

CONTEMPORARY VIEWS—1991

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This, the fourth annual edition of Contemporary Views, is a bit later than previous editions. I'm just now recuperating from a wild year of gardening to settle down and do some serious writing. With the addition of daylilies and gladioli to the garden, and the expansion of the Louisiana iris planting, it makes for a busy year. I've learned the joys of gardening by floodlight! Fortunately, I pushed to get everything planted and the glad bulbs dug before I left for Lafayette the first weekend in November for the Society for Louisiana Irises (SLI) Board Meeting. While I was gone, the temperature in Oklahoma City dropped (plummeted) to 11 degrees. And it was 30 degrees in south Louisiana! Miss Kitty kept saying we were in for an early, long, hard winter; even she was surprised it came so soon.

It will be very apparent, as you read this year's review, what kind of season we had, by seeing where the emphasis is. The median season was very good, and many crosses were made. Then the rains came – right in the middle of the Tall Bearded season. The TBs were very lackluster, and the rot that had started last fall kicked in again. I got fed up with them, dug everything up (medians too) and started all over this summer. I guess all the spring rain turned out to be a blessing for some things, because the Louisiana bloom was the best I've experienced in my 15 or so years of growing them. The Taylor introductions were especially dazzling. Never have I seen such magnificent bloom. The daylily bloom – only my second season – was exceptional.

There are not that many new TBs reviewed this year and, with a few exceptions, I see no reason to repeat those reviewed in previous years. I'm not a rich man, and I could not/would not spend those French Riviera prices to attend this year's national convention. And from the looks of things, I won't be attending the Atlanta Convention either. Fortunately, we see a lot of the newest and best right here in Oklahoma City each year.

There will be a heavy emphasis on medians, and with 1500 guest plants now residing in 8 tour gardens for the Sooner State Iris Society (SSIS) "Median Spree in '93", you'll be seeing more reviewed the next few years. Over 50 hybridizers have sent guests to our median convention. The Blanchard garden will be on tour with 132 guests planted.

The Australian Louisianas were so outstanding that a separate article is being written for publication in the SLI newsletter, titled "State of the Art: An Assessment of Australian Cultivars", but will be included with this review as an addendum.

Contemporary Views' award winners are reviewed first, then TBs by general color group, then medians by class, a couple of arilbreds, and last but not least, those unforgettable Louisiana wonders. 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 1989, 1990, and 1991).

AWARD WINNERS

1. The **CONTEMPORARY AWARD**, given to the Best New Iris seen, goes to **APOLLO'S SONG** (Taylor 1991). What a fantastic new Louisiana! A first-year plant produced 2 tall 50" stalks with show branching of 4 well spaced branches, wide enough to allow the moderately large flowers to open and expand with ease. Plenty of buds, and opens 2 and 3 at once. This creamy butter-yellow was the king of the patch, with strong stalks that held up beautifully (unusual for this color range). Clean colors with no other infusions to contaminate the effect, lightly ruffled, and completely sunfast, with tough leathery texture and outstanding substance. Extremely vigorous, husky plants with plenty of increase. Surprisingly, a child of 'Screen Gem' (Army) X 'Helen Naish' (Taylor).

Runnersup:

RASPBERRY FUDGE (Keppel 1989) was a Contemporary Award runnerup last year also. I continue to be impressed with its notable resistance to rot, excellent plant habits, and superb branching and bud count. Worthy of the top HM this year in the suspiciously-sparse group of winners (with only 16 winners out of 884 eligible TBs, something is terribly wrong somewhere). This is the best, overall, of the Keppel warm plicatas. A vivacious medley of rich raspberry, chocolate, and sienna colors, artfully arranged on a cream background. **ROSETTE WINE** (Schreiner 1989) was a surprise for me. This rich tapestry of rose cerise has a white area radiating from the heart of the flower (similar to what the Schreiners call their "zonal" pattern, but the light area is not quite full enough to meet their definition). Magnificent show stalk branching – a great one to have to "save the show" when we have those early bloom seasons, for it blooms very late in the season. Beautiful foliage, and the plant habits appear to be much more dependable than some of the predecessors from this bloodline. **KUNIKO** (Gatty 1989) was highly thought of even while still a seedling and continues to impress. Remindful of Joe's earlier introduction, the popular 'White Lightning', except that 'Kuniko' is a cleaner, "colder" white

and has prettier, heavier lace. But the bright yellow beard really makes the flower, as with ‘White Lightning’. The difference is that ‘Kuniko’ blooms later in the season and won’t fall victim to our notorious late Okie freezes, which unfortunately, the very fine ‘White Lightning’ was so susceptible to because of its extremely early season of bloom and tender growth. I was shocked when ‘Kuniko’ didn’t even make the HM list this year, for it is one of Gatty’s finest creations – ever!

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 receiving this award: **MAUISURF** (Aitken 1990). This divine new BB bloomed so late that the Louisiana season was already in full force. So you know it must have been grand to tear me away from my Louisiana patch even for a few minutes! First-year bloom on this produced a nice stalk with decent bud count and plant habits. I reveled at the individual flowers – heavily ruffled, frothy self in an unusual shade of medium blue, with undercurrents of violet that give intensity to the color saturation and carrying power in the garden. Terry, you’ve done it again – “Mr. Bubble Ruffling”, Joe Ghio, must be proud of this grandchild of ‘Mystique’!

Runnersup:

MALIBU MAGIC (Taylor 1991) was actually my favorite of all the wonderful new imports from John Taylor from Australia. A first-year plant produced one 30” stalk with graceful, slightly zigzagged branching (3 branches + terminal) and 5 buds. As with ‘Maui Surf’, this has an unusual shade of blue in its base color – this time almost a “grayed blue”, but eloquent rather than muddy. Then, shot throughout the entire flower is an intricate network of deeper texture veining, even more pronounced than Mary Dunn’s Louisiana, ‘Delta Dove’, or the old Georgia Hinkle TB classics. Moderate-sized flowers have crisp substance, just the right amount of ruffling that makes the flowers airy, and a picotee “crimping” never before seen in this color of Louisianas. The hue is not quite as deep as the shot of it on the cover of the Rainbow Ridge catalog, but it is even more beautiful. Superb plant habits, too, and as vigorous as a weed. **CORAL COAST** (Vizvarie 1989) is a glorious pastel array of gentle apricot standards, wonderful chalky-white falls, and then enhanced with a very narrow band (almost halo) of the standards’ color. Broad, blocky flowers are gently waved rather than ruffled, and the unique texture gives carrying power to such delicate colors. The hybridizer is from right here in central Oklahoma, and this is his finest achievement to date. Worlds of breeding potential with this one, and I’m using it extensively.

EMPRESS JOSEPHINE (Haymon 1990) is a rare and exquisite near-black Louisiana from one of the great new hybridizers in South Louisiana. Its sib, ‘Grace Duhon’ (1988), was the Contemporary Award winner in 1989. The Empress is an even glossier, more intensely saturated gem, with texture more like silk than velvet. Stock is very, very limited, so watch for it and get it just as soon as you see it offered. Named for a classy lady from Houston, former fellow SLI Board Member, Josephine Shanks.

3. The **9-1-1 AWARD** is given to the New Iris that is the most significant hybridizing achievement or color break: **GLADIATOR’S GIFT** (Taylor 1991), the first Louisiana I’ve seen that I would consider true brown. For me, on first-year bloom, it had none of the rose undertones that show in the color shot of it in the Rainbow Ridge catalog. Instead, it was a pure medium chocolate, remindful of the coloring and intensity of a Spuria. The sepals are only a touch lighter in henna, and the falls even have a suggestion of a deeper band. One first-year stalk was 33” with 4 branches and terminal and 6 to 7 buds, displayed on a sturdy, gracefully zigzagged stalk that allowed all florets to open properly. Moderate-sized flowers, with tight compact form and leathery substance. Completely sunfast and resistant to waterspotting and wind burn. Small yellow dagger signals appear on all 6 petals but are more pronounced on the falls. A totally different color than the great Army browns of yesteryear, but this, like most of John’s things, is a direct descendent of that master’s bloodlines: [‘Edith Fear’ (Taylor) x ‘Valera’ (Army)] X ‘Limited Edition’ (Taylor). A magnificent achievement!

Runnersup:

FASCINATOR (Hager 1990). Such breeding potential here, and I can’t wait to use it. Yellows and browns with red beards will be achieved with this iris – it’s just a matter of time. I will be using it with my ‘Aztec Sun’. ‘Fascinator’ is a bravura concoction of browns, russets, tans, and golds, with the standards slightly deeper. All this is punctuated with a bright flame beard. **PRIVILEGED CHARACTER** (Black 1990, SDB) is the vanguard of a whole new era of ‘Chubby Cheeks’ (Black) kids, in that it is the first I would consider a luminata pattern. A rich spectrum violet with a light (nearly white) area at the beard. The falls are edged in spectrum violet also, but the centers are a marbled, mottled light violet. Remindful of the mini-version of the Ensminger TB, ‘Pandora’s Purple’. Paul will have several very fine luminatas coming out – all from ‘Chubby Cheeks’ heritage – and this first release is most impressive. Joe Ghio’s pre-introductory publicity for **TEST PATTERN** (1990) touted it as a modern version of the great old classic, ‘Joseph’s Mantle’ (Craig). Well, he was right on the money, and the release of this iris shows just how diverse the ‘Gigolo’ (Keppel) line can be. A butterscotch-tan with the standards a self and the falls a lighter base, then etch-a-sketched with a joyful marbling and

washing of deep russet, brown, and violet. A pleasant surprise. Nice broad form to show off the *déjà vu* pattern, and a decent plant and stalk. I have special plans in my hybridizing with this one, but it's a secret....

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). I was so pleased to see that the 1988 Dark Horse Award winner has now been "discovered", winning an AM this year: **HOLY NIGHT** (Mohr 1983) is the epitome of what a good iris should be. It is the standard by which hybridizers should be striving for: Strong, tall, thick stalks rise above lush blue-green foliage with amazing increase. The flowers are large and well structured, holding together even in the most adverse weather conditions Oklahoma can throw at it. The backup buds expand to the same size as the principal blooms, and the branching is beautifully spaced in a modified candelabra. The rich glossy flowers of black satin have just enough ruffling to complete the form. And, incredibly, 'Holy Night' is a proven rebloomer. Here last year, it began its second season of bloom in October and continued until the first hard freeze the last week of November. All this, and our Awards Chairman can't even get the name spelled right on the awards list – oh well!!!

