

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



# In the Wake of Power

Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar  
 House of Cards  
 Thursday, May 9, 2002



PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

When *Odyssey* arrived, I really wanted to like *Ivy Elemental*. As a general rule, I tend to appreciate flexible spells. I love *Creeping Mold*, for example. The *Planeshift Battlemages* make me happy. Heck, I even use *Degavolver* on occasion. Here was *Ivy Elemental* -- a creature that got as big as the mana you pumped into it.

Almost.

What I *really* wanted was a creature exactly as big as the mana you paid. A 3/3 for 3 mana, or a 7/7 for seven. I wanted *Ivy Elemental* to enter play with X+1 counters or to have evasion of some kind. As a result, I didn't use it in decks. I'm stubborn that way.

Luckily, someone in R&D loves me (I think it's Mark Rosewater, but don't tell him I told you). *Judgment* brings with it *Mirari's Wake*. Anyone staring at a combination of *Glorious Anthem* and a personal *Mana Flare* undoubtedly thinks:

1. X spells
2. Creatures

C'mere, *Ivy Elemental*...

Next week I will take you step-by-step in the creation of a single deck. This week, however, I describe my odd mental journey when seeing a new card. I feel like the decks below only scratch the surface of *Mirari's Wake* possibilities. Still, I think it is worthwhile to a) compare your initial reactions to a card with mine and b) see how deck ideas can spawn more deck ideas.

As always, the point is to poke you in your creativity ribs.

Which brings me back to *Ivy Elemental*. With *Mirari's Wake*, Mr. Ivy is just how I want him: As big as the mana you pay. Even better, the Wake allows me to pay a *lot* more mana than usual. My first crack at a Wake deck, then, had the simple goal of seeing how big an *Ivy Elemental* I could cast.



Final Wrap-up  
 Top 8 Video Archives



How big can an *Ivy Elemental* get?

I started with 4 each of *Ivy Elemental* and *Mirari's Wake* as the core of the deck. With the Wake, I figured more creatures were better and creatures that could produce mana were better still. In went the regular assortment of *Llanowar Elves* and *Birds of Paradise*. I added *Wood Elves* too, since they have some natural synergy with *Mirari's Wake*.

The deck relied heavily on *Mirari's Wake*, so I needed a way to find it. I settled on *Sterling Grove* -- a tutor, Wake protector, and something that fit my colors. More tutable enchantments followed.

In tapping my lip, deep in thought, I pondered another green X-spell. No, not *Hurricane*. *New Frontiers* is a "symmetrically constructive" card I had called "bad" [previously](#). Undoubtedly, *New Frontiers* helped fulfill my *Ivy Elemental* quest by supplying ridiculous mana in combination with *Mirari's Wake* and thinning virtually all land from my library. I added *Heroes' Reunion* in the final slot to keep myself alive long enough to see the deck work.

Here's the result:

**Mister Ivy**

**Main Deck**  
60 cards

11 Forest	4 Birds of Paradise	4 New Frontiers
5 Plains	4 Llanowar Elves	4 Heroes' Reunion
4 Brushland	4 Wood Elves	4 Sterling Grove
2 Sungrass Prairie	4 Ivy Elemental	4 Mirari's Wake
22 lands	16 creatures	3 Armadillo Cloak
		1 Pariah
		1 Aura Shards
		1 Nature's Revolt
		22 other spells

By my calculations, I should be able to bust out an exactly gabillion/gabillion Elemental. Good enough for me. I now like **Ivy Elemental**.

Beaming over my new deck, I started pondering other fun X-creatures to use with **Mirari's Wake**. Not many exist, but wouldn't **Verdeloth the Ancient** be loads of fun? Throw in **Nemata**, **Grove Guardian** and saprolings might very well RULE THE WORLD!

I naturally think in terms of Type 2 decks, but before me was the opportunity to actually cast **Verdant Force** if I made my deck correctly. Armed with as many Extended mana producers as I could muster, I closed my eyes and scribbled down the following:

Green Trees		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
13 Forest	4 Birds of Paradise	4 Skyshroud Claim
4 Savannah	4 Llanowar Elves	4 Saproling Burst
3 Gaea's Cradle	4 Wood Elves	4 Mirari's Wake
20 lands	4 Verdant Force	3 Saproling Symbiosis
	3 Rofellos, Llanowar Emissary	15 other spells
	3 Nemata, Grove Guardian	
	3 Verdeloth the Ancient	
	25 creatures	

My mind was now in Extended. One of the most fun mainstream Extended decks is called Elf-Ball. Elf-Ball loads the board with Elves, including **Priest of Titania**, before casting either **Coat of Arms** or a huge Fireball-like spell to end the game. It sounds silly, but it is a surprisingly effective strategy. It also happens to be a strategy that relies on X-spells and creatures. Wheee!

Unfortunately the idea of rehashing an old deck is fairly boring to me. Anyone can put an Elf-Ball deck together. It would be more fun to take the idea behind Elf-Ball and try it with a different creature type and maybe a different (read: Standard) format. The idea of a Druid-Ball deck, thanks to **Seton**, **Krosan Protector**, made me giggle. Ideas that make me giggle inevitably end up as decks.

The trick with a deck like this, I found, was finding enough druids that could stand on their own before **Seton** or **Mirari's Wake** hit the table. The other important decision was what to use as the X-spell of choice. **Ghitu Fire** sounded great, but I liked the uncounterable, unpreventable power of a kicked **Urza's Rage**...



