

CONTEMPORARY VIEWS - 2005/2006

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This edition of Contemporary Views includes evaluations from the 2005 AIS National Convention in St. Louis, the 2006 Convention in Portland, Oregon, in addition to a review of some of the first-year bloom in convention gardens on tour for the 2007 Oklahoma City National Convention and bloom from my own garden too, of course. We were given a golden opportunity to observe irises in peak performance from near-perfect weather conditions (St. Louis) to cold, clammy overcast conditions (Portland and central Oklahoma).

AWARD WINNERS

1. **CONTEMPORARY AWARD** -- to the Best New Iris seen (one introduced within the past 3 years of the date of this review): **ALL NIGHT LONG** (Duncan 2005) is a smashing new lacquer black, a child of the famous 'Hollywood Nights' (Duncan), and in my opinion, an improvement by light years. Gone are the striations at the hafts. The form is a more "finished" look, and the texture is glossy and luxurious. Ruffling is heavy and well positioned throughout the flower. Standards appear a touch smaller than the falls, yet the form is still a very attractive look, distinctive. Foliage is a beautiful deep blue-green, clean with excellent increase. The stalks and branching display the high-quality Schreiner bloodline of its pollen parent. Simply stunning on the show bench.

Runnersup:

PANTHER (M. Smith 2004) is the most significant black SDB introduction since the release of 'Michael Paul' (W. Jones 1979). In many ways, it is very similar to 'All Night Long', scaled down to SDB size. Dramatic ruffling is juxtaposed against glossy patent leather petals, with the only contrast in color a blue-violet beard. An average grower which makes clean, disease-resistant plants. Stalks have 1 branch with 3 well-timed buds. A clump in full bloom in the garden is evocative.

RAINY RIVER (L. Painter 2005) is an intensely saturated flower, the best neglecta on the market, with medium blue standards atop inky blue-violet falls, polished off with a pleasing degree of ruffling throughout the flower and a beautiful sheen. The colors are sharp, there is excellent contrast in colors between the standards and falls, and the falls are mercifully devoid of annoying haft marks which have plagued so many of its predecessors. This talented new hybridizer from the Napa Valley of California has a keen eye for a quality iris and is obviously very discriminating in determining what makes the final cut from her seedling patch.

BE MY BABY (Black 2004) is a choice BB, a sinfully delicious shade of creamy pink with a chiffon texture that adds elegance to the flower. Deep, voluptuous, wavy ruffles on the compact flowers make the heart sing! Its finest feature, however, are the show stalks it consistently produces, easily carrying 4 branches and often some lower rebranching, adding up to a bud count of as much as 10 to 12 buds. Seeing multiple open blossoms (easily 3 and sometimes 4 at a time) is nothing unusual for this iris, with thin, graceful stalks that "give" in the breeze but never falter.

ESCALATOR UP (Richardson 2005) is an eloquent addition to the Emma Cook pattern, with huge flowers composed of softest pale yellow standards, creamy falls washed in blue, more intensified at the edges. Reminded me of a prettier 'Stairway to Heaven' (Lauer), with more color and clean contrast between the standards and falls. The substance is outstanding, with an impressive leathery texture. Stalks are thick and strong, carrying 3 branches, double sockets, with well-timed bloom sequence. Plants are husky and healthy with above average increase.

2. **L'ELEGANTE AWARD** -- to the New Iris with the most beautiful individual flower seen: **HYPNOTIC MELODY** (Innerst 2003) is quite simply one of the beautiful irises I have ever seen, and the denial of its due recognition in the AIS Awards System thusfar is puzzling and disturbing. A most difficult color to describe, it is a blending of pastels in creamy pewter with undertoning of pink and even subtle green. The ruffling is exquisite, deep and dramatic, yet never impedes its ability to open its flowers properly,

fully, and without tearing or twisting. The substance is thick with texture as if carved from wax. Its healthy plant habits and exceptional stalks come from its pod parent, 'Silverado' (Schreiner).

Runnersup:

ROYAL STERLING (Keppel 2005) is well named, a masterpiece in sterling silver to palest lilac, with wide, magnificent form embellished with intense ruffling and a degree of lace. The shimmering flowers are notably larger than most other 'Fogbound' (Keppel) offspring, carried on tall stately show stalks with consistently exceptional branching.

KONA WAVES (Annand 2005) is a bicolor with yellow standards and violet-blue falls, in the tradition of Dykes Medalist 'Edith Wolford' (Hager), but not from EW breeding (instead, from another Dykes Medal winner from Schreiner, 'Honky Tonk Blues'). A shorter TB, it has ripple ruffles which belie its name, deep and dramatic. The tones are moody, even somber in cooler weather, unique, a welcome addition to this limited color class. It was a lighter color overall in Missouri, but most attractive either way.

CLOUDS OF GLORY (Richardson 2005) is a genteel blue and white blend, in the style of 'Cloud Ballet' (Fort), but bigger, taller, and with improved plant habits. It makes a refreshing clump, a shimmering icy white heavily infused with crystalline sky blue throughout the flower. Branching appeared to be a bit close to the stalks, yet all the lower flowers opened properly.

GENTLE KISS (Christopherson 2004) is a sensuous blending of pastels in apricot, peach, buff, yellow and even rose-pink. To my eye, the overall effect is softest apricot, one of the most beautiful ever produced, graced with tight ruffling all the way around, standards and falls.

3. **9-1-1 AWARD** -- to the New Iris that is, in my opinion, the most significant hybridizing achievement or color break: **BLUEBEARD'S GHOST** (Black 2006) is the most important SDB release since the introduction of 'Pele' (Aitken 1993), and is the culmination of a quest of over 20 years for the elusive blue-bearded white. It is purest cold white, accented with startling deep indigo blue beards - no other colors present. The only suggestion of any other color is the subtle green veining which appears in cooler weather, which contributes to the freshness of the flower. Plant habits are flawless, floriferous but with a good bloom/increase ratio. Patience and perseverance pay off, especially if you have talent, intuition, and vision.

Runnersup:

REDROCK PRINCESS (Witt 2006), an MTB, was the most impressive seedling seen (in any class) at the St. Louis Convention in 2005. It has medium brown standards, closed and ruffled. Rounded brick red falls have deeper veins at the base of the falls and pleasing white striations around gold beards. It consistently produced slender, flexuous stalks with 3 branches, with foliage proportionate to the dainty flowers. The colors are rich, the form exceptional, and the overall garden effect memorable.

SOLAR FIRE (Tasco 2003) is the best variegata Space Age iris released to date, possessing the modern form, smoothness of haft, and overall sophistication others have lacked. It has deep golden bronze standards, approximately the color of its pollen parent, 'Golden Panther' (Tasco), infused even deeper in the midribs. Falls are a very masculine oxblood red, with golden beards ending consistently in oxblood flounces. Magnificent show stalks for the show fanatic, with plenty of buds on those stalks for those gardeners who can't bear to cut them for the show!

Exceptional deep pink Space Agers have been as equally difficult to develop. **SPIRITS RISING** (L. Miller 2006), viewed as a first-year planting in the Will Rogers Garden Convention Garden for the upcoming 2007 AIS National Convention in Oklahoma City, was most impressive. Azalea pink flowers are fully saturated, with no other colors to adulterate the effect. Thick fuzzy deep pink beards end in horns which pop straight up to the sky.

PARISIAN DAWN (Keppel 2006), to me, is the most voluptuous and eloquent of many fine Emma Cook pattern irises on the market now. This sophisticated beauty has soft creamy apricot standards and falls, with the falls yielding to a well defined but subtle mauve-pink edge. Slightly deeper apricot texture veining over the falls add to the vitality of the flower. Thick orange-scarlet beards are like a maraschino cherry atop your favorite dessert. The standards are heavily ruffled but remain closed; the falls are so wide they touch at the hafts, with extravagant ruffling gracing the contrasted edging.

4. **SUN BELT AWARD** -- to the Best Proven Variety, i.e., one that has been on the market long enough to be thoroughly tested in the Midwest (at least 4 years): **HEARTSTRING STRUMMER** (Ben Johnson 2001) has all the attributes one demands when considering an iris for the upper echelon of awards in the AIS Awards System. This sparkling, elegant blue amoena is imposing, in spite of its softer colors. Tall and stately, inheriting the height and magnificent branching of its Dykes Medalist parent, 'Conjuration' (Byers). Looking out over an expansive garden setting at the Smith-Giffin Garden on the Fresno Convention tour, it was literally head and shoulders above the crowd, majestic and strong. Plant habits are outstanding, without exception, and I gave it scrupulous critique in gardens here in Oklahoma, in Missouri (where, in its home region, it won the President's Cup at the St. Louis Convention), the hot, dry climate of central California, to the cold damp conditions of the Pacific Northwest. The refreshing colors are clear as the sky, the ruffling of the nearly-horizontal falls give the flowers permission to dance in the breeze. A clump of this masterpiece lifts the spirits. This new hybridizer from Springfield, MO should be proud--he has a jewel!

Runnersup: I continue to be impressed with **GOLDEN PANTHER** (Tasco 2000), back to the first time I saw it as a reselect at Superstition. It receives A+ ratings in every category - branching is consistent, with strong stalks displaying well-spaced modified candelabra branching; plants are healthy and vigorous with excellent increase; form is impeccable, rounded with a finished look to its ruffling. The true test, especially for this color range, is its sun-resistance. It never burns, even in the hot dry climate of Oklahoma or central California. It retains its clarity of color even in a wet spring, a significant accomplishment in this color class, when this type of weather conditions tend to "muddy up" the picture. It has been consistent in every part of the country it has appeared, a true testament to its worthiness for consideration of the Dykes Medal.

SPOUTING HORN (L. Johnson 2001) has displayed consistent high quality in all parts of the country, including my garden here in central Oklahoma. It is a deeper version of its pollen parent, 'Honky Tonk Blues' (Schreiner), a deep sea blue to violet, lightening at the edges as its parent does. Pulsating ruffles are deep, rippling throughout the flower. Tall and noble, it has magnificent show stalk branching on strong stems with 4 branches, stalks often opening 3 at once, with plenty of backup buds to ensure a proper length of season. Plants are a gorgeous deep blue green, disease-resistant, and vigorous, producing stunning clumps in the garden.

DANDY CANDY (Ernst 2001), in my opinion, is the finest iris this Oregon hybridizer has released to date. A confectionery delight in a rich dark-top, with medium purple standards and luscious bright peach falls, deeper at the shoulders around rich tangerine-orange beards. What you can't see in a varietal description is its magnificent texture, the falls displayed with a changeable silk effect with infiltration of the standards' color blended into the falls. It has been exceptional in every part of the country, with worthy mention of its plant habits and great stalks.

VIENNA WALTZ (Keppel 2000) is a luxurious presentation in rose-orchid with slightly deeper texture veins, then softened with an underglow of cream. A pleasing coral-pink beard completes the picture. Although a full sister to the highly awarded-pink, 'Happenance' (Keppel), it has a totally different look, with both heavy ruffling and lace, but with the same quality plant habits and stalk production.

5. **DARK HORSE AWARD** -- to the variety introduced within the past 10 years or so that has been overlooked by AIS judges and deserved higher awards. **PURE AS GOLD** (Maryott 1993) reminds me of my own creation, 'Aztec Sun' (1982), with intense saturation of color and sun-resistance, refusing to burn even on the hottest of days. This variety is even deeper, more golden than full yellow. It is also a reliable rebloomer in many zones. A great iris all around.

