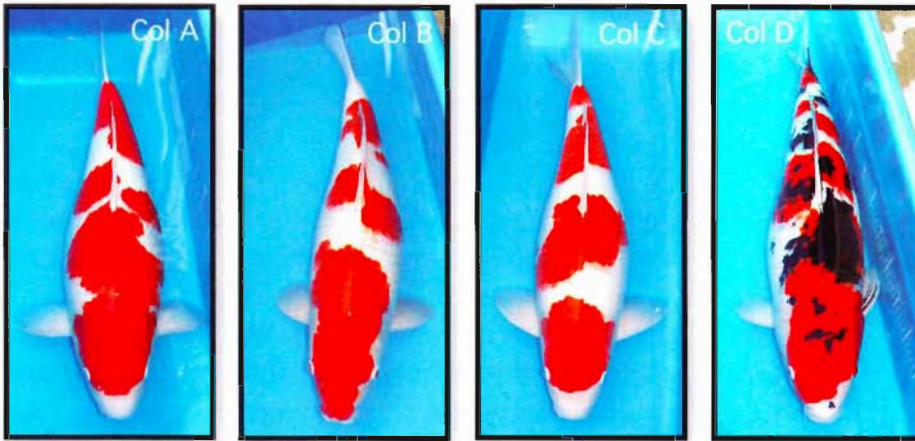


A Quest for 80 Centimeters

Part II - Mike Snaden



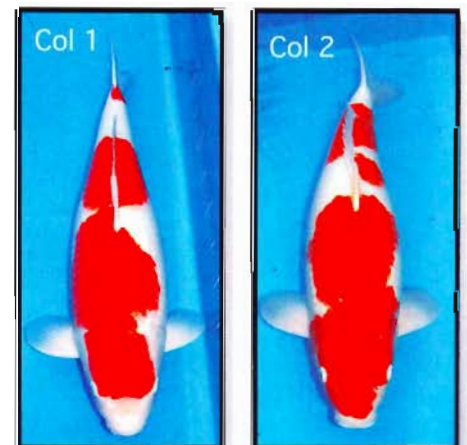
quality, but is still a mess! She will however, be interesting to watch.

Nisai

'Koi 1' (Momotaro) was 35 cm as Tosai in May 2003, and grew from 51 cm in December, and to 59 cm in June 2004. The Koi is a little plump, but the body is good, and the quality is wonderful. Although much of the Kiwa is 'Kamitori', it is still sharp. Kamitori Kiwa can have a tendency to be a little blurred. I am expecting good things with this Koi.

'Koi 2' (Momotaro) measured 30 cm as Tosai in May 2003, 44 cm in December, and now measures 52 cm. I am not convinced that this Koi will reach our 80 cm target, but the quality is exquisite. The skin is wonderful, and is the Hi quality. Every scale has Maruzome Kiwa of the highest standard.

'Koi 3' (Momotaro) measured 29 cm in May 2003, 45 cm in December, and is now 52 cm.



It is now June of 2004, and as such, we can compare the fruits of the past few months, albeit winter and spring, and also how close we have come to the 'June 2004' targets.

We will kick off with the Koi in Colin's pond. To keep things simple, we will stick with the reference numbers that were used in the last issue.

