmering diamond-dusting than leathery substance. Flower form acceptable, but not as finished a look, and the flowers are actually a bit smallish for the height of the stalk. Bright and showy.

**NEW MEXICO SUNSHINE** (Doonan 1991) is a fine new full golden-yellow, the best new gold seen this year. It has wide form and is deeper than 'Aztec Sun' (Dyer) but just as sunfast. By the time I saw this, it was mid-afternoon on a hot Texas day. "Yours Truly" (Perry Dyer) was melting; 'New Mexico Sunshine' was not! One of the most intriguing seen was **AMBER TAMBOUR** (Ernst 1991), a pleasant surprise. With so many yellows on the market, it was fun to see a different approach so successful. A full saffron-gold or "amber" that was totally sunfast. 'Amber Tambour' was first seen at 6 p.m., and it had not faded a bit. Standards are a curious closed near-conical shape and the falls big and blocky, but makes a pleasing, unique look. Watch for **VEGAS WEEKEND** (Nichols 2000), a bold full golden yellow in coloration between that of 'Bold Gold' (Gatty) and the more yellow, older 'Vegas' (Hamblen). Tight form with moderate ruffling and no distracting white patch at the beard. Branching was a bit close, with 3 branches, but looked promising.

**CLASSICS:** **ARCTIC DAWN** (Olson 1971); **PROCLAMATION** (Corlew 1971); **SUN WORSHIPER** (Hager 1972); **VEGAS** (Hamblen 1971); **YELLOW RUFFLES** (Rudolph 1971).

### **PLICATAS:**

Who would have dreamed such wild and wonderful, zesty patterns and color combinations would emerge this way. The first 2 probably should have made the Pick of the Litter bunch, but we ran out of slots. They're in a class all their own anyway: **MIND READER** and **SPIRIT WORLD** (both Keppel 1994). These are sister seedlings, seen this past year under Seedling Number 86-18B ('Mind Reader') and 86-18D ('Spirit World'). Hallucinogenic true-luminatas with pattern, form, and finish never seen before in TB irises. 'Mind Reader' has deep midnight-violet standards, heavily edged in a silver (not white) halo. Falls are deep violet with a white starburst illuminating the top of the falls around the white beard. Falls are edged in white also and then have white sparks marbling and radiating downward and outward from the luminata area. Strong husky plants. The branching on both of these is stupendous – 5 to 6 branches on 'Mind Reader', with the bottom branching having rebranching, beginning only about 5" above the ground. Then up and up and up. Double sockets too (and probably triple in some positions). Having picked oneself up off the dirt, it's time to go over to its "sister", 'Spirit World'. The stalks and sockets on this one are black! Deep orchid standards with a 1/8" halo in tan-ecru. Falls are rich, deep wine-black, with white marbling shot completely through the falls from the luminata patch at the beard. Overall, it has more red in its personality than its sib. As if not enough, rather than traditional luminata-white

beards, these are shot with bright red! Here the branching starts right at ground level, rebranches, and then has 3 well up the stalk with perfect placement. You'll never be the same once you've seen them!

A very colorful, improved 'Rancho Rose' (Gibson) type was **VICTORIA ROSE** (Durrance 1992), seen in Texas under Seedling #D86-153. A rose-pink plic, the standards completely covered in smoky-rose and well held. Rather tailored falls are a lighter pink ground, then peppered, sanded, and edged in bright pansy purple, with a double belly stripe right down the center of the falls! Coral beards. Strong plants with purple-based foliage. **ACOMA** (Magee 1990) is a lovely steel-grey on white plicata, with big blocky flowers like 'Rhonda Fleming', but in a near-colorless blue (subtle and lovely). Creative, crazy mixed up bloodlines produced burnt sienna beards on this one. Very different and appealing. Unfortunately, although it has tall strong stalks that are well-branched, it only has 5 buds and when you consider it often opens multiple blooms....

The Schreiners are as famous for their blue plics as their blue selfs, and a new one shows great promise: **CLASSIC LOOK** (Schreiner 1992) was a bit inconsistent on first-year guest bloom in Texas (seen under Seedling #AA-2169-C), but was very fine at Ft. Worth Botanic Garden. Well named, a classical blue-on-white plic, with clear medium blue stitching carefully placed in a 3/8" to 1/2" band on the very edge of the standards and falls (no streaking or bleeding into the base color at all). **FILM FESTIVAL** (Keppel 1993) is the most brilliant and vivacious of the 'Gigolo' (Keppel) kids, a brighter 'Raspberry Fudge' (Keppel). Light pink base, heavily sanded and striated with neon raspberry-rose. The standards are almost completely saturated. The falls have a sensible amount of pink showing through, but are then rudely interrupted with a wonderful belly stripe right down the center! Carrot beards. Wide round falls, gently waved. Branching, again beginning right at the bottom, with 4 more plus terminal above that. Double-socketed, of course, with 3 open at once the day I saw it. **Keppel 87-21K**, one of the most hauntingly beautiful plics I've ever seen, and there's nothin' like it. A study in impressionistic pastels, with a soft apricot base gracefully dotted and peppered in steel-grey/blue! Carrot beards. We only got to see one bloom on an aborted stalk, so the overall quality was impossible to evaluate this first year, but if it comes through like the other Keppel plics, he'll have a new smash hit!

**CLASSICS:** **KONA COAST** (Plough 1973); **RONDO** (Schreiner 1973); **SEWING BEE** (Ghio 1974); **SMOKE RINGS** (Gibson 1972).

#### **AMOENAS AND REVERSE AMOENAS:**

**BORN BEAUTIFUL** (Black 1992) is a tall, stately, late-blooming lilac-orchid amoena with wide graceful candelabra branching and light ruffling. This diva is encased in a smoked mother-of-pearl sheen. A neat little amoena which may or may not be introduced is **Black 90U15**, a short stubby stalk displaying tight leathery flowers in a peach version of 'Lighted Within' (Blodgett). Almost a spittin' image, and sure a child (although the parentage is "officially" unknown on it), except substitute "peach" where you would usually see and say "yellow". In spite of the same faults, we hope Paul agrees to release this one because of its distinctiveness and sheer beauty. Two reverse blue amoenas set a whole new standard in this color class, and both are worthy additions to any collection: **WINTER ADVENTURE** (Black 1992) is the best of some high-quality work Paul has been doing here. The largest flowers seen yet in this line, placed on sturdy stalks 3' tall. Rich medium blue standards, infused even more heavily in violet. Falls aren't white, but they are noticeably lighter in a rolling ocean blue, gradually easing to sky blue in the centers. Soft powder blue beards are harmonious. Gently waved and ruffled, with good plant habits. **IN REVERSE** (Gatty 1993). Deepest blue standards seen yet, closed and swirled; chalky white falls are horizontal and artfully waved. Superior show stalks, with 3 branches and spur, often opening 3 at once. This was seen in Texas as Seedling #S29-1, and the name chosen is brilliant!

