

A 'Superb Stunning Suri Creation' ©

Fiona Laughton

Beavona Lodge Suri Alpacas
QLD

Photos by **Susan Wall**

Photography

(photos copyrighted)

The model is **Ryley Walsh**

What a wonderful life's journey we are on! Who would have thought that these magnificent suri alpacas would present so many opportunities for the enrichment of our lives?

Since falling in love with suri alpacas and believing passionately that their silky, soft fleece is suited to more than just blending, Beaver (Darrel) Laughton has progressed from teaching himself to spin suri on a drop spindle (and it *did* drop – repeatedly) to mastering the fibre on his traditional wheel and starting our “*Superb Stunning Suri Creations*” © label. Being told, “You can’t spin suri” was like waving a red flag at a bull! His response was, “This is what I have, so this is what I’ll spin”. And spin he did – with mesmerizing results.

Hand spinning really does showcase the magnificence of this exotic fibre, confirming its place at the forefront of the luxury natural fibre market.



When the catalogues for the World Alpaca Conference / AOBA National Show in America were circulated, and Beaver saw that there was a hand spinning section, he took some of the under 20 micron yarn he had spun for our second wedding dress and mailed two skeins off for the competition: one skein of 100% suri used in the main body of the dress and another skein of 50% suri / 50% bombyx silk used in the lace overlay and veil. The criterion was for yardage (50 yd), not weight, as in Australia. At the same time he skeined off enough for an entry into the Queensland Royal Show.

Even though the Queensland Royal Show (EKKA) was held after the World Conference / AOBA National Show, Beaver had the results for the EKKA back first. He was lucky enough to be awarded a first in his class as well as ...

“Best Exhibit – Spinning” for the third year running.

Interestingly, when the skeins sent to the American competition were returned, they included a detailed score card not dissimilar to the AAA Ltd. fleece judging scorecards.

The suri / silk skein achieved a 1st place with a score of 96/100 and the judge's comment was...

“This is just lovely. Combining the two different fibers made the plying a little more obvious. Truly beautiful work.”

However the real surprise was the 100% suri skein with a score of 100/100 and the judge's comment...

“Wow! I need a magnifying glass.” This skein was also awarded “Judge's choice”, similar to Champion.



The wedding dress...

The spinning of the yarn required for the outfit was started in January 2008 and took 335 hours plus 50 hours hand combing of the fibre in preparation.

The dress was started in March 2009 and was completed at the end of September 2009. The final product – the wedding dress – weighing only 380g has exceeded all expectation, it really is breathtaking. There are 4,981 metres of yarn in the gown and veil.

This really is a special achievement – even more so during the International Year of Natural Fibres. The opportunity to show off the breathtaking beauty and the versatility of our suri fleeces to the world has been an honour. 🙌

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Our industry really is limited only by the imagination and passion of the breeders.