

THE JACOBIN



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It is said that the Jacobin is a difficult breed but that is certainly not true, as long as given a roomy loft and adequate nest boxes the Jacobin is no more demanding than many other breeds. Jacobin are also best given large aviaries in which they may be active and achieve the best fertility. In such a setting they will give years of pleasure and show at their best to admiring friends, visitors and neighbours.

The Jacobin is one of the most decorative and regal of the Structure Pigeons, a breed that appeals to everybody, eye-catching with it's Stately Posture and amazing feather formation of 'Hood, Chain and Mane'

Above: Black tiger female, breed 2005, breeder/owner: P. Smeyers.

Right: Young red female, in moulting time, but showing a nice upright stand, breeder/owner: P. Smeyers.

Introduction

The Jacobin has been known for a very long time. As early as the 16th Century pigeons were mentioned that were undoubtedly the forerunners of today's Jacobin.

They were presumed to have been brought to Europe from Asia by Dutch sailors. Looking at the old drawings we can see that the modern bird has evolved considerably since then. Monk marked and muffed birds are mentioned and there are also paintings of self coloured birds.





Above: Some males in the December sunshine, in one of Patrick's lofts.

Below: Black male, breed 2005, breeder/owner: P. Smeyers.



Up to 1800 – 1850 the birds did not have the feather structure they have today.

From 1850 onwards, due to selective breeding, they progressively became larger and with more elaborate feather structure, aided by increased knowledge of genetics and better nutrition.

There have been several diverse theories concerning what was the 'normal' Jacobin during this period.

In North America and Canada, compared to the European Jacobin, the birds are longer and with a larger feather formation, which up until a decade or so ago caused

some problems with the 'tightness' of the feather formation and with weak 'hairy' feather structure. With selective breeding this has been corrected and at the moment the greatest difference is in the overall length of the birds.



The average English, Scottish and Australian Jacobin also differ slightly from the European birds, being longer, more upright in stance and with enormous volume of feather structure.

Left: Two black males, father (left) and the son (right), breeder/owner: P. Smeyers.



Right: Red male, could have mane, hood and chain feathers better closed at this photo.

**Breeder: Bernd Wanke, Germany.
Owner: P. Smeyers.**

The European Jacobin is wanted a bit shorter. Here, thick bodied birds are regularly seen, where-as most N-American Jacobin excel in slender, refined, upright bodies. So it is understandable that by selectively mating these birds from around the World it can result in the best genetic combination by mating together birds that correct each others faults. That is what has happened since the late 1980's, many American and Canadian birds being imported into Europe for crossing with their stock.



Above:
Some females, mainly
breed 2005.
Breeder/Owner:
P. Smeyers.



Left:
Look at Patrick's
aviary.

In the Middle-East all types may still be found as Jacobin have been imported for many years and it is possible to see 'Muffed' Jacobin in many colours.

Right:
Young kite female, with
an extraordinary deep
bronze colour.
Breeder/Owner:
P. Smeyers.



Description of the breed

Type and Carriage is the most important feature of the Jacobin, the feather formation comes second, as although the feather structure is a hallmark of this breed, it is the overall balance and carriage that complete the picture. Markings and eye colour are of less importance.

Right: Top view young kite male.
Clint Robertson, Canada.

Just imagine a Jacobin in the most beautiful colour and sheen, clear pearl coloured eyes (which you have to look for between the feather structure), but with a very poor upright stance . . . no breeder or judge would be impressed!

In general appearance the Jacobin should epitomise grace and elegance, this is enhanced by a slender body and long neck to carry the beautiful feather structure of 'Hood, Chain and Mane'. Complete this picture with the correct colour and without a doubt it could be a real show winner!



Left:
Just separated young three colour (kite bronze tiger). Breeder/Owner: Patrick Smeyers.

Type and stance

The description of type and stance is not as easy as you would think. According to the Standard the Jacobin is 'medium' size, but what is 'medium'? Not too big or too small, but how to relate that to a breed that has a relatively long body and neck? It is best interpreted as having the best proportions between body size and shape. Seen from above, the body is elongated wedge shape, the shoulders being the broadest point across. The forepart of the body is carried upright

with the long neck carried high. Seen from the side, the body underline, from the legs to the tail is carried almost horizontally. The line of the back will therefore appear slightly hollowed, the long feathers on the back not appearing in perfect alignment all of the time.



Left: About 10 weeks old females. Breeder/Owner: P. Smeyers

Below: Young red female, in moulting time. Breeder/Owner: P. Smeyer.



In spite of its height, the Jacobin should not give the impression of an overlarge bird. Most important is that at the moment of judging that the bird 'shows', ideally stretching upwards and standing on 'tip-toes'. To do this the bird needs strong legs and good leg setting, ideally as near to the front of the body as possible. Birds that will not stand up and show lack any elegance, no matter the wealth of feather structure.



Left: Mealy female. Breeder/Owner: P. Smeyers.

Below: Opal, breeder/owner: Zuhair Haji, Bahrain



Right: Red male on the nest.