Runnersup:

WIND SPIRIT (Blyth 1996) is an IB from Down Under that, had it been a part of the AIS Awards System, surely would have gone far. It is a delicate mauve-orchid, a tone deeper in the falls, with vibrant tangerine beards. What sets this beauty apart from others is what happens in the falls - it is electrified with infusions of metallic blue and violet, undertones in rose-pink, all brought together like shot silk or changeable taffeta. It literally glows in the garden, and makes a soul-soothing clump.

O'SO PRETTY (Evelyn Kegerise 1993) is a special lilac amoena, with white standards flushed pale lilac, medium lilac falls, transforming to near-white in the heart of the flower, gradually intensifying as you come to the edge of the falls. White beards are tipped lilac and do not distract from the overall effect. The texture is diamond-dusted, and it has an effervescence in its nature which is easy on the eyes.

JENNIFER REBECCA (Zurbrigg 1985) is a great, dependable rebloomer in old rose, with the standards a couple of tones lighter than the falls, then completed with a coral-shrimp beard. It has modern, wide form which many rebloomers from that genre lacked, thick substance to sustain the flowers, and an underglow that gives carrying power to the flower, clear across the garden.

AZURE ICICLE (Hamner 1993) was barely noticed when it was first released. With the resurgence in popularity of the Emma Cook pattern, some hybridizers (namely, Fred Kerr for one) have "backed up" and used this variety in their work. Well named, it is a crystalline work of art in glistening white, complemented with a tasteful band of azure blue in the falls.

6. **PICK OF THE LITTER AWARD** -- to the most outstanding and promising seedling personally viewed this season: **KING OF LIGHT** (Baumunk 2007) is a perfect name for this grand new iris. The finest of many special seedlings viewed during the Portland National Convention, in every garden it shined in richest full gold with a unique copper (versus burnished) glow. In spite of less than desirable weather conditions, with rain and cold temperatures, this star maintained its composure and refused to go muddy. Magnificent stalks have 3 branches perfectly spaced, consistent throughout every clump, every stalk. Flawless plant habits with healthy foliage and very desirable vigor. It also sports an excellent bloom/increase ratio. The substance is thick, the texture leathery, the color projecting carrying power clear across the garden. I predict it will really be a dazzler in warmer, drier climates.

Runnersup:

T125B (Thomas Johnson): Look and say "ooh-la-la!". This is a heavily laced full orchid-lavender in the color of 'Feature Attraction' (Schreiner), even frillier and in a prettier shade of color. It has broad, horizontal falls. Flowers open properly, even with cool weather and heavy lace. Its great advancement, though, is in the plant habits - its growth and increase is about 10 times better than FA, with husky, tough, disease-resistant foliage! It produced magnificent stalks, with 3 branches in formal candelabra fashion.

AM-99/0415-1 (Anton Mego) is a wonderful, funky new bicolor fancy plicata Space Ager! Standards are solid medium yellow. Falls are horizontal in marbled red on white, remindful of a more colorful 'Aardvark Lark' (Black). Then, gold beards end in outlandish red flounces! Exotic, unique.

AM-99/0417-1 (Anton Mego) is my favorite of many fine, creative seedlings guested by this talented Slovakian hybridizer. It is a mysterious, downright spooky 'Jungle Shadows' (Sass-Graham) type of blend, with shocking dark violet (near-black) beards ending in horns sticking straight up in the air! The positioning in the flower of varying degrees of colors such as grey, gunmetal, slate, violet, and black is done in a series of shadows, eventually lightening at the flower edges in the style of 'Walking on Air'

(Black). Stalks in the Mid-America Garden at the Portland Convention had 4 branches plus spur plus lower rebranching. Rich blue-green foliage with a heavy concentration of purple at the base just adds to the Twilight Zone effect of the plant.

0108 (Kanarowski): The finest of several promising seedlings from this new hybridizer. It was impressive at both the St. Louis and Portland Conventions, receiving one of my HC votes this season against some stiff competition! It is a gorgeous compact blue amoena with bubble ruffling and even a suggestion of lace, unique for a blue amoena. Stalks were exceptional, with 4 branches, double socketed, consistently displayed in modified candelabra fashion.

WATCH PARTY:

I'm always hesitant to describe seedlings still under number in the primary sections of Contemporary Views, because I believe that few people follow these reviews so closely as to go back and see if any I have recognized go on to be introduced. But, with so many great seedlings seen these past two years, I don't think it's fair to limit the review to only 5 finalists for the Pick of the Litter. All of the following are Tall Bearded, unless otherwise indicated.

D27-A (Ben Johnson): Advancement in laced yellows has been slow to come by. This is a heavily laced medium sunshine yellow with deep yellow beards, remindful of 'Ritzy' (Hager-Cooley's) but with even heavier lace. Flowers open without twisting, even in cold wet weather. Standards retained their shape when others didn't. Strong stalks carry 2 to 3 branches. Good growth habits. A significant accomplishment in laced yellows.

T137A (Thomas Johnson): Similar to Pick of the Litter runnerup, T125B, in character and make-up, this seedling is a heavily laced lighter sky blue with white beards. Remindful of 'Charisma' (Blocher) except the application of color, including around the beards, is smoother. Style of branching is similar also, with a very formal look to the stalks. Perhaps not quite as vigorous as T125B, but still most acceptable. I hope both are introduced, because T137A is actually my favorite of the two.

02-92A (Keith Keppel): My favorite reselect in the hybridizer's home garden in Salem. From (Inside Track X Spice Lord), we have a dazzling, rich plicata, displayed with solid wine standards, pure white falls with a distinct 3/4" band in wine, then just a hint of yellow in the base color closer to the heart of the flower. Seriously ruffled. Magnificent stalks, strong, carrying 4 branches. Superb plant habits.

98-42A (Stephanie Markham): Was the best of several very promising MTB's from this gifted young hybridizer. It reminded me of 'Among Friends' (Varner), a neglecta with lightest blue (nearly white) standards, rich violet-blue falls with a 1/4" edge of the standards' color. Excellent branching, small dainty foliage.

Anton Mego is one of the rising stars in iris hybridizing. This European hybridizer (from Slovakia) is doing some of the most innovative work - anywhere - and his guests at the conventions have been most impressive. In addition to the two seedlings which made the Top 5 list for the Pick of the Litter Award, the following were also of merit:

AM-96/0121-13 (Mego): A full blue amoena with contrasting beards. White standards have an unusual filigree in blue. Falls are contrasted with bold, fully saturated violet-blue, deepening at the edges, then topped off with bright red to burnt orange beards. Falls are heavily ruffled and horizontal. Decent stalks, consistently producing 3 branches. It has good growth habits. A complete package, very exciting, and definitely an improvement in red-bearded blue amoenas.

AM-99/0387-1 (Mego): Is remindful of the classic 'Planned Treasure' (Burger) with clean pink standards and complementary orchid-lavender falls, but accented with coral horns. Thin, somewhat willowy stalks suggest that 'Conjuration' (Byers) is in its background, and were leaning a bit at the Theissen Garden at the St. Louis Convention.

AM-99/0393-02 (Mego): This one is a modern ‘Color Carnival’ (DeForest 1949) done in apricot, with dazzling, clever patterning in the falls. Excellent plants produce stalks with 4 branches and lower rebranching. The only American hybridizer even close to doing similar work might be Paul Black from Oregon.

00-181A (Merle Roberts): Impressive at both the St. Louis (2005) and Portland (2006) Conventions, it is a white in the Emma Cook pattern, with the banding in the falls in blue. Whereas the Kerr “Emma Cooks” (e.g., Queen’s Circle, Sapphire Halo, etc.) are crystalline, cold whites, this seedling is fitted with a leathery texture in a warm white. Either way, both types are attractive in their own right.

V-350 (Terry Varner, MTB): Was one of two very impressive blues seen at both the Fresno and St. Louis conventions. The other, ‘Lady Tara’ (Varner 2006, Seedling R-303) is a darker blue, V-350 is suave medium blue. As with ‘Lady Tara’, the branching and bud count are spectacular - 4 branches, 10-12 buds. It is distinctive enough from ‘Lady Tara’ to be worthy of introduction also.

Z01-33-1 (Mike Zuraw, MTB): Very impressive, from a new hybridizer from New England. A clean smooth lilac-orchid amoena with excellent form and clarity of color. It carried 3 branches, double-socketed, with stalks the correct thickness and height for the class. Several excellent MTB seedlings were observed these past 2 seasons; this one is as fine as any of the others.

TALL BEARDED BY COLOR GROUP

REDS TO MAROONS:

CANNED HEAT (Lauer 2003) is a full oxblood to crimson red with deep bronze beards, smooth at the hafts. It has thick leathery substance and proved itself to be sun-resistant in both Fresno and here in central Oklahoma. Flower size is considerably larger than its great pod parent, ‘Warrior King’ (Schreiner). Branching has been somewhat inconsistent but can produce a nice stalk. Superb plant habits, with healthy deep green foliage. **CODE RED** (Aitken 2003) is a unique shade of red, similar to that of the classic ‘Lady Friend’ (Ghio) but a more lively color. The hybridizer describes it as a “cranberry red”. For me, that doesn’t accurately describe it - but when I try to come up with a more descriptive color, I can’t do any better! Thick bright beards contribute to its excellent carrying power in the garden. Average growth. Branching is good, with 3 branches plus spur. Its unique color draws you back to it for just one more look.

POWER WOMAN (Mogensen R. 2003) was one of my favorite seedlings in Portland. From ‘Swingtown’ (Schreiner) by ‘Romantic Evening’ (Ghio), it is a large-flowered, rich glowing metallic plum claret wine with near-black beards. It had heavy substance and an electric texture which shot volts of its color clear across the garden. The hybridizer died just this past season; I hope arrangements have been made to release this scintillating new iris.

TRIAL BY FIRE (Ghio 2006) is the latest offering in a line of innovative breeding by Joe for the almighty elusive red, and this is the finest to date. A sensuous deep cauldron red is accentuated with deep ruffling and yes, finally, true lace. The color saturation is consistent, evenly applied, with the standards just a suggestion of a tone deeper than the falls. Discreet deep gold-brown beards do not disturb the presentation. Growth habits are notably strong. Stalks on a first-year planting appeared somewhat slender, but held up well in adverse weather conditions with 3 well-spaced branches.

WEEKEND UPDATE (Black 2005) is far more spectacular than what Paul was able to capture in the catalog shot for this. It is a deep fuchsia-cranberry self, rich like ‘Cranberry Ice’ (Schreiner), deeper than ‘Nora Eileen’ (Richardson). Show stalks are tall, with 3 modified candelabra branches. Gorgeous deep green foliage with rampant increase.

CLASSICS: **BURGUNDY CHERRY** (Ghio 1978), **HELL’S FIRE** (S. Roberts 1976), **MR. MAJESTIC** (Schmelzer 1976).

APRICOTS TO ORANGES:

ABBONDANZA (Ghio 2003) is an artful medley of colors, with varying shades of mango apricot, gold, yellow, and flushes of pink. The overall effect is apricot. Well formed blossoms are heavily ruffled. It is extremely tall, perhaps too tall for Oklahoma, with 4 branches and as many of 10-12 buds per stalk. Once it opens 3 and 4 at once, in windy Oklahoma, you may have to stake it. To quote a friend on a bus trip at this year's convention, "That's why God invented bamboo stakes!".....

