

The Dutch Beauty Homer

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The name already implies it: the breeders were looking for an especially beautiful pigeon with elegance. As basic material the Racing Pigeon was used. The Racing Pigeon originated in Belgium between 1815 and 1825, and meant as a sport for pigeons which fly fast and are capable to use their sense of orientation. It was mainly that orientation of the bird and to fly back as fast as possible as to his loft. One may assume that the wild rock dove, Columba Livia, has been at the base and that the different regions of Belgium have been breeding in different directions.

Above: Dutch Beauty Homer, silver darkbarred, F/Y. Owner: B. Melgers. Photo: Sytze de Bruine.

Right: Dutch Beauty Homer, silver darkbarred F/O.
Owner: Sarah Raijmakers,
Photo: D.J. Hamer.



Left: Dutch Beauty Homer, ash red chequer, M/Y.
Owner: B. Melgers.
Photo: Sytze de Bruine.

For those different breeding directions the breeders used various kinds of pigeon breeds. Examples are the Barbet of Liege and other short-beaked Owl Pigeon Breeds, used in Liege and Antwerp. But also the Carrier Pigeon, Croppers and Tumbler Breeds. The Liege type started as powerful and compact bird, the Antwerp type, due to its Carrier influence became some stretched and had especially coarse wattles and eye ceres. The Ghent type had the influence of the Croppers and the Brussels-type, was wide and short with a full head and rather coarse attributes.

**Right: Dutch Beauty Homer, white, M/O.
Owner: Sarah Raijmakers.
Photo: Sytze de Bruine.**

At the end of 19th century, there was more unity in the type and the local types disappeared. Then at the beginning of the 20th century, especially outside Belgium, trends emerged also to create a Show pigeon in addition to the birds with strict flying abilities, using the present material. This is how and why in England the Homer breeds, such as the Show Homer, Exhibition Homer, Genuine Homer and Show Antwerp originated. Although the name 'Homer' now should be considered as a historical 'note'; do not expect speed records or any homer instinct from these varieties! On March 1, 1903, the Dutch Exhibition Club 'De Postduif' was founded.



In Germany, the German Beauty Homer was created, which became a very popular breed for the pigeon hobby. Remarkably, this breed has continued to develop strongly during the course of time. The standard was constantly adjusted and the breed was refined further and further, the leg and neck length and head shape being the most prominent features. In this way in a short time a wonderful exhibition pigeon was created, which had little to do with the starting material, the Racing Pigeon.

In the Netherlands, eventually the pigeon from the Racing Pigeon Hobby was exhibited, because also the Dutch pigeon breeders desired to show a beautiful pigeon. This resulted in the founding of the Dutch group of 'Graduate Judges' on August 15, 1925. On May 13, 1926, the first judging regulations were established. At that time the judging was by means of a points system in five parts. Old birds could achieve up to 93, young birds 92.5 and late youngsters as a maximum up to 91.5 points.



On September 26, 1937 the Dutch Fancy Pigeons Association N.B.S. decided to prepare a Judge Training and organize this, if possible. It took years however for this program to get off the ground. Mr. C.Th. van Gink was Instructor.

In the book "De raskenmerken" (The Breed's characteristics) of C.A.M. Spruijt, 1949, there is a standard description of the Dutch Exhibition Racing Pigeon. The NBS had just appointed a Standard Committee in 1947, of which this was the result.

**Left: Dutch Beauty Homer, black F/O.
Owner: A. Visser.
Photo: Sytze de Bruine.**

In the standard of the Dutch Beauty Homer the emphasis was on the beauty and elegance of the pigeon. The body must held horizontally. The famous and well flying Belgian pigeon breeds at that time (and still do) bore the names of their region or the owner of the loft. Shortly before and after the 2nd World War in Ronse (B), Maurice Delbar was virtually unbeatable on long distance flights. This pigeon was found to fit best with the ideal image and colour of the ideal Dutch Beauty Homer in those years. The Delbar pigeons attract attentions by their - for the greater part - very light blue colour, sometimes with white flights, and also by their beautiful heads and the uniformity of type.

**Right: Dutch Beauty Homer, blue grizzle F/Y.
Owner: A. Raijmakers.
Photo: Sytze de Bruine.**

These Delbar pigeon were crossed with the then applicable German Beauty Homer, that was still very close to the Show Racing Pigeon type at that time. Now, some 75 years later, almost all Fancy Homer breeds and also the Dutch Beauty Homer still carry some Delbar blood. As a racing pigeon they are now ousted by other lines.

The Dutch Beauty Homer is still known for its vitality and fertility. This breed brings up to six rounds of young per season. This makes this breed also an excellent foster pigeon for rearing other pigeon breeds. Over the years, the popularity of this breed in the Netherlands has been subject to quite some fluctuations. However, there has always been a core of loyal breeders, so that over the years the breed was to be found on most shows in the Netherlands.



**Left: Dutch Beauty Homer, dun F/O.
Owner: A. Visser.
Photo: Sytze de Bruine.**



Thanks to the effort of some German breeders, including Marc Brinkwirth, the Dutch Beauty Homer was also recognized in 2002 in Germany, followed by the founding of a German specialty club on September 26, 2009, under the name: Niederländische Schönheitsbrieftauben SV.

Since then the breed has skyrocketed in Germany in popularity and strangely enough, this was in the beginning accompanied by an apparent waning interest in the Netherlands. This decline was due to the fact that too many birds were sold to German breeders; the breed was much in demand and one wanted to help. The result was that the number of entered birds on the Dutch shows initially fell, but this was a genuine incentive for the Dutch breeders to outdo their best and moreover dozens of new breeders signed up to the Beauty Homer

Pigeon Club for this breed.

