

The Janssen Brothers of Arendonk - [Racing Pigeons by Richard Clingan.](#)

For many years there has been a steady pilgrimage of pigeon fanciers from all over the world to the little village of Arendonk in Belgium. Their shrine has been the house at No 6, Schoolstraat. A very normal house to those outside the sport, but to the pilgrims it is the home of the Janssen Brothers, the most famous fanciers in pigeon racing throughout the world.

The Janssen Brothers like many other fanciers, were the sons of a pigeon fancier. Their father was named Henri, and he kept his first racing pigeons in 1886. To my knowledge there are no records available, but it is said that he was quite a brilliant flier up to and after the first world war.

He was a man of high principals and disagreed with the ever more popular widowhood system of racing, believing it to be against the natural system of things. Until his death in 1949 neither he nor his sons ever raced using the widowhood system. He had seven sons in all - Fons, Frans, Jef, Vic, Adriaan, Charel and Louis, There were also two sisters, Irma and Marie. Irma never married and looked after the brothers until passing away in 1980. Marie married another pigeon fancier - Tist Eyssen, who also raced the Janssen pigeons with great success.

After the end of the first world war in 1918, the eldest brother Fons, who was held captive by the Germans , was released. He went to see an old army friend of his called Louis Ceulemans who told him stories of the pigeons that his father kept. Upon visiting the loft of Ceulemans he purchased a red cock which was named "De Vos van 1919". On his return to Arendonk this cock was introduced into the already successful family of Henri Janssen and soon proved his worth as a breeder as did quite a few Ceulemans pigeons introduced at a later date. Fons Janssen was also to locate and buy the famous "Schalieblauwe van 1932" from Cas Goosens. This pigeon was from the loft of Shooters the brewer, and like the "Vos van 1919" and others from Ceulemans was to have an everlasting effect on the colony of Henri Janssen.

All the pigeons of the Janssen Brothers to this day can be traced back to the Ceulemans pigeons and the "Schalieblauwe van 1932". The particular red checker colouring with the silver head feathering that is unique to the Janssens is directly attributable to the Vos van 1919 and others bought from Ceulemans. Meanwhile the more famous slaty or schalie colouring stems from the Schalieblauwe van 32 (Schalieblauwe meaning slate blue).

As well as supplying his father Henri with the above two excellent stock pigeons Fons Janssen also supplied pigeons to Gust Hofkens the butcher of Merksplas. Hofkens crossed them into the birds of Van Rhijn Kloeck and formed a world beating family. The "Eenoger" B56 6353631 a fantastic racer and breeder. His grandson the "Dreibander" B64 6151612, another great racer and breeder, both of which were to help in the great successes of both Karel Meulemans and Jan Grondelaers. They were but two of many top pigeons belonging to Gust Hofkens, all descending from the birds of Fons Janssen. Frans Janssen, the second eldest brother and an excellent flier in his own right, flew a family of pigeons which were a cross of birds from Fons and from the other brothers. The story goes that he supplied pigeons to the famous Louis van Loon of Poppel, and it was these pigeons that started him on the road to success. Jef Janssen although not deeply involved in the pigeon, was in charge of the clocks for the brothers, while Vic who lived in the same house didn't have any interest in the pigeons at all. Adriaan was the breeder, the man with the great insight into how it was all put together. He was a man of very few words and when he spoke people stopped talking and listened. Charel also took a hand in the breeding and was an expert at keeping the birds in top condition. He was the brother with the competitive edge, the eye for a winner. After the death of Adriaan in 1981 he took on his tasks as well. Louis, the youngest of the brothers, looked after the book keeping. As the pigeons of the brothers found world-wide fame he also looked after the commercial interests. He is renowned for having a great memory, both for fanciers and pigeons. Some say he is not as involved in the birds as Adriaan and Charel, but I remember some years ago reading the Janssen Brothers book by Ad Schaerlaeckens (a most interesting publication and an essential item for all Janssen fanatics). On page 57 there is a photograph of Louis holding the "Jonge Geeloger " before its departure to Japan. The mixture of sadness and pride in his eyes immediately marks him down as a truly dedicated pigeon fancier.

