



The Gorguero

a Spanish Pouter of noble birth

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Paintings: Emilio Blasco,
Barcelona (E)



Imagine, a bird with that much of a character that every time it is landing on the loft, it lands exactly on the same square inch. The cock birds are blessed with such an extra dose of southern temperament, that comparing them with the other Spanish breeds with style this breed is the proverbial 'Don Juan' and largely will be in the forefront that's the Gorguero. This is a very interesting and attractive breed, especially for those fanciers who can have the discipline to keep the breed pure.

Above: This typical Gorguero cock was photographed in 1991 at the loft of Pino Pena in Cordoba (Andalusia - Spain).

In homeland Spain, the Gorguero pouter is looked at in different ways:

1. In Spain there is a group of fanciers who are mainly interested in the flying pigeon sport and are a member of the Federation Espagnol Colombiculture – a Union who principally represents the Paloma deportiva (Pica) and other original Spanish Pouter breeds. They are in the belief that the Gorguero is a variety of the Jiennense and certainly contributed to the development of the present type of Jiennense, but on the other hand they also believe that the Gorguero is extinct.

2. The survival of the Gorguero is to give thanks to the vet, geneticist and pigeon fanatic José Antonin i Cuatrecasas from Argentona (Barcelona), who (newly) discovered the Gorguero. During his college years he came in contact with Raphael Buche Brage, an historian and thus also a reliable pigeon medium, especially because of his many publications concerning the old Spanish pigeon breeds. Raphael had a painting of a Gorguero, painted by his father in 1955 and it was this portrait that started José's search for genetic material in order to newly establish the glory of the Gorguero. The bird that seemed to be the most suitable for the job was the Pirat: a faded ashred cock bird with a black pigment spot around one of his eyes.

Right: 1996 Standard drawing of the ideal Gorguero Pouter, by José Antonin.



This bird was purchased by him for a large sum of money. With much care and exertion he succeeded in re-creating the Gorguero, not in the least by the help of a new Gorguero breeder's Club that was founded in Cordoba (Andalusia) by his friend Pino Pena.

By means of exchanging birds and strict breeding programs, in the early nineties an

imposing and fairly uniform breed was created, which – according to José – answered to the old descriptions and pictures of the breed. To prove this, José showed me in 1994 eight beautiful blue black barred Gorgurero hens; the result of line breeding and these fully identical birds were so close in style that they could only be singled out by the numbers on their leg bands. Even the true connoisseurs lost many a bet in distinguishing these birds.

Left: A Gorguero on the loft at José Antonin, Argentona (Catalonia – Spain)

Spanish differences

The Spanish pigeon fanciers, but also the Spanish Pigeon Organizations are of a rather fanatic, straight and individualistic attitude. The first mentioned group preserves in denying the existence of the Gorguero, but meanwhile they purchase Gorgueros

- for a lot of money - to improve the Jiennense. That is why in the promotion videos of the FEC you can see Jiennense Pouters with a hollow tail and vertical neck; things that are breed characteristics of the Gorguero.



Right:

This is the much-discussed painting of a Gorguero pigeon, made in 1955 by Manuel Buch (the father of Raphael Buch Brage). This portrait inspired José Antonin to start searching and safe-guarding the Gorguero.

Thus you cannot escape in always comparing the Gorguero to the Jiennense, and mutually recognize characteristics that in fact belong to the other breed. Group 1 doesn't mind much, because their standard is a 'living' standard that continuously adapts to the available birds.

To them all that counts is the flying capacity and conquering abilities. Once a prominent Spanish breeder even told me that they were not so happy

with the 'written' standard of the Jiennense, because that it did label the breed as an exhibition breed, on the one hand opening doors to perfect the phenotype by means of outcrossing and on the other hand being a handicap to adapt the breed. To him, the Standard was only an instantaneous model with which you should not stand still. The most important parts are the flying capacities and personality of the pigeon.