Right: Dutch Beauty Homer, ash yellow barred.

Photo: Sytze de Bruine.

The Dutch Beauty Homer is part of the Dutch Special Club for Beauty Homer breeds that was founded on December 14, 1948. This club caters now for eight different exhibition pigeon breeds all based on the former Racing Homer. To watch over the breed and proper standard breeding, some supervisory committees have been appointed, i.e. for the Dutch-, German-, English-, Belgian and the American 'Homer' varieties individually.

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Interpretation of the standard

Being a 'Form Pigeon', the Dutch Beauty Homer must show a type and stance that radiates harmony and elegance. An aesthetic whole, by which every viewer is immediately impressed. It is a strong, short (racing) pigeon with a horizontally carried body, a decent length of the forehead and very moderate head rounding. In practice, that elegance usually applies to the hens. Inevitably, the cocks will be a bit coarse. The breeders should not be tempted to breed for fine and elegant cocks, otherwise the hens will become too small and too narrow. What we want are pigeons with a full, wide and deep chest joining a well-filled belly and smoothly flowing lines throughout. Chest and abdomen protrude generously from the wing butts. Viewed from the front, the breast feathers cover the wing butts.

The neck is of medium length, starts broad from the shoulders and narrows gracefully to the head. A tight feathering contributes a lot to this impression of thinness. In the transition to the head a clean and deep throat is decisive for a well proportioned head shape. A Dutch Beauty Homer with a so-called "full throat", i.e. lacking in sharpness of throat, always seems too short in the forehead. Stance shall be horizontal. This is determined by the leg setting; too far backward results in a body attitude upwards on. A pigeon is in balance, with slightly backwards flexed legs and a horizontal body, with a slightly sloping back line. The neck is thereby carried vertically. We desire a broad back, wide at the shoulders but also the transition to the upper rump and upper rump itself should not be too narrow. The standard requirement of a short tail, is almost impossible to achieve, especially in the males. The general rule is that the tail is not more than an inch longer than the flight feathers, but even in the hens it is hard to find a short enough tail. Also at the (flying) racing pigeons this is not different. The optical impression of a long rear end is usually caused by a too narrow chest. Narrow tail feathers are always long tail feathers. In compiling the breeding pairs this must be taken into account. The wings must be wide with broad feathers, covering the back and with the tips of the primaries loosely resting on the tail.

A medium leg length is exactly the right description of the Dutch Beauty Homer standard. But when due to a lack of space there are two or three tier cages at the show, then the DBH especially in the lower cage suffer a big disadvantage, because it will crouch due to this 'ceiling' above its head. Faults of the feet and toes, such as missing nails or white nails (except in white or pied pigeons), webbed toes or foot feathering, are exclusion faults.

For the Dutch Beauty Homer any mistake or deviation from the ideal head shape is a serious fault. The description of the head shape in the standard is detailed and reads as follows: A beautiful harmonic well developed forehead with a very moderate curved head. The smooth unbroken curved line starts from the point of the beak over the forehead to the highest point above the eyes, and without the slightest interruption in a beautiful curve to the neck. The forehead is wedge-shaped and filled without breakdown or being pinched. Also, the remaining part of the head is filled harmonically. The head is carried proud and horizontally. To study that head shape in "profile" we look at that length in the forehead and the beak implantation, but also we can see clearly any interruption in the profile line. We distinguish beak pressure, wattle pressure, forehead pressure etc. depending on where the indentation occurs. The last years we increasingly see angularity or not rounded rear heads in the Dutch Beauty Homer. The most common fault in head shape is called the "nip" – in Dutch "*kneep*" - (the forehead section immediately above the wattle is dented at the side). "Nip" is common in pigeons with great length in the forehead. The finest heads are always a compromise between length and filling. In youngsters you can expect a well-filled forehead after the moulting of the last primary feather.



The heart-shaped beak wattles have a fine structure. The ideal eye ceres are so fine that they are almost invisible. The shape of the eye ceres is very important, in order to give a perfectly circular impression, the feather growth around the eyes should be completely closed. The colour of the eye ceres is in relation with the feather colour. Pigeons with the black factor, like black, blue black bar and blue chequer, need to have a light grey eye cere. In the Whites, Yellows and Reds, the eye cere must be white to light flesh coloured.

**Left: Dutch Beauty Homer, blue chequer M/Y.
Owner: Team Hartkamp.
Photo: Sytze de Bruine.**

A black beak is wanted for the blacks, blue barless, blue blackbarred, blue- and T-pattern chequers. A horn coloured beak for the reds, yellow, ash red- and ash yellow barred, and for the silvers is a slightly horn touch allowed. A

light flesh coloured beak for the whites.

The standard demands for all colours (except for white) an orange/red iris. A different eye colour but also a hard yellow or very dark eye colour is considered a serious fault.

Feather colours are:

Selves: white, black, dun, red, yellow, dominant red and dominant yellow.

Barless: blue, silver, ash red and ash yellow.

Barred: blue black bar, silver dark bar, ash red- and ash yellow bar

Chequer: blue, silver, ash red and ash yellow.

T-pattern chequer: blue, silver, ash red and ash yellow.

Grizzle: blue, silver, ash red and ash yellow.

Pied: in all above mentioned colours.

Sources:

"De raskenmerken" from C.A.M. Spruijt in 1949

Website SPC specialty club <http://spc.sierduif.nl/>

Publication: W. Tuinman about the Historie from the Dutch Beauty Homer and en artikel from Dhr. M.H. Nebbeling.

Standard Nederlandse Schoonheidspostduif NBS.

The contactorgaan van de SPC, from the First issue in the years 1980.