FINE PORCELAIN (Black 2005) is one of Paul's best newer TB introductions, and is remindful in form and style of a previous introduction of his, 'Porcelain Ballet'. It is even prettier than the catalog shot, with softer tones of peach-apricot blended into warm ivory. Waxy substance enhances the heavy ruffling throughout the flower. Stalks are (fortunately) somewhat taller than 'Porcelain Ballet', with 3 branches beautifully spaced. It had an impressive bloom/increase ratio in the clump. **TROPICAL PASSION** (T. Johnson 2005) is actually a blending of colors, with rich coral pink heavily overlaid with varying shades of apricot, giving a mango effect from a distance. Much prettier than the catalog picture, with more vivacious coloring. Smaller flowers are nicely rounded and ruffled, with excellent substance. Quite tall stalks have 4 branches plus lower rebranching. Vigorous plant habits with beautiful, healthy foliage.

CLASSICS: MISSION SUNSET (Reckamp 1963), **PALISADES** (Plough 1964), **WENATCHEE VALLEY** (Noyd 1965).

PINKS:

AT FIRST BLUSH (Kerr 2006) is a pretty thing in the softest blush pink imaginable, just a hint deeper in the shoulders. Soft pink beards, nearly white at the ends. Beautiful rounded form with gentle ruffling. It produced decent stalks with 3 branches. Growth appeared to be average, but acceptable. **BRIDAL PARTY** (T. Johnson 2006) is a gorgeous new cameo pink infused with softest apricot in the midribs of the standards, slightly deeper apricot in the falls' shoulders and beards. It is adorned with gentle ruffling and lace. Magnificent stalks carry 3 wide formal candelabra branches. Flowers held up admirably after a significant rain the night before. **SUGAR COATED** (Schreiner 2006) was a pleasant surprise, a soft pastel pink with undertoning of blue in the cool weather of the Pacific Northwest. Beards are a delicate blue mixed with pink, subtle rather than provocative. It possesses the form and coloration which reminded me of one of my favorites in this style of pink, 'Shirley M' (Kegerise) with an unusual glazed or pearlescent texture. It has superb growth habits and outstanding stalks, carrying 3 well-spaced modified candelabra branches.

CANDY CLOUDS (Blyth 2002) was a pleasant surprise, a sleeper for me. It is a lilting deep, yummy, coral pink with fascinating purple markings in the shoulders. Stalks are tall and willowy, carrying smaller flowers in a similar fashion as some of Paul Black's releases. The falls, nearly horizontal, are pleasantly ruffled and waved. Anxious to get this one to breed with. **IN LOVE AGAIN** (Keppel 2004) is one of several nice recent pink introductions from Keith. This one is a rich orient pink, more luxurious with deeper ruffling than the similar 'Happenstance' (Keppel), but with the same dependable plant habits. It opens properly without twisting, as some similar pinks do. A good show iris too - I won Best of Show with it in Oklahoma City in 2006 with three open.

CLASSICS: FIFTY GRAND (Gaskill 1970), **FLAMINGO FLING** (Hamblen 1972), **MLLE. MODISTE** (Benson 1972), **PRETTY PLEASE** (Tompkins 1972).

LAVENDERS TO VIOLETS:

The impact 'Fogbound' (Keppel) is already having as a breeder is profound, with high-quality releases coming from several hybridizers. **BELGIAN PRINCESS** (T. Johnson 2005) is a "dark top", with medium orchid-blue standards, flushed deeper in the midribs. The falls are lighter, with hints of pink and lilac in a glistening, diamond-dusted effect, complemented with strong coral-shrimp beards. The form is tight and sophisticated, with heavy ruffling and a touch of lace on medium-sized flowers. Plant habits are without fault, and the stalks possess the branching you can expect from the work of Thomas Johnson, in this case 3 well-spaced branches in modified candelabra style. Very similar, and also from

'Fogbound' breeding, is DANCE RECITAL (Keppel 2005). The contrast between standards and falls is not quite so intense; the flower is somewhat larger and a bit more airy in nature, more from the blue side rather than orchid. It too has contrasting red beards. Both are most worthy and high-quality.

CAMEO APPEARANCE (Black 2006) has a totally different look from the others and is exceptionally tall. Cleverly named, it is an unusual cameo pink overlaid in greyed-pewter, giving a mysterious pearlescent look to the flower. Standards are flushed blue-violet at the base of the midribs, creating the appearance of a dark top type. Muted pink beards add to the enchanting color array. The entire flower is encased in light ruffling and embroidered lace, a masterpiece in understated elegance.

IMAGERY (T. Johnson 2006) is a self in lavender, with a lighter area in the upper part of the falls around the tangerine beards tipped blue. It carries outstanding stalks, taller than others of this type, with 3 branches. But its most impressive feature was the positioning of the flowers within the clump, floriferous with superb placement. Foliage is unusual, swirling, but healthy in appearance.

With an impeccable pedigree (Keppel introductions 'Vienna Waltz' by 'Fogbound'), PARIS FASHION (Keppel 2003) is a palatable pale pink to lilac, deeply ruffled and laced, and complemented with a slightly deeper pink beard. Opens well without twisting, in spite of the intense dose of luxury on the edges. Outstanding branching, with superior plant habits. VENETIAN GLASS (Keppel 2003) is simply elegant beyond belief, a crystalline masterpiece in palest orchid, infused with a hint of pale pink, and then transforming even lighter in the heart of the falls. Heavy deep ruffling in wax and a touch of lace complete the picture. Branching is flawless, winning Best of Show (with 3 open) at an intensely competitive Tulsa show which I was privileged to participate in judging a couple of years ago.

MYTHOLOGY (T. Johnson 2003) is one of my favorite TB's from this newer hybridizer from the Pacific Northwest. Well named, it is a gloriously strange, exotic concoction of moody slate blue and violet, transforming to a lighter grey at the very edge of the falls, in the style of 'Walking on Air' (Black). The beard is a jolt of deepest indigo (truly approaching soot black). In the tradition of its overlooked pod parent, 'Traitor' (Jameson), it is smaller-flowered and simple (so as not to distract from the color presentation) on moderately short stalks. Purple based foliage adds to the magic of the clump.

CLASSICS: ALLURA (O. Brown 1970), GATEWAY (Spence 1972), ORCHID WINGS (Hamblen 1970), SAN LEANDRO (Gaulter 1968).

DEEP VIOLETS TO BLACKS:

DARK HOLLOW (Davis 2005) is a wonderful, unique presentation of color, a deeper version of 'Honky Tonk Blues' (Schreiner) with darker, moody undertones. The somber color transforms to a hazy halo in silvery-grey on both the standards and falls. It has nice form with light to moderate ruffling interacting with the halo. With good distribution and effective marketing practices, it's hard to image a Schreiner release ever be "overlooked", but with FULL IMPACT (Schreiner 2001), this is exactly what we have. It is remindful of a luminata in pattern, a dark violet self with a prominent white zonal pattern around white beards. There is also a flush of white in the midribs of the standards. Tall stately stalks show off the dramatic flowers.

PARKRIDGE CHALLENGER (Parkhill 1999) is a tough, sturdy deepest violet, a child of the famous Dykes Medalist, 'Dusky Challenger'. It inherited all the good qualities of DC, and has even better form. Had I discovered it earlier, it probably would have made the Sun Belt Award list, because it is a vision of health, a report card with highest marks in all categories. This hybridizer from Knoxville, TN should be proud to see his creation perform so well in so many parts of the country. TAHITIAN PEARL (Larry Johnson 2003) is one of my favorite newer blacks, a lustrous study in patent leather black with remarkable resistance to adverse weather conditions. It is very smoothly staged, with waved petals versus the heavy ruffling we are seeing in many of its contemporaries. Typical of this talented hybridizer from the Pacific Northwest, its plant habits are flawless. WARRANTY (Thomas Johnson 2004), on first-year bloom, looked promising, with deepest violet standards approaching black, and then jet black falls and self beards. The falls have a velvet pile which adds to the richness of color. Shorter than described in its registration, I look forward to seeing this with better height and improved branching in an established clump.

SWEET MEI (Fan 2000) is one that I have somehow missed over the years. It is totally unique, a strange and wonderful metallic violet with a gunmetal glow and brown-mahogany shoulders (not haft marks) and gold beards. But then, there is an overlay of a mink finish to the entire flower, making it hauntingly beautiful. Wide rounded form with touching hafts and tight ruffling. **THAT CERTAIN SOMETHING** (Crump, Registered 2001, to my knowledge has not been introduced to date) is a gorgeous, mysterious smoked violet-grape with smooth chocolate hafts and a hint of a brown halo on the falls. Deep bronze beards. It is ruffled, with heaviest substance. Excellent plant habits, with superior stalks with 4 branches plus rebranching. Very original, and hauntingly beautiful.

CLASSICS: **BLACK BART** (Schmelzer 1969), **DRESS SUIT** (Spence 1968), **NIGHTSIDE** (Schreiner 1967), **ROYAL HERITAGE** (Luihn 1968).

BLUES:

ABIQUA FALLS (Schreiner 2003) extends a tradition of highest quality blues going back 50 years by the Schreiner family. A tall, heavily ruffled and fluted sapphire blue self, it has quite large flowers, but stalks appear to have the strength to sustain themselves in an upright position (without bamboo), a trait which cannot be shared with some of its predecessors over the years. It displays undertones of azure blue which add freshness to the flower. **LACED CREDENTIALS** (T. Johnson 2007) is a cleverly-named upcoming introduction that is far more attractive than the 2006 catalog could capture. A heavily laced 'Charisma' type in laced blue, contrasted with bright old gold (not yellow) beards. The lace has an expensive look and is evenly applied. It has superb modified candelabra branching, well spaced with good timing of the buds. Fantastic plant habits.

NOBLE STATURE (Hilton 2006) is an impressive first offering from a new East Coast hybridizer (New Jersey), seen at the St. Louis Convention under Seedling #HIL00-1-1. This diamond-dusted, palest blue could be categorized as a white with cold infusions of blue. Stalks are tall and stately, the flowers large, rounded, and pleasantly ruffled. It inherited the best features from both of its Dykes Medalist parents, 'Song of Norway' (Luihn) and 'Silverado' (Schreiner), with husky plants producing impressive clumps. Good red-bearded blues are, unfortunately, still a woefully limited class, but a nice advancement comes from France: **PRINCESS CAROLINE DE MONACO** (Cayeux 1998) is a clear light blue with contrasting fuzzy tangerine-orange to red beards. A child of one of the best red-bearded blues of all time, 'Skyblaze' (Keppel), it is a softer blue, gently lightening towards the center of the falls, which further accentuates the beards.

CLASSICS: **DISCOVERY BAY** (O. Brown 1970), **ELOQUENT** (Ghio 1970), **MARTINIQUE** (B. Jones 1970), **TIPPERARY** (Hamblen 1972).

WHITES to CREAMS:

A trio of pure laced whites receive positive marks. This is a difficult area to produce acceptable garden subjects, in that they are notorious for being finicky and temperamental. All three listed here are the exception, and are breakthroughs in the development of laced whites. **ALABASTER PRINCESS** (Landgraf 2005) is a German creation, a laced alabaster white with wonderful form, the laced flowers opening well in the cold, damp weather conditions. Stalks have 3 branches in formal candelabra style. Excellent plant habits, forming an elegant clump effect. A pleasant surprise - hope it is made available in the United States. **DIAMOND BRACELET** (Schreiner 2004) is a lovely thing, glistening, sparkling purest cold white, quite heavily laced. In spite of the generous dosage of lace, the flowers have no trouble opening and do not tear. Beard is also primarily white, tipped yellow only deep in the heart of the flower. The form is broad. Big plants produce an average amount of increase (better than many laced whites). My only reservation is in the branching. The clump viewed in Portland had strange, inconsistent branching, with weak stalks which required staking after a moderate rain. **ROYAL BIRTH** (Royal 2003) is a large white flower with a presence of yellow in the shoulders. From one of my all-time favorite whites, the laced 'Ann Blocher' (Blocher), it carries a modest amount of ruffling and lace with nicely shaped flowers of good substance. It has a very clean look to it. A clever name for the first offering from this Kentucky hybridizer.

