

## Merv Hatch - Warracknabeal S.A.D. Winner & Slowest Winning Velocity - 25923 SA06 BCH

Merv has been racing pigeons since he was de-mobbed from the Army in 1946 and is now in his 89<sup>th</sup> year. Pigeons have obviously been his passion for many years, and still are today. His performance highlights include winning four SAHPA Young Bird Derbies and another 10 SAHPA races. In 2007 he flew the Warracknabeal SAD and recorded his 14<sup>th</sup> SAHPA race win. His other SAD wins include two from Maryborough and little Topar. Merv has raced for the last 27 years in the Adelaide Hills based at Mt Barker, but has now moved to Strathalbyn. He uses twenty pairs to breed some 100/120 young each year and adds two year olds from the previous year into his race team of around 120/140 birds.



The Palmer Busschaert's, the Rob Wilson Busschaert's, and Dordin's from Ray McDonald of Pt Augusta make up the backbone of Merv's loft, but Merv also has some Rob Wilson Delbar's. He still has four SAHPA winners in his loft - Rob Wilson's Marla winner (Merv bred the bird), Hay, Maryborough and last years Warracknabeal hen. The Warracknabeal hen was bred from the Marla hen.

He loft flies the race birds once a day for about an hour, but doesn't mind if they come down early, and they are fed in to peas, wheat and some barley and canola. Race birds get fed twice a day and vitamins are provided twice a week. Young birds are weaned into the main loft with the remainder of last year's cocks and hens. Merv has been well served by the cocks - at least half of his SAHPA wins have been with young cocks.

Loft flying training starts about 6 weeks before racing starts and as long as the birds are ranging well he starts tossing at about 5 kms, then gradually gets them out to 80kms for the first race. He likes to have completed about 10 tosses by then. During club racing he tosses once a week

to 80kms, then after the SAD he generally stops tossing and loft flies. He does not use medication during the year.

Breeding birds are fed peas and wheat from individual hoppers, and the race birds are bred from birds specially chosen for stock, and from the best race birds of the previous year. He likes to line breed until performance slows, then outcrosses within the groups of birds he has in the loft.

Merv would like to see a single line of flight. He feels that this would assist returns and provide good consistent racing.

25923 SA06 BCH

