

Portland Ten Bird Special Winner

Southern Lofts (Paul Springett) won the Portland 10 Bird Special.

The breeding of Paul's 10 Bird Special winner is a Dunstan Cock from Ron Mountstephens sale and a stock hen down from John Jarzabek's Goodger cock and a hen from Mark Bruggemann's Lawson blood.

Paul became interested in pigeon racing as a boy in Sydney and when he moved to Adelaide in 1983 Phil Vale from the Oakland's club lived across the road and that sparked it all off. He started racing in 1986.

The method Paul uses to pair up his birds is best to best and the others are paired to retain blood lines.

Paul does not motivate his birds but he likes to keep them healthy and fit and sometimes will pair up birds in the nest boxes for the long races.

He medicates though the race season depending on what is happening with the birds but in general he uses Turbosole, Resfite, Triple X and Megamix.

The birds are wormed prior to and during the race season. He uses S76 every month or so. Before racing starts he uses tablets to cover all worms through to tapeworm then goes back to the S76.

He thinks that grit and minerals play a big part in a pigeon's diet. They must have good clean and dry grit, a good quality mineral powder and calcium grit as a minimum, a good vitamin and mineral supplement is essential to balance out the diet. He has used probiotics like Yukult from the supermarket on the odd occasion but in general doesn't use it. He uses a Garlic oil mix on the feed.

Paul has a video microscope that he uses if the birds are not right, but does not get too hung up on it. Loft smell and droppings first thing in the morning should tell him most of what he needs to do.

Training starts as soon as the birds are working well around the loft and the majority are through the moult. Depending on judgment the first toss can be as little as 30 kms and up to 125 kms but they have to be doing everything well and the weather has to be with them.

There is no preference to racing cocks or hens and he has good results from them both.

Paul thinks drug testing is necessary, this is something that has to be done in today's racing to keep the sport clean or at least the threat that it could be done.

He pairs up as soon as his commitments let him but as soon or near the end of the race season as he can. Some years he has not done this until Christmas day. He breeds around 120 to 130 babies.

"Where do you see the sport in ten years time? Do you have any thoughts on the politics and management of the sport?" There are two ways to answer this (1) where do I see the sport in ten years? OR (2) where would I *like* to see the sport in ten years? The answer to this is something that I will be taking up with a letter to the SAHPA COM. But I will be coming up with suggestions not just the problems!