The quest for good red-bearded whites has been nearly as painful. Again, to find one with healthy plant habits and vigorous increase is unfortunately still the exception to the rule, in most cases. **CASTING CROWNS** (Van Liere 2006) is one of the first introductions from an enthusiastic new hybridizer from Denver. It was nearly finished blooming in Cooley's, but the remaining individual flowers still looked good and had withstood the adverse elements respectably. Remindful of 'Old Flame' (Ghio), it is a chalky white with a hairline halo in gold, contrasted with medium apricot-red beards. It showed evidence that it had grown and bloomed well, most stalks producing 3 branches. **KALI JULIA** (Innerst 2000) was a pleasant surprise, a welcome addition to red-bearded whites. It is a chaste, purest white, diamond-dusted and glistening, with full deep red beards. It has a nice shape and notably excellent plant habits.

BLANKET OF SNOW (T. Johnson 2006) is a tall, imposing pure white with nice contrasting yellow beards and a hint of yellow in the shoulders. It has broad, rounded form. But what sets this white apart from the rest are its magnificent plant habits and killer stalks - 4 to 5 branches, sometimes with lower rebranching, opening multiple blossom for the iris show aficionado and plenty of backup beds to sustain its season of bloom for the stalks in the clump you left in the garden. **BRIDAL ICING** (T. Johnson 2003) could easily place in the L'Elegante category. From the choice 'Goldkist' (Black), its color staging is similar, a pure white with golden shoulders and beards. Stalks are magnificent, another 'Goldkist' quality which it generously passes on to its children. The "plus" in this variety is the finely crafted application of tight lace, diamond-dusted texture, and a celebratory narrow gilt edge in gold. **COUNTRY DAWN** (T. Johnson 2003) is a sister to 'Bridal Icing', but it presents itself in a totally different venue. Thick tall stalks with 4 branches display large flowers in a rich cream with warm yellow infusions in a leathery look rather than diamond dusting, a generous helping of ruffling instead of lace. As to be expected from this talented young hybridizer, the plant habits are impeccable. **PORCELAIN ANGEL** (Schreiner 2003) has thick, leathery alabaster petals, wide and sustained, the branching quite fine, and very acceptable, healthy plant habits. There is a hint of blue in the standards, giving the flower an icy effect. Branching was inconsistent from one garden to the next (including in the home garden), but at the Ludi Garden it sported tall strong stalks with 3 branches.

CLASSICS: **AFTER ALL** (Hall 1967), **CHERRY JUBILEE** (Wood 1969), **MADEIRA BELLE** (Quadros 1970).

YELLOWS:

RITZY (Hager-Cooley's 2004) is a major advancement in laced yellows, a style notoriously difficult for opening properly without tearing, and for retaining color in hot, dry conditions. Similar, but in a lighter (medium) yellow, and cleaner and prettier than 'Amarillo Frills' (Hager-Cooley's), 'Ritzy' retains its form far more successfully, especially in adverse weather conditions, and has taller, stronger stalks with 3 branches in modified candelabra. **COUNTY CORK** (Schreiner 2007) is a most innovative color, a burnished golden yellow with a definite influence of willow green in the heart of the flower. The overall effect, especially from a distance, is about as green as any TB I've seen. I hope it retains this intriguing color in our warmer, drier climate. Flower size is proper, the form wide and rounded but not exaggerated. It has 3 branches, a bit close to the stalk, often opening 2 to 3 at once. Excellent growth habits. Looking forward to seeing this again in future years.

LAST HALO (Niswonger 2002) refers to its bloom season, not the last offering of a halo-type iris from Dave. It is a brilliant burst of full yellow, deeper and thicker in the halo from its parent, the great 'Halo in Yellow' (Niswonger). The prominent white in the falls draws the eye to the richness of the yellow coloration. True to form, it was just beginning its bloom cycle when viewed at the St. Louis convention. It also proved itself in colder, wet weather, still glowing at the Portland convention. Similar in color pattern is **PURE AND SIMPLE** (Maryott-Ghio 2004), with the yellow one shade lighter and the contrast between the yellow and white not so bold. It has excellent form and pleasing ruffling, typical of the work this talented hybridizer was known for. Substance is thick and leathery, permitting the flower to retain its color in adverse conditions.

CLASSICS: **BLUSHING LEMON** (Boushay 1973), **LUSCIOUS LEMON** (Innes 1970), **MY DESIRE** (Sexton 1972), **TROPIC SUN** (Hamblen 1970).

PLICATAS:

BLACKBERRY TEASE (T. Johnson 2004) is an inebriating new plicata approaching black. Standards are almost 100% saturated in rich blackberry-violet, the falls a clear white, then artistically edged and sanded in the standards' color, the impromptu plicating bleeding towards the heart of the falls. It has notably better branching and bud count than many other black plicata attempts. **GALLERY** (T. Johnson 2005) is a joyful new plic, with palest pink base standards almost completely saturated in warm wine-mulberry. White falls have a precise ½" band in mulberry to cranberry stitching, pert and clean. Even in cold weather, it maintains excellent delineation of color between the base color and the plicata stitching. Stalks are tall, rather slender, and graceful, with magnificent branching up and down the stalk, giving every flower optimal exposure. Plants are a vision of health.

CELESTIAL EXPLOSION (Tasco 2004) is a sophisticated improvement over its celebrity parent, Dykes Medalist 'Splashacata' (Tasco). Standards are almost solidly drenched in violet; white falls are extremely heavily peppered in a deeper violet, concentrating with a suggestion of an even deeper band on the rims. The form is more "polished", the peppering deeper, and has notably better substance. It retained the healthy plant habits of 'Splashacata', so we have a complete package. **JERILEE** (Nebeker 2004) has been on my "Watch For" list ever since introduction, and I finally got to see it in the Ludi Garden during the Portland Convention. It is a white ground plicata with bright plum-purple stitching. What sets it apart from the pack is its ruffling and heavy lace, a rare feature in this color of plicata. It had decent growth and stalks with 2 branches plus spur. **CHIEF JOHN JOLLY** (Parkhill 2003) is a welcomed advancement in bicolor-plicatas, much in the style of 'Tennessee Woman' and others from Innerst. Standards are a buff-tan with just a few markings in violet. Falls are warm white with a distinct edge in violet and then spoke pattern radiating from the beard, remindful of 'Spinning Wheel' (Nearpass). The colors are cleaner and appears to have significantly better substance than most in this category.

MUSICIAN (Keppel 2004) is a cleverly-named bicolor plicata which looks like a "grown-up" rendition of Keith's SDB, 'Music'. Standards are solidly colored in a rich pink. Light peach falls are precisely banded in orchid and raspberry stitching. Colors are clean, with a crisp pattern. It was a bit short, but positioned its branching to where all flowers were able to open properly. **TELEPATHY** (Keppel 2003) is a nice advancement in luminatas, done in a blended lavender-orchid and blue, white in the heart of the flower. I find many of our modern luminatas to lack clarity of color and carrying power in the garden. This variety corrects this fault, and is very refreshing to the eye.

CLASSICS: **HEY LOOKIE** (W. Brown 1970), **KISS** (Knocke 1971), **MAD MAID** (Gibson 1966), **MOD MODE** (Gibson 1970).

AMOENAS, REVERSE AMOENAS, BITONES, and NEGLECTAS:

BRUSSELS (T. Johnson 2004) is a lovely affair, with medium blue standards (not as deep in Oklahoma as it shows in the catalog picture) atop soft pale blue falls which have an intriguing chalky appearance. There are several fine reverse blue amoenas on the market today, but this one is different. And rather than deep ruffling, the flowers are gently waved, a nice change of pace. The four stars, though, go to its branching - show stalks supreme, often opening 3 to 4 simultaneously, a show fanatic's dream iris!

CHATEAU D'AUVERS (Cayeux 2004) is a significant advancement in the quest for orange amoenas. It is a choice apricot amoena, with copper infusions in the falls which richen the effect. Contrast between standards and falls is good. It has notably better plant habits than many of its predecessors in this color pattern. It is also taller than the norm in this pattern, with 3 branches. **COFFEE WHISPERS** (Blyth 1999) is a serious attempt at a coffee brown amoena, with warm white standards and light brownish falls with deep coffee texture veins radiating from the shoulders. Strong stalks carry 3 branches. Some may not care for the coloration - I find it fascinating. **KIWI CHEESECAKE** (Niswonger 1998) is a nice attempt at that ever-elusive green amoena, remindful of 'Pickledilly' (Painter) but perhaps more elegant in its make-up. Subtle orange beards help bring out the green tones. As might be expected, this color combo is highly susceptible to variations in climate, and needs the sun to smoothen out the colors.

SUGAR CREEK BLUES (B. Nicodemus 2005) is a clearly colored blue amoena in the tradition of 'Dover Beach' (Nearpass), with pure white standards and smooth light to medium blue falls. The flower size is moderate in size, the nearly horizontal falls are sufficiently wide, simple, with rolling waves, and are displayed on well-branched stalks, beautifully spaced and timed within the clump. The overall effect is that of freshness, elegant in its simplicity, and impeccable plant habits. **PEACETIME** (L. Blyth 2001) was a pleasant surprise - don't know how I missed this one in previous years. From pink breeding, it is a delicately-colored silvery lavender bitone (nearly an amoena, as the standards are very pale), with the falls one or two shades deeper than the standards. Although the flowers are huge, they possess a translucent texture, with deeper texture veining in the falls, which gives a feeling of calm repose. Strong stalks carry four branches. **SENIOR MOMENT** (Richardson 2006), first seen in St. Louis as Seedling #94-10-1, is a huge orchid amoena with soft red beards, held grandly on tall, strong stalks with superior branching. Plant habits were also particularly impressive.

Really high-quality **neglectas** are still, unfortunately, all too rare, but a couple were exceptional at the Portland Convention and in Oklahoma. **EVENING DRAMA** (Black 2004) is one of the better offspring of 'Romantic Evening' (Ghio), with light violet standards contrasted by violet-black falls with a velvet finish and satin sheen. Beards are somber burnt orange. Branching has been a bit inconsistent, but does often produce acceptable stalks. A very dignified look, well named. **FABULOUS ONE** (R. Nicodemus 2006), the first introduction from the husband of Missouri hybridizer, Barbara Nicodemus, made its debut at the Portland Convention. Even though the convention booklet (again) wasn't updated properly, the garden tags did get updated and people figured it out, rewarding it with first runnerup to the Out-of-Region Cup! A luxurious, sensuous deep, deep neglecta, with medium to deep blue-violet standards and inky black velvet falls. It reminded me of a neglecta from Oklahoma, made famous (winning the President's Cup) at the 1980 Tulsa Convention, 'Twist of Fate' (Cleo Palmer), but with larger flowers and wider, more modern form. Somewhat shorter, rather clubby stalks carried 3 branches a bit close to the stalks but we had the proof in the clump that all the flowers could open properly. Average increase with beautiful purple-based foliage. **ROYAL TOGS** (L. Miller 2006) was my "pick of the litter" (Seedling #11503A) in a row of high-quality reselecs being considered for introduction by Lynda, seen in May 2005 when I was guest speaker and judges training clinician for the Region 6 Spring Convention in Indianapolis. From the great 'Wild Wings' (Keppel), it has orchid standards, with undertoning in pink and a flush of violet-purple in the base of the midribs. Falls are a plush deep purple with an overlay of black velvet, contributing to the dramatic contrast of colors between the standards and falls. A fuzzy burnt orange beard seals the deal. Heavily ruffled, with nearly horizontal falls.