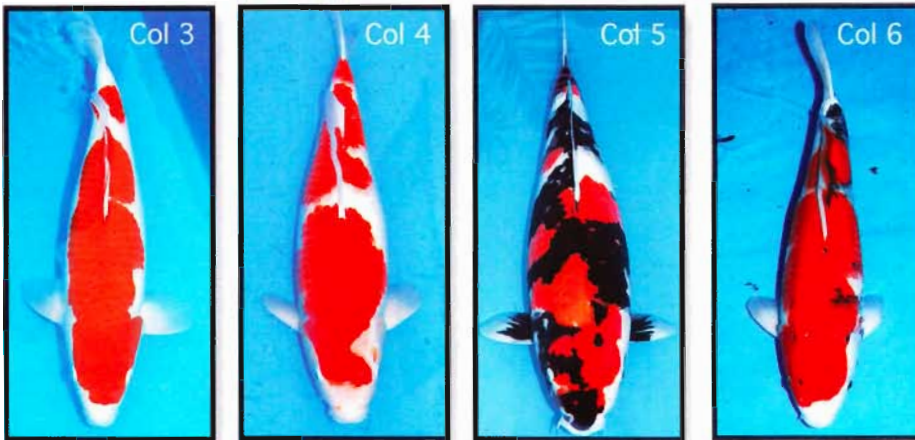
'Koi A' measured 21 cm in Spring 2002, 59 cm in December 2003, and now measures 63 cm. The Beni quality has improved since December, as has the skin. The Kiwa also seems to have improved a little, and the break in the pattern behind the head, that was apparent as Tosai, is now closing up almost completely. This is neither good nor bad, but I am hoping that given it's current state, it will thicken and cover the last two scales behind the head, which will make the pattern much neater.

'Koi B' measured 33 cm in Feb. 2002, 63 cm in December 2003,

and now measures 67 cm. This Koi has the perfect body and head that will look wonderful when the Koi gets big. The Hi quality is pretty good, but the skin isn't quite as youthful as I would like it to be. My one area of concern with this Koi lies in the Kiwa. Some of the Kiwa is reasonably good, but much of it is blurred. I am hoping that it will improve with age, but fear I may be asking too much of it. A Koi's value is greatly influenced by the quality of Kiwa, so as a Koi of 80 plus cm, it will make a drastic difference to it's desirability, and hence, it's value.

'Koi C' keeps going from strength to strength. The Koi would benefit from breeding, in order to improve growth and shape, but nonetheless has grown well, and improved well. She measured 62 cm in December, and now measures 67 cm. Kiwa is near perfect, and in the event of this Koi getting big, it's many qualities will make it extremely valuable.

'Koi D' has grown from 62 cm to 66 cm. She has improved in



Quality is excellent. I haven't got an up to date picture of this Koi.

'Koi 4' is a sibling of the three aforementioned Kohaku, and arrived in December 2002 as Tosai (5 months old) of 15 cm. It measured 47 cm in December, and has grown to 53 cm. The Koi is now developing a great deal of secondary Hi, and the Sushi is a little to deep still. I still feel that the Hi plate will break up in the near future.

'Koi 5' (Takeda) is becoming a wonderful Showa. My hopes of the Sumi covering the weak area of Hi on the shoulder seem to be working out well. This Showa has a wonderful body too, and should become big very easily. She measured 20 cm in December 2002, 51 cm in December 2003, and now measures 58 cm.

'Koi 6' (Takeda) measured 20 cm in December 2002, 49 cm in December 2003, and now measures 57 cm. She is of no comparison in quality, to 'Koi 5', but I think that she will become a reasonably good Koi when she gets bigger, and older.

'Koi 7' (Momotaro) is closing the gap on the two Takeda Showa, having grown from 15

cm in December 2002, to 48 cm in December, and now 57 cm. However, there is still no Sumi showing on the white skin, so it is impossible to judge the Sumi at this stage, or to judge whether it will ever come up. My feeling is, however, that it will come up.

'Koi 8' has grown from 41, to 49 cm. The Hi plate is still a little weak, but the face marking is unforgivably blurred. This Koi is not really worthy of being grown, but we will continue to watch it as a point of comparison.

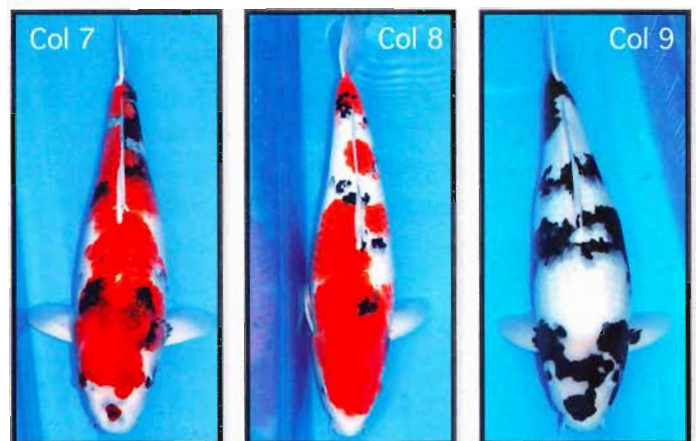
'Koi 9' (Omosako Shiro Utsuri) has grown from 43 cm in December, to 52 cm. The Sumi has also improved on this Koi. This Koi is now full of eggs, and would benefit from breeding.