However, when breeders are more interested in exhibitions - as we are in Holland - then the first need is a proper, clear and unambiguous standard description. That is why I personally much more agree with the point of view of my friend José Antonin, who intended to breed and keep the Gorguero according a written standard description. That apart from its own distinct morphological features and in the meantime it is also strict on things like the way of flying and the conquering temperament. An almost impossible task; moreover he thinks that a good judge should know the breed that well that he can judge all these characteristics in front of the show pen, commenting on the bird inside of it without handling and studying its every detail.



Left: A flying Gorguero pouter in Argenton (Catalonia - Spain), with broad wings and hollow tail carriage, the legs are often showing when flying.



Breeding

The Gorguero is a true Gentleman. The cock only courts the hen, he doesn't touch her or even reciprocate should she pick at him with her beak, which is often seen in courting pigeons. For many Spanish breeders this is a disqualifying fault.

A breeding couple can easily produce 6 to 7 rounds and also rear their own young.

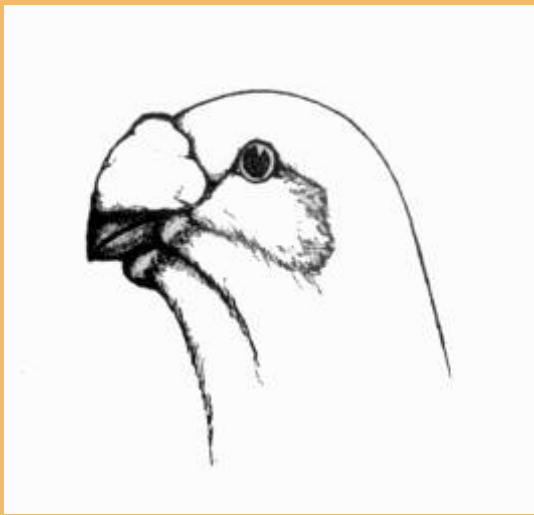


Left:
A Gorguero pouter, painted by Emilio Blasco (Barcelona – Spain) in 1995.

Below, in the middle: One of José Antonin's Gorguero Pouters, flying from its loft in Argenton (Catalonië – Spain). Note the characteristic hollow tail carriage.

Below left:
Blue grizzle Gorguero cock.
Below right:
Head study of a blue black barred Gorguero cock.



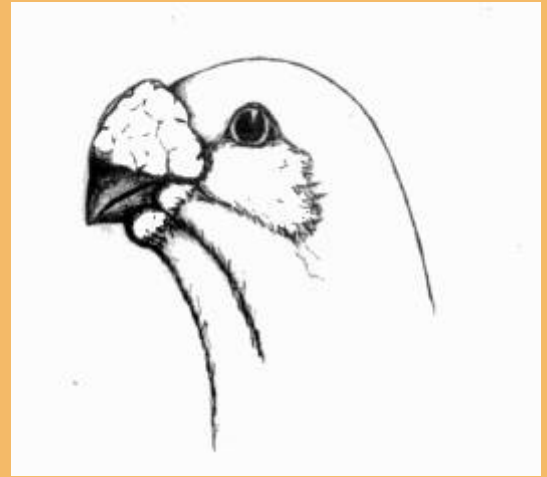


Heads at different age

**Left: Gorguero cock
age 2 to 3 years old.**

**Right: Gorguero cock
age 3 to 4 years old.**

Drawings by José Antonin



**Left: Gorguero cock
age 4 to 5 years old.**

**Right: Gorguero cock
age 5 to 6 years old.**

Drawings by José Antonin



**Right:
Faded mealy Gorguero hen on the loft
of José Antonin in Argentona
(Catalonia – Spain).**

**Below: A still young Faded mealy
Gorguero cock on the loft of José
Antonin in Argentona
(Catalonia – Spain).**





Left: The 'dark cages' of the Spanish breeder Monjos in Argentona (Catalonia – Spain) from which he had his Gorgueros free fly.

Right and below left: Faded mealy Gorguero cocks of Monjos.