CLASSICS: **BREAKING DAWN** (Schreiner 1971), **RAIN COUNTRY** (Plough 1979), **VERNAL FALLS** (Roe 1971).

BICOLORS AND VARIEGATAS:

There was a long dry spell in bicolors of yellow and lavender in the style of 'Edith Wolford' (Hager) or 'Lilac Champagne' (Hamblen), but now there are several of merit on the market, with varying degrees of depth of color and style. **BRIGHT NEW DAY** (F. Rogers 2003) is an attractive medley of colors in yellow, violet-blue, and white -- a prettier, more refined 'Seakist' (Schreiner). The standards are white, but flushed in the midribs and at the base in yellow. The falls are violet-blue with a prominent white patch in the heart amidst bright yellow beards. **CARTER SPRING** (Carter 2006) is a fresh bicolor in yellow and lavender from one of the youngest hybridizers in the country, Ryan Carter from Virginia (introduced via Winterberry Gardens, Don and Ginny Spoon, Cross Junction, VA). The yellow standards have a flush of violet up the midribs. The falls have varying degrees of lavender, with the deepest tones in the heart of the falls like 'Disco Eclipse' (T. Johnson), edged in a soft greyed-tan. It has decent stalks and good plant habits.

GYPSY ANGEL (Baumunk N/I) was seen in two convention gardens in Portland, and was impressive in both. It is a modern version of the great classic, 'Lilac Champagne', with clear soft yellow standards and hazy, translucent lavender falls, with a hint of a deeper halo on the falls. Very tall, with outstanding branching (4 branches), and superb plants habits with vigorous increase. **NEW AGE**

DAWNING (Richardson 2006), seen in St. Louis under Seedling #92-22-2, is a softer, gentler version of its mother, 'Edith Wolford' (Hager), with creamy soft yellow standards and cream falls overlaid in palest blue, gradually increasing in intensity as you approach the edge of the falls (almost to the point of calling it an Emma Cook pattern). Beards are harmonious in soft yellow. It has a waxy look to the texture with the husky plants and strong well-branched stalks that are a trademark of this discriminating hybridizer. Impressive enough to earn one of my HC votes in 2005 after the St. Louis Convention. **PIXIE DUST** (Schreiner 2001) is the most pastel of the group, and unfortunately didn't receive the distribution - or the attention - of most Schreiner releases. Clear pastel yellow standards gently yield to translucent lilac-orchid falls, all body parts diamond-dusted (well-named!). It is a simple, tasteful shape, with gentle ruffling.

FRENCH CAN-CAN (Cayeux 2002) is the most colorful of the modern Touche (Hamblen) types, with rich pink standards contrasted with clean orchid-lavender falls and brilliant shrimp-coral beards. Form isn't as "finished" as some of its contemporaries, but nonetheless acceptable. Fantastic stalks are taller than registered, carrying 4 branches with consistency. **ITALIAN VELVET** (Keppel 2006), in both Oklahoma and in the hybridizer's home garden in Oregon, was the most impressive of many fine 'Romantic Evening' (Ghio) types on the market now. Ironically, it is not from 'Romantic Evening', but rather from Blyth bloodlines. Deep pansy violet standards harmonize with plush, seductive black-burgundy falls, totally devoid of any suggestion of a haft mark. The velvet finish dared the rain to waterspot the flower - the water just beaded off! Stalks carry 3 well spaced candelabra branches.

Several variegata types are making a name for themselves. **MAN ABOUT TOWN** (Blyth 1998) is a macho number with buff-tan standards and earth-brown blended falls. The falls are also flushed with rose. Never fear, it retains its colors well, even in hot dry weather conditions. **DECADENCE** (Blyth 2004) is well-named, with a devilishly inviting combination of golden-apricot standards atop tapestry falls with varying degrees of depth in burgundy, wine, bronze, and mahogany, with edging the color of the standards, encapsulated in deep ruffles and lace. It held its own in cold, wet weather in both Oklahoma and Portland, retaining richness of color and with sufficient substance to keep itself together, when others in similar color combinations fell apart.

INDULGENCE (Blyth 2004) is a more colorful, bolder version of its parent, 'Mastery' (Blyth), with more golden-yellow standards instead of bronze, and falls in burgundy-mahogany instead of chestnut brown. A distinctive buff edge on the falls, along with a small light yellow sunburst pattern at the beards, add character to the flower. It also had a more sophisticated, rounded look to the form than 'Mastery'. **EXPLICIT** (Ghio 2005) is similar in color pattern, with clean golden-yellow standards against velvet wine-black falls with a more prominent gold sunburst zonal pattern exploding at the golden beards. Decent stalks carried 2 branches on first-year bloom.

PRAGUE (T. Johnson 2005) continues the color combination of its parent, 'Naples' (T. Johnson), with deeper, more intense saturation of color. Standards are a medium peach, infused a reddish-plum in the midribs. Falls are a dark burgundy with velvet pile, with just a hint of a mauve rim on the edges. Burnt orange beards add to the pizzazz. Branching will have to be evaluated another year, in that in nearly every garden in Portland this spring, the stalks were somewhat aborted. If it has inherited the branching of 'Naples', this won't be a problem. **UPPER HAND** (Ghio 2005) was seen on first-year bloom in Will Rogers Garden in Oklahoma City, one of the 2007 tour gardens. A departure from the type of work Joe has been releasing in recent years, this is a rich variegata, remindful of the overlooked 'Mariachi Music' (Maryott). It is late-blooming, with rich golden-bronze standards, flushed pansy in the midribs. Falls are a vibrant magenta-violet, deepening to mahogany tones in the shoulders.

CLASSICS: CAIRO LYRIC (Peterson 1973), **GYPSY PRINCE** (Hamblen 1974), **LOVE IS** (Varner 1973), **VISIONARY** (Ghio 1973).

EMMA COOK PATTERN:

CLOUDBASE (M. Roberts 2006) was seen in St. Louis under number, and received one of my HC votes that year as Seedling #01-141A. Similar to some of the Kerr things (see below), but from a totally different pedigree. Standards and falls are purest white, the billowing falls with a wide border in sky to medium blue. Coming from this very self-critical hybridizer from eastern Washington, you can expect it to have quality plant habits and strong stalks with well-placed branches - prerequisites to bearing the Merle Roberts name. **FRUITSATION** (Jedlicka 2006) is the first introduction from the Jedlicka family from western Nebraska, and is very impressive. It has soft peach-pink standards, style arms, and falls, with a lavender-orchid wash at the edges of the falls. The falls also have a patch of white immediately surrounding bright shrimp beards. It has thin, graceful stalks like its parent, 'Conjuration' (Byers), but not as tall and willowy. The texture is leathery rather than the diamond-dusted finish traditionally seen in 'Conjuration' kids. **EDGE OF EDEN** (Ed Roberts 2003) is literally directly from 'Emma Cook' (Cook), crossed with the great pink and lavender bitone, 'Planned Treasure' (Burger). It is very simply presented with soft pink standards and falls, gently transforming to a ¼"

edge of bluish lavender, with tangerine beards. That this variety hasn't received more attention totally baffles the brain.

A trio from France are most worthy, each highly distinctive and most tasteful. **ELEGANT** (Cayeux 2005) is a pure white with the glistening of a quartz crystal, the falls banded in ¼" soft lavender-blue. A subtle shrimp-red beard adds a flicker of color. Standards are open but hold well, the falls horizontal, rounded, and adorned in rippling ruffles. Stalks held 3 branches in modified candelabra style, with the only fault to be found was that the bottom branch occasionally came up a bit too far. **FABULEUX** (Cayeux 2003) is indeed a fabulous creation. Remindful of 'Aurelie' in style (but without the horns), it has cold white standards contrasted by intense indigo blue edging against pure white falls, artfully irregular, as much as an inch deep, appearing to be airbrushed on the inner parts. White beards blend discreetly into the base color. Although the branching tends to be a bit close to the stalk, the flowers still open properly, and it can produce show stalks with 4 well spaced branches. **POESIE** (Cayeux 2003) is a child of Dykes Medalist 'Celebration Song' (Schreiner) which, instead of a bicolor, manifests itself in the Emma Cook pattern. Standards are a light rose-pink. Falls are white with a precise, narrow edge in amethyst rose rather than lavender or orchid. Red beards add to the combo. Clear, elegant coloring. Form is simple with compact, smaller-sized flowers and nearly horizontal falls. The branching is exceptional, a trait inherited from 'Celebration Song'.

RESTLESS HEART (Keppel 2006) is very similar in style and form to 'Parisian Dawn' (Keppel), but displayed in cold crystal chandelier white with the same precise Emma Cook banding in the falls, this time in sparkling blue. White beards, heavily tipped carrot to red, provide the finishing touch. It carries moderate ruffling, as with 'Parisian Dawn', very evenly applied. Plant health and increase are acceptable, producing stalks with respectable branching. On the other hand, **JAZZ BAND** (Keppel 2006) is a colorful, rowdy affair, with orange standards and falls, contrasted with a bold band (anywhere from ½" to a full inch) in close-to-gaudy wine-red. Deep orange beards are bedazzling. Nice stalks, with 3 well-spaced branches. Average to fully acceptable plant habits. Similar, although a bit softer on the eye, and from totally different lines of breeding, is **MARCHING BAND** (Ghio 2006). The base color is light to medium apricot to orange, with a narrower, more precise band on the falls in rich orchid-violet. It is much more vibrant than the Bay Views catalog shot. Stalks are tall and strong, with 3 branches in modified candelabra style.

QUEEN'S CONSORT (Kerr 2004) is a child of its famous parent, 'Queen's Circle' (Kerr), and both were looking fine at the St. Louis Convention ('Queen's Circle' went on to win the Out-of-Region Cup, and 'Queen's Consort' first runnerup!). They do look similar, but the primary difference is in the way the blue edging is displayed - on Queen's Consort, rather than the precision edging of its parent, it "bleeds" the blue coloring nearly an inch towards the heart of the falls. Flip a coin - both are very lovely, artistic, and tasteful. My personal favorite from this group is **SAPPHIRE HALO** (Kerr 2003), a sib to 'Queen's Consort', but with the precise, thin edge of 'Queen's Circle', staged in a deep sapphire blue. The white primary color is chaste and diamond-dusted, making the halo on the falls even more shimmering in its effect.

POTPOURRI:

BLUSHING CLOUDS (Blyth 2001) is a fascinating blend of gold gilt, pastel pink, lilac, and lavender blended into a base color of glistening white, virtually impossible to accurately describe. It has the characteristics of changeable silk, in that the flowers' features will vary with the temperature, weather conditions, even cloud cover (and good luck on the show bench, you show judges). Perhaps the only things not subtle about this beautiful work of art would be the bright tangerine beards and the dizzying rhapsody of deep ruffling. **STOP FLIRTING** (Blyth 2002) is a sly one, equipped with a most unusual blending of greyed taupe, offset with a flash of violet in the falls below burnt orange beards. It has the wide form and elaborate ruffling of its super-parent, 'Louisa's Song' (Blyth). This is one of those mystery irises, hauntingly beautiful, which simply can't be described in text or captured accurately on film (or even digitally). Beware of those which appear shy and innocent - they're the ones that are addictive! **SWEET GEISHA** (Blyth 2004) is another coquette which has understated elegance. An unusual "milky" lavender, possessing an "opaque" texture, similar to the Taylor Louisiana, 'Art World' that has the opposite effect normally expected from the viewer - you are drawn

to the flower. To contrast this veil of mystery is an intricate networking of violet veins, forming a crescent in the upper part of the falls, surrounding white beards tipped lavender. Totally unique - captivating, nothing like it on the market.

