

## May Spinning Sample by Gretchen Kantor

Silk: no. Bamboo: no. Flax: no. Llama or alpaca (let alone Paco-vicuna): no. Everybody else's samples have stood out not only for how beautifully spun they were, but also for their being spun of some "exotic" (at least to me) fiber and, usually, for a purported use. I can't even tell you where my plain old sheep's wool came from, or what breed it was, or how I wanted to spin it or why. That's because I am a "demonstrator" spinner. Spinning, for me, is a group activity. I've taken lots of spinning classes, Norman Kennedy and Mabel Ross included. Both disapproved of my lack of ability; Mabel left me in tears often during those 2 dreadful days. She kept saying, "It's not the wheel's fault, it's the spinner's, so don't take it out on the wheel." As it turned out, it was (at least partly) the wheel's fault—but then again, Herman, my Ashford Traditional had come from dry South Africa, which he adored, and was now trying to cope with the humidity of Ohio. George played doctor and Herman was again a happy wheel. Oh, yeah—spinning classes (post Norman and Mabel)...I always have fun and do what the teacher wants and think I'd like to keep at a technique till it comes easily and becomes a true skein. But, I always slip seamlessly back into my comfort zone because I can spin and explain at the same time



So, I don't really enjoy sitting alone and spinning for a supposed project—that would require concentration. Spinning, for me, is a selfish activity, like reading or doing Sukoku or putting a puzzle together. So, I selfishly like to spin gorgeous colored roving, just to see what it will look like, all the while demonstrating and telling stoppers-by what I'm doing. So, I'll do the same to you:

I (very over-) spun a grey singles: actually I like it a lot because it's wavy, like a person's curly hair. Then I plied it back on itself for a 2-ply grey skein. It even hangs straight! While that was lying around, I found this roving in a little shop on the "green" in Taos, behind the main drag. It was dip-dyed bright yellow-green, navy blue, dark brown, and a yellow-earth ochre color. Loved the first 2 colors. Hated the last 2.



So, a challenge! I repeated the grey spinning with the colored roving, trying to get a reasonably long repeat of each color, but not trying to match the colors in the 2-ply. Too much work! But, I had a lot of each singles left over, so...plied them together. Well, which skein do you like best? Much to my chagrin, most people liked the "heathered" effect. I prefer the boldly colored one, barber-shop pole and all! It's the interplay of those strong colors in the ply that I like, each combination creating a new sensorial sensation of color.