**Left: Some young black tiger, about three weeks old.
Breeder/owner: P. Smeyer.**

Neck and feather formation

How should the feather structure be judged?

1. Feather length
2. Feather quality
3. The shape of the Hood, Chain and Main
4. When standing, is the feather structure held properly without gaps or weak points?
5. The shape and position of the Rosettes
6. The volume and density of the feather structure

Good feather structure will only show well on a neck of the correct length. Breeding Jacobin with necks as long as possible while still maintaining correct overall balance, that is the Art of it! The feathers should be as long as possible while still maintaining correct 'structure'.

Both sides of the Neck have a rosette from which the feathers radiate to form a perfect structure. Ideally the rosette should be circular, but in practice they are often oval or elongated. Another regularly seen problem is a 'flattened' top to the whole structure.

The complete structure is split into three parts; mane, hood and chain. It is very important that each part has the correct feather structure; smooth, broad, tight and in sufficient volume.

The tips of some feathers are not always as well closed as is liked but that is not a serious failing, as you cannot expect such long feathering to have enough barbs to guarantee strength at the tips, although this should not result in a loose, 'hairy' structure.

MANE

These are the feathers growing backwards from the rosette and will only 'flow' properly if the rosette is correctly formed.

An often seen fault is a 'crossed' mane (when viewing from behind, instead of just meeting at the tips from either side the feathers 'cross/overlap') This can be caused by having too many or comparatively short feathers. Another fault is a 'break' in the mane, generally caused by too few, or weak feathers or a poorly constructed rosette base.

HOOD

The hood is formed by those feathers that sweep up from just behind the head and forward to a line even with the eyes, so when viewed from above creating the effect of a hood.

The correct length of the feathers is easily checked by carefully stroking the feather forward; they should reach or even pass the tip of the beak, if they do then these are the correct length.

CHAIN

This is formed by the feathers that radiate from the rosette, sweeping forward and down as far as possible to the chest. Seen from the front, it will cover the neck completely but the head of the bird is clearly visible, with the edges of the chain just meeting on the neck and top of the breast. A fault is when the feathers do not meet at the same point.



There is a genetic contradiction in breeding good Jacobin;

we want as much feather structure as possible, no matter what effect this has on other parts of the body. Long feathers on the breast and belly are little problem but tail and wing feathers should not become too long or the bird will look unbalanced.

Left: Just separated Jacobins and Fantails. Breeder/owner: P. Smeyers.

Right: Red and black males, almost finished moulting. Breeder/owner: P. Smeyers.





Left: Excellent black male,
breeder/owner: P. Smeyers.

Below: White male, some 10 weeks
old, breeder/owner: P. Smeyers.



Colour and markings

Except from the self whites, there are two more basic markings recognised at the Jacobin, i.e. monk and tiger.

Monk

A monk marked pigeon is coloured, with white tail feathers, 6 to 10 white primaries and a white head marking. The head marking may be viewed as a horizontal line stretching from the beak across the head running through or just below the centre of the eye to the back of the head. The tail marking is strict without any coloured feathers in the white part or reverse.

Tiger

According to the standard, the tiger marked Jacobin has a pattern of 2 white feathers to 1 coloured feather, spread on average over the whole bird, except from the white feathers as described in the monk marking. This is the ideal marking, but it will never show in practice. So we are satisfied with a white ground colour with as much coloured feathers and equal spread as possible. The biggest obstacle is the marking on the breast which is hard to obtain. When the breast marking is correct, there will be too much colour on the wing shields and reverse, when the feather formation and wing shields have a correct marking, there will be hardly any colour in the breast.

Colours

Except for 'Self' Whites the colours recognised in the European Standard is rather restricted

- Self White
- Monk in Black, Red, Yellow, Blue (with or without bars) Dilute Blue/Silver, Mealy, Cream.
- Almond, Kite.
- Tiger in Black, Red, Yellow

On the other hand, there are Jacobin in magnificent colours in N America and the Middle-East. In these countries they have drastically increased the colour range of the Jacobin by crossing with various breeds.

This enlarging of the colours available benefits the hobby and I would like to put forward the argument for a faster recognition of accepted colours in the Jacobin (and other breeds).

You may find Jacobin in good too excellent quality in Brown, Brown Barred, Almond, Dun, Andalusian, Indigo, Opal, Reduced etc. etc.

Breeding

The Jacobin is not difficult to keep or breed. With a roomy loft and aviary you will soon have plenty of young about.

The breed demands a large, dry and airy loft with plenty of sunlight. For a floor covering a thick layer of white/silver sand, which can be raked and sieved regularly is fine.

A nest compartment 30 to 50 inches long by 15 high and 20 deep is ideal. For a nest a box is best 7x7x3 inches deep; this depth prevents the young being dragged out of the box during the first weeks of life as they can become entangled in the long breast feathers of the parents. You can use a plastic bucket cut across and the 'ring' placed over a conventional nest bowl to achieve the same effect.



Breed compartments at Patrick Smeyer's.

Are you interested in the Jacobin, or do you want to exchange views, or have new ideas or any comments please contact me:

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