Runnersup:

NEUTRON DANCE (Blyth 1987) is a "sin-sational" yellow amoena, the brightest and best on the market. Completely sunfast, a beacon shining across the garden. Vigorous, strong plants produce stalks of moderate height with 3 well-placed branches and plenty of backup buds. Miss Kitty will be pleased to see this one listed, for it was her favorite in the garden this year. **CHAMPAGNE ELEGANCE** (Niswonger 1987) is one I originally overlooked (or ignored). The color scheme is a sophisticated bitoning and blending of champagne and pink tones, finished with an elegant diamond-dusting over the entire flower. A good companion for 'Holy Night', having all the same qualities but on shorter stalks. The coloration will vary with the season, moisture, and mineral content of the soil, but rather than a defect, it adds to the enchantment. (Judges, be careful with this one on the bench. Those artificial lights can be especially tricky with this one!). Also a dependable rebloomer, reported to be a near ever-bloomer in the temperate, Mediterranean climates. Another Barry Blyth original completes this group: **TOUCH OF BRONZE** (1983) is a superb garden variety that consistently produces great show stalks also, although shorter and more delicate than some. An unusual shade of powder blue (with some slate undertones, but not drab), capped with shocking deep blue beards that are heavily tipped deep brown. The visual impression is a black beard, and against the light blue flowers, gives a dramatic effect. Smaller, compact flowers are in compliance with the shorter, leaner stalks. But the flowers are fat and wide and nearly tailored (just some light waving). Buds galore, and I hybridized nearly every one this year – in between showers. Barry is already getting a wide array of unbelievable offspring from this one, including the wonderful blue on white "barely-plic" with red beards, 'Lipstick Lies'. I predict this one will be a Progenitor in TB and BB breeding.

5. The **DARK HORSE AWARD** is given to the variety introduced within the past 10 years that I feel has been overlooked by AIS judges, and deserves/deserved higher awards. I'm pleased to see that last year's winner, 'Bay Ruffles' (Warburton 1985) has gone on to win the second most number of HM votes in the SDB class this year. The Dark Horse winner for this year is: **AZTEC SUN** (Dyer 1982). Surprise! Those of you that know me personally know that I'm not the type of hybridizer that goes around the country bragging and politicking my own things. If anything, I tend to be overly-critical and harsh with my work. My philosophy is to choose the right thing to release, put its best foot forward and try to get good distribution, then sit back and see what the public and the AIS judges think. I will take exception this time and just say that I think 'Aztec Sun' deserved more than it was awarded, although it did win a decent HM. Over the years, I have come to respect this brilliant yellow with deeper beards more and more. The richest, totally sunfast full yellow (not golden yellow) I've seen. Leathery, smooth substance. Branching and bud count can be excellent, and I've gotten to get to see it win Best of Show honors more than once. A vision of health and vigor, with husky blue-green foliage. My finest TB introduction (so far).

Runnersup:

RUFFLED SURPRISE (Rudolph 1981) is a hauntingly beautiful jungle blend of smoked-violet standards atop ecru-ivory falls that are distinctively banded with a chartreuse-gold band, and then smoked. Form is perfection *par excellence*, finished with heavy ruffling. Totally different from the type of work you would anticipate from the late great Nate Rudolph's program, yet one of his finest achievements. And it is proving to be a sensational parent whose possibilities haven't been fully tapped. I am still using it heavily. Had **GENIALITY** (O. Brown 1981) been a midseason bloomer rather than one of the last to open (after all the judges are pooped and "traveled out"), it would have easily won an AM. An elegant, melodious bicolor, with standards of medium rosy-pink and the falls in mauve-pink, tapped with deep shrimp beards. Deep pink style arms pull the two colors together, and the whole flower is finished with heavy lace. Ironically, one of its parents came from Nate Rudolph: The classic 'Pink Sleigh'. In a world full of all kinds of crazy, zany plic patterns, **PURPLE PEPPER** (Nearpass 1986) is unique. Well named, it has pansy purple standards and white ground falls that are almost completely bombasted with a heavy peppering of purple even deeper than the standards' color.

Smoothly tailored, with none of that silly lace that would ruin a color pattern such as this. Mixing this with the more popular plic lines today should be quite a combination!

6. The **CREAM OF THE CROP AWARDS** go to the 5 varieties on the Dykes Medal eligibility list that I consider the most worthy, in order of preference: **EXTRAVAGANT** (Hamblen 1983), last year's Sun Belt Award winner, deserved a second chance, so to speak. And had the AIS Board of Directors responded properly to the petition presented them last fall, there would have been a runoff for the Dykes this year, and 'Extravagant' would have been one of the players..... Magnificent burnished amethyst with deep burnt orange to sienna beards, with wide flowers caressed with intricate ruffling and lace. **HELLCAT** (Aitken 1983) was my second choice this year, and still impresses me as the benchmark of IB breeding in today's market. A rich neglecta with a shoe polish sheen, with branching and bud count we should now expect and insist upon with new IB introductions. This cross-breed truly captured the best of both worlds. **ACADIAN MISS** (Arny 1980) has become a classic in its own right among white Louisianas. It is smaller and more compact in flower size than its parent, 'Clara Goula' (Arny), but is a purer white. It also has nice ruffling and great show stalks. Also a "cross-breed", it inherited the elegance and ethereal beauty of *I.giganticaerulea* ('Clara Goula') and the vigor, stamina, and compactness of *I. brevicaulis* ('Clyde Redmond', Arny). **CRYSTAL GLITTERS** (Schreiner 1985) has been a bit of a dark horse, relatively speaking. This is a medley of pastels in hues of ivory, champagne, peach, and pink, all heavily ruffled and encased with diamond dusting. The rather thin, graceful stalks are deceptively strong, easily supporting show-stalk branching with 3 open at once without faltering. And **SOFT SPOKEN** (Dyer 1980), the soft lilac BB with shrimp beards which won the Knowlton Medal in 1988....

7. The **PICK OF THE LITTER AWARD** goes to the most outstanding seedling viewed this year: **TWEETY BIRD** (Black 1992). This SDB (seedling #85259A) is Paul Black's finest and most exciting achievement in a decade of median hybridizing. It is a fat little yellow with contrasty bright orange beards and a touch of orange at the hafts that gives an inner warmth. The entire flower is enlivened with a mint julep underglow. Crisp and clean, with form, substance, and clarity of color and contrast never before seen in the SDB class. It has very busy plant habits, with plenty of bloom stalks and plenty of increase left over for the next year. The foliage and stalk height are in good proportion, with stalks carrying 1 branch and 4 buds. Its maiden bloom in Oklahoma City was, needless to say, a momentous, joyous occasion!

Runnersup:

MARGARET LEE (Taylor 1992) has been receiving rave views Down Under, named for a popular lady who was President of the Iris Society of Australia. I'm pleased to report it is just as smashing so far from home, a hemisphere away! A much glorified, deeper, richer version of the Debaillon winner, 'Charlie's Michele' (Arny). This great grandchild of 'Charlie's Michele' has quite a royal lineage. I have charted its bloodline all the way back to the species (chart available upon request), and it has three Australasian Dykes Medalists and no less than eight different Debaillon winners in its background, with 'Charlie's Michele' on both sides of the family. The substance is so thick and the ruffling so intense that the flowers take 2 full days to open. The sepals are magenta pink with somewhat of an entrancing mottled effect, and the falls are 2 to 3 shades deeper. The buds are buff colored, and the ruffles cause the underside to show, even on a fully expanded flower. Breathtaking! The ultimate in bubble ruffling!! **Paul Black 89U25** is an insane new type of plicata from 'Glitz 'n' Glitter' (Black) breeding. The standards are a creamy white to pale yellow base, banded in plum-brown, with a gilt-edged gold rim at the top of the standards. The falls are a warm white base, with the hafts a heavy concentration of plum-brown. Then, as you go down the falls, the band transfigures into a more brassy-gold band, finally diminishing to a chartreuse color in the band around the bottom of the falls. Try putting all of THAT on a registration card! The stitchery is striped and dotted within the 3/4" band. A 1992 introduction, and has been named **MIX AND MATCH**. *Wunderbar!*

Pick of the Litter Updates:

Last year's winner, **DOO DAH**, will be introduced by Mitch Jameson of St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1992 – his first introduction (what a way to start your hybridizing career!!). The name of this garden is "Knee-Deep in June". Watch for the ad in the January 1992 Bulletin. Runnerup **83-40-1** (Kegerise) is being introduced in 1992 as **BRONZETTE STAR**. Pick of the Litter runnerup in 1989, **82-6** (Marvin Granger), was released this year as **DEIRDRE KAY**, and was one of the finest new Louisiana offerings this year. The winner in 1988, **Paul Black 8544B**, was named **DESIGNER'S RAGE** and introduced this year – my favorite of all of Paul's TBs to date.

TALL BEARDED BY COLOR GROUP

REDS TO MAROONS:

Bill Maryott owns the market in maroons, and **BURGUNDY BUBBLES** (1987) continues to impress me. This wide, sunfast maroon-wine is the heaviest ruffled of the lot, and the satin sheen is exceptional. **ROYAL PREMIER** (1985) is a smaller, tighter, more compact flower that is actually my favorite. It is more of a true maroon than wine. And now **ALMADEN** (1990) arrives. It is a deep velvety wine with a nice luster and good shape. Exceptionally strong stalks have 3 well spaced branches and double buds.

CLASSICS: **POST TIME** (Schreiner 1971); **RED PLANET** (E. Smith 1970); **WONDERFUL ONE** (Reynolds 1970).

APRICOTS TO ORANGES:

GOOD SHOW (Hager 1988) is still far and above the best orange on the market today, yet incredibly still failed to even win an HM! A huge extrovert that has the strongest stalks and the best branching and bud count in the rich oranges. **GRATUITY** (Hager 1990), on a first-year bloom, showed great promise, and is an even deeper, richer shade of orange. Joe Ghio is doing some nice work in this color, and I finally got to see why **ESMERALDA** (1988) is so popular. It is a smaller, shorter, heavily ruffled deep orange small-tall that Joe wisely changed to TB from its original BB classification. Some of the stalks here reach 36", but most hover right about 30". A magnificent show stalk of **MONTEVIDEO** (1987) was First Runnerup at the Dallas show this year. It is more of a medium orange with large, impressive flowers. **FUN FEST** (O. Brown 1988) is another one of those that opens so late in the season that most of the public rarely gets to see it. In this early year, a grand stalk of it, entered by Perry Parrish, was a Runnerup to Best-of-Show at the Oklahoma Iris Society show in Oklahoma City. It is an unusual shade of apricot-orange, in that it has a salmon underglow and poppy red beards. Heavy ruffles add zest to the fest. Howard Shockey, the "king of the arilbreds", has produced another TB winner with **PARFAIT DELIGHT** (1988), a luscious confection of pastel apricots, creams, and pinks, with the falls slightly lighter in the center, then banded with the blended colors. The king of the garden in plant habits, with obscene, huge plants rivaling 'Holy Night' (Mohr).

CLASSICS: **HAYRIDE** (B. Jones 1971); **MANDARIN MOON** (Moldovan 1970); **SALMON DREAM** (Rudolph 1970).