**CLASSICS:** **SEA OF GALILEE** (Sexton 1974); **SNOWLIGHT** (Blyth 1973); **SURF RIDER** (Tucker 1972).

#### **VARIEGATAS:**

Two from Joe Gatty continue to impress, although I have found both to be slow to establish, with minimal increase. **SMART ALECK** (1988) has almost saffron yellow standards with a burnished look, tight and virtually conical. Falls are clean hafted in a velvety dark violet-red with dark bronze beards. Extremely late-blooming. **HIGH DRAMA** (1991) has more of a glow with slightly larger flowers. Standards are more butterscotch underlaid in old gold; falls a more intense, dramatic red, tailored, and also smooth at the hafts. It doesn't bloom quite as late in the season. A comical iris with a cute name is **CALL RIPLEY'S** (Burseen 1990). Actually close to a bicolor, for the standards are somewhere between gold and salmon-orange. But then the falls are a burgundy silk, set off with intense coral beards. Large and imposing, with a few white haft marks that really don't offend.

**CLASSICS:** **SHAMAN** (DuBose 1980); **SPANISH STREET SONG** (Sexton 1974).



## **NEGLECTAS:**

The new standard by which to judge is **PROUD TRADITION** (Schreiner 1990), a rich, pure neglecta that has everything going for it that the high-touted 'Best Bet' (Schreiner 1988) lacks: Large, strong flowers, tailored and grand; tall well-branched stalks remindful of those produced by the great 'Holy Night'; consistent, good bud count, well timed; and most importantly, plants that grow! **CHINESE EMPRESS** (Blyth 1988) is a well named beauty, overlooked in America thusfar. It has medium blue (or darker) standards, heavily infiltrated in indigo. Falls are a silken violet, approaching black, encased in an aura of smoke, then set off with a black beard tipped bronze. And from 'Witch's Wand' (Blyth), watch for **Paul Black A68A**, his best TB seedling seen this year. A simple description would be "an improved 'Witch's Wand'". A very refined, dignified dark beauty, with closed, heavily waved and fluted spectrum violet standards. Falls are a full 2 tones deeper, approaching formal black, round and ruffled. Startling sienna to carrot beards sear the darkness. Exceedingly vigorous, husky plants produce strong show stalks in a candelabra fashion with 3 branches. [**NOTE:** This seedling was named **TOM JOHNSON**, introduced in 1996].

**CLASSICS:** **VENERATION** (Ghio 1971); **WOODLAND SHADOWS** (Munger 1971).

## **BICOLORS:**

From a long line, including the famous 'Touche' (Hamblen), comes **FERN MAW** (Hamblen 1991). Soft pink standards sit atop lilac-lavender falls with a hint of a band and a soft sienna-coral beard. Typically-perfect Hamblen show stalks with excellent spacing, easily opening 3 at once in symmetry supreme. Lightly ruffled and laced. A notably stronger grower and increaser than some of the others from this line, such as 'Rosabelle V' (Hamblen) and 'Winifred Ross' (Hamblen). Another with greatly improved plant habits is **HONEYMOON SUITE** (Ghio 1991). A 'Dualtone' (O. Brown) type, with peach-pink standards, infused orchid in the midribs; pretty, clean orchid-lavender falls, with a hint of deeper orchid at the shoulders and in a band on the edges. Branching a bit close but acceptable, and opens 3 at once. Adorned with evenly-applied ruffling and lace. Like a fancy 'Sweet Musette' (Schreiner). **Joe Ghio 87-129W2** has sultry apricot standards contrasting luxurious falls in a magnificent changeable-taffeta color array of translucent plum, orchid, and lilac, all with texture veining. Different colors appear as the sunlight hit it and as one changes positions viewing it! Medium orange to coral beards atop falls with touching hafts. Good strong growth habits and candelabra show stalks. **LADY JULIET** (Nichols 1993). A bicolor unlike any on the market I've seen to date. Soft ochre-yellow standards like those of 'Debby Rairdon' (Kuntz); gentle elegant pastel to light orchid falls with leathery substance but a chiffon texture. There is an intensification of soft tan to chocolate in the shoulders, but not rough like haft marks, then, orchid beards lightly tipped mustard. Elegant texture veining throughout on a sizeable flower.

**CLASSICS:** **LADY DAWN** (Plough 1973); **MISTY DAWN** (Hamblen 1973); **TIMELESS BEAUTY** (Hamner 1972).

## **POTPOURRI:**

**DIFFERENT WORLD** (Ernst 1991) was the best of several nice new things seen in Texas from Rick Ernst. His earlier release, **AFTERNOON DELIGHT**, is grown fairly extensively in this part of the country, but this iris is far superior in every way. Most graceful, yet has huge blocky flowers, opening 3 at once on fairly short stalks with ideal branching. Superb plant habits, with clean, lush foliage. Gentle honey standards have orchid glitters in them to give life to the flower. Falls are a whipped-chiffon orchid, gradually lightening to white in the center. Honey shoulders. Amazingly sun-proof. **SIGHS AND WHISPERS** (Black 1990) won the first Premio Firenze in Italy for Paul Black in 1992. It is a pure cold icy white with a soft washing of clear blue only on the edges of the falls. Not a plicata, but rather a modern version of the popular 'Fuji's Mantle' (Schreiner). Tall, willowy stalks display the moderate-sized florets with good proportion and spacing. **Black Seedling #A169C**, affectionately referred to as the "Evil Iris", a cousin to the great dignified 'Tom Johnson' (Black), is a sultry concoction vaguely resembling 'Honky Tonk Blues' (Schreiner), in that it is a deep blue, but the falls are totally engulfed in a smokescreen of smoked black rather than silvery white. Lighter blue style arms come peering from the heart, as if looking to see if "the coast is clear". Like 'Honky Tonk Blues', the whole thing starts off with light blue buds, making the unveiling of the blossoms even more shocking. Heavy scalloped ruffling with leathery substance.

**CLASSICS:** **BUTTERSCOTCH TRIM** (Buckles-Niswonger 1972); **DARK RITUAL** (Hager 1972); **MARTEL** (Muhlestein 1962); **PRIDE OF IRELAND** (Noyd 1971).

