

SPANISH POUTERS IN SPAIN AND THE NETHERLANDS



Part 1

Pigeons in Moorish Spain

- Pigeons probably came to Spain with the Moors in 711.
- The pigeon was a useful source of meat, feathers and manure.
- The first documentation comes from the province of Murcia, after it was conquered by the Moors.
- The rich pigeon culture during the Moorish domination is mentioned, and the many pigeon towers in the walls of Murcia and other cities are testament to this.
- The type of pigeon mentioned is similar to the Rafeño, later called Valencia Antigo.
- Alfonso X (1268–73) is impressed by the abundance in the remaining Moorish pigeon towers after Murcia was conquered by the Christians

Murcia



Origin of pigeon sport in Spain

- In 1773 the first association for pigeon sport is established in Murcia.
- This sport had existed previously.
- In 1839, free flying of Paloma Laudinos is officially allowed.
- The sport is mainly indulged in by the city's notables, whereas in the Hague the sport of "thief flying" was the province of 'commoners'.
- People begin to select the pigeons for appearance and seduction skills – the ability to lure other pigeons to their own loft.

Origin of the Thief Pouter

- *Columbia livia* is generally recognised as the ancestor of all domestic pigeons including thief pouters.
- Many varieties are eligible to be named as ancestral to the Spanish cropper, but for our purposes, generally speaking, it is the Spanish Buchona, Buchona Valenciana.
- Various breeds have been used to develop the ideal sport pigeon: Owls, Baghdads, Croppers and Racing Homers, among them.
- This took many years, if not many generations of pigeons and their breeders.

Palomas Ladrónes (thief pouter)

- Neither too small nor too large, with good flying ability.
- All croppers have a pendulous crop, with the exception of the Gaditano, Morrillero, Moroncelo and the Palomo de Clase.
- They must be able to attract a pigeon of opposite sex to their own loft by seduction.
- Cocks are well-mannered towards hens and do not peck.
- They fly solo or in groups (except for the Moroncelo, which flies in unison with his hen).
- Tame towards the owner.

Development up to the Franco regime

- Pigeons and their associated sports were very popular..
- Local breeds were everywhere, many regions and villages having their own , with many breeds in Andalusia.
- Until 1900 there was little exchange between the regions.
- Increasing exchange and the emergence of new breeds after 1900.
- The sport of releasing birds to catch other pigeons was very important.

Spanish Regions



Franco regime

- Circa 1939 Franco forbade flying thief pouters.
- To preserve the beloved breeds they were reborn as show pigeons, bred for their looks.
- The pigeons lost their flying ability partially or entirely, due to lack of selection.
- Pica flying was the only pigeon sport allowed under Franco. In Pica (Deportiva) flying, one hen and several cocks are released and cocks who fly closest to the hen score points.
- (See <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/aug/06/paloma-al-aire-ricardo-cases-photobook-spain-pigeon-racing>)

Times after Franco

- After Franco, pigeons could again fly.
- The flying ability had to be reintroduced in many breeds.
- New breeds arose and the pigeons became increasingly well-known abroad.
- In addition to the sporting breeds, varieties were developed with specific flying styles.

Showing in Spain, the differences with our shows

- Type, stance and character more important than colour.
- 100 point system for different parts.
- Weight and size are also given in the breed standard.
- 'Knock-out' system; several judges assess the birds in an aviary to determine the winner.
- Types within a breed may deviate and are often determined by the breeder's preference (e.g. long legs, longer neck).
- In Spain there are both real lovers of the flying pigeons and those that keep them for show, but there are also many enthusiasts who combine showing and flying.
- With the exception of the Veleño, pigeons are often flown in groups, cocks with cocks, hens with hens.

Judging at a Spanish show



Spanish lofts



Thief pouter flying outside Spain

- The sport is practiced not only in Spain, but also in Latin America, Cuba, and by Cuban immigrants in Miami.
- In the Netherlands, at first only in The Hague and surrounds but now the sport has spread countrywide.
- In Scotland and the north of England, participation is almost fanatic, in the past mainly with Horseman Pouters but now also with Spanish breeds.
- The Scots regularly come to the Netherlands to buy pigeons; some are also members of the SIS.