PINKS:

SANDY ROSE (O. Brown 1988) has been a sleeper. As with so many of Opal's things, it is an extremely late bloomer. Very well named, it is literally a sandy rose with broad classy form and garnished with a beard in a pleasing shade of sienna coral. The entire flower is encapsulated in a burnished toasty look, remindful of the Ghio bloodline. **BEAUTIFUL DREAMER** (Hamblen 1988) is also a late bloomer with silken pink and ivory shadings, somewhat lighter in the heart of the flower. Unobtrusive and smaller in stature, but with typically-incredible Hamblen branching. A trio of Gatty pinks is worth another review. Each is slightly different in intensity and flower form, and distinctive enough to each be worthy of a place in your garden: **FRENCH PASTRY** (1987) is a soft cotton candy pink with powdered sugar dusting in the falls. Broad and heavily ruffled. **SATIN SIREN** (1987) is a rich medium pink, a cleaner 'Triple Crown' (Dyer) with good plants that are quite resistant to leaf spot. The deepest, and my favorite, is **FEMME FATALE** (1988), a naughty presentation of hot pink – almost as deep as 'Warm Embrace' (Dyer) – with x-rated ruffling and lace on a full-formed bodice of sensuous pink. We've come a long way from 'Cherie' (Hall)!

CLASSICS: **PAINTED PINK** (Plough 1971); **PINK PIROUETTE** (Newhard 1970); **PRINCESS** (Gatty 1972); **WOODLAND ROSE** (O. Brown 1970).

LAVENDERS TO VIOLETS:

DESIGNER'S RAGE (Black 1991) is such a unique color it's hard to decide where to even put it in the review, unless you'd stick it in Potpourri! A transcendental crushed velvet in smoked mauve, creamed raspberry, diamond dusted rosy mauve YOU try to describe it. Don't bother to look it up in the color charts – it ain't there! This wide, shapely color gem is my favorite and the most unique of my friend, Paul Black's, innovative breeding program. A deep burnt sienna beard just adds to the captivation. With admittedly inconsistent branching and bud count, one can nonetheless take this melting pot of bloodlines and further confuse the issue with the Hamblen, Ghio, Keppel, Opal Brown, and Shoop lines. That's my plan...and a couple of other ventures not to be discussed! **DRIFTING ALONG** (O. Brown 1988) is another that's difficult to "categorize". A soft blend of gentle lilac and blue, lighter in the falls, and all diamond dusted. The light coral beards and delicate lace do not break the ambiance. **FARAWAY PLACES** (Keppel 1988) is a sultry, muted, mulled wine to rose, with suggestions of apricot across the falls that add to the mystery. Rich terra-cotta to sienna beards are an asset. It is heavily ruffled and has a strange "rolled-back" look in the falls.

CLASSICS: CARO NOME (B. Brown 1970); FOND WISH (E. Smith 1967); LAURIE (Gaulter 1966).

DEEP VIOLETS TO BLACKS:

A couple of new additions were most worthy, in addition to 2 nice ones reviewed last year: GYRO (Aitken 1989) and MY SHADOW (Magee 1990). EVENING SILK (Aitken 1990) was very popular at Paul Black's the day of the Sooner State bus tour. A rich, wide, lightly waved silky near-black with all the great stalk and plant habits of its parent, 'Superstition' (Schreiner), but with much smoother hafts and deeper intensity of color saturation. A child of the great 'Evelyn's Echo' (Kegerise), MAJESTIC INTERLUDE (Kegerise 1989) is also a lustrous deep midnight-blue to violet-black, and an improvement over its parent, if that's possible. Unfortunately, it is also a rather late bloomer. The bold, robust background of 'Titan's Glory' (Schreiner) is most evident in SPACE VIKING (Hager 1989), an imposing monster-flower of smooth dark violet, held up on stallion show stalks approaching 4' tall. Form is perhaps a bit more "finished" than its famous daddy.

CLASSICS: BASIC BLACK (Hager 1971); NEPTUNE'S POOL (Moldovan 1972); SWING SHIFT (Sexton 1972).

BLUES:

HONKY TONK BLUES (Schreiner 1988) continues to take this part of the country by storm, being the Most Popular Iris at the Sooner State show and on the Sooner State tour this year. A rich deep blue with a subtle white wash over the falls, and ruffling so heavy that the lighter color of the underneath of the petals shows on a fully opened flower, as happens with 'Margaret Lee' (Taylor, LA). An exciting presentation. The Schreiner family has produced yet another fine light blue, for which they are more famous: RAPTURE IN BLUE (1990) is a wide blocky heavily ruffled translucent blue that shows signs of turquoise in its pigmentation. Finally got to see DOUCE FRANCE (Anfosso 1988). It is a major advancement in red-bearded blues. Deepest aquamarine florets have the richest red beards seen to date, screaming from the heart. All this and even a hint of lace.

CLASSICS: PRAISE THE LORD (Boushay 1972); ROCKETTE (O. Brown 1971); RUSHING STREAM (Schreiner 1971); TEMPO (Hinkle 1970).

WHITES:

Where have I been?! ANY SUNDAE (Durrance 1986) stopped me in my tracks! Purest, pristine white, with shocking fire-engine red beards – the thickest, bushiest, boldest, and most intense ever. Smaller, dainty flowers all afrill with tight lace. PERFECT PEARL (Black 1991) is an opalescent ice-white with pearl-grey overtones and captivating designer-ruffling. Shorter and smaller in stature, with moderate-sized flowers in compliance with the diminutized stalks (30" tall). Tight ripple ruffles adorn the compact florets. ICE CAVE (Wright 1986) continues to be a classy blue-white ice sculpture, with translucent waves and fluting. A short-tall, with nonetheless faultless branching and bud count. Its limited recognition, even after favorable appearances at 2 national conventions, is most disheartening.

CLASSICS: ANGEL CHOIR (Schliefert 1970); ANGEL UNAWARES (Terrell 1970); CARRARA MARBLE (Schaeff 1970); NINA'S DELIGHT (Ghio 1964).

CREAMS TO YELLOWS:

HOLLYWOOD BLONDE (Gatty 1989) is a large, busty blonde-yellow, gradually lightening to near-white in the center of the falls, below lemon beards. Blocky form is lightly waved and laced. As with 'Kuniko' (Gatty), one of the best of Joe Gatty's recent releases, yet it too failed to receive an HM this year. WAKEUP CALL (Black 1989) is technically a yellow amoena, but appears as a light yellow to the eye. Shorter show stalks with branching that reminds you of its Kegerise heritage. Tightly structured, with swirling ruffles and waves.

CLASSICS: CAROLINA GOLD (Powell 1970); ON TARGET (Knopf 1970); TREASURE ROOM (Williamson 1970); YELLOW CHIFFON (Rudolph 1970).

PPLICATAS:

KISSING CIRCLE (Stevens 1989) is a clean, pure deep blue on white plic, remindful in pattern of some of the old classics such as 'Charmed Circle' (Keppel) or 'Graphic Arts' (Hager). A pleasing sight, after all the "cluttered" plics in

the recent past. Moderate-sized flowers are displayed on short (30") stalks with superb branching. Originally registered as a BB, it is a small-tall, and very graceful. **POINT MADE** (Innerst 1988) is a wild bicolor-plic, with buff-tan standards, lightly infused violet. The broad falls have a white base, but then decorated with a crazy-quilt patterning of rich deep purple, then edged in purple plicata edging. The wash, mottling, and streaking vary from flower to flower and makes for a surprise every time you visit it in the garden. **COLORWATCH** (Innerst 1987) is a burgundy on white plicata, reminiscent of the old classic 'Port Wine' (Schreiner), with the patterning so intense that the creamy patch in the center of the falls barely shows through. Adorned with light lace, too.

Two 'Gigolo' (Keppel) children from Keith Keppel were very exciting: **BEGUINE** (1989) has an amber to cream base, then patterned with dots and stippling in shades of deeper amber, rich roses, and deep salmon. A rust-orange beard just makes the color splash. **ABSTRACT ART** (1990) is smaller and more compact, with deeper rose-purple markings, wildly striated and painted on a golden-orange base. **CIRCUS JEWEL** (Nichols-Albers 1988) is a zany purple plic, directly from 'Mystique' (Ghio). The white ground is joyfully striped and stitched in a style reminiscent of old 'Circus Stripes' (Plough), but with a refined modern form. **SILHOUETTE** (Dunn 1989) is my favorite of several recent plicata releases from Bob and Mary. White ground is completely covered with an elegant wash of lavender-blue, with solid hafts and margins on the falls. **LIPSTICK LIES** (Blyth 1985) is an overlooked barely-plic, a chalky white self with a minimal number of tell-tale blue plic markings in the shoulders of the falls. Add to this a bright carrot-red beard, and you have a unique iris. Unquestionably a mecca for the hybridizer.

CLASSICS: CASINO QUEEN (Gibson 1971); **ODYSSEY** (Babson 1971); **SADDLE SHOES** (Plough 1971); **SUMMER SUNSHINE** (Gibson 1972).

VARIEGATAS, NEGLECTAS, AMOENAS, AND BICOLORS:

CRANBERRY CRUSH (Aitken 1986) is one of the richest on the market. A tightly formed, intensely ruffled neglecta, completely underlaid with Ocean Spray cranberry. The midribs of the standards have a heavy infusion of the deep fall color. **MAGHAREE** (Blyth 1986) was planted next to 'Neutron Dance' (Blyth) and made a colorful contrast. A full-colored pink amoena like no other! Standards are a lavender-white, flushed rose. The broad, expansive falls are richest rose-pink, pulsating with color, then edged lighter. Bright tangerine-orange beards just add fuel to the fire. A strong competitor for 'Neutron Dance' is also a foreign entry: **ECHO DE FRANCE** (Anfosso 1984) is perhaps an even prettier, brighter color of full yellow in the falls. But the branching, bud count, and flower form aren't quite as good as its Aussie cousin. Both are worthy additions to the garden.

The best variegata in recent years is **SMART ALECK** (Gatty 1988), a super-glorified version of its parent, the famous 'Show Biz' (Gatty). Tall and bold, and demands your attention, with old gold standards and velvet-smooth dark red falls, smooth at the hafts. A late bloomer that retains its color well in the Okie heat. Technically, **PURGATORY** (Moore 1987) could be considered a variegata. Orangish-brown standards top smooth red-brown falls, all finished with a leathery substance and a sizzling look. A bit of a finicky grower for me, but unique enough to put up with it. **MARIACHI MUSIC** (Maryott 1988) is a new bicolor/variegata that shows good promise. Standards are a solid tan and the falls a blending of reds and violets, then banded in tan. Very loud colors, and fun.

