

# *Mid-Atlantic Koi*

The Magazine of The Mid-Atlantic Koi Club

June 2006

**MAKC's  
Candidate  
for AKCA  
Koi of  
the Year**



# Selecting a Showa

by Bob Winkler, Colorado and Art Lembke, Maryland

*Koi America 2005* photos by Bob Brudd

Showa is my wife Shila and my favorite variety. Selecting a good Showa is one of the toughest young koi to choose because they change so much as they grow. Many times the black is very deep and only comes out as the fish grows. For this reason, when you see gray areas in the white, it may be deep black that will appear later rather than poor quality white. Complicating matters is that Showa often have defects, especially of the head, that are hard to see when they are small.

Start selecting a young Showa by looking for a good Kohaku pattern. It should be balanced throughout the body. One must know how to choose a good Kohaku and good Shiro Utsuri to be able to choose a good Showa. If you take all the black away from a Showa, you should have a good Kohaku, and if you take



**Jumbo Award - Art & Nicole Lembke**



**Young Champion - Jan Long**

all the red away, you should have a good Shiro Utsuri. Look for a good strong body, large pectoral fins, and a disease free fish.

Next, look at the head. It should have all three colors: red, white, and black, preferably in equal amounts. Best would be to have a lightning stripe, or a Y- shape in black on top of the head. Many Showa do not develop this until later, so try to pick out a koi with good red and white with some black present or coming out throughout the body. The late great koi judge, and showa “aficionado,” Bob Spindola often said, “Buy the red, but bet on the black.” Do not worry if the black looks to be poor quality at an early age. Black develops later in most good quality Showa.

*Selecting a Showa, continued on page 6*

The next important thing to check is the pectoral fins. Ideally, the inner 1/3 of the fins (close to the body) should be black. As the pectoral fin grows, the black often seems to remain the same and the white area enlarges. If the pectoral fins are all black in a young koi, it may be alright because this too can grow to have acceptable Showa fins. All the other fins should be white, but can have some black. No red should be in any of the fins.

Another factor to consider in Showa is the percentage of the three colors in the total koi. A classic or “old style” Showa is 40% black, 40% red, and 20% white. It is often described as a black fish with red and white on it. A modern or “Kindai” Showa has equal amounts of all three colors. It can often be hard to tell the difference between a Kindai Showa and a Sanke with a lot of black.

As you can see, Showa are one of the most difficult koi to select at a young age. They can be disappointing, but also one of the most rewarding to see develop in your pond. ❖