DISCO ECLIPSE (T. Johnson 2003) is my favorite TB release from this hybridizer. It is a unique bicolor, with yellow standards and clean orchid-lavender falls. What makes it unique is a deeper violet flash, bleeding in the heart of the falls, remindful of the pattern I. balkana produced for Joe Ghio and a few other hybridizers, 25 years ago. Beards are mustard gold. The falls also have a rim in mustard which pulls the contrasted colors together. Stalks consistently carry 3 branches, and seeing them with 3 open at once is not uncommon. **BOLD EXPRESSION** (Ernst 2003) is the best of several “dark top” types released in recent years by Cooley’s. Rich purple standards overshadow peachy-pink falls with bright orange beards. Two things pull the colors together in harmony and add distinctiveness to the flower: First, the style arms are peach (from the falls) with a hairline edging of purple (from the standards). Second, the falls transform ever so slightly into an edging in a more subdued purple of the standards.

HALO IN NUTMEG (Niswonger ’05) is of the same character as its parent, ‘Halo in Rosewood’, but richer, with more nutmeg/brown to old rose in its makeup. The white falls, banded in nutmeg, also have a flash of light violet just below the beard, which further enlivens the flower. **MISTRESS OF CAMELOT** (Baumunk 2004) is like a richer, prettier, deeper ‘Easter Lace’ (Byers). It has rounded form, decorated with heavy lace all over. Horizontal falls add a lilt to the flower. Thick stalks have superb placement of their branches. Not the style of color, with a blending of orchid, tan, and yellow, to have good carrying power in the garden; yet this one overcomes that problem. **SHADOW WARRIOR** (Kerr 2002) is a gloriously strange concoction of blended blue-violet, heavily edged in straw yellow. The depth of the edge is variable, which enhances the attractiveness of the variety. A very descriptive name, and unforgettable once you have seen a specimen on the show bench under artificial lights.

And then there was **NEANDERTHAL** (Worel 2003), a cleverly-named, huge subject in the strangest coloring of grey-willow green-tan. While you’re at it, add a savage thick purple - near black - beard. Broad with plain edging (c’mon, now, do you really want to see a cave man in ruffles??). Fortunately, it has husky plants and thick strong stalks to hold everything in an upright position. Love it or hate it, it has its own special way of saying “come hither”....

CLASSICS: **COSMOPOLITAN** (Hamblen 1972), **LUCKY NUMBER** (Noyd 1970), **RARE WINE** (Nelson 1970).

COLOR BREAKERS:

This year, we begin this group with two medians: **CLASH** (Black 2003) is one of the first true color-breaker SDB’s to be introduced. A base color varying from pink to orange-peach is tattooed with deep rose, wine, and purple blotches and streaks, more intense in the falls. There’s nothing like it on the market. Subtle it is not - try gaudy. I like gaudy. **JOYFUL JOY** (Spoon 2001), a BB, was perfectly in class in both gardens viewed at the St. Louis convention. I believe it has been overlooked, because it is very distinctive from the other color breaker BB’s on the market today. Its base color is a clean baby ribbon pink, devoid of the mauve undertoning common in this color range of color breakers. The splashing occurs in an artistic random pattern of crisp violet and then some secondary markings in more gentle lavender. A fresh shrimp-pink to orange beard pulls it all together. Superb, graceful branching and healthy plant habits (both especially fine for a color breaker) are inherited from its father, the great ‘Little John’ (Spoon).

Looking for a conversation piece for your garden? **ELIMINATOR** (Hedgecock 2004) fits the bill. Violet-blue base color is erratically streaked and splashed in white. Wait. Look again. By golly, there are flounces rising from the beards! Even the appendages carry the colorbreaking, white on violet. The form is simple but acceptable. It has adequate branching on somewhat thin stalks, and has good plants with good increase. A lot of fun, and most definitely unique! Now, if that’s too “subtle” for you, try **MESSY JESSI** (Burseen 2004), ironically released the same year, down in Texas. This crazy concoction has light orchid standards, heavily splish-splashed in medium and deep violet. Falls are actually a white base, but you can barely see it, because of a riotous array of violet, rose, and ruby red splashes, splotches, and streaks, all topped off with a red beards ending in purple horns, finally transforming

into flounces. I'm serious. You have to see it to believe it. Usually I'm "tolerant" of, and even get a kick out of Tom's zany, off-the-wall names. I just hope the negative connotation suggested in this one doesn't hurt its distribution and presence in the AIS awards system.

I first saw **OASIS PATCHES** (Chadwick-White 2002) in the MOBOT Garden in St. Louis, and it was a pleasant surprise. This vivacious color breaker is arrayed in candy pink, joyfully splashed and streaked in deep ruby red and violet. Orange beards add to the celebration of color. The form is broad and modern, the plant habits impressive and healthy. Stalks are reasonably substantial (not so with many color breakers) with 2 branches plus spur. All things considered, I feel this is the best color breaker currently on the market. **PEEKABOO ZEBU** (Kasperek 2005) is a bright and bold color breaker, with rich cranberry streaks over deep pink lemonade base color. It has the best color saturation and presentation of any from Brad I've seen so far, in this color array. In the Portland Convention garden where evaluated, the stalks were a bit wimpy and the foliage only so-so; nonetheless, impressive enough for another look, and hopefully improvement in these areas.

VARIEGATED FOLIAGE:

So little work is being done in this area that I rarely have the opportunity to include them in Contemporary Views. This year, three varieties are the exception. **VERDICT** (T. Johnson 2004) is a major breakthrough in flower quality. It is a lovely orchid self with wide form, good substance, and carries ruffling and even a touch of lace. Variegating in the foliage is dependable and very artistic. **ZEBRA BLUEZ** (Kasperek 2004) is a medium blue with decently-modern looking form and substance with even a suggestion of ruffling. A moderate increaser, it is very consistent with its creamy streaking of foliage. One stalk in a clump at Cooley's was nearly albino! **ZEBRA JAM** (Kasperek 2003) is a very pleasing shade of old rose with burnt orange beards. Respectable form with some ruffling and lace. Great plant habits, both in California and Missouri, with good increase and consistent variegating of foliage.

SPACE AGERS:

TICKLE THE IVORIES (Blyth 2002) is the only median to be reviewed this year. It is a warm ivory with some infusions in the hafts and standards' midribs with butter yellow. This is contrasted with medium blue beards which end consistently in horns. Quite similar to the SDB, 'Serenity Prayer' (Dyer) but taller and with horns. It is very vigorous, but the only fault I find so far is that it is an extremely heavy bloomer.

AURELIE (Cayeux 2003) has chaste diamond-dusted white standards with a hairline edge in crystalline blue. The falls are in an Emma Cook pattern, with white in the heart of the flower, then heavily saturated with a 2" wash (and then band) of richest glowing violet. Red beards give way to discreet, smaller white horns. The falls have a flare to them which really accentuates the horns. It has the magnificent spacing of its branches from its pollen parent, 'Conjuration' (Byers), but not quite as tall and thicker and stronger. Truly at the opposite end of the spectrum, **TOILE DE JOUY** (Cayeux 2005) is a late-blooming bicolor, with light to medium salmon-pink standards, paler pink falls with a mauve-lavender Emma Cook edging, then distinctive red beards ending in horns. It has smaller flowers with horizontal falls, an attractive, elegant look on the tall, graceful stalks which easily carry up to 4 branches.

BARBARA'S LACE (Sutton 2003) is a clean satin pink with deep coral beards ending in horns. Opens well in spite of heavy lace. Growth habits were suspect, and stalks may be weak with questionable branching. However, the flowers were impressive enough to reserve another look with the hopes that both improve. **JUST FOR KICKS** (Black 2005) is a heavily ruffled reverse blue amoena, with lighter blue falls exhibiting an icy effect. It consistent produces cute fuzzy upturned violet-blue horns. First-year bloom in the 2007 Oklahoma Convention gardens was actually even more impressive than it was in its home garden during the Portland Convention. Nearly horizontal falls intensify the liveliness of the flowers.

PURPLE PEOPLE EATER (Cadd 2003) - oh WOW what a great name for a Space Ager! Darn, wish I had thought of it (and had had a seedling to give the name to!). A rich, deep true purple (not violet), deeper than 'Thriller' (Schreiner), reasonably smooth at the hafts, with distinctive deep purple horns sticking straight up - 1" high! It has simple form, with sufficient width to the falls, just lightly waved, so that the eye can focus on those amazing appendages. Excellent stalks, tall and strong. Impressive plant habits, with deep green foliage and good increase.

DRAGON FLIGHT (B. Nichols 2003) is a vivacious chocolate on yellow plicata, with precise stitching on the F, then topped off with a chocolate to plum horn. The stalks are rather slender (but sturdy) and elegant, producing as many as 4 branches and rebranching when well established, often opening multiple blooms. Produces its appendages very consistently. Space Agers in this color of plicata are rare, and this is the best to date. **COWBOY IN BLACK** (Hedgecock 2005) is a contribution to a color class of Space Agers which is still also very limited in quality. This tall, husky, well-branched black has excellent color saturation and consistent horns. Form is very simple with light waving - no ruffled rhinestone cowboy here! We'll just have none uh that, now!

Two orange Space Agers from the King of Zing, Tom Burseen, were impressive, and unique from each other. **NUCLEAR NANCY** (Burseen 2004) is an unusual soft apricot/mango sherbet with an unusual lime or mint influence in the heart of the flower which adds a glow to the flower and aids the carrying power of the flower. Horizontal falls have self-colored flounces which pop straight up in the air. Nicely formed blossoms, wider and overall the best of the duo. The stalks appeared somewhat thin but held everything up well under adverse weather conditions. **SEEUN IS BELEEVUN** (Burseen 2004) didn't make much of an impression on me with first-year bloom in the Oklahoma Convention gardens, but more than made up for it in Portland. A delectable confection in softest apricot with a satin sheen to its texture. Then, to add spunk, there is an airbrushing of maroon-violet in the shoulders (not haft marks), quite unique. Opens well, even in cold weather, in spite of heavy ruffling and a dash of lace. The horns, self-colored, looked "feathered" in some of the gardens, a very fascinating look. Excellent plant habits, healthy with plenty of increase and a good bloom/increase ratio. Most stalks carried 3 branches.

SEEING STARS (Christopherson 2005) was first seen as a seedling at the Fresno Convention listed as a BB. Fortunately the hybridizer adjusted the classification to a Tall Bearded before introduction, because its flower size is too large for a BB. Nonetheless, the flowers are smaller than the usual TB, displayed on proportionately shorter stalks (28-30"). It appears to me like a Space Age version of 'Daredevil' (Keppel) with cornflower to royal blue stitching on white, then orange-red beards often expanding to flounced appendages. There are few blue plicata Space Agers, and this one is very fine. **SWEET EMOTIONS** (Christopherson 2003) was a stunning clump at MOBOT in St. Louis. A simply-formed, unusual shade of vibrant deep pink, it threw bold horns with consistency throughout the planting. Its most impressive traits, however, were its beautiful lush foliage with terrific increase, and outstanding stalks carrying four branches. I rarely take the time (have the time) to stop in the middle of a convention garden to actually count buds, but I did with this one - 11 to 15 buds on every stalk in the clump, many with 3 open at once!

