

THE LIMBURG JACOBIN



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Photos: Petra Krekelbergh, unless otherwise stated.

In the book 'De Belgische sierduivenrassen' (The Belgian pigeon breeds) by Juul Lauwers, 1983, the Limburg Jacobin does not appear, not even in the chapter 'Vanished Breeds'. Juul Lauwers is chairman of the Belgian Standards Committee for Fancy Pigeons, and when I asked him why this was, he answered: "The Limburg Jacobin is not mentioned in my 1983 book because the breed was not yet recognized at that time and it was not mentioned in any old writings. Judge Ivo Hanssen began in the seventies with crosses of various breeds to obtain a pigeon that would resemble the Perückentauben as described in the book 'Illustriertes Mustertaubenbuch' by Gustav Prütz 1884, pages 74-75. Ivo Hanssen claimed that in the 19th century there was a pigeon breed in the Rhine region and Belgian Limburg that was very similar to the Perückentauben, but it was not a Jacobin". So much for Juul Lauwers.



History

The Limburg Jacobin is an ancient European breed. The first literature mentioning hooded pigeons dates back to 1750, but they were probably bred much earlier. They appeared in 5 colours: white, black, blue, red and yellow. But by about 1900 the Limburg Jacobin was extinct. That it is a true European breed is evident, not only from old Belgian breed descriptions, but also from descriptions in other countries, which always corresponded pretty well. In England they were called Old-Jacks, in Germany *Kragentauben* and in France *Nonnanis*. The Limburg judge Ivo Hanssen, who died in 2012, could not resist the nostalgia and wanted to re-breed these birds. Around 1975 the first foundations of his brainchild, the Limburg Jacobin, were laid.

Left: Dun colour hen.

Breeder: Antoon Krekelbergh.

More than 20 breeds were crossed to obtain the desired light type. Some breeds have clearly left their mark: self Komorner Tumblers, Hungarian

Erlauer Tumblers and farmers' Capuchines. During the first years, 700 youngsters were bred each year, of which only a few were kept for further breeding.

In 1990 they were shown for the first time at the Grensland Show in Hasselt. In

1993 the Limburg Jacobin was recognized in Belgium and on July 1, 2013 European recognition came. They are registered as breed number 614 of the Entente Europeenne.

The name consists of two parts; Jacobin is clear, and Limburg was chosen, because the creator Ivo Hanssen came from the province Limburg in Belgium and with that, the Limburg province now also had its own pigeon breed, next to the Ghent Cropper and Leuven Pouter, the Antwerp Smerle, the Liege Owl, Ghent Owl, and so on.

Officially, the Limburg Jacobin is the latest or newest Belgian pigeon breed, but in fact it is a re-creation of a breed that existed much earlier.

Left: Filip Hendrickx took a great part in achieving European recognition in 2013.

The Breed today

A few years ago, the Vereniging Bedreigde Neerhofdieren VBN (*Association for Endangered species of Farm Animals*), and Rik Snauwaert were the only ones who still had Limburg Jacobins.

Rik got his birds coincidentally when he swapped some pigeons

with Johan Opsomer. When he noticed that his new pigeons were very rare, he contacted the VBN - Ivo Hanssen, who sold him two pairs in black and red. With those, the line was further expanded. Today, Rik Snauwaert and his fellow breeder Antoon Krekelbergh breed with 6 to 8 pairs. Some birds were handed over to Filip Hendrickx and Jean Paul Nicolas, who also took up their breeding.

Breeder Antoon Krekelbergh talking about his birds

Today, June 10th 2018, I took the time to take some photos for you. It is a pity that the birds lack condition now. They all still have youngsters, which causes the feathering to look a bit dowdy.



Right: Young Limburg Jacobins, parents yellow x red.



The **dun hen (photo to the left)** is a daughter straight from a black hen of the late Ivo Hansen – and a yellow cock from the breeding lines of the VBN. This hen has become one of the granddames. She is a bit long in body but has a good collar.



The **black hen (photo to the right)** is a daughter of the dun hen, mated to a black F1 cock (parents: yellow Limburg Jacobin x black Roller pigeon) This outcross was necessary to prevent full inbreeding. This has some disadvantages but also many advantages, seeing that this hen is much shorter. In my opinion the ideal length of a Limburg Jacobin is about 22 cm measured from the wing bow to the end of the tail feathers. The collar is still a bit too short feathered; certainly the hood has to be above the head to be very good.

The **red cock (photo to the right)** is a full brother of the dun hen. This bird has a very beautiful collar and hood, but unfortunately a too light eye colour (should be yellow) and again too long on body. Also the colour could be a bit more even.

The **yellow hen (photo on the next page)** is a third generation bird. Its body length is quite good, as is its eye colour and stance. Only the collar and in particular the hood feathering could be a bit longer; it hardly reaches the top of the head.



Blacks are the best quality, while red and yellow are still a bit less good. We are working on that, but we come a long way. Since I only have six pairs (in black, red and yellow) and had to outcross to another breed to partially eliminate the extreme inbreeding, it is very difficult to get top birds. I only began with this breed when the health of the late Ivo Hansen had already deteriorated considerably and because at that time it became apparent that the number of remaining birds had greatly decreased.