## **SPACE AGE:**

**HELGA'S HAT** (Nichols 1990, IB) is a cold pure white, with just a touch of yellow in the shoulders. It adorns itself with long white horns. Substance supreme, and very fine plant habits. Chiseled ruffling, like carved wax. **MAGIC KINGDOM** (Byers 1989) is one of the most eloquent and pristine from Monty's work. A soft medley of sherbet colors, with the standards in peach and the falls in lilac-orchid, adorned with coral beards ending in peach horns and even sometimes flounces. The entire flower glistens with diamond-dusting. Wide form with satin ruffling. **ROCK STAR** (Byers 1991), on a first-year planting, did not bloom during regular TB season. Much to my surprise, there it was in June in full bloom. A bright traffic-stopper plicata, similar in color layout to 'Columbia the Gem' (Gibson) or one of the more vivid Keppel dazzlers from the 'Gigolo' line: Clean pink base, mischievously streaked, stripped, and polka-dotted in wine, cranberry, and strawberry – all topped off with a splendid coral beard with a long coral horn protruding! Much larger flower than its dainty, charming, overlooked parent, 'Lovebird' (Byers). **STINGER** (Byers 1994) was one of the most significant hybridizing achievements bloomed this spring in the Median Spree guests: The first SDB Space Age iris. We measured it every which-way to be sure it wasn't IB instead of SDB. It fits the bill, and even blooms more with the SDBs than the IBs. A perky honey-brown on ivory plicata, remindful of its parent, 'Muchacha' (Gatty SDB), but then – right there – HORNS – PURPLE HORNS! Stalks were 12-14" tall, with 1 branch and 3 buds. Foliage is proportionately narrow. This one exhibits a double halo with the inner secondary halo in violet stitching and the outer principal band in bright tan to honey.

## **MEDIANS BY CLASSIFICATION**

### **MINIATURE TALL BEARDED:**

**ASTRA GIRL** (T. Varner 1990) is a pert, perky solid white, contrasted with a bright, prominent yellow beard. Dainty flowers in perfect proportion with the thin, graceful, well-branched stalks. **BELLA VEE** (Fisher 1991). Smooth medium yellow with a deeper yellow beard. Nicely shaped oval falls. Superb branching, with 3 branches (double-socketed), precisely placed up and down a gentle S-curved stalk. Purple-based foliage is narrow and in proportion. **DESERT STORM** (T. Varner 1991) is a cleverly-named variegata-type with sand standards and brick to blood red falls with a nicely-contrasting bold bronze beard. A nice velvet sheen pulls the colors together. My favorite MTB this year was **LADY DI**

(T. Varner 1989), a smooth, royal violet, almost a complete self, with superior form and substance. The beards are just a touch lighter. Magnificent proportions. **LADY OF MARIETTA** (T. Varner 1988) is a soft butter yellow to burnished gold, somewhat lighter than the great 'Chickee' (Dunderman), and with more creamy white in the center of the falls. In cooler weather it displays a non-offensive cast of orchid in the falls, which clears up after a day in the sun, if the temperatures warm up. The flower form is tight and compact, with horizontal falls and nicely shaped standards. The finish has a diamond-dusted texture. Superb stalks and bud count.

**OZARK EVENING** (Fisher 1991). Here is the pink tet MTB we've been waiting for. It has the clarity of color of 'Puppy Love' (Hager) – even prettier – the quality in branching and plant habits of 'Abridged Version' (Hager), and form that beats them both! 'Ozark Evening' retained its daintiness and charm, even in rich new-to-irises soil in Blanchard. **Seedling #91-10** will hopefully be a future introduction for Kenneth Fisher. [It was named **LASTING MEMORY**, a 1994 introduction.] It looked very good, not only in Blanchard, but other Median Spree gardens and in the Ft. Worth convention gardens. A tight, sound neglecta, with the standards so deep that it is nearly a blue-black self. There are just a few white "MTB" lines at the hafts around the beards that add charm rather than distract. Superb substance. In very good proportion, including the foliage.

**CLASSICS:** **BELLBOY** (Dunderman 1975); **TINSEL** (Dunderman 1973).

### **BORDER BEARDED:**

**ALVA** (Hickerson 1991) was the great surprise of the year in this class. Hybridized by the late Alva Hickerson from Tulsa, and introduced by his widow, his namesake has done him proud. Quality through and through. A luscious chocolate-brown on pure white plicata, with the form and knock 'em dead show stalk branching from its famous parent, the great 'Picayune' (Keppel). Slender, graceful stalks carry 3 branches, double socketed, and have 3 rounds of opening 2 or 3 at once. Color saturation is deeper than 'Picayune', and the color more brown than copper. It also opens better than its parent, yet retains that tight, compact look that is so classy. Strong, healthy plant habits. **CHAPTER** (Innerst 1989) was well within the class restrictions in "overgrown" Texas convention beds. Remindful of the beautiful small-tall, 'Sand and Sea' (B. Jones), it has softly toned tan standards atop satin smooth orchid falls, banded with the standards' color. There is almost a deeper orchid "balkana" flash below the yellow beards. Tight, blocky, compact form with good stalks and plant habits. **MAUI MAGIC** (Aitken 1991) is another fine release of the "Maui" series from Terry Aitken, a nice complement to an earlier release, the billowy surf-blue, 'Maui Surf'. This one is a diminutive version of the great 'Orbiter' (Aitken) or

‘Gyro’ (Aitken), and has a silky glow to it. Not as heavily ruffled, emphasizing the compact form. Perfectly in proportion for me in Blanchard, but I did see it blooming out of proportion in a couple of other gardens. Either way, BB or small-tall, an exciting new iris.

**MINTAKA** (Hummel 1991) was as good in the Ft. Worth convention gardens as what we saw in the Omaha convention gardens a few years ago. Palest blue with chalky white falls, lightly infused pale blue. Powder blue beards. Open, strong standards to let you see the deeper blue heart of the flower (in the style arms). Moderate to heavy ruffling. It displayed 3 branches with good spacing, double socketed. **SHRIMP BOAT** (Gatty 1992) was pushing the limits in the rich Ft. Worth convention gardens, but had a daintiness and compact look to it to verify its validity in the BB class. A different shade of shrimp pink, with exquisite coral to orange beards. Moderate ruffling, and a superb stalk. **SPITFIRE** (Hager 1992). A tight, compact flower with moderately heavy lace and ruffling. It’s like an “albino ‘Pink Bubbles’”, with a very-nearly-true pink beard. Excellent show stalks and average to decent vigor and plant habits.