Two older bicolors are worth a review: **SWEET MUSETTE** (Schreiner 1986) is a lovely bicolor I've never personally grown but think a lot of. I see other people have "discovered" it also, because it pulled down an AM this year! Soft harmony with gentle lavender-pink standards sitting atop richer rose-pink falls, with a color combo that never clashes. Outstanding branching and bud count, and great plant habits too. **SOONER SERENADE** (Shaver 1984), hybridized right here in Oklahoma, is a rich combo of claret-wine standards against cherry-black to wine falls with a distinctive banding of the standards' color. Tell-tale haft marks belie its plicata background, around bronze beards, but are not offensive.

CLASSICS: GUITAR COUNTRY (Plough 1971); **ROAD FROM MADRID** (Peterson 1972); **SNOW CLOUD** (Schreiner 1970); **TROPICAL NIGHT** (Schreiner 1970).

POTPOURRI:

The "King of Kolor", George Shoop, continues to WOW us with dazzling, zestful color combos. **HAWAIIAN QUEEN** (1986) has deep peachy-buff standards, with hints of rose and orchid; falls are a lighter buff-salmon accented with brilliant orange-red beards. As with most of George's things, the amount of ruffling and lace is not overstated; rather, a gentle

waving on compact flowers. **ISLAND GIRL** (1985) is almost a reverse brown amoena, with deep rosy-tan standards blended lavender atop straw yellow falls, blended apricot. Again, bright tangerine beards. **HULA DANCER** (1985) has unusual colors with rosy-purple-brown standards and tannish-brown rosy falls, interrupted by bright orange beards. The growth habits from this entire bloodline are somewhat weaker than we like, but I'm mating them with more vigorous partners. The kaleidoscope of colors continues! **GOODBYE HEART** (Schreiner 1989) was one of the big surprises this year: Large flowers are a zestful bicoloring of warm peach standards and pink lemonade falls with shrimp-pink beards. Looks like two scoops of sherbet with a maraschino cherry in the middle. **VIDA** (Daling 1987) is an overlooked, colorful blend of ashes of roses and buff. The falls are several shades lighter, then embellished with a deeper band and then a golden halo at the edge of that band. Great breeding potential.

CLASSICS: **LOUISE WATTS** (Blocher 1971); **PANTOMIME** (Babson 1970); **SABRE DANCE** (O. Brown 1970).

SPACE AGE:

I am convinced that the first TB white with true blue beards will come from Space Age breeding -- thank you, 'Sky Hooks' (Osborne)! **DEITY** (Byers 1988) is a broad, milky blue-white, with falls pure white with true blue horns protruding from blue beards. Magnificent form and substance. **LOVEBIRD** (Byers 1988), a 9-1-1 Award runnerup a couple of years ago, looked particularly good on an established clump this year in Blanchard. Truly diminutive proportions do not take away from the excitement of its pink plicata markings with carrot beards ending in horns. Simply charming, with excellent branching and bud count. Substance is notably better than most other pink plics, and lace adds to the daintiness. I'm hybridizing heavily with this one for BBs and, combined with SDBs, special Space Age IB plics. Another small-tall being used for smaller-flowered Space Agers is **THORNBERRY** (Robarts 1986), an overlooked rosy-lavender with coral-red adornments. Should be a natural with 'Soft Spoken' (Dyer, BB), but it rained on my crosses! **HANDS UP** (Byers 1988) is a glorified 'Sky Hooks' with cleaner yellow color -- creamy falls have wild horns/spoons in violet. Nicely ruffled. I'm also sure yellows with true blue beards will appear from Space Age work -- thank you, 'Sky Hooks'!

MEDIANS BY CLASSIFICATION

MINIATURE TALL BEARDED:

Ken Fisher is now one of the nation's leading hybridizers of MTBs, and **FROSTED VELVET** (1989) has taken the country by storm. Finally, an improvement over its famous parent, 'Consummation' (Welch). Cool white standards with rich velvety-violet falls with a hairline edging of white and creamy white beards. For me, it has been a better grower than its parent. This Walther Cup winner has superb branching and bud count. The grand dame of MTBs, Mary Louise Dunderman, has another winner with **CHERRY** (1989). A perky, cherry-red plicata, with the standards almost a solid color. The falls have a neat plic edging of the cherry-red stitching. Completing the trio of dynamo hybridizers is Terry Varner from Ohio. I don't think he would be offended to be referred to as a protégé of Mary Louise. **QUIET PLACE** (1988) is a cool, simple gentian blue self with white beards and slightly lighter area in the falls. Beautiful form, and a fresh look in the garden.

CLASSICS: **ROSEMARY'S DREAM** (Dunderman 1982); **WHITE CANARY** (Roberts 1973).

BORDER BEARDED:

ZINC PINK (Ensminger 1987) is very popular right now, winning the top AM this year. But frankly, it looks just like 'Pink Bubbles' (Hager) to me, but has inferior branching. **FAUX PAS** (Keppel 1990) is a nice addition to the great lineup of Keppel BB plicatas. A cute name -- it has rather innocent standards in a muted peach. But then the falls explode in a fireworks display of deep roses, violets, and orchids, heavily sanding and filtering through to the base color. Typically superb proportions, with outstanding branching. The color combo in 'Miss Nellie' (Burch) is apparently very popular, but I don't particularly care for the gaudy look. Its child, **CALICO CAT** (Lankow 1989) is a bit more refined, but retaining the same excellent proportion and flower form of 'Miss Nellie'. Light yellow standards over lavender falls, yellow edges, and distinctive rose shoulder pads. I wish Carol had lived long enough to see her kitty rise to the top of the BB HM list this year. **COPPER GLAZE** (Hamblen 1986) has been a slow grower for me over the years, but it is still a fine addition to a class where true representatives are rare. Tight compact flowers are an antique gold-buff with cinnamon hafts that hint at its 'Picayune' (Keppel) lineage. The beards are a wonderful root beer to copper. Heavy substance, and tight symmetrical ruffles. **Never** goes out of class in height or flower size.

CLASSICS: EMBROIDERY (Keppel 1971); ORACLE (Ghio 1971); TANYA ELIZABETH (Wolff 1972).

INTERMEDIATE BEARDED:

The star in Blanchard this year as ASK ALMA (Lankow 1987). Wildly vigorous, solid plants produce multiple stalks with great branching and bud count. The flowers are very simple, but a very bright blend of coral-orange and pink with tangerine beards. Extremely popular nationwide, and the winner of a strong AM this year, second only to the great light yellow, 'Maui Moonlight' (Aitken). BROADWAY BABY (Gatty 1990) is well named, a sizzling, diminutive IB version of its parent, 'Broadway' (Keppel). Bronze to tan standards are solid with no plic markings; the falls are a warm white, heavily banded a sensuous oxblood red. Outstanding wide form, and lightly ruffled. Another exciting plicata is FIDDLE FADDLE (Hager 1989), similar in color and pattern to its dwarf parent, 'Pepper Mill' (Hager): A light yellow ground plic, heavily peppered and stripped in chocolate. An overlooked plicata is BLUE CALICO (C. Palmer 1986), a pure blue on white plic with excellent form and proportion. The banding is the bluest of the blue IB plics I've seen thusfar. NECTAR (Keppel 1990) is from plicata breeding also, but appears as a nectarine-yellow blend with no markings to the eye. Classy form. Bright orange beards tipped red. Two Aussies complete the category this year. They're sibs, but totally different from each other, and a lot of fun: POSH (Blyth 1987) is an insanely vigorous apricot-salmon blend with gorgeous deep orange beards. STRUM (Blyth 1987) is a yellow amoena, but with the same screaming beards. Both are sufficiently wide, with simplistic form and finish to allow the eye to concentrate on the color combos.

CLASSICS: RUBY CHIMES (A. Brown 1972); SPACE CADET (Moldovan 1970); SWEETIE (Warburton 1971).

STANDARD DWARF BEARDED:

The early success of SERENITY PRAYER (me, 1989) has been most gratifying. I'm getting great reports from all over the country, and we're now hearing that it's a reliable repeat bloomer and rebloomer. One of Paul Black's releases from the same year is similar in background but distinctive enough from 'Serenity Prayer' that they really shouldn't be compared: SIGH (1989) is a magnificent work of art, with cool icy white flowers blessed with elegant soft blue beards. Needless to say, we're trying to mate the two! 'Sigh' has excellent form and substance supreme, with no other coloration to distract from the glacial effect.

A cute new 'Chubby Cheeks' kid released this year, INKY DINKY (Black 1991), is like a mini-version of the TB, 'Circus Stripes' (Plough), but with tight, compact dwarf form and more consistent plicata striations. A double shot of 'Chubby Cheeks' produced MUPPET MADNESS (Black 1991). The standards are almost completely infiltrated with a rich, bold purple from the red side. The falls have a little bit of white peeking through, but are banded in a solid red-purple, then the color eeks out onto the center of the falls, seeking the deep purple beards. This is the same cross that produced true luminatas which you'll be seeing soon. Like, right now: TROUBADOUR'S SONG (Black 1991) is surely the strangest of the lot, and I love it. The standards are a white base, but almost completely infused in orchid-lavender and tan, and a tan halo. The falls are basically the same pattern, but with slightly deeper colors and more of a white halo. Follow the halo up to the shoulders and beard area, and there you have it --- looominata! Make it in the shape of 'Chubby Cheeks' and you have a wonderful addition to the rare luminatas. A couple of lemon yellows from Cleo Palmer were most impressive this year: SENSATIONAL (1990) is a broad, shapely blending of lemon yellow, with the color gradually lightening to near white in the midribs of the standards and in the upper part of the falls around the beards. Superb substance and light ruffling. SPANISH EMPIRE (1990) is a sib, very similar in color and pattern, but has even a touch of lace. Both are very strong growers.

PUMPIN' IRON (Black 1990) is a butch, bold color study in rich dark tones, with vibrant red-black standards over falls which hold an even deeper black cherry spot, surrounded by a glow of rich magenta purple edging. Remindful of a much-improved, modern 'Bloodspot' (Craig). No steroids here – just a good solid, disciplined bloodline. Its papa, FORTE (Black 1987) continues to impress me, and its smaller flowers should be a valuable tool in SDB breeding. Sharp, perky colors, with vibrant deep orchid standards and velveteen blackish-red falls, highlighted with pansy purple beards. An excellent garden subject, with outstanding plant habits it passes on to its children. One of Paul's that has been overlooked was one of my AM votes for the year: MARY'S LAMB (1987), smaller and petite in stature, it is a pert white with warm shoulders of creamy yellow, ruffled, and the gentle pale violet-blue beards in harmony with the mood created. This distant cousin of 'Serenity Prayer' has perfect proportions, with a mound of bloom on a vigorous plant, leaving plenty of increase for next year.

