

Preface

The beginning of this decade was also the beginning of a new era when RHIC opened up a new vista in the physics of dense matter. The major theoretical insights gained soon after were reviewed in the previous volume of this series. Now as the decade draws to its end and as RHIC moves on to its mature phase, it is remarkable that new discoveries are still being made and the theoretical understanding shows no sign of reaching a saturation point. The new ideas that continue to spring up are to be tested by future experiments in the next energy domain offered at LHC. A notable claim that has been made is that RHIC has produced the most perfect fluid achievable, which the cover picture of this volume is intended to symbolize. As a springboard to LHC, it is an opportune moment to make an objective assessment of what has been learnt and what to expect next.

We are happy to have assembled a group of experts who have all made significant contributions to the various aspects of the subject on many fronts, although regretfully we were not able to cover some fields that are also important. To all the contributors we are very grateful for their time and energy spent in giving the community comprehensive descriptions of the present status of QGP at what will be an auspicious beginning of the next era.

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