Lofts in the Hague, on roofs, balconies or in gardens



Scottish 'doo kit'

(pigeon loft, from “dove cote”)



Flying and Catching



A cock lands straight from the air on the 'trap'



Working pigeon, does not fly

Specialty Club for Iberian Pigeon Breeds (SIS), Flying & Showing

- Within the SIS we have members who keep pigeons for showing and/or flying.
- Many members used to have “bastard” (crossbred) pouters for the thief pouter sport, but are now flying Spanish pouters, which is going very well.
- In the past, there were a lot of “doo kits” (from Scots dialect for “dove cote”) in The Hague and surrounds. Nowadays one often flies from a pigeon loft or shed with a small catching platform in front, but they also practice the sport from balconies (and high apartment buildings) with a few boxes with or without a trap.
- There are also many enthusiasts in the newly built neighbourhoods around The Hague and in Leiden and Delft.

Flying with Thief Pouters in the Netherlands

- We let our birds fly solo.
- Cocks are keen on going out and are 'hot' so that they go looking for a hen, which they try to lure to their loft.
- Often the hens are fixated on their keeper.
- Other fanciers try to lure cocks or hens. There are different ways to do this.
- For instance with a pigeon set out to lure, a working (non-flying) pigeon or a 'springer', on that flies only in the loft/aviary to attract the attention of free -flying pigeons.
- Pigeons must be “loft stable” and have a strong character. It is a pity if your '96- point pigeon' flies to the loft of another fancier.

Selecting Spanish Thief pouters

- Usual selection for appearance according to the breed standard.
- Selection for flying, catching and breed characteristics.
- Sometimes perfect looking pigeons should be discarded if they lack one of the above qualities.
- Use as little line-breeding as possible to preserve all these properties.

“Improving” the breed is not always better

- Many of the breeds imported into the Netherlands unfortunately had lost their ability to fly because they were bred for shows. Selecting too much on the basis of external characteristics increased the risk of ever-larger birds. This resulted in reduced vitality, crop acidification, the risk of reduced flying ability or the difficulty of rearing their own young.
- However, the SIS is of the opinion that showing and flying must go hand in hand.
- The SIS has a competition in which characteristics and flying ability are also assessed.

Is this bird still able to fly?



All-round Championship

- Choosing the most complete pigeon!
- The pigeon must be judged at a current SIS club show.
- The pigeon is then assessed at the breeder's home by at least two SIS judges according to the assessment list for breed-typical flying and breed characteristics.
- The eight components of the assessment list provide the total points for flying and character.
- These points are added to the points gained at the show to arrive at the total.

Assessment formula

A very extensive assessment –
including a stop watch – covering
many factors.

Waarnemerslijst Allround Kampioenschap:

Naam keurmeester:

TT. Predikaat:

Naam waarnemers:

vliegminuten	0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20-25	25-30	30-35
Punten telling	M-90	V-91	G-92	ZG-93,94,95	F-96	U-97
vliegminuten	0	5-10	10-15	15-20	20	25

Ras: *Gaditon o*

Kleur: *A.o.C.*

Ringnr: *15657*

Naam: *Marco v.d Burg*

Straat: *Baarslaan 150*

Woonplaats: *Voorhout*. Tel nr:

90 Vliegvermogen,

- . Goed vliegen, rekening houden met het ras.

95 Vliegeigenschappen,

- . Vliegeigenschappen van het ras.

95 Handigheid,

- . Insteken.
- . Zoeken.
- . Wegdraaien.
- . Leiding nemen.
- . Op huis aan werken.

95 Conditie,

- . Alert zijn met de omgeving.
- . Actie,
- . Goed aanvoelen en goede pluim,

95 Koergedrag,

- . Man, bij het koeren hoort de doffer zo hoog mogelijk te blijven.
- . Vrouw, vrouwelijk gedrag.
- . Rugafdekking in actie, conform het ras.
- . Niet drijven.

