

Jan Polder (Middelharnis, NL) owns super marathon pigeons with his 'Victoria' dynasty based on the Jan Aarden strain

By: Calvin Gall (Marathon Masters)
calvin.gall@mail.wlc.edu

Introduction to his family of pigeons and 'Victoria'

Jan Polder has been a name to reckon with for more than 30 years in the International long distance races and has done this for 30 years with the same basic pigeons, the strain: Jan Aarden. The base began with 2 children of "de Marseille" obtained from Jac. Steketee and a granddaughter of the world famous "Witbuik" of Bas Batenburg and Son (now known as Batenburg van de Merwe). By crossing these with each other they produced countless top racers on the marathon flights up to 1200 kilometers (700 miles). Jan won two national victories at his loft, with 1st National St. Vincent won by "Victoria" and 1st National Marseille by "Annemarie," and a third national victory was just missed this year by "t Zacht Bont," which had to settle for 2nd National Marseille. The number of national top 10 prizes that has been achieved over the years is impressive, as is the prize percentage achieved in these races, which generally exceeds 50%. These performances result in many championships and titles in large competition.

In 2005 Victoria won 1^e National St. Vincent at a distance of 1000 kilometers (621 miles) against 32.149 birds. Victoria was a phenom (crossing of Batenburg x Steketee, pure Jan Aarden family). A year before her national victory she won 7^e National St. Vincent (S2) against 6.385 pigeons. Thanks to well calculated inbreeding, Jan succeeded in building up a breeding loft that is unparalleled. For each pair in his loft, one of the partners is either a child, grandchild or inbred to Victoria. By crossing these pigeons they produced a lot of champions now only in Jan's own loft, but also with other fanciers. The 'Victoria' family is now responsible for 8 (Inter)National victories and 5 (Inter)National 1st ace pigeons. An example of how successful the Victoria line is at Jan's own loft is illustrated below:

1st generation 'Victoria,' 1st and 7th National St. Vincent

2nd generation "Superbreeder 329" son of Victoria and father and grandfather of top pigeons such as 'Dieseltje,' 'First Flirt,' and 'Black Warrior'

3rd generation, 'Dieseltje,' won 11 prizes in the Marathon races, of which 4 from Barcelona and was 1st Ace Pigeon Marathon. She is the mother of 'Black Warrior'

4th generation: 'Black Warrior,' 1^e National Ace Pigeon over 2017 and 2018. He was the only Dutch pigeon that managed to win 6 prizes out of 6 races. This year, in 2019 he still won another prize, 39 National St. Vincent.

Just goes to show that good blood never lies.

System flown and preparation for a long distance race

Jan Polder races with 36 widowhood cocks and 12 hens in the marathon races. The hens were coupled with 12 yearling cocks that were prepared for the marathon races and only were tested from Bergerac, 815 km (506 miles) as their test in their first year. For his own use, around 60 youngsters are bred that are trained out to 225 kilometers (140 miles) as youngsters. The breeding loft consists of 14 couples.

The widowhood cocks train twice a day for one hour, the lofts are closed up, except for the last 10 minutes, during which they can fly in and out freely. The nest pigeons can fly in and out for 2 hours in the afternoon and are forced to train for 1.5 hours later in the evening.

Before the long distance races start Jan tries to enter them in races every week starting at the end of April. He also prefers that they have at least one 500-600 kilometer race (310-370 miles) under their belt. Then he will give them 1 week of rest from the races before entering them in an important long distance competition.

In regards to his feeding system during the season he gives them 1/3 barley, 1/3 non-hulled rice and 1/3 of a Versele Laga mixture. Then 3 days before basketing they get rich and fat mixtures with small and fat/oil seeds and peanuts.

The lofts

The racing loft is 10 x 2 meter (32 ft x 6 ½ ft) and is divided into 4 sections. 3 for the widowers and 1 for the nest pigeons. Then another loft is 5 x 2 meter (18 ft x 6 ½ ft) half of which is for the youngsters and the other half for the breeding pigeons. This loft is equipped with an aviary in the front. There is a thick layer of pea straw on the bottom of the lofts, which is refreshed only once a year. This brings warmth and a cozy atmosphere to the lofts. Pigeons really have to feel at home in their loft, Jan says. Perches are added or removed on a regular basis to increase motivation and to stimulate attachment to their territory.

Medications and Supplements used

The young pigeons are vaccinated against pox and then the compulsory PMV vaccination is done every year. During the racing season the pigeons are checked over by Dr. Henk de Weerd and his advice is then put into action. No medicines are given during the season, unless there is reason to do so. The pigeons are supported by the supplements from Travipharma, whose product Forte Vita is given all year round 1 day a week.

List of achievements and his current super star 'Black Warrior'

- 1st National St. Vincent
- 1st National Marseille
- 2nd National Marseille
- 3rd National Barcelona
- 3rd National St. Vincent

3rd National Dax
5th National St. Vincent
5th National Marseille
7th National St. Vincent
7th National Dax
8th National Bergerac
8th National Perpignan
8th National St. Vincent
9th National Marseille
1st International Ace Pigeon Pau over 5 years with "Husky"
1st International Ace Pigeon Pau over 5 years with "Black Magic Woman"
1st National Ace Pigeon Barcelona over 3 years with "De Witstaart"

And with his current super star "Black Warrior" Jan won:

1st National Ace Pigeon over all International Races in 2017-2018

who was the only bird that won 6 prizes in marathon races over these 2 years, remarkable!

Goal for the future

Jan's goal for his future in the pigeon sport is to enjoy it and have pleasure in the races, but also to win a 1st International! He has come close in the past winning 2nd, 5th and 7th International, now he sets his sights on 1st International!

The secret to Jan's success

The secret to Jan Polder's success is a hard selection on natural health and performance. Pigeons that never get in the right form are removed, as well as pigeons that are struggling with health and those who do not get the same average performance as their loft mates. In addition, Jan is always looking for better pigeons. His firm conviction is that this yields better results than the search pigeon fanciers have for all kinds of supplements that would make their pigeons fly faster. This has resulted in Jan's breeding loft now consisting of pigeons, as described earlier, closely related to Victoria, which are paired to children of top pigeons from other families, often children of national winners.

In addition, Jan spends a lot of time among his pigeons. Because of this he knows all his pigeons and their behavior.

According to Jan, the pigeon sport is really not as complicated as some people suggest. Jan's advice is to keep it simple, because the more complicated you make it, the greater the chance that mistakes will be made.

Many fanciers make use of Jan's knowledge and when possible he provides fanciers with advice. If you have any questions you can send him an email at j.cpolder@hetnet.nl