Below left: The aviary with breeding compartments at José Antonin in Argentona (Catalonia – Spain).



The flying Gorguero shows a splendid hollow tail.

In the right you can see the then secretary of the Entente Européenne, Dipl. Ing. Adolf Rudolf (Germany).

Even keeping several breeding couples in the same room doesn't cause any trouble. Only one thing you must keep an open eye for: the moment that youngsters are on the floor and start begging for food from other pigeons. If there is no possible escape for the youngster, it can happen that the young will be scalped by the other parents. This is kind of natural behavior for pigeons when defeating their territory with a correcting 'peck' toward the young. But when that young cannot get away (due to lack of hiding space) this can cause a big problem. I used to put up a roof tile at a slant to the wall, and the young can hide behind it.

Day 7 the young can be ringed with a ring size 9 mm.

Right: A young Gorguero cock, note the typical dewlap and the eye ceres, which have to be blue in this colour variety.

Standard

Firstly I would like to explain that the Gorguero takes its name to the *Gorguera*: a large white pleated collar, with which the Spanish Duke of Alva (governor of the Spanish Netherlands from 1567 to 1573) and other nobility of the medieval time are portrayed in our history books. Most of the Spanish pigeon breeds are named in relation to a region of origin, like the Jiennense, originating in Jean. In the Gorguero Standard description we read that this breed originated in Madrid, thus from the province of Castile.



Type: Broad, compact, tapering backwards (triangle form).

The Gorguero has to distinguish itself from the Jiennense not only by the wide, short and wedge shaped body, but also by the neck carriage, which - in a showing-off Gorguero (being the position in which it will be judged, thus not 'in action')- has to be more elevated than in the Jiennense. This makes a Gorguero looks shorter than a Jiennense. I also would like to add that when flying, the neck of the Gorguero is almost vertically.



Stance: Medium high, medium upright.

I would like to add that the stance, thus the space between the legs and the body, is not wanted as high as suggested in the Standard drawing.

Left: A nine years old Gorguero cock of José Antonin. Note the fully developed nose wattles and the superb eye colour, with the eye ceres still of the wanted blue colour.

Head: large and wide, with curved lines.

Neglecting the nose wattle, the head line will be a fluent line from the point of the beak backwards. The highest point is above the eye. Seen from the front the head will be wedge-shaped, the wattles never detracting from the curved head shape. The head of the hen will be noticeable narrower and thus seem longer.

Eyes: large, set back in the head, ruby colour.

A trait that you should select for is the alert appearance and ruby colour of the eye. This colour is obviously encouraged by the warm Spanish sun, and just the reverse in Holland, where it is striking to notice that imported birds lose this intense ruby eye colour after a short time.

Right:

A twelve years old Gorguero cock, with fully developed nose wattles. Note the eye ceres still of the wanted blue colour.



Eye ceres:

Fine and smooth, the colour conform the colour of the head plumage. They are rather unobtrusive, adult birds have a little more cere due to age but never overly coarse.

Blue black barred comes with a narrow blue-black eye cere. (Dominant) Red barred or Faded mealy comes with a light colour eye cere. Thus in both cases the eye cere will be hardly noticeable. Sometimes in older birds the eye ceres become reddish; this is not wanted.



Left: One of the oldest Gorguero cocks on the loft of José Antonin.

Beak: Strong and broad based, medium long, looking shorter due to the nose wattles and in line with the curved head shape. Under and upper beak equally thick.

A hooked beak, thus a longer upper beak, is not wanted. Also pay attention to the beak colour, which should be dark on the dark coloured birds and light on the light coloured birds. When a dark coloured beak is too light, then the bird will have the smoky factor, which is definitely not wanted. This smoky factor will also be detrimental to the clear blue colour of the wing shield.

Beak wattles:

Well developed in adults from 3 years old, but they should not be exaggerated or soft and loose. They start smaller at the base of the beak and get larger as they go forward.