Druid-Ball		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
8 Forest	4 Diligent Farmhand	4 Urza's Rage
1 Mountain	4 Druid Lyrst	4 Coat of Arms
1 Plains	4 Seton's Scout	4 Mirari's Wake
4 Brushland	4 Werebear	3 Harrow
4 Karplusan Forest	4 Krosan Avenger	15 other spells
2 Rith's Grove	4 Seton, Krosan Protector	
20 lands	1 Rith, the Awakener	
	25 creatures	

To this point, I realized, my decks built around **Mirari's Wake** had a definite green feel. But **Mirari's Wake** is half white, so I wondered if it was possible to make a base-white Wake deck work (don't try saying that five times fast).

The best idea I could muster was to use **Goblin Trenches**, a terrific compliment to **Mirari's Wake**. The problem with the concept was that I now had a 3-color deck based in a color (white) with very few "mana fixers." Using **Hellionaut**, while amusing in a silly sort of way, precluded me from using **Wrath of God** as a way to buy myself time.

The problem got worse when I settled on the idea of **Death Grasp** as the X-spell in the deck. FOUR colors? I had before me a very, very ugly mana base. The result was a deck that probably only worked occasionally and that had exactly three thousand expensive rares in it. In the final analysis, **Goblin Trenches**, **Death Grasp**, and **Necra Sanctuary** are all great ideas but they probably belong in separate decks.

The Great White Globular Mess		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
4 City of Brass	2 Sabertooth Nishoba	4 Orim's Chant
4 Elfhame Palace		4 Sterling Grove
4 Terminal Moraine	2 creatures	4 Death Grasp
8 Plains		4 Goblin Trenches
3 Forest		4 Wrath of God
2 Swamp		4 Mirari's Wake
1 Mountain		3 Necra Sanctuary
		3 Orim's Thunder
		1 Worship
		1 Ancestral Tribute
26 lands		32 other spells

Back to green. It seemed to me that another card might benefit from a Wake deck: **Thornscape Master** (**Sunscape Master** too, but I was done trying a white mana base). I have always liked the *Invasion* "Masters" but their activation costs are a real pain to build decks around. With **Mirari's Wake**, however, a single **Mountain** can provide , or a single **Plains** . Voila! The aforementioned activation cost problem is gone.

The result was a pseudo-Thornscape theme deck that also happened to rely less on **Mirari's Wake** than any deck so far. The Wake, however, spruced up almost every spell in the deck, including **Ghitu Fire**, **Global Ruin**, and the sprouting-generation of **Rith's Charm**...

Thornscape		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
12 Forest	4 Birds of Paradise	4 Rampant Growth
3 Mountain	4 Thornscape Apprentice	4 Rith's Charm
3 Plains	4 Thornscape Battlemage	4 Mirari's Wake
2 Rith's Grove	4 Flametongue Kavu	3 Ghitu Fire
1 Brushland	4 Thornscape Master	3 Global Ruin
1 Karplusan Forest		
	20 creatures	18 other spells
22 lands		

Looking at my work, I had made five decks without a ["lite" deck](#) in the mix. One way to make a more inexpensive deck could be to use the "silver bullet" strategy mentioned [last week](#) and again rely on **Sterling Grove**. But I had used the Grove enough. I decided a good old-fashioned green/white creature deck would work just fine.

Somewhere along the way I figured out that even-cost spells are best in a Wake deck to avoid mana burn. As a result, I looked at common and uncommon 2- and 4-cost creatures. **Charging Troll**, for instance, is 4-cost and also has a regeneration "sink" for excess mana.

I happened upon some other fun tricks when making this deck. **Elephant Ambush** had a playable flashback cost with **Mirari's Wake** on the table. Similarly, **Roar of the Wurm** might actually produce two 7/7 Wurms. **Coalition Honor Guard** couldn't be killed by **Flametongue Kavu** when it was 3/5. And **Beloved Chaplain**... oh, heck, just look at the deck:

Wake Up! (semi- <b>Lite!</b> )		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
13 Forest	4 Llanowar Elves	4 Creeping Mold
10 Plains	4 Beloved Chaplain	4 Elephant Ambush
	4 Wild Mongrel	4 Mirari's Wake
23 lands	4 Llanowar Knight	3 Roar of the Wurm
	3 Coalition Honor Guard	
	3 Charging Troll	15 other spells
	22 creatures	

These are only my *initial* thoughts about **Mirari's Wake**. Some cards lead to an endless number possibilities. If Aaron the Editor let me continue, I might talk about **Snake Basket**; **Goblin Offensive**; **Kangee**, **Aerie Keeper**; or --

you heard it here first -- **FLOCK OF RABID SHEEP!** Oh yeah, smell the power of sheep, baby.

But I can't. Aaron just won't let me. He has this habit of cutt--

-j

---

Jay may be reached at [houseofcards@wizards.com](mailto:houseofcards@wizards.com).



[Discuss](#) on the message boards



[Respond](#) via email



[Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar](#) archive

---

[About Us](#) | [Jobs](#) | [New to the Game?](#) | [Inside Wizards](#) | [Find a Store](#) | [Press](#) | [Help](#) | [Sitemap](#)

---

© 1995-2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
[Terms of Use](#) - [Privacy Statement](#)