After Ivo had passed away, me and my colleague from the VBN, Rik Snauwaert, started breeding more intensively with the Limburg Jacobins, so that we could place a lot of youngsters with other breeders during the past two years. Of course they are mostly birds that have some faults, but are already useful for further breeding, so that more capacity is available to both birds and breeders. But it cannot be done in just a few years, although as recently as last year I achieved 96 points at the Show in Affligem!



At the Children's Farm 'de Oude Smelterij' in Torhout (B), a breeding program for the Limburg Jacobin was started a few years ago and there are now regularly Limburg Jacobins available to serious breeders. The Limburg Jacobins owned by Ivo Hanssen went to the bird market after his death before anyone could intervene.

Breed Characteristics



Characteristic is the erect stance. Their broad and full hood and collar feathering is typical for this temperamental and rather small structure pigeon. The tiny beak, golden yellow eyes and very small nose wattles fit nicely on the oval-round head. The chest is rather broad, carried fairly high and well rounded. The back is also fairly wide between the shoulders and narrows towards the tail.

The wings almost touch the end of the tail and rest on it, so that there is a good back covering. The hood protrudes above the back of the head. The collar runs uninterrupted in a flowing, elegant manner from the chest to the top of the hood. The front

edges of the collar almost touch each other, leaving only the upper beak, the eyes and the forehead visible.

The breed is recognized in four colours: white, black, red and yellow. White has to be much improved to bring it to the level of the other three colours. Black mottleds become white in old age.

They are good and reliable brooders and parents. In contrast to the breeding, the selection does have some difficulties. Only a small number of youngsters can pass the selection criteria. Size, colour, beak shape and eye colour are the main criteria.

White

We asked judge Jan Spaepen for his opinion on this photo of a white Limburg Jacobin:

“Indeed, white Limburg Jacobin are unfortunately not very common. As far as I know, there are only a few pairs and they still bear many characteristics of the present Old Dutch Capuchin. They are, therefore, usually assessed with love and care.

This white is still a bit heavy and bulky in body. The stance is okay and the eye colour is also good. The hood on the head we prefer to see bending closer to the middle of the head instead of upright, and better closed in the neck. The collar can run a little lower on the chest, with a nice vertical separation line”.



Right: White Limburg Jacobin at the Prachtduif show in 2014. Breeder: G. Stiers. Photo: Sytze de Bruine.

The standard description (*Note: Translation by AE; there is no official English Standard for this breed*)

The general appearance is an almost medium-sized pigeon, rather short, medium-high with slightly upraised posture. With full wide hood and collar.

Head: Longish, with a well-rounded frontal and wide forehead.

Eyes: Yellow to orange-yellow.

Ceres: Fine, narrow; colour in accordance with the feather colour.

Beak: Medium length, flesh coloured in the Whites, black in the Blacks and light to dark horn colour in the Yellows and Reds.

Wattle: Fine and neat.

Neck: Medium length, broad at the base. Clean cut throat.

Breast: Broad, with body to the front, well rounded.

Back: Broad between the shoulders and slightly sloping toward the tail.

Wings: Rather short, carried normally.

Tail: Rather short, carried in line with the back.

Legs: Medium length, nail colour in accordance with the feather colour.

The hood is even, well filled and broad, rounding the head, rising high from the back of the head, bending forward up to about the middle of the upper head. The collar/chain: richly feathered, flowing and as far down as possible from the hood to the chest, with a straight separation of frontwards and backwards bending feathers. At the front of the neck and breast the collar is almost closed. The eyes and front of the head remain clearly visible.

Faults:

Too narrow breast; too long; too large; carriage not erect; too high stance; flat head; too small hood and collar; hood too low, too flat or too upright, no straight separation in collar feathering; wrong eye cere colour.

To illustrate, a concise assessment in consultation with Judge Jan Spaepen, of three pigeons bred by **Rik Snauwaart**:

This **black** Limburg Jacobin (**photo below**) is a good example of what to expect from a standard Limburg Jacobin. Great type, nice colour, beautiful sheen. A hood that goes well above the head, but has to lay more towards the centre of the head. The collar should run lower on the chest with a clearer vertical line of parting feathers and the front of the collar should almost close at the chest. The eye colour is a bit red, but should be yellow. The eye ceres are wanted a bit finer and in accordance with the feather colour.



These are the most important remarks about this pigeon, but we sure can say that this pigeon is already a very decent representative of the current status of the Limburg Jacobin!

The **yellow (photo to the right)** is a bit too long and narrow. The hood should fit more evenly at the head and the collar should run further down on the breast. The stance should be more upright. The colour more even.



This **black (photo to the left)** looks very long in type, also pay attention to the length of the wings; they show very long. The stance is too flat. The hood is set high in the neck, but must be more over the head. The collar can run much further down on the chest. Very good feather colour.



In conclusion

I could never have written this article without the cooperation of the breeders Rik Snauwaert, Antoon Krekelbergh (and his daughter Petra for the photos), Filip Hendrickx, Bert Driessen and the judges Jan Spaepen and Juul Lauwers. Thank you all very much.

I hope that I have been able to warm readers to this new, old breed; a very beautiful pigeon. It is a pity that it is not yet recognized in the Netherlands.

Nevertheless, we hope to be able to admire a few Limburg Jacobins at the Manifestation of the 17 National Belgian pigeon breeds at the 13th International South of the Netherlands Pigeon Show in Berkel-Enschot (municipality of Tilburg) NL, on November 2 and 3, 2018.

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