At the end of the Second World War the brothers had managed to hold on to 42 pigeons which they had kept hidden in the cellars of the house in Schoolstraat. There is a story that says after the war the brothers gave exactly half of their surviving birds to a certain Albert de Haen of Brussels. De Haen put his pigeons in an aviary and tried to break them to the loft. He lost all 21 pigeons and regretted it all of his life. With the 21 that the brothers kept they were once again to take over total dominance of the sport in their area.

For many year after the war in fact until very recently, those who bought birds from the Janssens were lucky even to get the names or ring numbers of the parents. With the necessity for pedigrees in modern times, the brothers have now made out a simple form with just enough room for the basic breeding information. When the famous Planet Brothers bought their pigeons from the brothers in the late 70's the only information they got was written on the back of the ring card.

So much for the brothers themselves, what about the many winning pigeons they created, many of which are household names today? There is an abundance of great pigeons involved in this family. So, for practical purposes I will limit them to those bred after the end of the second world war. That being the case there is only one starting point and that is B45 411053 the marvellous "Wondervoske van 45". A winner of many first prizes, she was bred from the line of the Schalieblauwe of 32 and Ceulemans Vos van 26. One cannot mention Wondervoske without in the same breath mentioning another all time great. The fabulous "Blauwe van 48" also bred from the line of the Schalieblauwe of 32. The blood of these two great birds runs through all of the Janssen pigeons of today. There are and have been many debates as to which was the greater of the two, but I prefer to think of them as both being of equal merit.

The great producer, the "Bange van 51", B51 6117447 was bred from the "Voske van 49" and "Viteske". The Voske of 49 was from Wondervoske when paired to the Lichte Witoger of 46 (light cheque white eye). This Bange of 51 was to breed a dynasty of top class racers and breeders, and his bloodlines even generations ahead are most sought after today. His most famous son, and in the opinion of many Janssen connoisseurs, the best breeder of all was the "Bange van 59". His dam was the "Licht van Schoon Licht", a daughter of - not surprisingly, the Blue of 48 when paired to the great Schoon Licht of 51, another super breeder. No matter which of the brothers pigeons you care to look at, they are all bred with so much quality in depth.

In the bloodlines of the pigeons covered in the next few paragraphs, the Bange (pronounce Bang-eh and meaning nervous) of 51 and 59 are all important. The "Oude Geeloger van 67" (Old yellow eye of 67) B67 6282027, a fantastic racer with 15 first prizes to his credit. Like others he was also a crack breeder. His sire was a grandson of Bange van 51, his dam a grand daughter of the Blue of 48 and Schoon Licht van 51. This Geeloger of 67 was to sire many great racers including the famous "Geeloger van 74" B74 6696296. In this period at the end of the 60's the Janssens were unbeatable, and the birds that made them so like the Geeloger van 67, each deserve a chapter to themselves.

One of the most interesting of the Janssen pigeons was the "Oude Witoger van 65". Interesting, not because of his 10 first prizes, but because unlike the rest of the family, he was the result of a cross. The only cross that the brothers introduced since the war. He was a full brother of the "Licht van 67" and the "Geschelpte van 62" B62 6130361 (both will crop up later). His sire was B60 1000863. You will notice that this is not a Janssen ring number. This bird came direct from Viktor Fabry. The story goes that Viktor Fabry purchased a son of the Blue van 48 from the Janssens. This bird, known as the "Trage" B52 6384936 did so well for him that in return he gave the brothers a cock from him, when he was paired to the daughter (B59 1005026) of his best racing cock. This cock had won over two million B.Frs and was named "Porthos" B50 1195569. Porthos in turn was from "De Franck" B44 306686 winner of first provincial Angouleme and "Heroine" B47 306686 winner of first national St Vincent. This is getting quite complicated, but please bear with me. The dam of B59 1005026 was pure Jos Van den Bosch of Berlaar, known as the "Jonge Prinses" B57 6327825 and was a daughter of the "Prinses van 56", none other than a full sister to the famous "Zuster Prinses" B61 6643537 who was the dam of Karel Meulemans "Oude van den Bosch" B67 6729926 the sire of the world famous "Stamkopple". Even with these illustrious bloodlines behind him this gift pigeon from Fabry was put on the road and raced, gaining quite a few firsts. He became known as the "Halve

Fabry", and was paired to Schoon Licht van 61 B61 65000825, a daughter of the Bange van 59. They produced the Oude Witoger and many more excellent pigeons.

