

Spinning Sample by Kathleen Cook

At the time of writing up this sample, I was listening to Rod Stewart's "Some Guys Have All the Luck" and I thought to myself "This song should be called 'Some Spinners Have All the Luck' " because this month's dyeing and spinning samples are the happy intersection of planning and lack of planning. My dye sample was absolutely unplanned and random; my spinning sample was the result of research and thought. And I am thrilled with the result.

Several months ago when we were perspiring under the July sun, I participated in an impromptu dye day with friends out at the Table Rock LLamas studio. I carefully prepared ahead of time, reading many sources, taking many notes. I arrived, dyes in hand, fiber wetted and ready to produce gasp-worthy skeins. The best-laid plans being what they are, and my being an inexperienced dyer, I was not happy with what I produced by the end of the day and turned to the last roving in fatigue, determined to get the dyeing over with for the day. So I laid out the roving, grabbed three leftover colors that seemed work together, dispiritedly daubed splotches here and there, rolled it up in Saran wrap and threw it in the steamer to heat up while we cleaned up the studio. Once home, I rinsed the cooled roving and, after looking it over and deciding it looked like bruised skin, threw it on the rack to dry and left it to languish for several weeks.

Then one day I received my Spunky Eclectic monthly fiber shipment titled *Cold Front* and it was so lovely, I couldn't wait to spin it. I read all the comments fellow Spunky Eclectic spinners had shared on their Ravelry forum and the consensus was that *Cold Front* looked best spun as a single. Since I had only spun multi-ply skeins, I delved into Amy King's "Spin Control" and found some advice on how to proceed. Not wanting to ruin the *Cold Front* Wensleydale fiber, I turned to my "Bruised Skin" roving because it too was a long wool and I didn't care if I ruined it. But then something magical happened. The *Bruised Skin* ugly duckling turned into a lovely swan as the random blobs of blue, green, and gold slowly stretched out into long runs of color punctuated here and there by sections of white. Some spinners have all the luck indeed.

Technical information:

Dye fiber: 6 oz. Masham

Jacquard acid dyes: Teal, Olive Green, Gold Ochre, Sapphire Blue

Preparation: Bundled Masham soaked the night before in warm water, Jacquard dyes applied with no thought as to proportion or pattern between sections of undyed fiber, vinegar sprayed on thoroughly before wrapping in plastic wrap, steamed for 40 minutes. Subdued colors due to late application of vinegar. Had the fiber been soaked in a water-vinegar solution ahead of time, the color would have struck faster and been more brilliant.

Spinning information:

Low-twist single because of long staple length

Fingering weight

21 WPI

3 TPI

Fast uptake, lower twist ratio than for normal Singles. Very slightly fulling when washed to ensure it would not fall apart since it was a low-twist single. Fulling made the fiber bloom a bit so it has a halo now and feels like mohair.

Fiber information:

Masham is a longwool, "the result of a crossing of a Teeswater or Wensleydale ram with a Dalesbred or Swaledale ewe." (*In Sheep's Clothing*, Fournier, Nola and Jane Fournier, p, 72.)

Staple length: 6-14"

Fiber diameter: 46s-50s

Useful for outerwear, stronger fleeces used in upholstery and carpets.

Purchased at Table Rock Llamas Fiber Studio, Black Forest, CO

