Phil’s notes on Hino Rei/Sailormars

**Hino Rei** (Voice actor: Tomizawa Michie)

Rei goes to a different school from the rest of the sailor senshi (a catholic junior high school) and lives with her Grandfather at a Shinto shrine (Hikawa Jinja). She is a Shinto priestess-in-training and can thus perform exorcisms and fire readings. She is also mildly clairvoyant/empathic and possesses a good understanding of human nature. An only child, her mother died when she was very young and her father is a politician with little time for her.

Her passion, frankness and self-confidence make Rei popular among many viewers, but she also has a rather quick temper. Rei tends to wear more fashionable outfits compare to her four friends (pink overalls notwithstanding). She is a good singer, skis well, and has many dreams for her future, although she will most likely become either a Shinto priestess or a full-time sailor-suited soldier of love and justice.

A surprising note (especially to viewers who have only watched the English dub) is that Rei and Usagi are the closest friends among the senshi. Their frequent teasing and insulting are testament to their confidence in the strength of their friendship. Despite all of Rei’s insults, Usagi frequently consults Rei for advice and holds a high regard for Rei’s opinion. There are hints that Rei is a big anime (animation) and manga (comic book) fan, and Usagi frequently visits her to read her comics. The rest of the senshi actually get work done at their study group meetings at Rei’s home.

Although Rei had serious issues with Usagi’s/Sailormoon’s competence in the first season of Sailormoon, and Rei once dated Mamoru, the Japanese TV series consistently hints that Usagi and Rei have become best friends. Rescriptings in the English script have given the North American Rei (Raye) a veneer of real animosity towards Usagi. Note that in the original Bishoujo Senshi Sailormoon manga series, Usagi’s best friend is Aino Minako (Sailorvenus).

Rei has an admirer named Kumada Yuuichirou, who gave up a comfortable life with his family to work in the shrine to be closer to Rei. Unfortunately, Yuuichirou has not really stepped up to the batter’s plate when it comes to their relationship, but Rei is aware of Yuuichirou’s affection.

**Sailormars**

Sailormars yields the power of fire, and her two attacks are Fire Soul (single blast) and Burning Mandala (multiple bolts). She has rather impractical footwear for combat but her powers, combined with her aggressiveness, makes her possibly more dangerous than Sailorjupiter. As a soldier, she is professional and dedicated to doing her job, especially when it comes to defending Sailormoon. Sailormars is physically tenacious and tends to struggle on, even when all the others have fallen.

**A note about 'Akuryo Taisan' (Evil begone)**

As a Shinto princess, Rei can chant and use an exorcism ward (called an ofuda) to keep possessed people under control. She can use this skill without having to transform into Sailormars.
Phil’s notes on Aino Minako/Sailorvenus

Aino Minako (Voice actor: Fukami Rica)
Minako lives in Tokyo with her mother, father and Artemis (the white cat) whom she met long before meeting Usagi or Luna. She is a real bundle of energy, having a strong interest in sports and executing elaborate plans to track down good-looking men — some remark that she is the most boy-crazy of the five. She also excels in performance arts, frequently participating in singing and movie auditions in pursuit of her glamorous ambitions. Having lived in England before, she has the best English of the five friends.

Minako passionately cares for her friends, doing all she can to help them when they are ill or depressed. Unfortunately, Minako becomes more Usagi-like from the second season onwards, thus her good intentions often result in disaster. Minako frequently misquotes proverbs, to hilarious effect, and occasionally lapses into deep resentment over the fact that she is the soldier of love (ai no senshi) without a boyfriend.

Sailorvenus and Sailor V
The identity and powers of Sailorvenus is a little less cohesive than the rest of the sailor senshi. This is partially because Aino Minako, as a character, first appeared in her own manga (comic book) series that was called Codename: Sailor V in 1991. A year later, the Sailormoon manga was released, and Sailor V became Sailorvenus and joined the rest of the crew. However, since Sailor V is almost a proto-Sailormoon, Sailorvenus uses ‘Crescent Beam’, which seems more appropriate for Sailormoon.

