

PONDEROSA U.K. PIGEONS IN AUSTRALIA

By John Hofman – written in 2008

The entire first shipment of imported pigeons into Australia were bred at Ponderosa U.K. Stud in Weymouth and arrived early in 1990. This was after a 40+ year ban of importing birds into Australia.

A variety of strains were in the shipment and included Janssen-Arendonk, DeKlak, Dr Linssen, Achiel Leus, Cobut, Desmet Matthys, Jan Aarden, Van Wanroy, Van der Wegen, Stichelbaut & Delbar. The Janssen's made up about 35% of the shipment. All strains were an instant success in Australia with the Janssen's dominating.

Birds in this first shipment went mainly to owners in Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth but it didn't take long for their blood to be disseminated to all parts of Australia.

When I started the Ponderosa Australia Stud in Adelaide, about 50% of the Janssen stock originated from Ponderosa U.K. Stud and 50% from Greenfield Stud in Holland and I would say that top results from their progeny would have been divided 50/50 over the years, i.e., stock bred at Ponderosa U.K. produced results in about the same ratio as stock bred at Greenfield Stud, Holland.

Bill Walford and Stan Ferguson of Adelaide each imported a Janssen from Ponderosa U.K in the first shipment. They were a brother & sister, of Goede Jaarling 372 x Racketman lines x Famous 05 lines. Bill's was a cock & Stan's was a hen. Both pigeons were prolific producers whose progeny produced winners and countless placings at Federation level in Adelaide. Bill Walford to this day maintains that his Janssen cock GB 88C 13530 was the best pigeon he had ever owned and no doubt Stan would say the same about his hen. This is quite a statement since both of these men had been in the sport for at least 40 years each before these pigeons came into their hands.

Ponderosa U.K. Stud was responsible for introducing the "Marilyn" Janssen lines into this country. In the early shipments they sent over a couple of direct children & several grand children of this legendary hen and their progeny scored big time Australia wide.

One notable grand daughter called "Blue Moon" won 1st Fed Victorian Homing Association 500 miles for Grenville Evans. She was the only bird home on the day in the Federation, arriving in the dark around 10.00 pm.

Another was a grand daughter of "Boniek" who won 1st Fed VHA young birds 200 miles for Malcolm Staley of Melbourne. The sire was a son of "Boniek" & the dam was a grand daughter of "James Bond".

A couple of other top results that come to mind:- 1st Fed SAHPA 400 miles for Brian Fretter of Adelaide. The sire of this hen was "Fergus", from a son of the "Schone Mallie" x the Stan Ferguson hen mentioned above.

1st Fed SAHPA 330 miles for the late Raymond Delaye of Adelaide was of Janssen bloodlines from Ponderosa Australia via Ponderosa U.K. Stud. Raymond came to Australia many years ago from Belgium and was quite an old man when he got his hands on the Janssen's. For years prior to that he had little success as he just could not come to terms with the Australian pigeons. Once he got the Janssens he suddenly had almost instant success from 150 to 550 miles and in the first couple of years won numerous high SAHPA Fed placings including 2nd & 3rd from hard all day races and overnight races from Coober Pedy & Mt. Willoughby. I remember him coming to me one day and saying, "John, these are the pigeons I was used to in Belgium. I know I can win an Association race with them, I just hope I can live long enough to achieve it". He accomplished his life long dream in 2001 from Glendambo and raced very successfully until his death three or four years later.

Carlos Vincente of Melbourne won 1st Fed VHA young bird derby 250 miles with a Janssen and Rob Wilson won 1st SAHPA Temora 510 miles, only about 20 birds home on the day, with a Delbar.

Today the Fed winners and Fed placings taken by birds bred down from Ponderosa U.K. stock would fill a book and their progeny are winning down & down again.

Greg Hamilton of Adelaide has recently won the coveted SAHPA Aggregate Points Trophy for 2008 with the majority of his placings being won by Janssen progeny and Van Loon progeny which originated from Ponderosa U.K. Stud & Greenfield Stud via Ponderosa Australia when it was in Adelaide.

The last full shipment to come to Australia via Ponderosa U.K. & Greenfield Stud was in 1998. Since then only limited numbers of Ponderosa birds have arrived on composite shipments as many Australian fanciers seek other sources for improvement. But it is the Ponderosa Janssens, Van Loons & Van Breemens that still appear to be doing most of the winning in Australia. It is the opinion of many fanciers that the Ponderosa pigeons that arrived in shipments between 1990 and 1998 are by far the best birds ever to come to Australia.

Many other strains from overseas lofts & studs have been imported over the last ten years including Van Reet, Koopmans, Herbots, Flor Engels, Jos Thone, Vandenabeele, Casaert, Houbens, Soontjens, De Weerd, Heremans-Ceusters and a whole list of unpronounceable names but I think, with perhaps the exception of the De Weerds, and perhaps it's a bit too early to make a call on the Heremans-Ceusters just yet, most of these strains have produced the odd top fed spot or two but all have paled into oblivion against the consistency of the Ponderosa Janssens, DeKlaks & Van Loons.

Apart from the above mentioned Ponderosa strains that arrived in the first shipment in 1990, other strains that came in subsequent shipments from Ponderosa U.K. were Van Loon, Van Breeman, Meuleman, Tournier, Berlengee, Wim Muller, Cattrysse, Verstraete, Broeckx-Van Hees and VIP.

Written in November 2008.