CLASSICS: **LAVENDER PETTICOAT** (Osborne 1975), **MISS VENUS** (Zurbrigg 1975), **SPACE DRAGON** (Osborne 1974).

MEDIANS BY CLASSIFICATION

MINIATURE TALL BEARDED:

There are so many fine offerings from fellow Region 22 hybridizer, Ken Fisher (Arkansas), they are being reviewed together this year. If I fail to mention it on each one, this hybridizer will ensure that the branching of his releases will be a cut above in quality, the foliage will be graceful and "under control", the flowers distinctive, well formed, and properly sized within the strict dimensions dictated by the class, and worthy of a place in your garden. His self-critical evaluation of his seedlings is remindful of the same high standards of another great MTB hybridizer, the late Mary Louise Dunderman.

AH YES (Fisher 2002) is perhaps the least known of recent releases, but was most impressive. It is a violet bitone, with the falls 2 tones deeper than the standards. Gold beards. It is nearly completely devoid of haft marks, rare for a diploid MTB. Excellent form. It has very good foliage, smaller, tidy, and compact. **OZARK MAID** (Fisher 2003) is a compact medium violet (the falls one tone deeper) with white showing through in the midribs of the standards and the upper half of the horizontal falls. Look closely at the yellow beards - as with some other MTB's, they appear to be seriously thinking about producing horns! Quality stalks with excellent branching and bud count (3 branches, double socketed). **PERFORMER** (Fisher 2003) is a unique shade of blue, leaning towards steel-grey or even gunmetal, with carefully positioned, well disciplined veining radiating out from an understated white base color. Beards are small, yellow, and discreet. Although it is at the lower end of the spectrum for MTB height, it concisely positions 3 branches in perfect placement, double-socketed, thin and graceful. To be so subtle, it leaves quite an impression. In the cooler, damper weather of the Portland convention, it was perhaps even prettier, retaining its high quality attributes. Well named, it is truly a performer - with consistency. But, indeed the star this year at the Portland Convention was **SAILOR'S DREAM** (Fisher 2004), which wound up winning the Franklin Cook Cup for Best Out-of-Region iris at convention - a rare feat at national conventions where Tall Bearded dominate. Perfect clumps in every garden gusted. The color is a vibrant, pure full to deep blue self, absolutely smooth at the hafts. Beards have only a hint of brown in them. It consistently produced perfect stalks, with 3 branches, the bottom one coming up out of the foliage. Foliage was compact, in compliance with the strict requirements of the class, in harmony with its tidy flowers and graceful stalks.

Ken has also done work in tetraploid MTB's, and in my opinion, **SPRING BLUSH** (Fisher 2002) is the best to date. With Hager's 'Abridged Version', 'New Idea', 'New Wave', and 'Puppy Love' in its pedigree, it is a smooth light to medium peach self with orange beards influenced with pink. Beautiful modern form and superb substance testifies to its bloodline. Stalks are thin and graceful, in class, with decent branching and bud count.

JAZZY DECOR (Witt), registered in 2003, but not introduced yet, as of the date of this writing. It is a dazzling array with clean full yellow standards atop a medley of brick-red and brown embellished with white striping in the falls. The colors are pulled together with yellow hafts, golden beards, and a narrow edging on the falls in gold. Tight, quite tiny, cute flowers, with stalks proportionately at the lower end of the MTB spectrum. **PEEBEE AND JAY** (Schmieder 2006) is a cleverly-named new MTB from New England in a presentation of colors new to diploid MTB's. The standards are peanut butter brown. The violet-orchid falls (the jelly) have a gold beard. Was seen in the 2005 St. Louis Convention gardens under Seedling Number 98-BP-1.

I have but three words to describe **MYSTIC CRYSTAL** (Markham 2005): Cute, cute, CUTE! A darling, petite crystalline white complemented with full yellow beards. First seen at the Portland Median Convention in 2004, still under number, it took center stage in St. Louis, with fantastic stalks, high bud count, and nice spacing of its 3-4 branches, doing so without crowding or being lost in the foliage. Plants and stalk thickness/height are in excellent proportion with the smaller, dainty flowers. At the same conventions, **LADY TARA** (Varner 2006) was also seen under number (Seedling #R303). It is a rich full blue, approximately the depth of tone as 'Sailor's Dream', but has a different appearance in its form and is more at the upper limits of the class. It carries up to 4 branches, double socketed, on slender, graceful stalks.

RAYOS ADENTRO (Carol Morgan, R. 2004) is a mystery iris to me, from a new hybridizer from Michigan I am unfamiliar with. It was outstanding both in St. Louis and in Portland, with intense dark red standards and falls with an unusual overlay of black. The falls are then punctuated with bold white stripes running up and down the upper half of the falls, radiating out from yellow beards. What makes this unique is a lacquered, waxy texture, the likes of which I don't believe I have ever witnessed before in diploid MTB's. I will certainly be contacting the hybridizer this winter to get more details, including when it is to be scheduled for introduction. **Z Z ZANZIBAR** (Kasperek 2005), registered as a species, is an MTB-type with clean white standards and base color of the falls. Then the falls are mischievously striped up and down in a neat-o deep violet tone (near black). The flowers are tidy and petite with cute form. It is a good grower and produces very nice stalks.

We are still in dire need of quality **tetraploid MTB's**. Slowly but surely, some patient hybridizers are making headway. **EASY** (Craig 2005) was almost finished blooming in the Collier Garden at the Portland Convention, but showed signs of great promise. A simple, clean medium yellow with wonderful branching coming from its l. aphylla bloodlines. Stalks were thin and graceful, in character with the class. **LUCY DOODLE** (Nearpass-Chesapeake and Potomac Iris Society 2003) is a pert variegata, with golden yellow standards, ruby red falls, and a bright golden yellow beard. What's missing in this tet MTB are those annoying haft marks too common with the diploids. The form is contemporary and reasonably wide and rounded, but still retains the characteristics of a quality MTB. Tidy growth habits. It carries its 3 branches a bit close to the stalk, but still acceptable.

CLASSICS: **DAPPLED PONY** (Witt 1981), **FUN AND FANCY** (Guild 1980), **GUMDROPS** (Hager 1982, Tet).

BORDER BEARDED:

CUT ABOVE (Aitken 2005) is my favorite of a group of sibs from a "ka-ching!" (gold mine) cross for Terry, all BB's, and all with superlative quality. Standards are a bronze to chestnut brown. Horizontal falls are white in the heart, then heavily edged in a pleasing mustard-bronze. Thick bold tangerine beards jazz up the scene. It has tight, proper form, with closed standards and horizontal falls which exhibit deeper texture veining, which adds to the sophistication of the flower. **LOVE POWER** (Aitken 2006), a sib, couldn't be more different in its color. It is a clear, cool light orchid self with deeper texture veins and a coral-red beard. Other than the color, it carries the same fine qualities as 'Cut Above', including wonderful show stalks with excellent spacing and plenty of buds.

KEEPER (Craig 2003) was a pleasant surprise, a plicata similar to another high-quality BB from the Craigs, 'Spy', but in a softer, pretty cornflower blue with precise, heavy ruffling. Nice form, standards open but held well. Foliage is in proper proportion, shorter and graceful, as are the stalk height (with 3 well spaced branches) and flower size. Very vigorous. **MOONTIME** (Craig 2005) is an interesting study in warm white with an unusual green glow in the heart of the flower. It has plentiful ruffling and an attractive chiffon texture. The color was a bit muddy in the cold wet Portland Convention gardens, but I anticipate it "cleaning up" and being ever more attractive in a warmer, drier bloom season.

MORNING TWILIGHT (Keppel 2005) has a very eerie color, a muted and smoked mauve-orchid with an unusual smoked pink beard that adds to the intrigue. Flowers, stalk height, and foliage are in proper proportion for a BB. Simple stalks are adequately branched with 2 branches plus spur. The effect grows on you - you keep coming back to it in the garden. **YOUNG PRINCE** (F. Rogers 2003) is a charming smoky grape luminata with the color of the heart of the flower being a subtle buff-salmon. Stalks are thin, almost too thin, in class, as is the size of the flowers. Plant habits were notably good, considering many luminatas can be finicky. The glow of the luminata gives life to the flower, with good carrying power in the garden, more vivacious than most luminatas.

CLASSICS: **CHILD'S PLAY** (Ghio 1972), **JOHN'S JOY** (Ensminger 1972), **LITTLE SUSIE** (Quadros 1970), **MEXICALI** (Keppel 1970).

INTERMEDIATE BEARDED:

CAYENNE (M. Smith 2006) carries the style of color of the SDB, 'Minidragon' (M. Smith) in the IB class. It has improved form over its SDB parent with standards that behave themselves. The best (and most recent) of a trio of IB's from this line of work. The red hot chili pepper flowers are richly saturated, with stunning contrasting beards in brick red to burnished orange. It produces 3 branches with beautiful spacing. **DRAGONMASTER** (M. Smith 2004) is more the color combination of 'Minidragon', with deep red standards against black-red falls and more of a brighter red beard. It has a velvet pile in the falls which intensifies the color impact. It doesn't have quite the "finished" look as 'Cayenne', but is still most acceptable. From the same color range, **JUMP START** (Keppel 2002) has coloring similar to 'Ruby Slippers' (Keppel), more of a wine bicolor, with deep wine standards and deeper burgundy-wine falls. Branching can be a bit inconsistent, but it can produce some fine bloomstalks.

FLYING CIRCUS (Keppel 2004) is a raucous affair, a bicolor plicata with solid light salmon-peach standards and white-based falls, boldly banded in red-violet and rose stitching. It is going to be a great show iris, with incredible branching, stalks consistently opening multiple blossoms. Backup buds are staggered properly, providing an acceptable length of bloom, like a good IB should. **SPICED PEACHES** (Black 2004) is also a bicolor plicata, but presents itself on a different stage. Bold peach-orange standards are nearly solid in color. Falls are a buff-pink to apricot base, then irregular sanded (spiced) in varying degrees of grape, sienna, and orange. It will give 'Flying Circus' a run for its money on the show bench also, with magnificent branching. **JERSEY CREAM** (Keppel 2002), from luminata breeding, is a warm creamy-white glaciata, with just a few hairs of the beards showing yellow deep in the heart of the flower. A lovely creation. Branching can be a bit inconsistent at times, but I have seen it sport show stalks with 3 branches with multiple blossoms open.

CLASSICS: **LOOKIN' GOOD** (Hager 1979), **MARTY** (W. Jones 1978), **OKLAHOMA BANDIT** (Nichols 1980), **VERSE** (Gatty 1979).

STANDARD DWARF BEARDED:

ATTENDANT (T. Johnson 2004) is a mahogany-red on yellow plicata in the fashion of 'Firestorm' (M. Smith), but with even heavier saturation of the plicata coloring. Form is faultless, very classy but in a masculine way. **CHEEKY KID** (Schmieder 2006) was first seen while still under number (#97-CA-1) at the "Medians Galore in 2004" in Portland. It is a wide, rounded plicata, with form in the tradition of 'Chubby Cheeks' (Black), laid out in a 'Tea Apron' (El Dorado) style -- pure white with an intensification of deep violet appearing solidly in the style arms and gently stitched only in the shoulder area of the falls. Clean and pert, a new plicata with worlds of character. A cutie pie. From Italy, **POLLICINO** (Bianco 2004) is similar, but with more plicata markings surrounding all petals instead of only in the shoulders of the falls. It too has that classic look in its form from 'Chubby Cheeks'.