We now move on to Ian and Jill Graham's Nisai. Since last November, Ian has had a second pond, of 3800 gallons. This pond is Bakki Showered, with the drains being fed directly to the Bakki Showers. This pond has given startling results already!

At the end of February this year, we put 10 Tosai into Ian's new pond, which ranged from 23 to 28 cm. Already, all of the Momotaro Sanke have grown to between 45 and 52 cm, which is far greater than we expected, and as well as the astonishing growth, the Koi also have wonderful quality, with extremely thick color. It now seems that perhaps 70 cm Nisai can be produced in the future in this pond?

A fourth set of Bakki Showers has been fitted to Ian's 6500-gallon pond, and since doing so, the TDS level has dropped from 80 ppm to around 50 ppm.

Ian has succeeded in obtaining this year's target, by raising his Momotaro 'Eagle' Kohaku ('Ian 1') to 63 cm. This Koi is exactly two years old now, and measured 23 cm as Tosai in December 2002. The Hi quality has improved since last December, and the damage just behind the head, has now completely recovered. I feel that this Koi will become extremely



good when it gets big, and it will get big!

Ian's second Kohaku (Momotaro 'Seio' line) was 33 cm in July 2003, and now measures 57 cm. The Sashi is still an area of concern with this Koi, as it appears a little



too deep alongside the dorsal fin, but the Koi is very good in all other respects.

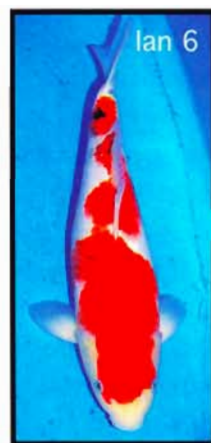
'Ian 3' (Momotaro 'Seio') was 35 cm in July 2003, and has grown from 49 cm in December, to 58 cm. I feel that this koi's pattern will look very attractive when the Koi gets big. The Hi should thicken greatly this year. I sold this Koi very cheaply to Ian, as it had a slight fault at the back of the head on one side. Surprisingly, this fault has become less evident as the Koi has grown. I am hopeful of this Koi will growing big very easily.

'Ian 4' (Momotaro 'Seio') has also grown to 58 cm, having measured 48 cm in December. The Hi plate is a little thin on this Koi, but I think that it will improve greatly this year. This Koi has a wonderful body, and I feel very confident of it growing big this summer.



The fifth Koi ('Ian 5') is a Momotaro Showa that was 18 cm in December 2002, and has grown from 48 cm in December 2003, to a current size of 58 cm. The underlying Hi on the shoulder is still a problem, and will remain so. But, the Koi is very good in all other areas.

'Ian 6' (Momotaro) has grown to 48 cm, and has turned out female as I suspected. This was a late-bred Koi, so it will always trail behind the others a little. I am not confident of this Koi growing to 80 cm, but the next 6 months hopefully give a little insight



into it's likely size potential. The Koi isn't particularly big in its frame, but it is possible that it will strengthen up. This Sanke measured 21 cm as Tosai, in May 2003.

'Ian 7' has turned out to be a male, but I still feel that it is possible that it can be grown big. Size is now 55 cm. This Koi measured 23 cm in July 2003.

'Ian 8' (Takeda Sanke, 22 cm in Dec. 2002), has grown from 50 cm in December 2003, to 58 cm. She is pretty much the same as she was in December, except of course for her size.



