



INTRODUCING
BRUNNER
POUTER BREEDER
GREGOR
MATHIEU

Text and photos:
Archives Gregor Mathieu

This is an online interview with Gregor Mathieu from Belgium, internationally known as pigeon judge and successful breeder of Brunner Pouters.

He is especially known as someone who has been playing for decades a leading role in the pigeon fancier hobby in several European countries.

Left: Gregor Mathieu, judging at the European Brunner show in Munich (Germany) with over 2000 Brunner Pouters.

How long have you been interested in fancy pigeons and which breeds did you keep over the years?

The first contacts with fancy pigeons I got through my father who did not exhibit his pigeons. He had many contacts with fanciers in the Netherlands.

When my parents in 1968, fully concentrated on breeding Arabian thoroughbreds horses, I took over the Holle Croppers and immediately began to show both nationally and internationally. The Avicultura-Show in the Houtrust Halls in The Hague (NL) was an annual highlight for me!

Right:
A standard blackpied Brunner Pouter. A topper, it has always been among the best in B, NL and D.

At the end of the 70s, when I wanted to achieve my Pigeon Judging Diploma, the English Pigmy Pouter became my special breed. But when I had to travel increasingly, also for professionally reasons, the many extra miles and travel time became too much for keeping pigeons. In the meantime, I had been challenged by some local enthusiasts to not only breed 'small' pigeons but they dared me to breed the Ghent Cropper.



Some years later this resulted in winning the 'Champion Pouter Pigeon' title in Dortmund, a very prestigious prize, but it was also the end of my breeding the Ghent Cropper. Dwarf Pouters kept charming me the most, and because they are fairly easy to breed, so I opted for the Brunner Pouter. This is a choice that gives me much satisfaction. That's why I now have nearly 50 Dwarf Pouters in the lofts!



Left: One of the two pens for the youngsters.

Would you recommend this breed to everyone, and how are they as breeding stock?

The Brunner Cropper is a fantastic pleasant pigeon in the loft. Very affectionate, lively, healthy, and is definitely a good foster parent. Usually the first weekend of March some 18 Pairs in Black/Red/Yellow Standard Pied are mated, and they will be separated again in mid-July.

Right:

The 'closed' breeding compartments are ideal for mating the breeding pairs, but during breeding they are open and the pairs have free access to the common loft.

Meanwhile, about 80 youngsters will be ringed and very quickly selected by body type (and sometimes character).

During the months of August and September, I often use two boxes for experimental mating.

Are you a fancier who is cleaning (scraping) the cages every day, and do you use litter on the floor?



I have a loft of 13 meters in which two breeding areas are included. I also have two lofts for youngsters and an area for youngsters selected to be shown at a show. In addition, a loft where some foster pigeon pairs are housed, from which I can breed a few extra youngsters from a certain line or individual pigeons.

In front of the loft the aviaries are placed, hanging at one meter above the ground with the manure falling through the wire. The top side is covered. The lofts have a dry wooden floor with fine litter and are cleaned out weekly, but the breeding pens are cleaned daily during the breeding season. The nest boxes are very spacious 80 x 60 x 60. This has the advantage the pair can easily mate. Also, they have two nest bowls in the breeding pen.



Does this breed need a special type of feed?

Of course there are countless opportunities to various feeds for your animals. My opinion is that we all give our pigeons a too rich of a food ration (too much protein), which causes a major overload on the digestive system and skeletal system. 30% corn and 30% peas is not a good mixture for the birds. For a long time I have been in consultation with various feed suppliers, but most do not deliver a real effort to produce something specific.

In consultation with the product manager of Matador petfood, I finally developed a fantastic feed that guarantees enough energy to make for example, the long legs of our Brunner with strong bones, but it also avoids excess feed waste. The result is a mix of which nothing is spilled anymore, less food is needed, and their droppings will be less and more compact!

Left: A wonderful red standard pied Brunner Pouter, with an amazing back crop and nice necking.