An SDB that sneaked up on me was SPLIT DECISION (Hobbs 1989), an unusual amoena (all too rare in SDBs, and I'm not sure why) with pure white standards hovering over cool violet-blue falls which are then edged in a fine halo of white, with cream beards. The color in the falls appears to be stroked onto the white base with an artist's brush, but the effect is a solid color nonetheless. Slender delicate stalks have 1 to 2 branches, and 2 to 4 buds. A Hager SDB that has

been overlooked by the judges thusfar is **RUSTY DUSTY** (1988), a well-named, bronzy rust-brown plicata on full yellow ground, with the falls an even deeper coloring. A notably better performer and increaser than some of the brown plic SDBs released over the years. Another SDB whose name well describes its appearance is **OH JAY** (Lankow 1988), a compact colorful saffron yellow that blends into light orange (juice), marked with bold orange beards. Very vigorous, but my only complaint is that the foliage (this year) was very messy, easily leafspotting and “burning” on the edges from excess moisture. Hopefully it won’t do that again.

And lastly, a nice breeding partner for Barry Blyth’s blue-bearded pinks such as ‘Kandi Moon’ is **PINK PANTHER** (Willott 1988), a funky pale pink, warmed at the hafts with ambers shoulders, and then zipped up with a pale to light blue beard. I think I would have saved such a fun name for the next generation, or whenever the pinks become a little more screaming, with bold indigo blue beards howling from the heart. But we get the idea anyhow. The genes are there, and it’s fun tomcatting around with these color combos!

CLASSICS: **BANBURY RUFFLES** (Reath 1970); **DEMON** (Hager 1972); **MYRA’S CHILD** (Greenlee 1971); **RANGERETTE** (Hamblen 1971); **WOW** (A. Brown 1970).

MINIATURE DWARF BEARDED

SPOT OF TEA (Black 1989) is a favorite: A warm honey brown with a dainty spot of deeper (tea) brown in the center of the falls. Magnificent proportions at the upper part of the height limits but always in class, with dainty flowers that are shapely and look like the name. **CINNAMON APPLES** (Black 1990) has small, fat little flowers with golden-tan standards (cinnamon) and smooth yummy red-brown falls (yep, apples), then a narrow edge of gold (brown sugar?). Backup bud in the terminal on the 5” stalks gives an extended bloom and a mound of color. A nice contrast between the 2 deeper-toned dwarfs would be **DAISY FRESH** (Willott 1988), a wide, warm white with yellow midribs in the standards and a spot (glow) of yellow in the falls. It is from SDB breeding, and is admittedly at the top of the MDB class, but it is a lovely fresh face with good proportions with tight, compact flowers and a well extended season of bloom in the established clumps. **CANDY FLUFF** (L. Miller 1988) is a popular little light pink, in a color where worthy additions to the class are still very few and far between. Very vigorous, with nice shorter foliage here. The flowers are lightly ruffled and have a slightly deeper pink beard.

CLASSICS: **BUTTERCUP CHARM** (A. Brown 1970); **PURPLE SIDEBURNS** (Kavan 1972); **THREE CHERRIES** (Hager 1971).

ARILBREDS

Not sure where I’m going with these. I have just recently started trying to grow a handful here, after the disappointment of more than a few years in a row of losses of bloom and plants to notorious Okie late freezes, too much rain, and even scorch! Some of my old friends that bring back fond memories, such as **ESTHER, THE QUEEN** (Hunt 1968) and its child, **MARTHA MIA** (Hunt 1975) were added again, and I’m trying my hand at the finicky color-siren, **OYEZ** (C.G. White 1938). I’m now growing about a dozen, and protect them in the winter with a straw mulch (as I do with all my Louisianas and daylilies), leaving it on as late as possible in the spring to protect against a sudden unwelcomed visitor blasting in from the North.

The Shockey introductions seem to do very well here and have been more hardy than many others. And he sends out the prettiest plants you’ve ever seen. The star this year was **PERSIAN PADISHAH** (Shockey 1988), a riot of color on shorter stalks (18 to 20”), with large globular tapestry done in royal shades of rose and purple (falls deeper than the standards somewhat), then a bold announcement of a huge black signal holding the falls hostage. Extremely vigorous, with my only complaint being that it nearly bloomed itself out. Also commanding, but with not such intensity in color, was **SYRIAN PRINCESS** (Shockey 1988), a bit taller, with near-white standards, unmarked, and regal beige falls with an exotic heart-shaped deep brown (near black) signal implanted on the falls. **MAROON ELF** (Rich 1983) is a rampant arilbred-median in the size and height of an SDB. It is a rich maroon velvet with a silk overlay in the falls. The saturation is so deep, you can barely view the diffused black signal, almost incognito, on the falls. And I’ve added **LOUDMOUTH** (Rich 1970) once again to give it some company – still my favorite arilbred-median, after all these years.

LOUISIANAS

It was such an important, successful year for me that a significant part of this review is being devoted to sharing what all happened here with the Louisiana irises. I can't even remember when I began growing them, but my first order was to Joe Ghio about 15 years ago, and things just haven't been the same in Blanchard ever since. Ironically, I'm in the process of adding some of those first acquisitions to my collection again, in limited quantities for historical and sentimental reasons. And there just may be some serious "backtracking" done in hybridizing too, especially with some of the Army classics. After all these years, yet this was my first year to attempt to do any serious hybridizing with Louisianas. Two factors caused me to take the plunge: (1) The unabashed enthusiasm and joy exhibited by my friend, Farron Campbell, of Garland, Texas, for Louisianas, and the wisdom this relative "newcomer" has shared with me; and (2) the incredible success story of John Taylor's work in Dural, New South Wales, Australia.

But for now, we'll start in Lafayette, with the grand Fiftieth Anniversary celebration of the Society for Louisiana Irises (SLI), and then head back home to Oklahoma. **PRALINE FESTIVAL** (Haymon 1992) was entered in the seedling class at the show and walked away with top honors (seedling #12-84-2). It is a well-branched, double-socketed yummy confection in caramel honey to tan, with entrancing deeper texture veining shot throughout the flower. Substance supreme, with an unusual leathery texture. Beautiful indoors under artificial lights or outdoors in full sun. A welcome addition to a limited color class. Dorman's **EMPRESS JOSEPHINE** (1990) has already been reviewed as a runnerup to the L'Elegante Award, and its sib, **GRACE DUHON** (1988) is a rich near-black that continues to impress. Once decent distribution has been achieved, their popularity outside the home region will grow. Two more Haymon releases are particularly meritorious for both their show stalk branching and their qualities that make them excellent garden irises: **TERESA MARGARET** (1988) is a tall, stately pure light yellow from Army bloodlines. All segments, including the style arms, are lightly veined in green, giving a mint fresh look to the blossoms. Impeccable substance and endurance. **MARIE DOLORES** (1988), a pure white on tall 40" stalks, is a fine tribute to its *I. giganteaerulea* heritage. Waxen blossoms are gently ruffled and contrasted with a distinct sharp orange signal, neatly positioned against the snowy backdrop. It has proven to be dependable and healthy away from home, too.

The season was supposedly an early one in south Louisiana, and those in charge of doing the worrying were doing their share, fearing there would be "nothing for the show". They had one of the largest in their 50-year history, and **EXQUISITE LADY** (Owen 1987) stole many a heart, sweeping Best of Show honors. A magnificent, alluring medium lavender-blue, with each petal haloed in an exquisite silvery white. Nothing like it, and a visionary of the wondrous things we have to look forward to in Louisianas. As a child of 'Clara Goula' and 'Mrs. Ira Nelson' (Army), a fitting way to pay tribute to the first 50 years of Louisianas and welcome the next 50! Since I'm interested in hybridizing pinks, my eyes were drawn to **FELICIANA HILLS** (Pat O'Connor, registered in 1987, but not formally introduced yet). This is a pristine pink with average branching and bud count, but in a color we've not seen before in pink Louisianas. Good substance and carrying power. **LAURA LOUISE** (Mertzweiller-Ostheimer 1990) is one of the kids from the famous "Joe's Pots" from the SLI auctions donated by Joe Mertzweiller each spring. This is a rich pulsating super-yellow, with an underglow of orange rather than the more traditional russet. The clean color presentation is decorated with rich yellow-orange signals. One of the brightest yellows yet.

A trip to the Bois d'Arc Gardens of Ed and Rusty Ostheimer in deep south Louisiana (just outside of Houma) introduced us to the largest planting of named Louisianas in the United States. Although past peak, there was still plenty of good bloom. Far on one of the back rows of the 5-acre spread, I discovered a small clump of rare, old **LOUISIANA FASCINATION** (Army 1963), a soft pure dawn pink, with stalks holding 3 open at once in an elegant fashion. What a relief to see that such a classic, feared extinct, still exists and is in good hands. My goal is to transmit that color to a flower with more modern form and substance. A trio from Arkansas was exceptional here: **NOBLE MOMENT** (Morgan 1987) was displayed in huge, floriferous clumps, packed with dozens of shapely blooms in a soft, true medium blue-lavender, with harmonious yellow dagger signals. A vision of good health and productivity. Shorter of stature, but not lacking in the least in personality, is **SEA KNIGHT** (Morgan 1989), a lustrous deep spectrum blue self, with absolutely no other colors present, except for a hint of an orange line signal peeking from the heart. Intense saturation of color, with significant substance to carry it out. An impressive presence of chartreuse-green makes **UPBEAT** (Rowland 1989) unique – probably the greenest Louisiana on the market. Tall and stately stalks from its parent, 'Ila Nunn' (Army).

Back home, and where to begin, unless it would be with the oldest and then the newest. **BLACK WIDOW** (MacMillan 1953) is rather infamous for its finicky growth habits, but for me this year, it performed well and put on a magnificent display of spidery blossoms in soot black. It has renewed my interest in a modern, more vigorous spider. **MEDORA WILSON** (Granger 1972) is a marvelous, overlooked light pink, with the standards a tone lighter than the falls. It has a nice shape and very good substance for its age. It is one of the principal cultivars I'm using in my pink line. Several newer pinks were most impressive, and there appears to be 2 main approaches to improvement. The hardy, Arkansas line, mainly originating with works such as Frank Chowning's 'This I Love', has been greatly expanded, with varying degrees of color, all with tight, compact form, and generally shorter stalks. Each is extremely vigorous and a compact grower: **WAVERLY PINK** (Lineberger 1989) was the big surprise. A dainty rosy mauve-pink, with unique coloring and a small greenish-yellow signal. Lightly ruffled. From unknown parents, but surely from the Chowning bloodline. Henry Rowland

has produced 2 pristine pink color gems that were extremely popular: **PINK POETRY** (1988) is a rich medium shell pink from ‘Bryce Leigh’ (Chowning), with compact tidy flowers with a small yellow steeple signal. **TWIRLING BALLERINA** (1988) is from different breeding, yet is very similar in style, flower size, and height of stalk to ‘Pink Poetry’. A light, airy, true shell pink, sunfast, and then decorated with the most unusual yellow star-signals on all 6 petals, but then carefully outlined in **deep cardinal red** like an eyeliner – a very rare phenomenon that traces all the way back to ‘Lockett’s Luck’. The compact clumping of these 3 varieties is a blessing, after chasing so many of the “crawlers” all over the garden, merrily mixing with their neighbors to each side! The other approach to pinks, from the tall stately large-flowered

I. giganticaerulea bloodlines, has produced elegant, larger, more heavily ruffled varieties. **GERRY MARSTELLAR** (Raabe 1988) is the finest example, and is covered in the Aussie review. **SCREEN GEM** (Arny 1983) is the best of a long line of pinks from Charlie, but hasn’t received the recognition it deserves: A huge, rounded true mid-pink (‘Pink Taffeta’ (Rudolph) pink) with a large, somewhat diffused yellow signal. The best substance ever, and a main player in my pink breeding. John Taylor has already released several non-pink introductions directly from ‘Screen Gem’, in a wide array of colors, and I can’t wait to see what the first pink release will look like!