However, most of the crossover issues are neatly resolved in the series. Minako met Artemis in England long before any of the others met Luna in Japan, and Artemis convinced Minako that she was the Moon Princess. This could have been Artemis’ mistake or deliberate plan, but the false identity served to distract the enemies in the TV series from the real Moon Princess, Sailormoon. Before meeting Sailormoon, Minako honed her skills as the crime-fighting Sailor V in England. Because of this, Sailorvenus is the most combat-experienced of the senshi and is technically the leader over Sailormars, Sailormercury and Sailorjupiter. *

In Sailor V’s English career, she teamed up with a policewoman named Katarina. Minako was also in love with a man named Alan. However, in her final mission, Katarina saw Sailor V dash into a garage that later exploded. Sailor V actually survived the explosion, but from a corner, witnessed Alan comforting Katarina who was mourning for Sailor V/Minako. She suddenly realized that Alan was in fact in love with Katarina, and decided to leave the two of them alone.

Sailorvenus is a competent and responsible leader, dedicated to protecting the Moon Princess. However, she made many sacrifices in her personal life for the sake of her senshi role, so it is ironic that she represents Venus, the Goddess of Love, and the anime occasionally implies that she is aware of this irony. The planet Venus is associated with gold in Japanese Kanji, and the ‘Venus Love-Me Chain’ happens to be one of the most versatile attacks/defenses/generally-useful-skills among the senshi’s powers.

* Sailormoon should not be fighting because she is a princess! In addition, a klutz and a liability in combat...
Phil’s notes on Kino Makoto/Sailorjupiter

Kino Makoto (Voice actor: Shinohara Emi)
Makoto (Mako-chan, to her friends) is taller and more physically intimidating than the others are. When she transferred to Usagi’s school, the rumor was that her previous school expelled her for fighting. Makoto may or may not have been violent, but there was another compelling reason for switching schools: Makoto’s boyfriend decided to leave her. Although she tries to forget him throughout the whole series, she consistently remarks how certain people remind her of her ‘sempai’ (schoolmate, a term of respect).

Her parents died in an aircraft accident and she now lives alone. Although she has adapted well to the solitary lifestyle, she is sensitive to others’ loneliness and normally notices first when any of her friends are upset. As a nurturing ‘big-sister’, she extends a lot of encouragement to Usagi and the others. She is approximately the same age as the others, though.

Although she attends the same school as Usagi, Ami and Minako, she retains her old school uniform because new school uniforms do not fit her. Opening credits often show Makoto chasing after butterflies, which we can read in a number of ways. Either she is a child of nature (reinforced by her powers as Sailorjupiter), or that she has not quite come out of her chrysalis. In the very last season, the opening credits have a butterfly landing on Makoto instead of her chasing after it.

Makoto is good at cooking and housekeeping, partially due to her solitary lifestyle and partly because she fears that she may be too ‘masculine’ to attract a man. In fact, ‘Makoto’ is traditionally a male name. In one episode, though, Makoto does mention that she has larger breasts than the others do. For the English dub, the reference changed to Makoto having ‘more talent’. In the Sailormoon Internet fan community, ‘talent’ is now analogous to ‘breast size’. As for real talents, Makoto is also a capable ice-skater, and athletes often ask her to join various sports teams.

Makoto’s hand-to-hand combat skills are impressive, comprising of judo/jujitsu throws and boxing punches. She is also particularly aggressive when incensed and will often charge with her fists if any of her friends are hurt. However, Aino Minako is more accomplished at reversals and kicks, and Makoto’s relative inexperience with fighting villains and her aggression render Sailorjupiter vulnerable to cool-headed enemies.