One of the most fun irises in Texas was the new BB, **TINK** (Durrance 1991), colorful, with an innovative combination of colors. Standards are pink lemonade pink; falls are amber with yellow in the center (very much like a burnished ‘Tulare’ (Hamblen) in color and shape). Bright orange beards. Looked like 2 different flowers had been dissected and glued together – we’ve never seen a color combo like this before. But it works, and I’m hooked! Simple, thin stalks with 2 branches, double socketed. Beautiful purple-based foliage with the vigor and health of ‘Tulare’. Watch for this one! **Byers D162-1-B** looked like a scaled-down ‘Song of Norway’ (Luihn), with show stalks having 3 branches and spur. Domed standards and flaring falls. Two well-spaced branches on stalks that remained in class, as did the flower size. Slender foliage. **Innerst 3267-1** was also looking good in Texas, and amazingly stayed in class in both gardens viewed. A compact, ruffled and laced tangerine-orange with deep orange beards, very colorfast and showy in the hot Texas sun. Decent growth, with 2 well-spaced modified candelabra branches. [It was named **GROBSWITCHER**, introduced in 1995].

**CLASSICS:** **SEER** (Ghio 1971); **SO CHIC** (Hamner 1973); **STEPPING LITTLE** (Kuesel 1973).

### **INTERMEDIATE BEARDED:**

**APOLLO’S TOUCH** (Nichols 1991). Dazzling clean yellow amoena, with pure white standards with just a touch of yellow in the midribs and brilliant yellow falls, with the intensity of color of the TB, ‘Neutron Dance’ (Blyth). Nice wide form with just a hint of ruffling. Outstanding plant habits with clean healthy blue-green foliage. **COME SEE** (Ensminger 1992) was one of the more interesting new IBs seen this year. A broadly formed pure white plicata, distinctly edged in silvery blue to steel grey, and then an intriguing indigo blue beard – never seen before in a median plicata. A vigorous grower with plenty of increase. **DARK WATERS** (Aitken 1992). Gracefully waved and ruffled deep blue-violet with contrasty bronzed-brown beards, similar to those of the older TB, ‘Intuition’ (Ghio). A very attractive look. Superb substance. Some of the best plant habits on the place, with lush but not coarse purple-based foliage that is most healthy. Exhibited the potential for being an outstanding show iris, opening multiple blossoms, yet having plenty of backup buds. **FLIRTATIOUS** (Willott 1992). Similar to the SDB, ‘Ballet Slippers’ (Willott), in its color, but has a bright orange beard for contrast, as is found in the TB, ‘Elsiema Nicholson’ (Corlew). **HOT SPICE** (Aitken 1989). A variegata-plicata with burnished gold to bronze standards and cream-based falls heavily stitched in an intense red, copper, and brown patterning. The color in the falls has more red in its makeup than ‘Hot Fudge’ (Hager), but not as deep in tone as Gatty’s new ‘Broadway Baby’. Remarkably sunfast in the blazing heat. It has a nice lilt to it, with horizontal falls to showcase the colorful falls.

**MASTER SLEUTH** (Nichols 1993). Standards are blue-violet with deeper midribs, marbling out to lighter blue at the edges, giving the appearance of a halo. Falls are horizontal, nicely shaped, with moderate ruffling. They are deep orchid-lavender, with a lighter edging in blue. Although technically a neglecta, the hafts show its plicata heritage but are not coarse or offensive. Light blue beards blend in nicely. **MORNING SHOW** (Ensminger 1988). A clean, cheery cherry red, with a deep brown beard that approaches black. Outstanding substance and sunfastness, with show stalks supreme. A strong grower, with the only complaint being that it bloomed a bit heavy in every garden seen. The color has excellent carrying power in the garden. **OBLIGATO** (Stahly 1988). An unusual shade of creamed orange sherbet (not neon flash like some of the new ones), then accented with a medium orange beard. Tight, compact form, and thin, graceful stalks, with 2 well-placed branches, 4 buds. Slender foliage is not too tall. Good proportions overall. **ORANGE PETALS** (Niswonger 1991). A smooth, rich orange from the great parent, ‘Marmalade Skies’ (Niswonger BB), and like its parent, shows just a hint of being bitoned, with the falls a shade deeper than the standards. Clean healthy foliage and sturdy stalks. The bud count has the potential for being very good, again inherited from ‘Marmalade Skies’.

**PINK EMPRESS** (C. Palmer 1990). A nice shade of rich medium pink. Standards open but held. Falls horizontal, nicely shaped, with undertones of apricot and cream, and then deeper ambers shoulders. Bright orange beards. Good

growth habits. **ROYAL GOSSIP** (Nichols 1993). Colorful plicata, with rich wine-purple standards, almost completely saturated. Clean white falls, also almost completely covered with wine-purple stitching (banded). Good plant habits. One of the deepest plicatas in the IBs today. **SMITTEN KITTEN** (Aitken 1991) is a pastel pink amoena with impeccable form and substance – subtle coloring rather than drab or washed out. Lush blue-green foliage. One of those that is surely difficult to capture on film – it is much prettier than its pictures. **TETON VALLEY** (C. Palmer 1992) was the best of the new IBs seen this year here. This is a blocky, refined burnished saffron gold, slightly bitoned with an even deeper beard. The hafts are so wide that they touch, yet it is architecturally sound and pleasing to the eye. The plant habits are a vision of health. Show stalk branching. The texture is a velvet pile, very rare in this color group. **TROPICAL PEACH** (Willott 1992). Solid peach standards; pinker falls blushed peach at the shoulders. A mellow coral beard. Standards are upright and well held; the falls wide but simply formed. Nice color combination.

**CLASSICS:** **SNOW GNOME** (Stuart 1974); **SWIZZLE** (Hager 1972); **VELVET GLOW** (A. Brown 1975); **VOILA** (Gatty 1973).