*Right:
A black standard pied Brunner Pouter.
A successful pigeon in several European countries.*

How do you feel about preparations and food supplements?

Birds that are kept inside should be provided with everything possible to keep them healthy.

I like to keep the drinking water clean. On the food I use - besides minerals and grit - something which optimizes the proper ratio calcium / phosphorus.

I am really enthusiastic on supplying liquid yeast, probiotics and oregano on the feed. The pigeons like to eat it, and these products promote good digestion and good growing youngsters.





Left:
One of the top males highly awarded in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

Do you use anything in the area of preventive health, such as vaccinations and cures?

As already mentioned, I use certain probiotics. Also, oregano is said to make the birds to be more resistant to disease. The pigeons are vaccinated annually against paramyxovirus and paratyphoid. Treatments (such as wormers) used without the birds showing it is needed, is not something I would do as a routine!

The 'young bird disease' has been seriously problematic in recent years. It is always after visiting a show abroad when the youngster suddenly fall ill and it often moves so fast that they are already died after 24 hours.

Below:
A beautiful female with an ideal type and wonderful colour and marking.

Do you participate in many exhibitions?

Actually I am a Pigeon Fancier who especially enjoys his animals at home. I have absolutely no interest in the smaller shows where all breeds are represented by just a few birds. Mainly to prevent and control the 'young bird disease', I take part in only a few smaller shows.

Later in the show season I'll take part in the Club Show in Germany, where the last years over 1,000 Brunner's have been competing and of course I'm also present at our club show of the 'Brünner Club Belgium.'

Finally, I try every year to be present at the Dutch Champion show in Nieuwegein. If there is still a time for something extra, then surely the VDT show in Germany!





Above: I have a loft of 13 meters in length in which are two breeding lofts, two lofts for youngsters and a show loft for very young pigeons. In front of the loft are the aviaries, hanging at one meter above the ground and allowing the manure to fall through the wire. The top side is covered.

Left:
For me, this is one of the nicest Brunner's. This pigeon was bred by Dieter Müller. Brunner AOC (Archive Gregor Mathieu).

Of course I am always proud and happy with good show results, as in the past year (2013-2014 show season) in both Belgium and the Netherlands, when I won the Club Show in Nuremberg, or when the 'Deutsche Meister' (German Championship) was achieved. I also greatly enjoy the friendships built up in recent years.

What do you do with surplus birds?

That is of course the sad side of our hobby. A breeder who does not know how to select will never reach the top. However, despite strict selection just up to 5% of our birds will be top pigeons. On the other hand, we have to control the number of our birds.

Within the Brunner world, there is an enormous willingness to help each other, but this can only be positive if one is willing to deliver 'good' animals. It is important to know that I have a very intense breeding contact with my best friend, Nick Dawyd, from England. This is not to 'just give something to each other', but together we developed a breeding direction with equally sharing and exchanging the very best pigeons from loft!

Is there interest from abroad in your Brunner Pouters?

The Brunner Pouter is one of most widely distributed pigeon breed and can be found everywhere in the world. Within Europe, most countries have a specialty club that is very strong, especially in Germany, which Club has developed into an international club with 400 members!

I personally have a lot of contacts with a large number of fanciers all over the world and often my birds were exported to the Netherlands, Germany, France and England, and also to the USA and China. I would like to say that this always involves small amounts of money that is possible for everyone.

What do you think about being a board member of a Club or Association?

It seems logical to me that if you are committed to your hobby, you also want to do something for it. Making yourself useful by doing administrative work for instance, is certainly positive, but I know many fans who do not want this 'jobs' but prefer to help building an exhibition etc Everyone has to decide that for themselves.

However, there are also clubs with unpleasant atmosphere or where decisions are made in the board's own interest and not the fancier's. I have been a board member of several clubs, but I especially enjoy the "Brünner Club Belgium." A club that some 10 fanciers including me founded five years ago, and is only supporting the Brunner Pouter breed, and friendship of the fanciers. I am also a board member and 'responsible' for the non-German speaking countries within the 'Europe Brunner Kröpfer Club'.