96 Hokwerk,

- . Zoveel mogelijk oogcontact houden.
- . Niet natikken.
- . Hokwerk.

97 Aannemen duif 1,

- . De duif huift binnen 1 minuut, 97 punten.
- . Alleen pluizen/koeren in zijn hok, 95, 96 punten.
- . Eén enkel pikje in het hok, 93, 94 punten.
- . Meerdere pikjes in het hok, 91, 92 punten.
- . Dominant pikken en niet koeren, 90 punten.

97 Aannemen duif 2.

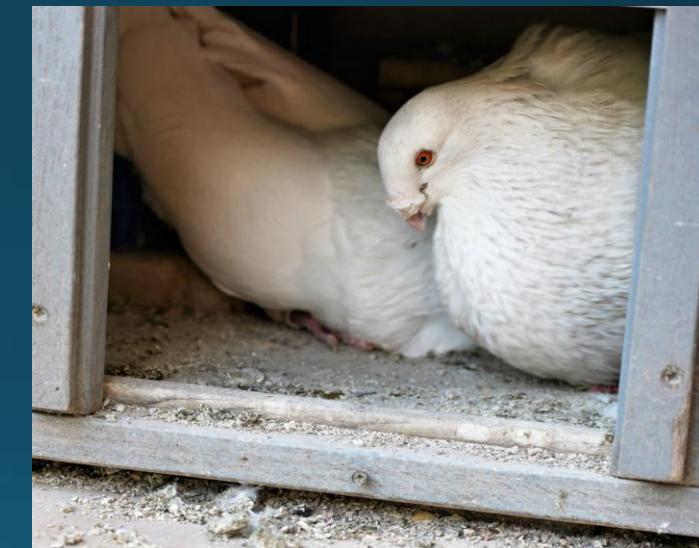
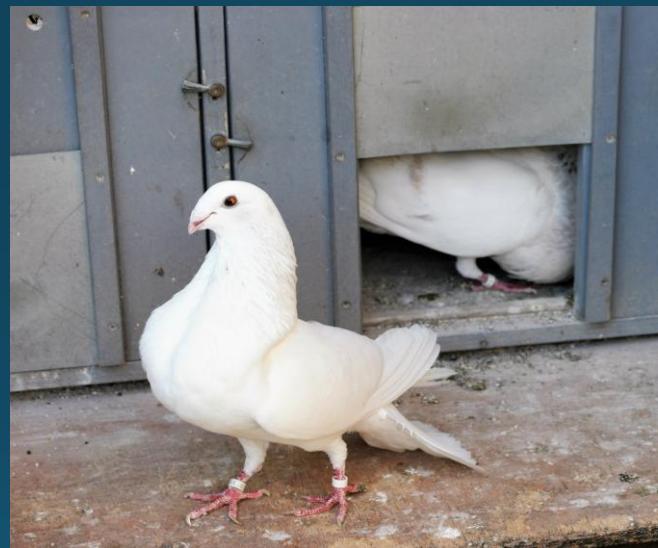
T.T. predicaat F 96

vlieg 380 = ZG 95

Karakter 385 = F 96,25

287,25

All-round Championship: Flying, loft work, treatment of the hen.



Participant certificate



Participants All-round Championship



SIS Club Day



Showing is also important to the SIS; on our Club Day there can be up to 500 Spanish Croppers in the cages.



Other Events

Fixed events are the NBS National Championship Show and the Proffsport Spring Fair in Houten. We also enter our pigeons in German shows and in the European Show. In addition, we promote the sport at Agricultural events and the like; this year we were present at Animal Event, which attracted some 34,000 visitors and in August we were present at 'The Day of the Pigeon'.



Copyright ©2018 All rights reserved by the Aviculture-Europe Foundation and SIS.

This is a publication by the online magazine www.aviculture-europe.nl

English edition ISSN: 2352-2445.

You are not allowed to copy, distribute, send or publish these texts or photos
without our prior permission in writing.