The most famous of them all, probably the most well known racing pigeon in the world - B67 6282031, the Janssen brothers famous "Oude Merckx van 67" named after the famous Belgian cyclist Eddy Merckx. Oude Merckx was the winner of 21 first prizes throughout his career. He was sired by "Donkere Stier " B63 6510753, a son of De Stier van 55 out of the Bange van 51 when paired to the Blauwke van 54 (15 x 1st's) from once again the Blue of 48. The dam of Donkere Stier (dark cheque bull) was the Geschelpte van 62, B62 6130361, a full sister of Oude Witoger of 65. The dam of Merckx was Het Kleintje (the small one) B65 6524603. She was from the Bange van 59 and a grand daughter of Bange van 51 when paired to the same Blauwke van 54. Virtually every line of this famous pedigree leads back to Wondervoske van 45 and Schalieblauwe van 32. Merckx is as well known for his superb breeding record as for his race results. He was the sire of "Jonge Merckx" B70 6243257 the winner of 15 first prizes and also a tremendous breeder. The "019" B73 6736019 winner of 18 first prizes and one of Janssens fastest racers and his brother "Velo" B73 6108765. So named as he won a bicycle for the brothers. Later on as the story of these wonderful Janssen pigeons unfolds, the true breeding value of the Merckx will be revealed.

One of the fastest of all the brothers pigeons which descends from both Oude Merckx and Oude Witoger was B73 6276400 " The Oude Raket" (the old rocket) or Raketman. A winner of 10 firsts, and like his predecessor an exceptional breeder. The Raket is a direct son of Oude Witoger van 65 when paired to the Goei Dulfke van 72 (the good hen) B72 6112590. Now why with all these exceptional pigeons would the brothers call a bird the good hen? Well, she was a daughter of the above mentioned Young merckx, she was a winner of many first prizes, but above all she was amongst their very best ever breeders. Along with the Oude Raket this pairing produced the 'Marietje' of Jos van Limpt better known as De Klak (the cap). Klak mated her to the "Dikke van de 20" (the fat one from the 20) and they formed a superb breeding couple. The Oude Raket was paired with a hen from Scherpe van 68 B68 6178123 and a sister of 019, she was called the Donker Duivin van de Scherpen B75 6100335 , this mating bred many successful offspring including the great racer and breeder Jonge Raket B76 6121297 a winner of 17 prizes.

In the Janssen family there are so many top class pigeons that it would be impossible to mention them all. I will include a few names that immediately spring to mind. The 'Goed Jaarling' B76 6112572 a super racer, bred from the Blauwe van 69 B69 6054535 and a half sister of Merckx, the Duivin van de Stier B71 6103457. Het Veldduifje B80 6307760 (the field hen) if it was not for her habit of going to the fields she could have been one of their best ever racing hens ,after all she was a grand daughter of the Blue of 69 and Donkere Stier. The Schouwman (chimney man) B76 6371905 from a full brother of the 019. The Bange van 67 one of the last sons of the Bange van 51 and also a fantastic breeder. I have covered a few of the many great birds of the Janssen brothers so far, but the question one must ask is, what happened to the birds the brothers sold and how did they per for others? Before going any further I believe it is essential to give a brief description of the typical Janssen,they are mostly blues and cheques, very occasionally a white flight or two crops up any more is a rare occurrence. The reds in the lofts of the brothers are very few in number as are the schalies, but every year some are hatched. In body they are powerful at the shoulder, medium in size as well as in depth of keel. They are well muscled and any I have handled have an abundance of silky feathers. As regards the eyes they are mostly white with the odd yellow one as well (apologies here as I know nothing about eyes or eye sign). One thing they all have in common is their good looks and very streamlined intelligent heads. When these birds got into the hands of other breeders, because of differing methods of breeding from brothers some of the checks became darker, and the size of the pigeons became less uniform. As is said in Europe they lost their 'Made in Arendonk' look. However that certainly did not put a stop to the fantastic success that the strain had achieved in the hands of others.