*For more information about the Brunner Pouter:
Contact the Brünner Club Belgium, since 2010.*

President Gregor Mathieu,

E-mail: gregor.mathieu@telenet.be

Also member of the board and contact person for the non-German speaking countries within the 'Europe Brunner Kröpfer Club'.

From Friday 6th till Sunday November 8th in Houthalen (Belgium), an International Brunner Pouter Show will be held by the specialty clubs from Belgium, France, England and the Netherlands. In addition, a significant participation is ensured from Germany and other European countries.

**For the Netherlands: Specialty Club for the Brunner Pouter,
Secretary: Jouke van de Siepkamp,
e-mail: brunner.jouke@kpnmail.nl**



Brünner Kropfer Club

Read on for the latest (European) Standard of the Brunner Pouter.



**Last, newest European
Brunner Pouter standard,
Drawn by:
Jean Louis Frindell (Fr).**

Entente code SBI : CZ / 330

Origen

Czech Republic (Brno/Brünn)

Overall Impression

Smallest and most dainty of the blowing pigeon breeds. Temperament being very attractive and its manner appealing. Its characteristic hop, skip, bustle and drive being a special feature. The forepart of the bird representing 2/3 of its length and the rump and tail 1/3. The back being a straight line. The Globe as round and as a ball. All in proportion.

Breed characteristics

Head: Fine, rather long and lightly arched.

Eye: Bull in Whites and Gansel-marked, orange to yellow in other colours. Eye ceres almost imperceptible. Light to dark but never red.

Beak: Medium in length, fine and slender. Flesh colour in Whites and Yellows. Horn colour in Black and intense colours.

Wattles: white and smooth.

Neck: As long as possible.

Globe: High set, cut out well from the body, showing back crop, as round as a ball, the widest part in the centre.

Breast: Breast Bone straight and set well forward. Body, long as slim.

Back: Long and narrow between the shoulders, sloping and straight with the tail.

Wings: Long and well set, carried well up at the butts, held high on the rump. Primaries crossed. When in action, the wing-shields are carried 1 – 2 cm from the drawback.

Tail: Narrow and firmly closed., a little longer than the wings and carried clear of the ground in a line with the back. Wry or 'fish-tail' are serious drawback.

Legs: Long and slender, nor close at the juncture of the body. When viewed from the front perfectly straight. The side view showing the eye above the centre toe. Thighs moderately prominent running almost imperceptibly into the body hocks, just slightly bent, not frog jointed. Toes medium to long, slender and un-feathered from the hock down, toenails as beck colour. The length of leg being slightly less than half of the total height of the Brunner.

Feathers: Clean, silky when in the hand. Lustrous in colour. Thighs well covered and Smooth.

Colours

Self: White, Red, Yellow and Black.

Bars: Blue, Silver, Red (Mealy), Yellow (Cream).

White Bars: In Black, Blue, Red, Yellow and Isabel.

Grizzle: In Blue, Silver, Red and Yellow.

Mottles: Black , Red and Yellow.

Standard Pied: Black, Red, Yellow, Blue and Silver.

Red Bar (Mealy) and Yellow Bar (Cream).

Gansel: Black, Red, Yellow, Blue and Silver.

Faults

Too big, too small. Carriage too low. Too plump in body. Legs set too wide ('A'-legged). Thighs too close at the hocks. 'X'-legged. Under-size Globe. Over-blown Globe. Globe not round. Too short in neck. Feathered feet or shanks. Flat head. Broad or hung flights. Flights not crossed over the back. Tail fanned, wry or split. Too strong in leg. Hinged high. Beak dark in Whites, Yellows or Isabel. Red eye. Cere too light in Blacks or Blues. Feather rough in outline.

Order of importance

General impression

Carriage

Globe

Frontal length

Leg setting

Length of leg

Colour and depth of colour

Ring size: A

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