The last of Ian's Koi ('Ian 9') is the Omosako Shiro Utsuri. This Koi measured 13 cm as Tosai in December 2002, and has grown from 39 cm in December, to a current size of 48 cm. This Koi has wonderful Sumi quality, and Shiroji. I am pretty confident that the Koi is female. Shiro Utsuri of this quality are hard to come by. This will be a very interesting Koi to watch.



Moving on to Cliff Neale's Koi, we have another success here! Cliff's Momotaro Sanke 'Cliff 1' has now reached 60 cm. This incredible considering that it was a late bred Tosai, and measured just 21.5 cm at last years BKKS National Show! (June 2003). The Hi still looks pale, but I am confident that this Koi will become extremely good in the future. The Hi on the face is a little blurred, but the Sashi on the pattern is good. Hopefully, the Sumi will re-emerge later in the year.

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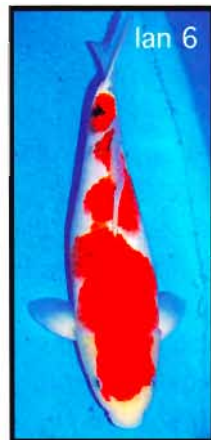
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'Cliff 2' (Momotaro 'Seio') has



turned out male, and has been moved out of Cliff's 'female' pond. This Koi was 33 cm, won Baby Champion at last year's BKKS National, and now measures 56 cm.

'Cliff 3' has also turned out male, but is a wonderful Koi, and is at present still allowed to swim in Cliff's 'female' pond, at least until it shows any interest in any females! If this happens, it will be moved out. This Koi was shown alongside the baby Champion last year, measured 48 cm in December 2003, and is now 56 cm.

'Cliff 4' was a wonderful Kohaku, but unfortunately jumped out of Cliff's pond recently, and died. This was such a shame, as it was such a good Koi.

Since writing the first part of this article, a handful of people have asked me why we are monitoring TDS levels, as opposed to ORP readings. So, with no further ado, I will elaborate with the following hypothetical scenarios...



1) Fred's pond contains 8000 gallons. His mains water has a TDS of 100 ppm, with a KH of 3 Gdh, and GH of 3 Gdh. He changes water in such a way that he can maintain a pond TDS of 130 ppm, and finds that he can comfortably maintain a KH of 2.5, with his GH sitting pretty at 3. As his Koi grow over the years, Fred finds that he has to change a higher proportion of water in order to keep his TDS at 130 ppm, and also finds that because of the extra loading on his filters, his KH tends to run at 2, but he's happy with this.

2) Fred tests his water using ORP instead of TDS, but also monitors his KH and GH. He adds water whenever flushing his drains. Fred tries to maintain an ORP reading of 300. As Fred's Koi grow over the years, he finds that his KH keeps dropping, so he adds Bicarb on a regular basis, in order to keep it buffered. He also finds that his ORP keeps dropping off, so he doses his pond with Potassium Permanganate in order to oxidize the organics. Fred is happy with this, but after a few years, he buys himself a TDS meter, and finds that his pond is running a TDS of 900 ppm! As a good friend once said to me, "The water is so heavily loaded, that the only next logical step is to put the Koi into Castrol GTX". The bottom line is that although ORP readings can be helpful, it is still possible to have lousy, and aged water, but it can easily be made to 'seem' good. GH tests, although handy in order to assess mains water, is a pretty useless test for day-to-day pond keeping. GH levels are usually fairly constant, but it's considered desirable to keep them as low as reasonably possible. The use of mineral additives such as clays will generally raise these levels. Feeding won't usually have much effect towards GH levels. A GH reading doesn't contain the KH reading. They are two different tests. TDS will account for GH, KH, and everything else that has become dissolved into the water (i.e., organics).

Next years target of 68 cm for Sansai is looking very easy to obtain now. We are now approaching the main part of the summer growing season, so the next few months will be very exciting. I may feel compelled to include some of this years Tosai, as both Ian and Cliff have been able to grow their latest Koi at alarming rates. The quest for 80 centimeters has so far been very inspiring for me as a dealer, and it is results like these, that make everything so worthwhile. Keep your eyes peeled for the next update. 鯉人