### **STANDARD DWARF BEARDED:**

**BALLET SLIPPERS** (Willott 1987) was one of the better “pink” SDBs. A remarkably clear pink with self beards, decent form, and superb substance. Does not overbloom, as some SDBs in this color class do. **CHEERFUL ANGEL** (Nichols 1993). Clean and pert, reminiscent of the old classic, ‘Spring Bells’ (B. Jones). Open, nicely held standards in lemon-yellow. Ivory-white falls, diamond dusted and imprinted with a small thumbprint in lemon-yellow at the shoulders surrounding the beards. Horizontal falls with moderate ruffling. **CHOCOLATE CUPCAKE** (Jeffries 1989). One of the surprises for the year. A rather tall, but smaller-flowered brown two-tone, with honey-brown standards and bright rich chocolate falls, edged ¼” in the standards’ color. At the top of the class in height, with 2 well spaced branches above the bulk of the foliage, 4-5 buds. Simple oval shape with flaring falls and good substance. **ERIN NICOLE** (W. Jones— NOTE: Never registered or introduced). A high-quality median from the hybridizer who gave us ‘Michael Paul’ (SDB) and ‘Avanelle’ (IB). This is a warm ivory with creamy yellow undertones, with a bit more yellow showing at the shoulders and a hint of a band on the falls. Good presentation in form, with open, well held standards showing an inner glow of ivory styles. Horizontal falls, gently waved. Crisp substance. A smaller-flowered SDB with proportionate foliage and graceful 11” stalks. **EVENING HUSH** (Nichols 1989). Magnificent deep violet with even deeper spot around deep violet beards. Horizontal falls, so heavily subtanced they sometimes bounce back up! Heavy, nicely placed ruffling, with well held standards and rounded falls. The whole flower is embossed with a silken sheen that makes the flower glow. Good plant habits. **FERN’S DELIGHT** (C. Palmer 1989). Smoky lavender-blue standards. Much deeper falls, more orchid in their makeup, then heavily marked with deep violet texture veining throughout (elegant, not coarse). Pattern remindful of an arilbred. Superb form and substance. Moderately heavy ruffling, well positioned on the flower.

**FIZZGIG** (Black 1993) is a tight little honey plicata on a cream to light yellow ground. Some of the modern plicatas are getting too big and the parts too thick. This is Paul’s answer. Compact and cuddly, making a mound of honey bloom. **GYPSY STAR** (F. Dyer 1990). Superb wide, rounded russet-bronze blend, similar in color pattern to ‘Woodling’ (Sobek), with outstanding shape and substance. Purple beards, lightly tipped bronze. Horizontal falls, moderately ruffled. Standards are closed and flushed orchid-violet. Falls edged in ochre, with bronzing over most of the petals. One of the sleepers! **NURSE NANCY** (Black 1993). Upright closed standards are presented in a pure soft gentle yellow. Falls are remindful of ‘Soft Air’ (Warburton), with a sheen like a recessive white, diamond-dusted with a hint of lemon halo. Beards are deeper yellow in the heart, white at the ends. It has a good increase/bloom ratio, with staggered bloom and secondary bloom that pops up at the end of the SDB season. Elegant, with outstanding form. **TORCHY** (Shoop 1989), a much finer variety than some of the more highly-touted ones in this color range: A glowing neon orange with even deeper, fuzzy beards. The flowers are oval shaped and give a nice airy look. Foliage is wonderfully narrow and grassy, complementing the slender, graceful stalks that carry 1 branch, 3 buds. Excellent proportions. **TWEETY BIRD** (Black 1992). A cheerful yellow to apricot sherbet, networked with a delicate overlay of deeper texture veining. Bright carrot beards. Superb substance and heavy ruffling. Foliage is shorter and narrower, making for superior proportions. **WUNDERKIND** (Hager 1990) has been overlooked thusfar. It is a pure variegata with intense deepest gold standards and rich velvety oxblood red falls with absolutely no other markings or band. A deeper version of the classic, ‘Combo’ (Hager).

Several seedlings that will (should!) be seen at the Median Spree are reviewed next. Some may be 1993 introductions and named, but at the time of this writing, they’re still under number: **Paul Black 91243B** is a brilliant, nicely shape pink plicata with a tangerine beard. The standards are almost solidly colored, and then the falls show more of a silvery plicating. Decent foliage, and does not overbloom. 1 branch, 3 buds. **Paul Black 91276B** is a midnight to spectrum violet, with even deeper, near-black brushing around the near-black beards, creating a diffused spot pattern. Standards are upright and well held; the falls horizontal. The entire flower is encased in a satin sheen. 1 branch, 2-3 buds. **Paul Black 91318A** is another one of “those strange luminatas” showing up in Paul’s patch. This one is basically like ‘Troubadour’s

Song' (Black), with ochre standards, heavily marbled and infused with deeper violet. But then the falls are a solid violet, with ochre edging and marbling. Luminata white hafts and beards. Daintier, smaller, and more compact than 'Troubadour's Song', with rich color presentation. Standards are closed, showing off the marbling. Falls are horizontal to flaring, again enhancing the impact of the luminata pattern and the marbling. 1 branch, 3 buds.

**Paul Black 91328E** is the best of Paul's pink plicatas, even more beautiful than the one mentioned above. A creamy pink ground plicata, with a touch of ivory at the bright cerise beard. It is boldly stitched and banded in brilliant rose to deep pink, with heavier stitching right at the beard. Lightly ruffled. Surely a future introduction. **Paul Black A130A** was my favorite new seedling in the Med-America median patch. Clean apricot-orange sherbet with deep orange haft venations showing its plicata heritage. Bright orange beards. Superb substance, even after our cruddy weather and late freezes. Heavily ruffled but not messy. It had heavy bloom, but good strong increase to support the floriferousness. Thin graceful foliage produced stalks with 1 branch, 3 buds. **Paul Black A151A** was a ginger on ivory plicata with a tight, "finished" look to the form. The plicata markings became deeper and more intense as you swing around the bend of the top of the falls and head for the beards. Beards were deep and rich, approaching sienna! Lightly ruffled. Foliage seemed to be a bit thick but still within acceptable boundaries. Good bloom sequence, with secondary stalks appearing later in the season, as we find with 'Nurse Nancy' (Black).