Sailorjupiter
Jupiter’s Greek counterpart, Zeus, wields lightning bolts. Thus, Sailorjupiter has the power of lightning, although ‘Sparkling Wide Pressure’ is closer to Iron Man’s repulsors. In later seasons, Sailorjupiter uses ‘Jupiter Oak Evolution’, which refers to the god Jupiter’s oracle of the oak. The Kanji for ‘Jupiter’ also reads as ‘Wood Star’ and ‘Kino’ means ‘of wood’.

Sailorjupiter’s are typically less accurate than those of Sailorvenus or Sailormars. However, like her punches, her attacks are extremely powerful and direct hits can dispatch enemies without Sailormoon’s intervention. In order to use her powers, a little lightning rod appears on her tiara, generating the electricity she needs. Thus, she does not have to use her hands to attack: in the poignant finale of the first season, Sailorjupiter used ‘Supreme Thunder’ to electrocute both herself and the enemy restraining her. Sailorjupiter is so protective that she often jumps in the way of attacks meant for Sailormoon, but her resilience is as strong as her penchant for self-sacrifice.
Phil’s notes on Mizuno Ami/Sailormercury

**Mizuno Ami** (Voice actor: Hisakawa Aya)
Ami has an I.Q. of 300, and is easily the most intelligent of the five girls. She excels in all her school subjects, driven by her ambition to be a doctor, like her mother. She also spares time to help her friends in their schoolwork (only Ami and Rei seem to understand their schoolwork to a comfortable level), even if it means taking time from her own study schedule. Ami lives with her mother in a mansion in Tokyo, and enjoys chess, reading, swimming and eating sandwiches.

Mizuno Ami seems to be a more popular character in Asia than in the United States. This may partly be due to her North American version using too many multisyllabic words, but the differences in audience reaction may also be cultural. Ami is what the perfect Japanese female student should be — traditional, demure, punctual, sensitive and devoted to her studies. She also experiences a lot of stress due to the high expectations placed on her grades, and many Asian students find it easy to identify with her situation.

Ami gets along well with Mamoru, as he is almost as intelligent and has done well for himself in academia. Thus, he understands the stresses she is enduring, and by being older, he can offer sensible advice. She also has an almost-boyfriend in Urawa Ryo, an intelligent boy with psychic powers, aware of Ami’s senshi identity. However, he moved away shortly after she met him, although apparently they do keep in touch. Ami occasionally makes Freudian slips (in contrast to Minako’s malapropisms) revealing a repressed fascination with all sorts of romantic relationships.

She was the first of the four to meet Usagi and gets on exceptionally well with Luna. Ami’s introduction to the series was a welcome relief to the constant crying of Usagi, and for most situations, she is the most reasonable and sensible of the group. However, her compassion and unwillingness to trouble others with her problems does reveal low self-esteem, and she has problems dealing with relationships. In *Ami-chan no Hatsukoi*, an exclusive mini-movie on Ami *, she demonstrates a particularly violent reaction to receiving a love letter.

**Sailormercury**
The planet Mercury has the Kanji ‘Water Star’, thus Sailormercury’s powers all use water. ** Her powers are primarily defensive and create a dense fog (Shabon Spray) or a huge block of ice (Shine Aqua Illusion). More importantly, she is the chief strategist and uses her Luna-given minicomputer and visor to gather and analyse vital intelligence. Sailormoon usually takes the credit for victories, but Sailormercury’s planning keeps everyone alive until Sailormoon has time to attack.

Visually, Sailormercury’s hairstyle is more difficult to draw than the others’ hair and animators keep choosing ridiculous (constipated?) poses for her. Although she is supposed to be as attractive as the other senshi, and her hairstyle is reasonable for real life, the general framing of her face does not always flatter Ami/Sailormercury. However, the animators of the show pay a lot of attention to Sailormercury’s few action scenes (even the high-kicking Sailorvenus’ movements are less complex), accentuating a dance-like grace in all her physical sequences.

* Ami is the only character to have a mini-movie — although the producers planned to produce one for every character, the series ended before they started on any other little character pieces.

** Neptune’s power is of the sea, not of water.