Cock birds will develop wattles around the beak, thus at the upper beak and at the lower beak forms a row of wattles, with the upper wattle the most developed. In the third year the wattles will reach their full size. Hens will commonly show none or hardly any wattles.

Neck:

Medium long, strong.

The crop comes off the dewlap, starting as close as possible from the point of the beak, hanging down in an even pear shape. The crop is richly feathered and not inflated, hanging down without pleats till just below the breast. The excessive crop skin is rolled in such a way that it forms a collar in the neck. The loose crop skin will also cover the wing bows, extra stressing the loose crop feathering. Both dewlap and collar are specific traits of the Gorguero, thus if a Jiennense is showing these traits they should be marked as defaults. The crop section at the Blue black barred should show a beetle green sheen; a violet sheen is unwanted.

Breast:

Broad and rounded.

Back:

Broad, tapering towards the tail; when in rest, back and tail showing a sloping downwards back line.

In the Blue black barred the colour of the back plumage should not be too light and certainly not white.

Wings: Long, wide and carried thigh; 11 or 12 flights on each wing, which is typical for the breed. The wings almost reaching as far as the tail's end and laying flat on the tail without crossing.

The Gorguero has large, wide wings which can be clearly noticed when the bird is flying. The larger number of flights is a desirable breed characteristic, although it is not commonly seen.

Tail:

When at rest, the tail feathers tightly grouped together and closed. The extremely wide tail feathers will make the tail broader at the end.

Over 12 tail feathers is a prevalence. This will extra accentuate the arched, hollow tail carriage when flying.

Right:

Pino Pena keeps his Gorgueros at the roof garden of his house in Cordoba (Andalusia – Spain).

Pino Pena was a friend of José Antonin and founded the Specialty Club for the Gorguero Pouter in Spain.



Legs and feet:

Fairly long legs, strong, with adequate spacing between them. Leg colour purple, free of feathers with well developed brilliant scales. Nail colour conform the plumage colour.

(in white birds, dark nails and coloured beak are tolerated)

The last sentence is between brackets because this is written in the today (Dutch) standard, but should lapse. It was tolerated during the development of the white colour variety, but should not be documented as a standard rule. The remark on the scales and leg colour are however very typical for the breed. Especially in Young birds the dark leg colour is striking.

Plumage:

Abundant with wide feathers, soft to the touch. It should be loose on the crop but tight on the rest of the body. Neck feathering long, fine and loose (collar) with intense sheen.

With emphasizing the abundant soft and in the same time tight plumage; together with the surplus wing and tail feathers these are true traits of the breed.

Colour varieties:

White and Black;

Blue black barred; mealy; blue and mealy chequer; faded blue black barred and faded mealy; blue grizzle. To explain: the word 'faded' is exactly expressing what is meant: a fading colour in the wing bars of these birds. All colours are wanted intense and pure.

The ideal type colours are Blue black barred and Faded mealy, with bars wanted clearly defined and intense. However, we often see a third bar develop, which is not wanted.

Faded mealy cocks will often show dark (black) spots in the tail and wing shields, but also in the head and neck. These spots tend to increase when the bird gets older.

Today we again can find Black and White Gorgueros and also Blue grizzled. The Whites (homozygote grizzle) were re-created with the help of the Blue (storked) grizzle and the Faded mealies. The result is indeed white, but juveniles show some red in the plumage. The eyes of these Whites (faded mealies storked grizzles) are ruby coloured.

Faults:

Too large; too small; deviating type; stance too flat; too little action; too small, arched or flat head; thin or long beak; deviating wattles; too light eye colour; too pale or too wide eye ceres; inflated crop; strongly pleated crop; missing dewlap and collar.

The listing of these faults was discussed by the Dutch NBS Standard Committee when the Gorguero was standardised. It was agreed that the summed faults were already mentioned when each of the particular items was described. Thus when under: 'general aspects' is stated that the Gorguero is a 'middle size, strong pigeon' you later don't have to list faults like: too large, too small and /or deviating type.