**Paul Black A161A** is a mysterious off-shoot from luminata breeding that grows on you. The basic color is a gentle, almost grayed orchid-lavender, but it is then peppered and streaked (etched?) with deeper orchid plicata lines. There is a hint of luminata showing at the orchid beards. Standards are upright, with deepening purple in the midrib. Falls are horizontal, round, and lightly waved. It has a melancholy opaque glaze to the substance, most unique. Not one of the knock-your-socks-off seedlings in the patch, yet I found myself drawn back to it every time I visited the garden, and it became one of my favorites. **Monty Byers H39-1**, a showy, multi-haloed plicata, obviously from 'Chubby Cheeks' (Black) bloodlines. A white-based plicata, with the first halo in soft blue peppering/feathering, then the outer ¼" a golden-yellow halo of stitching. Somewhat out of proportion (too big/too tall), but nonetheless very attractive. The beards are deep gold in the heart, changing to powder blue as it reaches the part of the fall visible to the eye. Wide and rounded, with excellent substance. **Sterling Innerst 2844-3**, a warm saffron yellow with a velvet texture. Beards are deeper, approaching orange. The mink overlay gives a different look. Lightly ruffled, with average form and substance. Standards are open and well held; falls horizontal. Excellent carrying power in the garden. **Jeffries J86-D5-RB** is a clean, different chocolate-brown self, small-flowered and shorter (just above MDB proportions). Lavender beards tipped deep gold. Superb form and substance, with good color saturation. Unfortunately, it nearly bloomed out. Very worthy, if it'll settle down. Wonder if the RB stands for "rebloom"?

**Marky Smith 920A**: Surely dubbed the busiest plant on the place. Floriferous and a weed-of-a-grower, with 10 stalks and 5 rather thick increases left over on a first-year planting. It bloomed and bloomed, and survived the late freezes very well. A beacon across the garden – it glows. Could be described as a deeper 'Lemon Rings' (Aitken), with brilliant yellow standards, then chaste white falls, glittered with diamond dusting and wide yellow shoulders and a distinctive band in the standards' lemon-yellow tones. Fat, sassy flowers open well, in spite of the hafts very nearly overlapping. Falls are horizontal to slightly flaring, showing off the neat pattern. Admittedly at the upper limits, with stalks at 14" and 1-2 branches, 3-4 buds. **Marky Smith 925B**, a full sib to 'Firestorm' (from the Pick of the Litter Awards), yet it is a luminous brassy yellow self with a fat sassy deep gold beard. Good plant habits, with foliage that is resilient, bouncing back after being frosted by the late freezes.

### **MINIATURE DWARF BEARDEDS**

**CHILD BRIDE** (L. Miller 1990) is a dainty pumila in warm ivory with light yellow infusions and a yellow beard. Rounded form on a tiny flower, a major advancement in this line. Great growth habits. **Marky Smith 925A** is another full sib to 'Firestorm', but this is a dainty, compact flower with true-MDB proportions. 6" stalks, smaller, grassy foliage with good vigor. Standards are deepest gold to russet, lightly sanded and stitched tan to copper. Rounded, horizontal falls are a lighter golden yellow, even lighter in the center, then sanded at the hafts in tan.

**CLASSICS: APRIL BALLETT** (C. Palmer 1973); **CURIO** (Hager 1972); **VELVET TOY** (Dunbar 1972).

### **ARILBREDS AND ARILBRED-MEDIANS**

**KALIFA'S ROBE** (Hager 1990) is one of the finer releases from Ben in the past few years. A rich fuchsia-orchid, complemented with very refined, formal, huge near-black signals covering a bronzed-black beard. **SOLOMON'S GLORY** (Nichols 1987) was one of the outstanding Median Spree guests, a great arilbred-median. Clean, bright brassy yellow with no speckling or other colors to distort the principal color. Accented by a prominent, neat thumbprint in the falls in brick

red. Then, a pure solid gold beard sits right in the big-middle of the signal! Outstanding form and substance, with good clean foliage and increase. 1-2 branches on 20” stalks. Survived the late freezes with verve. **TURKISH HEART** (Shockey 1990) has a look like the famous ‘Syrian Moon’ (Brizendine), with clear white standards and crisp light yellow falls, then boldly bedazzled with a huge signal in reddish-brown. Magnificent substance and shape, of course – it’s a Shockey!

## SPURIAS

I'm just now beginning to grow Spurias on a serious basis again, adding about 2 dozen to the collection this year. Most of these reviewed were seen in the spectacular planting at the Ft. Worth Botanical Gardens in the convention beds: **CHOCOLATE FUDGE** (Niswonger 1988) is a healthy, rich, worthy chocolate with a diffused signal patch in the falls in burnished bronze-gold. Substance supreme, and was taking the Texas heat in fine fashion. **DRESS CIRCLE** (Hager 1985) is my favorite Spuria today. Louis Scott has a knockout stalk at the Sooner State beardless show this spring that was a contender for best-in-class. Glorious blue standards atop warm yellow falls that have a double-halo of white and then a heavier band (the circle?) of the standards' blue on the very edge. The very best form with outstanding substance. Mauve isn't one of my favorite iris colors, but it looks good in Spurias. **SONORAN CABALLERO** (Wickenkamp 1989) is a dusty mauve with a smoky mysterious look to it. Very tall, and it held up well with good plant habits. **SONORAN SENORITA** (Wickenkamp 1989) had a magnificent show-stopper clump in Ft. Worth. A pure golden yellow self that simply did not burn.

**SUN SINGER** (Hager 1991) is the best of the new yellows on the market today, and there were most impressive first-year stalks of it at the Ft. Worth show, quite tall for "new bloom". Purest sunshine yellow without any other color pigmentation or even gold. No signal. Florets were beautifully ruffled and even almost laced, with branching and placement like the Queen-of-All-Times, 'Archie Owen' (Hager). **TOUCH OF LACE** (Jenkins 1991) had ivory standards, slightly deeper falls, with yellow signals. Gently laced and ruffled, with 2-3 open at once on all the stalks. A most impressive sight. Super plant habits. **WHITE SHIMMER** (Jenkins 1991) was a classic study in understated elegance. Akimbo white standards; 'Ila Crawford' (Hager) type falls (not quite as heavily ruffled, but definitely there). A dime-spot yellow signal pattern graced the center of the falls. And **ZULU CHIEF** (Jenkins 1992), still under number in the gardens as Seedling #81-3C, in deepest brown (almost approaching the black of 'Crow Wing'). Virtually no signals, with just a few brushings of gold under the claw. Good plant habits, with superior placement of buds. Absolutely no indication of virusing, a problem all-too-common in dark Spurias.

**CLASSICS:** **ARCHIE OWEN** (Hager 1970); **CROW WING** (Ferguson 1972); **DAWN CANDLE** (Ferguson 1966); **ELIXER** (Hager 1964).

## LOUISIANAS

Throughout this review, I have intentionally left out (for the most part) those varieties that have been reviewed the past couple of years in Contemporary Views. If I didn't, as "wordy" as I am, I never would get finished writing, and you would have given up reading this epistle many pages ago (if you haven't already!). So many of the Louisianas in particular (especially the Australian introductions) were emphasized the past couple of editions. I assure you, in most cases, previous selections were still mighty fine this year!