The blues were **very blue** this year in Blanchard, and are the other main area in which I intend to work. The rich ‘Blue Shield’ (Davis) style of spectrum blue found in **SEA KNIGHT** (Morgan 1989) was just as nice for us as it was in south Louisiana. **DELTA DOVE** (Dunn 1985) is the softest of aqua blues in a haunting shade that nearly approaches turquoise, then overlaid with an almost-eclectic webbing of deeper texture veins. **BLUEBONNET SUE** (Chenoweth 1987), a child of the great ‘Clara Goula’, is a tastefully ruffled offering in a clear bluebird blue that truly is the color of Texas bluebonnets. Somewhat lower bud count than some of the others, but displayed on gently S-curved show stalks, opening 2 to 3 simultaneously. **ICE ANGEL** (Faggard 1991) is a new, large-flowered glacial white with captivating undertoning of icy blue. A mammoth cultivar in all respects, with huge flowers and plants that measured over a foot long when I dug and replanted them this September. My favorite blue remains **BELLEVEUE COQUETTE** (Bertinot 1984), an effervescent *giganticaerulea*, again from ‘Clara Goula’, with exquisite, translucent rippling ruffles. Tall, noble stalks carry 4 well-spaced branches and terminal, with double sockets.

Charlie Arny is probably best known for his larger, more dominating introductions such as ‘Ila Nunn’ or ‘Clara Goula’. You’ll find a recent release of his to be a pleasant surprise: **GEISHA EYES** (1990) is a petite jewel in rich blue-violet, but then has distinct, large, deep yellow spear signals irregularly imprinted on all 6 of the petals. The flower form is totally flat and circular, which makes the “eyes” even more prominent – just like they’re staring at you (and following you as you walk through the garden!). Registered at 30”, for me it is more of a true patio, with *I. brevicaulis* branching on thin, graceful 16” stalks, perfectly proportioned with the diminutive effect. It inherited the vigor and stamina of its mother, ‘Acadian Miss’. Two other patios to intermediates held their own with the big boys this year. **CHERRY CUP** (Morgan 1989) is one of the best, purest, brightest (indeed) **cherry** reds since the release of its parent, the great should’ve-won-the-Debaillon, ‘F.A.C. McCulla’ (Arny). Intense, rich color with a small yellow line signal, almost completely hidden by extended, cherry-red style arms. It’s whimsical, with its white anthers peeking out from underneath the stark contrast of the red style arms. **HEAVENLY GLOW** (Morgan 1989) is unique to anything on the market. Compact, tightly constructed flowers are a magnificent blending of copper, russet, to burnt orange. It has the traditional yellow signals, but the style arms are an enchanting green (thus the glow) – the greenest saturation of anything seen in Louisianas.

At the opposite end of the totem pole are 3 that stood above the others and demanded your undivided attention: **JERI** (Bertinot 1985) is the most famous of Neil’s releases to date, finishing #2 on the HMs in 1990. A sultry, glowing jet black with tiny, almost nonexistent yellow signals that do not interrupt the color scheme. It inherited its color saturation from the great ‘Full Eclipse’ (Hager), but has larger, more open flowers, with such fullness of form that the intensity of color is even more predominant. Slender, graceful, almost willow stalks (like ‘Full Eclipse’) are deceptively strong enough to support 3, 4, and even 5 flowers open at once. Resistant to waterspotting, it makes for a grand show iris, and it is winning its share. It has pulled Best of Show honors at the SLI Show in Lafayette before, and in Arkansas this year for SLI President, Henry Rowlan. **CONCOURS D’ELEGANCE** (Dunn 1989) had not bloomed for me before, and I was shocked. One of the richest true magentas ever seen, on a flat flower with almost no ruffling – just a gentle waving to enhance its outstanding shape and substance. The color literally pulsates across the garden. One of Mary’s best releases. And then there’s **HURRICANE PARTY** (Haymon 1988), the king of the garden. It thinks it’s a tetraploid, with lush, vigorous monster-plants in a magnificent blue-green. Husky is an understatement. The form even resembles that of a tetraploid, with thick substance remindful of the Mertzweiller “Professors”. Bold ‘Ann Chowning’ signals in yellow are juxtaposed against the velvet pile in full violet. Although it is a self, I see a hint of a lighter band on the falls.

The Debaillon for me this year was a tossup between two “Deltas” from Mary Dunn. I have already praised ‘Delta Dove’, but the flip of the coin for my vote went to **DELTA DAWN** (1983), for many years one of my favorite offerings from Mary. Most unique, and perfectly named, with a calm, romantic blend of dawn colors of pink, apricot, honey, amber, and mauve pastels (I believe they call it “rosewood”). It is a **self** rather than a mottled blend, and there aren’t even any texture veins to disrupt the reverent mood. Tall, strong stalks carry 4 perfectly placed and spaced branches, with double sockets. Mary

had 2 other representatives in my garden that were especially noteworthy: **WINE COUNTRY** (1988) has somewhat smaller flowers in a rich, shining wine, with ruffles so deep and heavy that they were pleated. Proportionate shorter stalks (30") and somewhat close branching, but well spaced, and the flowers (for the most part) opened properly in the branch positions. **RUE ROYALE** (1986) is an unusual saffron yellow, very rare and unlike the more traditional burnished golden yellow of 'President Hedley' (Mertzweiller). Very vigorous, and although a late bloomer in the season, the color retained its saturation and didn't bleach out to a gross albino, like so many of the yellows do, unfortunately. Simple flowers with good shape and just a bit of waving and ruffling – a nice effect.

And 2 from Dorman Haymon complete the diploid portion of this review: **WAKE-UP SUSIE** (1988) was a favorite with garden visitors. For me, smaller flowered and shorter than its 40" registered height, it was a cute flat blue-lavender with golden yellow signals. She's been getting into Lockett's Luck's make-up case, because the signals are edged in that tell-tale eyeliner in dark mascara (violet). Most distinctive against the soft colors of the falls. And the winner for the most "beat-'em-over-the-head" vigor must surely go to **GABRIEL'S LOVE** (1988). An instant clump, but also rewards you with show stalks a-plenty, with multiple flowers in a ruffled, clean light lavender, accented with brilliant gold dagger-shaped signals – which sometimes end with a fork! Reasonably compact plants are a relief, but you'll have to divide the clumps often! Share with a friend.

Ah, the tetraploids...we're finally getting somewhere. And now we've got a couple of guys helping Joe's cause, with the delicate, dangerous process of chemically converting diploids to tetraploidy. We should see major breakthroughs in the advancement of this avenue of Louisiana breeding in just a few years, with fresh, diverse bloodlines added to the established gene pool. I finally got to see the infamous **SAUTERNE** (Durio 1982) – the real one – but not at my place....My first attempt at growing this color breakthrough ultimately ended in the disheartening, maddening revelation that I had been growing a purple tet rogue – and an ugly one at that!! The real thing is a magnificent, elegant bitone effect with lavender standards and broad light yellow falls, with all segments eloquently overlaid with soft lavender texture veining. Substance supreme. It's hard to imagine that this variety has now been on the market for a decade, and that such colors could come from straight purple tet breeding. The fascination of hybridizing – you never know what's hiding in them-there genes!!

Another impressive departure of color is **SAMURAI WISH** (Chenoweth 1987), one of the only true bicolors introduced thusfar in the tetraploids, with flat, heavily subtended flowers in a colorful combo of amber standards against oxblood red falls. The contrast is pulled together with an intense saturation of red in the standards' midribs. Two Mertzweiller tets from 'Professor Ike' (Mertzweiller) represent the careful, dedicated foundation work which has been laid for our future by Joe: **PROFESSOR ELLIS** (1987) is a gigantic, full-blown, royal blue-violet, with a large, distinct greenish-yellow signal. Lightly ruffled, with the ultimate in substance and luster. Thick, strong show stalks emerge from healthy, vigorous blue-green foliage. **PROFESSOR JIM** (1987) has all the same fine attributes we now expect with tetraploids, but presented in a bold red with velvet pile, the standards only a hint lighter in intensity.

CLASSICS: **AMBER GODDESS** (Arny 1963); **BLUE SHIELD** (Davis 1966); **DELTA KING** (Hager 1968); **DENE** (Arny 1969); **G.W. HOLLEYMAN** (Holleyman 1963); **IRA S. NELSON** (Arny 1969).

AUSTRALIAN LOUISIANAS

The early collectors from south Louisiana, those who were the founding fathers of the Society for Louisiana Irises some 50 years ago, would be shocked and amazed to see how far their wonders of the bayou have traveled in such a short time. Today, the popularity and acceptance of the Louisiana iris in Australia even surpasses the interest and awards in the United States. Several hybridizers Down Under are making great strides in stretching the limits of Louisianas and exploring new patterns and colors.

We had a splendid bloom season at "Bayou North" in Blanchard this year. Generous spring rains that ruined the biggest portion of the Tall Bearded season made up for the disappointment by rewarding us with exceptional bloom 3 weeks later in the Louisianas. It was the best bloom I've experienced in my 15-plus years of growing Louisianas. This article features the significant impact our counterparts Down Under have contributed to the evolution of Louisianas. Virtually every Aussie variety that bloomed will be reviewed here. The extensive review of the Taylor cultivars will be listed alphabetically.