Below: Gorgueros on the loft at José Antonin's in Argentona (Catalonia – Spain).



Judging:

After judging the general aspects the following breed characteristics are in order of importance:

- Breed type and stance
- Action
- Crop and collar
- Head form
- Eyes and eye ceres
- Beak and wattles
- Wings and tail
- Colour and plumage

Right:

Gorguero Pouter, painted by **Emilio Blasco** (Barcelona – Spain).

In the Netherlands we Judge by means of a point scale, as distinct from Spain, where each item is scaled with a total of 100 points. From the above list you can learn that in our country a remark concerning the colour is of less influence on the final judging report than a remark on type and stance. However, a mis-coloured bird will be a definite and even disqualifying fault, same as deviate eye colour, like a dark or pearl eye. When you want to Judge a cock's qualities, try to get the bird to perform, especially



paying attention to the moments that the cock is strutting around his hen, proudly uprighted. This will get you the Clear Picture to keep in mind.

Additional breed characteristics:

Although the bird might look arrogant, it has a very gentle nature. The Gorguero cock is a Gentleman: he will never peck a hen.

Essential for the breed is the hollow tail and the lifted head when flying.

Another criterion is judging the gentleman personality, meaning the cock will never peck a hen. In Spain this is a true selecting criterion. With notification that we must use our brains when judging this; an aroused cock bird in an unfamiliar surrounding will peck at anything! What we mean is that the cock bird as we daily experience it in its familiar surroundings, will not have a bullying nature, chasing and pecking the hens all the time.

Several Gorguero couples can be kept in one loft without problems. The breed is tolerant between them and not quarrelsome. Even when several breeding pairs are together in one loft, the Gorguero will never disturb another bird's nest by 'mis-flying' or dominant behavior. They will easily rear their young and are careful and reliable foster parents. When you intend to free fly your birds, you should start by having the young fly as early as possible and with regularity. When you start later with flying the birds, their flying capacities will be less good. In the air the bird exhibits itself not just by the hollow

arched tail, the slightly uplifted neck and hanging crop, but also by the somewhat 'wide standing' legs. Above all the Gorguero is a bird with personality and will never fly around in groups such as is common at the homer pigeons. We often see a Gorguero individually flying out with loudly clapping wings, which is very attractive. Very specific for the Gorguero is its flying behaviour in the loft, which is very refined and never impetuous. While hanging still in the air, the birds can take a 180 degree turn and change flying direction. Homing on the loft a cock bird will soon show its prevalence for a certain landing spot and return exactly there each time. At my loft the Gorguero's flew from 3 openings, and although all doors came out in the same loft, every Gorguero preferred its own, specific door.

Blue black barred and faded mealy are the 'ideal-type' colours and are mutually bred together, thus the quality is the same in both colours, although faded mealy hens tend to have a narrow beak and forehead. Mating a blue black barred and a faded mealy will most of the time give young in both colour varieties, although it can happen that 'normal' - thus not faded - mealy youngsters are born. The heredity of the number of tail feathers is a gamble. From parents with 12 tail feathers each, sometimes young were born with 13 tail feathers. In their turn, the 13 tail feathered birds did not just like that pass on this trait.