This was a great show year for the Louisiana iris. I hauled several stalks all the way to the Ponca City and Tulsa shows, in addition to entering very heavily in the first annual Sooner State Iris Society Mostly-Beardless Show in Oklahoma City. I won Bronze Medals at the Ponca City and Tulsa shows and Sweepstakes at the Oklahoma City show, almost exclusively with Louisiana entries. Here were the winners from these shows, entered by myself and other enthusiasts in Oklahoma:

**TIME KEEPER** (Taylor 1991) was First Runnerup for me at the Ponca City show. This gorgeous orchid-pink bitone has the ruffling almost as intense as 'Margaret Lee' (Taylor), not quite as boldly stated or as broad and overlapping. In some ways, it might even be prettier, and is a very good approach at "pink" in Louisianas. It has a light, airy look. **NATURAL WONDER** (Taylor 1991) was Third Runnerup for me at the same show. A strange muted dusty mauve-pink, much more "dulled" in color than 'Time Keeper', but hauntingly beautiful. It forms small star-signals in yellow on all 6 petals.

The Tulsa show was where the interest in Louisianas really became very apparent. Of the Top Five on the Queen's Court, three were Louisianas, and all three were from different exhibitors! Bravo! Dorothy Howard won a very close First Runnerup with the glamorous **BELLEVUE'S ANGELA** (Bertinot 1984), one of the great 'Clara Goula' (Arny) offspring Neil Bertinot has released. Incredible that they haven't received more attention. This one is a tall, broad, flat creamy white to pale yellow with ruffles supreme (of course!). Second Runnerup was won by me with one of my all-time favorite Taylor introductions, **MALIBU MAGIC** (1991), a soft grayed light blue with an intricate networking of deeper blue texture veining shot throughout the flower. It is shimmering – and very popular! And then Dale Satterwhite won Fourth Runnerup with a glorious, rich specimen of **SATCHMO** (Dunn 1987), a black-purple so flat you almost couldn't see it on the elevated level of the Queen's Court. A flawless flower.

Then, the next day at the big Oklahoma City show, the Dyers won with that stalk of **HURRICANE PARTY** (Haymon 1988), already mentioned in the awards section. I had been watching that stalk all week! I didn't think it was going to make it, and actually, it has so much substance that the two newest flowers (those in the middle of the stalk) had falls that kept "popping back up" – a defect at that point in the judging, but a stalk that still just could not be denied! What an iris! I also received the Second Runnerup with a graceful stalk of **MIDNIGHT DRAMA** (Taylor 1991), an ultra-rich full purple to spectrum violet from 'Helen Naish' (Taylor). It shows a lighter underneath side and light green star-signals on all 6 parts, not as boldly applied as some others. Wide and flat with rippling ruffles and a shimmering sheen. It is an average increaser, but unfortunately nearly bloomed out, a defect very rare in Taylor releases. The Fourth Runnerup was my specimen of **JAZZ BALLET** (Taylor 1989), the famous Australasian Dykes Medalist that is now becoming popular in the States also. This was the first year this full violet had acclimated and really showed off, and it produced a stunning clump full of show stalks. Heavy ruffling like Ghio's bubble-ruffling, adorned with large, bold, bright yellow signals on all 6, forming a star in the heart. Makes whopper-plants with average increase. Velvet texture.

Others at this show that were serious contenders for the Top 5 were **GLADIATOR'S GIFT** (Taylor 1991), a chocolate fudge with leathery substance, opening 3 at once with smaller, compact flowers on a show-stalk supreme; **CAMMERAY** (Taylor 1987), a shimmering 'Tide's In' (Schreiner) blue with a huge flower on an extremely tall, imposing stalk; **LINA** (Taylor 1989), the mystery-iris you love to love or love to hate – no indifference here; **SEA LORD** (Taylor 1991), the richest blue on the market with impeccable form; and **WHITE UMBRELLA** (Taylor 1991), an extroverted white with formal candelabra branching and huge flowers.

### **AMERICAN-BRED LOUISIANAS:**

The people-pleaser in the Blanchard garden was **BUBBLEGUM BALLERINA** (Haymon 1990), a colorful bitone in bubblegum pink (no other Louisiana with quite this color on the market) and light ruffling. Looked very good in Texas too, where it was just as popular. Graced with a diffused sunburst spray in the signal area in yellow and white. **KITTY D** (Haymon 1990) made its debut in Oklahoma, and although the stalks weren't up to the usual Dyer show-quality, we whacked 2 stalks and hauled them to Tulsa and Oklahoma City for the folks to see. A clean pure orchid-lilac with a distinct bright yellow signal. Extremely tough and resilient (just like the real Kitty D!). **JUST HELENE** (Mertzeuiller 1991) was just eloquent, reminiscent in color pattern of the famous 'Easter Tide' (Arny) but with a heavier intensification of deep orchid texture veining sketched over the whole flower. The blooming habits are gratefully a drastic improvement over the double-Debaillon winner, which never blooms on a normal stalk, even in good years, in Oklahoma (it is always aborted, with its 2 buds blooming in the foliage!). 'Just Helene' is not as flat a look, but more of a butterfly effect. **SPANISH SUNSET** (Rowland 1987) is one I had missed along the way, seen this year at Farron Campbell's in Garland, TX. It is a tight, compact burnt orange to Spanish orange with a tiny nondescript gold line signal. Unusual color, and seemed to be holding its color well in the heat.

There is a trio of new tets released for Joe Mertzeuiller via Cordon Bleu Farms in 1992. I missed the bloom in Texas of the great yellow, **PROFESSOR BARBARA**, but the other two were in full glory at Marie Caillet's. **PROFESSOR MARTA MARIE** (yep, another one named in honor of Miss Mari!) is a rich rose-pink with a yellow signal bleeding into a modified sunburst ray pattern in white. It has 3 branches, and the thick-substanced flowers open well at all positions. More refined, compact, and shorter than then darker "Professors". **PROFESSOR NEIL** is a huge, bold rosy-red, with a bit more rose showing through than the very-red 'Professor Jim' (Mertzeuiller). It has a definite halo in cream, and is fully flat. Bold husky plants.

