

# A Quartet of Colourful Hybrids

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Why is it that all the good growers always seem to have the good plants? There are numerous answers to this question. The main one however is that these people tend to choose hybrids with high potential - then either purchase a flask or numerous seedlings of the same cross. So basically it is like a lottery - the more tickets you buy, the better your odds. Many new to orchids will happily visit a nursery and buy one seedling each of a dozen different crosses. When they may have been better off buying a dozen seedlings of one cross.

This way, upon flowering, you get to select the clones you like and get a better understanding and appreciation of the variation within a given hybrid.

I have been fortunate that I get to do a reasonable amount of travelling throughout Australia and get to see a lot of quality orchids. Last spring I saw and photographed four such exhibits which caught my eye. I intend doing regular updates along these lines for new quality native orchid seedlings.

**Sarcochilus First Light** is the cross between S. Aussie Dawn and S. *hartmannii*. With S. Aussie Dawn being S. *hartmannii* x S. *dilatatus*. I remember presenting a paper for the Australian Orchid Conference in 1988 stating that I saw no benefit in using S. *dilatatus* as a parent. How wrong was I! At least two clones of S. First Light have been awarded and the good cultivars are simply outstanding. Bob Lewry grew three flasks of seedlings (from Down Under Native Orchids) to get the clone pictured opposite. This plant, with its unique colouring, was judged "Best Seedling" at the ANOS Sydney Group Sarcanthinae Show 1997, and on a larger plant will take some beating.

**Sarcochilus Peach Spots** was registered in 1991 by Simpson Orchids, a mating of S. *fitzgeraldii* and S. *weinthalii*. Wal Upton grew the pictured clone which was certainly the largest and most intensely coloured example of this hybrid I have seen to date. I don't think this clone has been on any outings but I do know that Wal certainly made use of its pollen! Many of these hybrids are being remade using line bred species - particularly the darker clones of S. *fitzgeraldii*. Here is another example of what happens when you cross a flower with brown in it with a pink. You end up with very dark purple markings where the brown would normally be, thereby intensifying the colour.

**Sarcochilus Star Struck 'Ada'** is from the Ken Russell remake of S. Southern Cross x S. *fitzgeraldii*. S. Southern Cross is S. *hartmannii* x S. *australis*. Ken used the well known S. *fitzgeraldii* 'Lorraine' for this grex. Alan and Ada Kelly, of Devonport, Tasmania, grew this clone which was in their quality display at the recent Tasmanian Orchid Conference. I have been fortunate to have visited the Kelly's a few times and been most impressed with the way they grow their "sarkies" as they call them. They are grown under cover without heat, which again shows how Tasmania is an ideal climate for these treasures. This clone had numerous pendent inflorescences with dozens of flowers well displayed. It should only get better if the proliferation of offshoots continue. Florafest Orchids have also remade this hybrid.

**Dendrobium Barry Simpson** was exhibited at the 1997 Australian Orchid Conference in Brisbane by premier grower Henk van den Berg. This clone, obtained as a seedling from Down Under Native Orchids, is a cross between D. Brinawa Charm and D. *speciosum*. I actually preferred this plant to the D. Star of Riverdene which won the Champion Hybrid (but what would I know anyway!). This is one example of the direction the hot/cold breeding is taking us. This was a very strong plant, due to the D. *speciosum* influence, with terrific upright spike habit and large well shaped flowers. The labellum was well marked and displayed - without the turned-up sidelobes of most D. *speciosum* hybrids. This would be due to D. Brinawa Charm 'Lucky's Toy' AM/ANOS being the pod parent. Another top hybrid.







grower, Bob Lewry  
***Sarcochilus First Light***

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grower, Wal Upton  
***Sarcochilus Peach Spots***

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growers, Alan & Ada Kelly  
***Sarcochilus Star Struck 'Ada'***

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grower, Henk van den Berg  
***Dendrobium Barry Simpson***

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