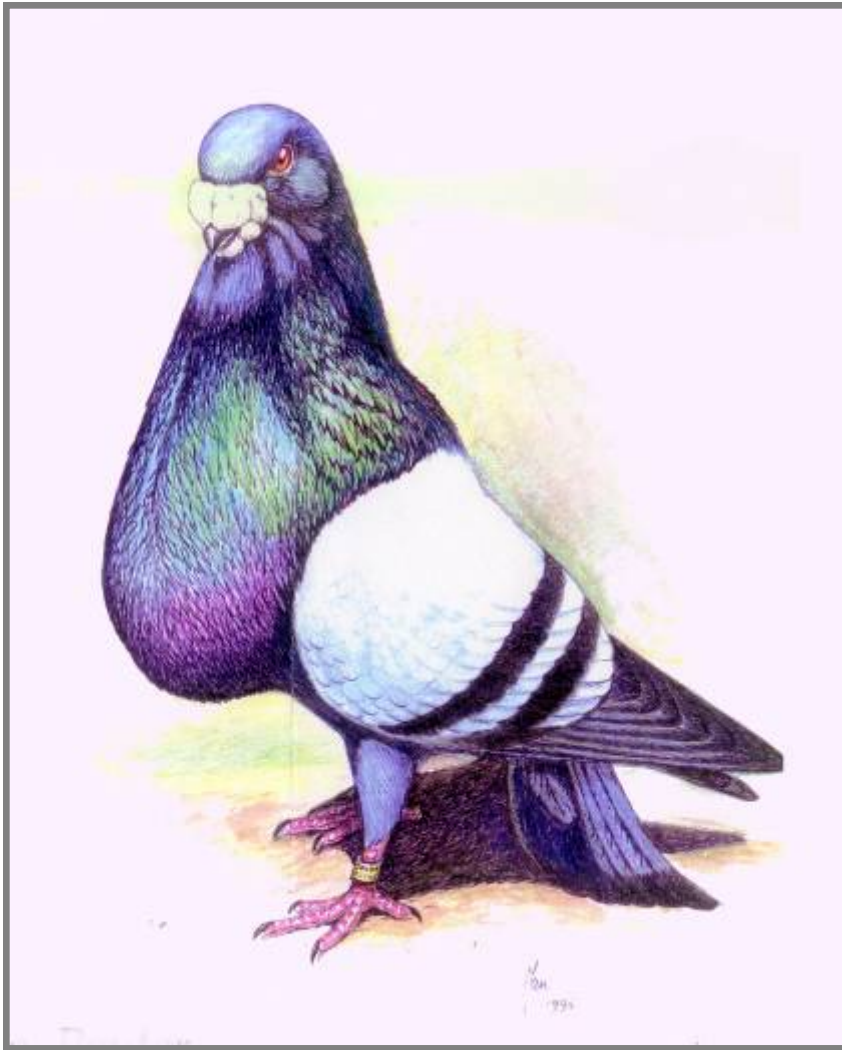
In short, the Gorguero is a fine and noble breed, it will hit you by its physical characteristics and flying capacity, in such a way that you cannot abandon it and will be true to the breed forever, just like me, and always will support it and stand up for it, although you will often stand alone and you will again and again have to compete with those breeders who keep on crossing out. Be sure; any outcrossing is unwanted and won't serve any purpose. The result will never be a Gorguero, but always something different, a substitute! What you have got has nothing to do with a Gorguero and even when it would resemble one, the sole will be missing!

To be complete, I also give you the Judging Point Scale as mentioned in the original Spanish Standard, dated 1 September 1992, by J. Antonin i Cuatrecasas.



General aspect	- 10 pnt.
Head form	- 10 pnt.
Wattles	- 5 pnt.
Beak wattles	- 5 pnt.
Eye	- 5 pnt.
Eye ceres	- 5 pnt.
Beak	- 5 pnt.
Neck and collar (<i>gorguera</i>)	- 5 pnt.
Crop and chest	- 10 pnt.
Dewlap (<i>tirilla</i>)	- 10 pnt.
Wings	- 7 pnt.
Tail and tail coverts	- 8 pnt.
Colour and plumage	- 10 pnt.
Legs and feet	- 5 pnt.

Left: Gorguero Pouter, painting by Emilio Blasco (Barcelona – Spain)



Both aquarelles are painted by the specialist painter Jan Hatzmann (Hoogeveen – Holland) in 1995.

In the Netherlands, the Gorguero Pouter breed is registered at:

Speciaalclub voor Iberische Sierduivenrassen SIS. (Iberian Pouter Breeders' Club)

Secretary:
Marcel Fehling
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2581 VX Den Haag
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He can supply you with further information.



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