Seedlings to watch for, seen in Texas this year: **Granger FB-Self-88-8** (stands for "Freddie Boy selfed") at the Ft. Worth Botanical Garden, was stunning, even on first-year bloom. Rosy-pink standards with deeper veining appliquéd. Falls are bright deep rose-pink, a dazzling two-tone effect. The signal is a diffused chartreuse-yellow with tiger-stripping of rose throughout it. Dynamite form, with standards almost remaining upright, and perfectly round falls that are somewhat cupped. Superb substance and color retention. **Mertzeuiller 74-22**, a diploid that is now named **CAJUN SUNRISE**, to be introduced by Cordon Bleu Farms, San Marcos, CA, in Fall 1993: SIZZLE! KA-ZAAM! An infamous seedling with a great storyline behind it (it was nearly declare extinct once upon a time, found again, and sent to Marie Caillet's "foster home" to rescue and build up the stock in her "pond" for introduction – it worked!). Nothing like it on the market, and it will turn heads! Basically a bold brick red with a super-nova of a sunburst ray pattern in brilliant yellow exploding from the heart onto the falls. Then, a splendorous, scintillating golden-yellow edge in laced gold – like a high-priced tet daylily. *Avante garde*. Completely sunfast, and a decent grower, now that it has had a new lease on life. It displays 4 branches, formally placed and timed so that all open properly and sequentially. Ironically, later in the year, I saw a red tet daylily seedling by Jack Carpenter in his garden in Center, TX, which was the spittin' image of this Mertzeuiller Louisiana iris!



Also at Marie “Nightingale” Caillet’s for “therapy” and evaluation was Joe Mertzweiller’s interploidy seedling, **INT-DT-87—34** (named **CREOLE RHAPSODY** and introduced by Farron Campbell for Joe in 1998), from a cross-of a tet with a dip parent – even more difficult than straight tet breeding. Joe was there when we visited Marie’s, and this one made him beam. He considers this his greatest accomplishment in his 3 or 4 decades of breeding. Standards are light pink, heavily veined in rose. Tet-looking round flat falls are a true-rose, sprayed with a yellow circular sunburn ray pattern at the signal, in a perfect half-circle, as found in the tet Siberians. The rose veining is so heavy it nearly looks like a plicata in the standards, and they remain nearly upright. Falls are so wide they touch at the shoulders. And lastly, **Norris T88-AH**, a glowing midnight blue-spectrum violet tet from the hybridizer that released the great ‘Mentida’. Actually the color and pizzazz is similar to ‘Mentida’, but in a tet version, except a deeper, pulsating blue, with silky texture and the thick substance you expect in a tet. Tattooed with brilliant ‘Ann Chowning’ (Chowning) yellow signals that stand out in contrast against the royal velvet pile. We hope to see this one introduced in the near future (it was named **KENTUCKY CAJUN** and introduced by Farron Campbell for Sam in 1995).

**CLASSICS: BAYOU COMUS** (Army 1969); **DR. DORMAN** (Conger 1973); **MARTIN REDMOND** (Army 1971); **MEDORA WILSON** (Granger 1972); **UPTIGHT** (Army 1971); **BLACK WIDOW** (MacMillan 1953).

### **AUSTRALIAN-BRED LOUISIANAS:**

As mentioned earlier, only those not previously reviewed are highlighted in this edition. The work from Down Under continues to dominate the scene, and it is simply impossible for the supply to meet the current demand in America.

**HONOURED GUEST** (Taylor 1992) is a round, ruffled velvet purple with a lighter edge. Another one of those with the fascinating buds that are light-colored – like ‘Honky Tonk Blues’ (Schreiner TB) – and then open to the rich royal color. Especially neat when viewing the contrast on the show bench. Yellow star-signals on all 6 petals, with a muted ivory glow in the heart in the stylearms that adds a soothing touch. Flower size is small and more compact than those like ‘Jazz Ballet’ (Taylor). **LASER SHOW** (Taylor 1992) was my favorite of the 1992 releases not previously bloomed in Oklahoma. A vibrant color-gem, with creamy standards heavily marbled with magenta and mauve, and falls that are a solid, darker magenta with a cream edge and lighter stylearms. The whole flower has a ruby undersheen that sends sparks a-flyin’ from the flowers. Tight, compact, flat flowers. **LINA** (Taylor 1989), alluded to in the show report, is a bizarre release that has been rather controversial here. Some think it’s among the most beautiful of the Aussies; others think it is muddy and down-right ugly and wouldn’t have it! It is certainly a muted blend, somewhat bitoned, in soft smoky orchid-violet tones, all encased in a velvet finish with heavy, tight ruffling. But there is a definite undercasing in pink that really makes the flower unusual. All I have to say it that it must be bewitched, because you’ll find yourself drawn back to it time and time again. Understated elegance.

**POSEIDON’S POOL** (Taylor 1990) was a late arrival here – we didn’t import it at the same time as ‘Dural White Butterfly’ (Taylor), ‘All Agaze’ (Taylor), and some of the others from the 1990 crop. This is very popular Down Under, a tall, large medium blue about the saturation of ‘Sea Lord’ (Taylor), but with a nice, looser, more expanded version from the formal compact look (either way is attractive, but I personally prefer the look of ‘Sea Lord’). In addition to ruffling, the petals of ‘Poseidon’s Pool’ are serrated – very unusual and rare, usually only associated with ‘Dr. Dorman’ (Conger) derivatives. A vigorous grower. **QUIET HARBOUR** (Taylor 1992) has a compact look similar to ‘Honoured Guest’ (Taylor), saturated with more blue in its makeup than royal violet. The styles are different from other blues – white, but outlined in the principal blue color. **SEA CONSUL** (Taylor 1991) has been perhaps overshadowed by the extreme enthusiasm for ‘Sea Lord’, released the same year. An ethereal sky to medium blue, with a white heart and a rim on all parts. It is a weed for us, *a la* ‘Clyde Redmond’ (Army). Extremely tall on rather willowy stalks that nonetheless hold up well under most conditions.

A sleeper for us was **SELENA** (Taylor 1991), a bit slow to reacclimate from the Southern to Northern Hemisphere, but a good performer now that it has settled down from the transition. It is a suave cream, with a mint glow in its texture veins in the heart. A tight compact flower with the flatness and ruffling from its father, ‘Koorawatha’ (Taylor). **TOP START** (Taylor 1991) is one of the few Taylor releases that has had difficulty growing. Thusfar, it has the obstinance of a ‘Charles Army III’ (Army), but so sexy and luxurious. It’s worth the hassles and extra patience. Basically a pastel blue-violet bitone/amoena, but it has glistening diamond-dusting that has been rare in this color range – voluptuous in shimmering satin. Don’t let the negative comments discourage you from trying it – get it and enjoy it – if you can find it available for sale anywhere!

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