SURROUNDED (Black 2005) is an impressive new plicata, a vivid violet-blue plicata, with only a patch of white showing through in the heart of the falls, just in time to show off its contrasting red beards. There have been a few attempts at this color combination over the years, to tease us; with 'Surrounded', we have arrived! **FREEZE FRAME** (Black 2004) is a cold white, boldly and precisely banded in deepest violet, truly approaching black. Just an inkling of white shows through in the midribs of the standards. It has impeccable form and thick, tough substance. Just the opposite in style, **HALF MOON** (Black 2003) is cleverly named, in that the standards exhibit the heavier saturation, then the falls are white with a heavy concentration of violet at the shoulders, then purposefully, gradually decreasing in degree of stitching as you travel down the falls. Fascinating!

HOMESPUN HONEY (Walker 2006) is a warm honey plic, with amber-russet striations and speckling at the shoulders and around the beards. It inherited its wide, round, ruffled form from 'Chubby Cheeks', and possesses a nice glow which transmits carrying power to the flower. **RED TOP HAT** (Walker 2006) is an unusual creation; if you look closely, and know what you're looking at, you'll see that it has plicatas in its pedigree. If the wide, rounded form looks familiar, yep, it has 'Chubby Cheeks' as a grandparent. Somewhere in all that red, there is an underlying base color of cream to yellow. But the standards are almost completely saturated with a charming shade of wine red, and then the falls have marbled/ washed type of fancy plicating, giving ever more character to the flower. And then **INVISIBLE** (Black 2004) is a pure white glaciata which exhibits absolutely no other color in the flower. As with most glaciatas, the color is exceptionally pure, its beautiful rounded form glistening in the sunlight.

ARTFUL TRADITION (B. Jones 2006) is a white with a bold deep blue spot pattern occupying half the falls, similar in style to the great classic, 'Boo' (Markham), but is then accentuated with a bright red beard sitting amidst the blue spot pattern. There are even some suggestions of green peering out of the shoulder area. **MIKEY LIKES IT** (Aitken 2003) is somewhat similar, with white standards, but the falls are almost completely covered in deep blue to grape, and then sport a distinct, fine band of white. Beards are deep yellow, sometimes appearing to be carrying tangerine tones. **FIESTA FLAME** (Aitken 2004) is a deeper version of its grandparent, 'Pele' (Aitken) with rich orange emblazoned with a stunning red spot pattern covering nearly the entire falls, capped with a dazzling deep orange beard.

The form is an improvement over 'Pele', and it has much better substance and even a fair amount of ruffling.

Major advancements in oranges and their derivatives continue to be made. **FIRE EATER** (M. Smith 2005) is the next step in the evolution of orange SDB's, an update of the Cook-Douglas Medalist, 'Marksman' (M. Smith), tighter and more compact. It is every bit as bright in color, fully saturated, with flower form that is a bit more refined. **LOST ART** (Black 2005) is a golden-yellow with just a suggestion of a deeper spot in the falls, interrupted with the biggest, boldest, fuzziest bright orange beards imaginable. Standards are decidedly open, but hold their own, allowing the viewer to look down and get the full impact of those dazzling beards. **PHOTON** (M. Smith 2005) has magnificent color, an improved, refined 'Circus Dragon' (B. Jones) with richer colors, smoother finish, better form, and more ruffling. It is bright yellow (without the gold influences as found in 'Lost Art'), also possessing howling thick deep orange beards. Intense drama!

Truly at the opposite end of the emotional spectrum, you find **SHALLOWS** (M. Smith 2006), a fascinating sequencing of colors like I've never seen before in an SDB. Standards give the impression of opalescent soft green. Falls are a translucent blending of pewter, true grey, and then infused slightly with the color of the standards. Standards are domed and ruffled; falls are horizontal with a significant degree of ruffling, giving motion to the effect. You have to see it to fully appreciate it.

CLASSICS: FINE PRINT (Keppel 1968), **GINGERBREAD MAN** (B. Jones 1969), **LADY** (Warburton 1969), **PEANUTS** (Hager 1969), **RED HEART** (A. Brown 1967).

MINIATURE DWARF BEARDED

A trio of colorful dwarfs from similar breeding make up this year's review. **FISSION CHIPS** (Keppel 2004) must surely glow in the dark! The neon orange is much brighter, prettier, and more exciting than what could be captured in the catalog. Flower size is in class, and the stalks and foliage are tidy and in proportion. It has an amazing amount of ruffling for such a small package, yet it pulls it off splendidly. **SUN DABS** (Aitken 2002) has excellent color presentation with orange beards against the dainty bright yellow flowers. Form is wide and rounded, but get out the tape measure, it does indeed meet the size qualifications. **TINY TITAN** (Aitken 2002) is similar, but done in orange with deeper orange, bushy beards. Both have the correct flower size for an MDB, with dainty, narrow foliage in character with the class.

CLASSICS: FUZZY (Westfall 1971), **GAY SUNSHINE** (Sindt 1973).

ARILBREDS

ABSOLOM'S TREACHERY (McGrath 1998, OGB) is intoxicating and brooding with domed deep spectrum violet standards dominating over somewhat lighter rose-violet falls following up with signals the depth of color of the standards. The whole flower possesses an intriguing smoked overlay, adding to the impact of the seductive colors. **BETTY McPHERSON** (Rice 2001, OGB) has nearly solid white standards with only a suggestion of tiny veining. Then the falls have a much greater intensification of the deep veining, shooting out from the heart of the flower in a spray pattern. Perhaps similar in nature to 'Jonnye's Magic' (Rich-Whitely), but not with so much of the appearance of a plicata pattern.

EASTERN BLUSH (Ransom 2002, RB/MED), from France, is from regelia blood, typically difficult to describe in words. Technically it is an arilbred-median, with the median Faux Pas (Keppel BB) as the pollen parent. The primary color is mauve shading into a soft ochre-yellow, slightly deeper in the falls, intensifying to an old gold edging, more predominant in the falls. The regelia bloodline announces itself with an artistic flash of violet below a lighter area in the upper part of the falls, bleeding out from a small blue beard. **OMAR'S GOLD** (Boswell 1995, OGB-) is quite probably the best and most important of many fine arilbred-medians which Carl has produced over the past 20 years, and is certainly the most dependable, acclimating beautifully in all parts of the country. It has domed warm yellow standards, complemented with burnished old gold falls, transforming somewhat to a lighter tone

at the edges, and then a black signal embracing gold beards. It is IB in height and flower size. Faultless plant habits, excellent bloom/increase ratio, and is stunning in a clump.

MAGIC DREAM (Flanagan 2001) was love at first sight for me, and has become one of my favorite arilbreds. Medium violet standards are solid in color. The falls mimic the color, but are then blended with varying degrees of tan and rich mahogany tones, a brown version of its parent, 'Tornado Warning'. An imposing rounded jet black signal dominates the eye - you can't help but stare at it! **PINK SERAPH** (Shockey 2001) is a major advancement in the quest for truly pink arilbreds. The globular standards are a soft lavender-pink, flushed a bit deeper in the base of the midribs. Rounded falls are a lush rose-pink, a couple of shades deeper than the intensity of the standards, adorned with much deeper rose-purple signals surrounding gold beards. The substance and resistance to fading is decent, highly commendable for this color range. **SURPASSING YELLOW** (Mathes 2001, OGB) is amazing, in that it has a deep maroon-wine, 'Concerto Grosso', as a parent. The only place this type of color comes through in this flower is in a large, daring dark mahogany signal dominating the falls. Otherwise, the flower is an intense yellow (not gold), sunfast, with some of the best saturation in arilbreds.

CLASSICS: **IMAM SALAH** (White 1956), **JABAL KERAK** (White 1955), **KALIFA BALTIS** (White 1955), **KALIFA KABUL** (White 1956), **TATAI PASHA** (White, 1955), **VOLUNTEER FIREMAN** (Cline-Durrance 1957).

LOUISIANAS

BROAD DAYLIGHT (Dunn-Ghio 2002) is a neon yellow, the most intense yellow on the block, virtually devoid of a signal and 100% sunfast, blessed with a serious amount of ruffling. It has a leathery substance inherited from its parent, 'Gladiator's Gift'. Excellent branching and a good strong plant.

GOOD HEAVENS (Dunn 1997) is an interesting mauve-lavender with an opaque look, similar to that of 'Art World' (Taylor). It is a total self, nearly devoid of the presence of a signal. Branching is a little tight, with 3 branches. Average to good growth habits. When I first saw **ENVIABLE** (Faith 2002), I thought it was a tetraploid, because of its thick substance and wide body parts. It reminds me of 'Easter Tide' (Arny) with its blue standards and yellow falls. The colors are more subtle, especially the blue part, but texture veining truly enhances the flower, and the petals are flatter and more rounded.

COOL NITE (Morgan 2001) is a dramatic bitone, with moderately dark blue-violet standards and deeper midnight blue falls with only a hint of a yellow line signal. As with many of Richard's creations, it is shorter and proportionately smaller-flowered. It exhibits the luster its parent, 'Sea Knight' was famous for. **GINGER PUNCH** (Morgan 1999) is a unique, pleasing ginger-honey with a yellow signal. Smaller, compact flowers are displayed on shorter stalks with 3 branches with beautiful spacing. Average growth habits. This was my first year to see **NIGHT THUNDER** (Morgan 2000), and what a treat was in store for me! Rich lustrous black from the red side. Form and style of bold yellow signal remindful of 'Ann Chowning' (Chowning). The substance is notable - it held up in the acid rain of the Pacific Northwest with no damage. A velvet pile makes the color of the falls even more intense.

TRANSIT (Taylor 1999) continues a tradition of high-quality heavily ruffled yellows for which this Australian hybridizer is famous. The color is soft and gentle, but the stalks are tall and stately, not to be overlooked. Magnificent branching, with bud count sufficient to guarantee a pleasant length of bloom cycle. John is also known for his choice dark varieties. **UNDERCOVER** (Taylor 1999) in a pure deep violet, with the intensity of color of its mother, 'Bout Midnight' (Dunn) and the tight, disciplined ruffling of its father, 'Rachel's Request' (Taylor). Suave and sophisticated.

CAPTAIN GATES (Pryor 1998) is a deep sea blue, remindful of its parent, 'Sea Lord' (Taylor), but with taller stalks and much improved branching. Clean, bold deep yellow signals provide a nice contrast. It has a luster which is surely the envy of its Tall Bearded contemporaries. **PEACHES IN WINE** (Pryor 1998), winner of the 2006 Debaillon Medal, was a worthy choice. This ruffled masterpiece is well named, for it has rich peach standards laying on wide, flat falls of burgundy wine, completed with a fine halo of peach embedded in the ruffling. The coloration of the standards varies, but this is one of the traits that makes it so appealing. **WIZARD OF AUSSIE** (Pryor 2000), named by Heather to honor her friend and fellow hybridizer, John Taylor, is clever and fascinating, with red standards with yellow color breaking, then deep red falls with a dazzling yellow sunburst pattern radiating from the signal area.

CLASSICS: C'EST MAGNIFIQUE (Dunn 1980), CHARLIE'S TRESS (Arny 1977), E.C. EVERINGHAM (Raabe 1980), UPTIGHT CREAM WHITE (Arny 1978).

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