My own exposure to Australian Louisianas is not new. In 1980, I had the privilege to introduce 2 diploids for Bob Raabe from New South Wales: **E.C. EVERINGHAM**, a full blue-violet with exceptional form and substance; and **URALBA GOLD**, an intriguing straw yellow, completely enveloped in an elaborate network of intricate violet texture webbing. Both varieties went on to win Honorable Mentions from the American Iris Society. Later in the decade, Melrose Gardens in California introduced 3 more Raabe creations, including a tetraploid. One of the most popular of Bob's recent releases

via Melrose is quickly becoming one of the all-time classics in blue: **SINFONIETTA** (1987). From Raabe's 'Bethany Douglas' (a "Clyde Redmond" kid) crossed with a seedling involving 'Clara Goula' and 'Gatewood Princess' (Goula), we have a sparkling bluebird (gentian) blue in medium tones with a clearness of tone incomparable in bearded irises. Heavy scalloped ruffling is the gift of 'Clara Goula' and the virtually indestructible plant habits from a double shot of 'Clyde Redmond' (a.k.a., "The Weed"!). **GERRY MARSTELLER** (Raabe 1988) is a voluptuous, sensuous mallow pink with artistic ruffles and pleats marking a suggestion of a lighter cream-pink at petal's edge. Superb plant habits, with strong increase all too rare in the pink class. This, with Charlie Army's 'Screen Gem', is the focal point of my pink breeding. From a cross of 2 earlier Raabe Australian releases, 'Uralba Mist' X 'Trionfo'.

Bob has made a major contribution to tetraploids with the release of **COORABELL**, introduced by Melrose in 1988, also. I consider this the best of the dark tets on the market today, a royal violet near-black with a shimmering satin sheen and bold gold signal pattern. It possesses the best form of the lot, in that it consistently opens properly and fully, and the falls "unfurl" to open to their flat shape rather than curling and popping back up – a common occurrence in tetraploid flowers due to their extremely heavy substance. This is Mertzweiller's 'Professor Ike' intensified three-fold, from 'Professor Ike' X 'Magistral', a Raabe registration from 'Professor Ike' selfed! Unbelievable that neither of these releases garnered enough votes this year to win an Honorable Mention!

The most successful and productive hybridizer from Australia has been John Taylor. He and his brother-in-law, Graeme Grosvenor, operate Rainbow Ridge Nursery in Dural, New South Wales, where the largest collection of Louisiana irises in the world can be found. In addition to featuring John's Louisiana releases, Rainbow Ridge introduces and markets for other hybridizers from Australia. Some impressive work is being done, so before beginning the Taylor expose, I want to praise 2 of the most noteworthy releases from the other folks:

OUR PARRIS, a 1990 offering from Craig Carroll of Baulkham Hills, New South Wales, is like nothing else on the market, and one of my very favorites of all. It is an indescribable color, with all the difficulty of producing an accurate description as Mary Dunn's 'Delta Dawn'. In Oklahoma, the coloring is a smooth velveteen self somewhere in the neighborhood of peach, dusty pink, buff, rosewood, tan, and mauve. Take a dab of each of those colors, put them in a blender for 5 minutes and then pour it out. Whatever the mix of all those colors becomes is as close as I can describe it – I've found it in no color chart. A simplified description might be a "peach 'Valera'" (Army). Surely an impossibility to accurately capture in color on film, and even the Rainbow Ridge catalog shot doesn't do it justice. A first-year plant produced one 37" stalk with 4 branches plus terminal, with 4 healthy increases. The flower form is similar to the airy look of 'Valera' (but fuller), perfectly positioned on a graceful modified zigzag stalk with double sockets up and down, and a total of 10 buds. It opens multiple blooms simultaneously for a grand show stalk, yet has sufficient buds for 3 full cycles of well timed bloom, making it a superior garden iris. Imagine how this will perform on an established clump! The flowers open well and flatten out to expose the vibrant color to its fullest. From a complex pedigree with a proverbial melting pot in its background, including 'Marie Caillet' (Conger, a tall grand *I. giganteaerulea*), 'Gypsy Moon' (Granger, a delicate purple texture veining on yellow), and 'Myra Army' (Army, a graceful, airy pink amoena). A magnificent mix! It has already won an Australasian Award of Merit. **SOFT LAUGHTER** is also from a complex lineage involving such classics as 'Charlie's Michele', hybridized by Janet Hutchinson from Pymble, New South Wales. Released by Rainbow Ridge in 1990 also, this is a warm cream (opening cream and not light yellow initially), full and broad with light ruffling and an outpouring of green and gold texture veining from the heart, extending from the signal area onto a significant amount of the falls. Cream style arms are in harmony with the ambiance of the flower. Plant habits and quality of stalks are beyond reproach. We hope to see more from these 2 talented hybridizers in the near future.

The work of John Taylor is an incredible success story. The Australasian Dykes Medal was born in the mid-1980s, and since its inception, John Taylor has proceeded to win the prestigious award in 4 of the 6 years. John has shown us just what can happen – even on the diploid level of work – if you dedicate yourself to fully exploring the possibilities that Mother Nature has to offer in a species whose native habitat is half-a-world away. He has the largest seedling patch devoted to Louisiana irises in the world – literally – blooming thousands of seedlings each year. He has several introductions annually, yet I don't see how he is even able to narrow it down to the ones that do make the final cut for release. We exchange plants each year, and I grow nearly all his releases. I have now bloomed virtually the entire lot, and can personally testify that this group is not only worthy, their uniqueness and quality have launched diploid hybridizing of Louisianas onto a whole new plateau! We haven't discussed if he is tackling the challenge of tetraploids. If he is, look out! John started with the best; his lines are almost exclusively the result of intensive hybridization of the bloodlines of the most famous of American hybridizers, the master Charles Army, Jr., from Lafayette, Louisiana.

ALL AGAZE (Taylor 1990): Red times white equals pink, right? In Louisiana breeding, that's not usually what happens, but this child of 'Mighty Rich' (Army) X 'Clara Goula' is a luscious salmon pink bitone, heavily ruffled with the classical 'Clara Goula' form. A second-year clump produced 4 stalks at 42" with 18 increases. Each stalk had 4 well-spaced branches plus terminal and 6-8 buds. A color combination never before seen in Louisianas. The winner of the Contemporary Award, given to the Best New Iris seen (of any class), goes to **APOLLO'S SONG** (Taylor 1991). See the

Awards Section of this edition of Contemporary Views. One of the strangest this year was **ART WORLD** (Taylor 1988), a hauntingly beautiful mauve pink, with the standards a shade lighter and more of a lavender influence. Then, all 6 petals have a distinct silver halo surrounding them – another totally unique color combination and one of my favorites. The falls have a small diffused sunburst signal pattern in yellow. Smaller, compact flowers remindful of ‘This I Love’ (Chowning), but with a gentle waving and fluting of the rounded, flat petals. Stalks were only 20” above small grassy foliage, making a compact clump. From ‘Uptown’ X ‘Helen Naish’ (Taylor).

An older release, but new to me, was **CAMMERAY** (Taylor 1987). A first-year plant produced one 36” stalk with well-spaced branching at 3 positions plus terminal and 5 increases. A superb, expanded, flat, sparkling light to medium blue with just a suggestion of lavender undertones, especially in the style arms. The signal pattern is a tiny, exact “V” in yellow. Fresh and clean, with superior substance and lightly waved parts. From ‘Bit of Blue’ (Arny) X ‘Clara Goula’. One of John’s first releases still remains one of his most exciting: **C’EST SI BON** (1984) is an outrageous extrovert with huge flowers of spectrum violet, with the world’s largest spray pattern of white filtering from the signals down almost to the very base of the falls. A fine halo of white brings out the finely picoteed edges, as if an artist had taken the shears and carefully, precisely nicked the falls all around (similar to the effect from ‘Dr. Dorman’, a release in the ‘70s from Sidney Conger). Take all this and put it on 34” stalks with 4 open at once. Kazaam! A dazzling specimen, bold but elegant in its own way. A second-year clump produced 5 stalks with 4 branches plus terminal. From a great parent, ‘Freddie Boy’ (Mertzweiller), crossed with an old Holleyman *I. giganticaerulea* from the ‘50s, ‘Royal Lady’. This may be the beginning of a plicata pattern in Louisianas, as Joe Ghio discovered in his early work with Pacific Coast Natives.

Choosing the best of the new yellows for 1991 was difficult, but the nod went to **APOLLO’S SONG** for overall quality and performance. The most beautiful individual flower, though, belongs to **CLASSICAL NOTE** (Taylor 1991). A first-year planting produced one tall 36” stalk, gracefully S-curved with 3 branches plus terminal, with 7 increases remaining. It’s so good to see strong stalks and vigorous plant habits in the yellows now. Here, it was a clean canary yellow, deeper than ‘Apollo’s Song’ and richer than the Rainbow Ridge plate in their catalog – almost as deep as ‘Koorawatha’ (Taylor). Substance like leather, with heavier ruffling than ‘Apollo’s Song’, and more perfectly placed on the flower than ‘Koorawatha’. This outstanding, sunfast yellow will be a classic, indeed, and is the product of two Australasian Dykes Medalists, ‘Koorawatha’ X ‘Helen Naish’. **DANZA** (Taylor 1989) was a favorite with the visitors. Modest-sized flowers on 32” stalks are like carved wax, in a warm white with a diffused pattern of green making up the signals. Tight, compact flowers are perfectly round and heavily ruffled, with such thick substance that they take 2 full days to fully open. Looks great in the bright Okie sun, but on those rare cool, cloudy days, the presence of green illuminates from the heart. The Aussies consider this one of John’s best creations, and we agree. From ‘Valera’ X ‘Helen Naish’.

Another bizarre color combination that I found intriguing was **DAWN PLANET** (Taylor 1990). Well named, it is a mysterious bitone to bicolor, with light pink standards contrasted by captivating rose-pink falls. But then the entire flower is hazed with smoke. No-no, not dirty or muddy. There’s nothing like it on the market, and it kept drawing me closer. An unusual cross of an Arny blue, ‘Secret Spell’, with John’s Dykes classic, ‘Koorawatha’. Who would ever dream that, from 2 yellows (‘Koorawatha’ X ‘Lucile Holley’, Arny), you would get **DAZZLING STAR** (Taylor 1988)? Considered by Rainbow Ridge to be the top release for that year, it has already made its presence known Down Under, having already won an Australasian Award of Merit. A captivating blending of magenta and pink, then unashamedly blotched and blended with a creamy yellow. All petals are then haloed in cream. The focal point is the prominent yellow star-signals on all 6 petals. Outstanding plants produce consistent show stalks.

The pre-introductory publicity for **DURAL WHITE BUTTERFLY** (Taylor 1990) was intense, and the premiere introduction for that year went on to break all sales records for a new introduction from Rainbow Ridge. Those Aussies know a good thing when they see it – this sib to ‘Apollo’s Song’ (‘Screen Gem’ X ‘Helen Naish’) is a tall, magnificent, large-flowered pure white. It is a blinding white, even clearer than ‘Helen Naish’, yet pure and pristine with its airy form and heavy ruffles on classic flat flowers. We anticipate this one to be yet another to go all the way for John Taylor. Splendid plant habits, with strong stalks approaching 4’ tall, giving 4 branches held away from the stem, plus terminal and backup buds. **FINE WARRIOR** (Taylor 1991) is a strange flat, grayed orange to rust-ran that grows on you. Some would say an improved ‘Valera’, but they’re really too different to compare. A first-year plant produced a mammoth, telephone pole stalk 40” tall with a graceful zigzag of 4 branches and terminal. The flowers are flat and round, lightly ruffled and just a hint of a halo. Each of the 6 petals had a distinct V-shaped yellow signal. It reminded me of a toned-down, masculine ‘Dazzling Star’. Alas, one of the few new ones that has thusfar been a poor grower, but worth the effort. Strange bloodlines: (A blue ‘Freddie Boy’ (Mertzweiller) seedling X ‘Grace Scott’ (Arny)) X ‘Pintharuka’. ‘Pintharuka’ is a Taylor 1989 yellow from ‘Screen Gem’ X ‘Helen Naish’! **FLIGHT OF FANTASY** (Taylor 1989) is unlike anything else I’ve seen from Taylor. Here it was so different from the description that I questioned whether or not Marie Caillet and I had the real thing. I’ve received another start of it from Australia, plus imported another from a grower in California, so we’ll see next spring. For us, it bloomed a genteel white to sky blue, with butterfly texture veining throughout the flower, but intensified in the falls. The texture was an ethereal, creped look, so delicate that it looked weak of substance. Yet it

endured. The large wide flowers were relaxed but never droopy. The patterning reminded me of the old barely-arilbred, 'Butterfly Wings'. We loved it! From 'Cammeray' X 'Secret Spell'.

GLADIATOR'S GIFT (Taylor 1991) was the winner of the 9-1-1 Award this year (see Awards section). If a prize were given for the biggest flower, the winner would be **GOOD VIBES** (Taylor 1991). A first-year plant yielded, quite simply, the largest blossoms I've ever seen on a Louisiana iris, measuring a full 8-9" across. Yet its segments are so strong structurally that they were never floppy or sloppy. The color is an uneventful violet-purple, very common to its forefathers. But each perfectly round flower is given a little pizzazz with bold, contrasting bright yellow star-signals on all 6 petals, with the falls sharply marked and the standards a bit more diffused. Petals are tightly ruffled, adorned with a most definite ¼" band of yet deeper purple. The 36" stalks are so strong that the monster-flowers are never in jeopardy of winding up face-down in the mulch. And they have sexy, wide, controlled zigzag branching that gives lower blossoms the opportunity to open fully and strut their stuff, too. From 'Lucile Holley' X 'Dazzling Star'. The plant habits make a bold statement too, with 7 husky increases remaining on the first-year growth. The richest of all yellows is **HELIOSTAT** (Taylor 1991), a pleasant surprise, because it had much better color, heavier ruffling, and better form than the Rainbow Ridge picture. A brassy, burnished golden yellow with a deeper, diffused signal area. Remindful of 'President Hedley' (Mertzweiller), but with modern form, deep sensuous ruffles, and a glossy sheen that makes a flower sizzle. Totally sunfast, with 33" stalks with 4 branches (somewhat close to the stalk) and terminal. A modest increaser here so far. A cross of 'Valera' X 'Koorawatha'.

JOHN'S LUCIFER (Taylor 1987) is a famous dark near-black from the red side that has already won an Australasian Award of Merit. It doesn't have the sultry depth of color or the luster of Dorman Haymon's sibs, 'Grace Duhon' and 'Empress Josephine', but it is an elegant, broad, ruffled beauty with grand, tall show stalks. From a memorable cross of 'Ann Chowning' (Chowning) X 'Charles Army III' (Army). **LYDIA'S LOVE** (Taylor 1991) was the first to bloom this year. From a sib to 'Koorawatha' crossed with 'Lucile Holley', it is a pure, understated pastel to light yellow self, with elegant texture veins and gentle ruffling. Superb form and substance, non-fading here. A first-year plant produced one 34" stalk, very strong, with 3 branches and terminal. Unfortunately, it has thusfar been a slow grower, with only 2 rather weak increases, reverting back to 'Lucile Holley', which for me never performed well. Amazingly, this is the only Taylor, directly from 'Lucile Holley', where this weakness has been transmitted.

MALIBU MAGIC (Taylor 1991) was First Runnerup to the L'Elegante Award, previously reviewed. The most magnificent of all the Taylor Louisianas was **MARGARET LEE** (Taylor 1992), First Runnerup for this year's Pick of the Litter Award. **MIDNIGHT DRAMA** (Taylor 1991) was different, in that the flowers were a bit smaller than expected. It is a slightly bitoned velvety blue-violet with a tiny forked signal pattern in yellow and white styles heavily edged in violet. The thickly substanced petals are flat and deeply scalloped, with a lighter underside showing in the channels of the ruffling (as with 'Margaret Lee'), giving a feeling of motion to the flower. The signals are on all 6 petals, forming a unique star pattern in the heart of the flower, even different from the other Taylor releases with a similar signal pattern array. A first-year plant produced two 37" stalks that were somewhat snaking and weak this first year. Of course this may improve on a fully acclimated, established planting. The stalks produced 3 to 4 wide branches and terminal, with 5 to 6 buds. From ('C'est Si Bon' X 'Charles Army III') X 'Helen Naish'. Extremely vigorous, healthy plants.

The first-year planting of **NATURAL WONDER** (Taylor 1991) produced two 34" stalks and 3 increases. The branching is wide enough to allow the 7" blossoms to open and fully expand, with 4 branches well spaced up the stalks plus terminal, with double sockets at some of the positions. The flowers are a large, flat burnished rose to dusky pink with texture veining, beautifully sculpted with elegant waving in all the parts. Green-yellow signals in a V-shape on all 6 petals form a star pattern in nice contrast against the smooth self color of the flower. From a sib to 'Koorawatha', crossed by an unknown daddy – even John's accidents turn out well! **PATIENT REWARD** (Taylor 1987) is a bit older but still most competitive with the newer releases. It is a voluptuous clear medium pink from one of the great all-time crosses: 'Ann Chowning' X 'Clara Goula'. The form and ruffling come from 'Clara Goula', and the bold yellow predominant signal pattern is the classic signature of 'Ann Chowning's' children. One of the prettiest pinks, and with that kind of regal bloodline, I'm using it heavily in my pink breeding here in Oklahoma. It is closer to a true self than some like 'All Agaze'. **PERFECT MATCH** (Taylor 1990) is a pulsating rosy magenta bitone from unknown breeding, with large flat flowers that show off bold, contrasty 'Ann Chowning' signals imprinted in yellow on the falls. The flowers have almost no ruffling, which makes for a nice change of pace, after all the dizzying ripples and ruffles elsewhere! Tall majestic show stalks.

ROSEBERY (Taylor 1988) is one of the largest whites available, an informal creamy white that opens light yellow. As the flower expands and fully develops, the flowers fade gently to the cream, retaining the texture veining. The imposing florets are a full 8" across with a crimped picotee edge, closely approaching what I would call "lace". A first-year plant produced four 40" skyscrapers, with 4 wide branches, beautifully spaced with double sockets up and down, and up to 10 buds per stalk. Exceptionally vigorous, leaving 9 increases. The relaxed informal look in the shape is a nice change from the tight compact look of other whites. From 'Koorawatha' X 'Lucile Holley'. **SAN DOMENICO** (Taylor 1987)

reminded me of 'Acadian White' (Arny), but with a smaller spear signal with more orange present. It is a large, flat milky white with virtually no texture veining. The falls have a more oval shape and just a bit of ruffling, making for a nice diversion from the traditional form we usually see today. Well branched, with 3 wide, well-placed branches, but the stalk was not as strong as others on this first-year bloom. Unknown parentage.

The premiere Taylor release in blue is **SEA LORD** (1991). It is the ultimate (so far!) in true-blue, with the richest, most intense saturation in royal blue -- in the heritage of 'Clyde Redmond' (Arny). A color so pure that it would make the Tall Bearded hybridizer weep! Rainbow Ridge considers this John's best blue to date, and I agree. Smaller flowers are absolutely round and compact, with clean yellow signals perfectly placed on each fall. A first-year plant produced one strong, thick 29" stalk with only 2 branches plus terminal, but each bloom opened one at a time, resulting in an acceptable length of bloom season for the stalk. Lush blue-green foliage with 3 strong increases and clean, erect, healthy fans. From 'Cammeray' X 'Secret Spell', this may become one of John's all-time classics, with some of the most perfect flowers I've ever seen in a Louisiana iris. Melodiously waved and ruffled, with understated elegance and grace. **SUN DREAM** (Taylor 1987) is a sib to the famous Dykes recipient, 'Koorawatha' ('Dural Charm' (Taylor) X 'Clara Goula'), but in some ways I prefer it to its more famous sister. It is a brilliant, non-fading sunshine yellow, not as heavily ruffled, but with even better form and solid show branching. Both are different enough from each other that each should be grown and enjoyed. Very popular at the SLI show in Lafayette this spring. **SWISS CHALET** (Taylor 1987) is a very nice cold white-white that has also been overshadowed by a more famous sib, Dykes Medalist 'Helen Naish'. Its petals are more elongated than the full-figured look of many other whites but, adorned with moderate, tight ruffling, makes a different, attractive change in style of form, giving a very airy look of a dove in flight. Not as much green veining in the heart as 'Helen Naish'. From 'Charlie's Ginny' (Arny) X 'Clara Goula'.

Lighter colored halos are becoming more common now, with the best example to date being the fabulous silver halo against blue backdrop, as found in 'Exquisite Lady' (Owen). John's new **TIME KEEPER** (1991) is another contribution to the new pattern. It is a large, flat, moderately ruffled light to medium grape with a definite underfusion of pink. The standards are slightly lighter in intensity and then somewhat mottled with the deeper grape. All 6 petals then have a distinct halo of silver-white, causing the flower to glisten. A bold medium yellow V-signal is crisply marked on all 6 petals, giving a starry-eyed effect for which John is becoming so famous. Branching comes away from the stalk sufficiently to allow the moderately large flowers to unfurl properly and dazzle you. A first-year plant produced one 36" stalk with 4 increases remaining. Another great child of the cross 'Lucile Holley' X 'Dazzling Star'. **TRANQUIL STAR** (Taylor 1988) is one of John's best progressions in the advancement of pink in the Louisianas, and one of my personal favorites. A serene marshmallow pink, somewhat deeper in the falls, with a mauve underglow that gives added vitality and carrying power to the color in the garden. Crisp, reliable substance on broad, ruffled flowers. Beautiful in the landscape, but won't let you down on the show bench, either. From what is surely the most unusual cross of all times, 'C'est Si Bon' X 'Koorawatha'! Festive! A nice traveling companion to the show would be the bright **TREND SETTER** (Taylor 1988), a bravura rose-pink with large yellow signals boldly expressing themselves on the falls. Then there is an intensification of deeper rose "feathering" spreading over the expansive falls. A generous application of ruffling belies its 'Clara Goula' heritage, from 'Pam Truscott' (Arny) X 'Clara Goula'.

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