It was my intention to go into some detail of a few of the many fanciers who obtained the Janssen pigeons and how they fared with them. On second thoughts it seems to me that a better idea would be to go through some of the pigeons whose children and grand children have actually been imported into this country. I know that some fanciers have already had success with offspring from these imports and I am more than confident that if used correctly much more success is yet to come from this fantastic strain of pigeons.

To me the first and most obvious of the exporters to start with is Hans Eijerkamp, the great Dutch champion and owner of the Ponderosa Greenfield Stud. This, by the way is not a commercial break, but through my close association with Tony Hayne of Ponderosa U.K. I have had access to the pigeons and information on them in both U.K. and Holland.

Mr Eijerkamp bred some of his great champions and bought in others. With this in mind I will also try to cover some of the excellent fanciers from whom he bought these great champions as well as the champions that were made by his Janssen pigeons, the pedigrees of some I will try to trace back to the source. You, the reader, will then see what I can only describe as a jigsaw puzzle coming together, with all the pieces taking their rightful place. This has been the result of years of information gathering and I beg your forgiveness if the odd fact is not as accurate as it should be.

Among the first pigeons Hans Eijerkamp obtained from the brothers was a son of the Bange of 51 when paired to a daughter of Schoon Lichte van 51. He called this cock the Bange of 64 B64 6639792. From this cock when paired to a sister of the 200 he bred his Olympiade Bange NL67 1328552. This Olympiade Bange won over 50 prizes at the top level including many firsts. He represented Holland at the pigeon Olympiade in Brussels, he then paired Olympiade Bange to a daughter of the 41 of Thei Hartogs of Brunssum. This resulted in another crack, the Jonge Bange NL75 284002. This Jonge Bange was yet again a great breeder as well as winning 7 first prizes. In 1973 he bought from the brothers a nest pair from the Old Merckx of 67 and the Schone Duivin. They were both hens and full sisters of the famous 019. Both were fantastic breeders and their blood still flows in the champions of today. Their ring numbers being B73 6773092 and 6773093. All the above pigeons are in the pedigrees of some of the Janssen imports, showing Hans Eijerkamp's determination to continue breeding quality in depth as the brother have done for many years.

Very pleased with the success of his Janssens, Hans went on to purchase the 05 NL77 476105 and all his brothers and sisters from Bert Camphuis. In the hands of Camphuis this 05 had won the title of best middle distance flier and 3rd ace pigeon of all Holland in 1981, winning 9 first prizes. Hans Eijerkamp then bought NL83 1774007 from the same source. This pigeon was of course the famous James Bond 007. The best middle distance pigeon of Holland in 1984. It is no coincidence that the Bond was bred from a sister of the 05. The bloodlines of these two birds are very similar. If we can take the 05 and the dam of Bond first, both being full blood relatives. Their breeding is based on the classic principle of dividing the family into two or even three distinct groupings, inbreeding them (not too closely) and then crossing them together. Their sire was rung NL74 1262495 and was bred by Freek Romein of Twello from Vos den Bijter B69 6322235 and Schone Vos B72 6365783. Both birds being bred by Albert van de Flaes of Ravels, very near to Arendonk. Once again I have the strange feeling that this is going to get complicated, so I think it appropriate that I move on to a separate chapter to cover them.

I will deal with the Bijter first. His sire was B68 6401330 the Goed Mallie (cheque) of 68, a son of the very famous Blauwe van Lier B62 6108600, a winner of 20 first prizes. As can be expected this Blauwe van Lier was a grandson of the Blue of 48. The dam of Bijter can be traced back through the Dikke Vos van 64 to Wondervoske, straight to the old family of Ceulemans. Schone Vos also has bloodlines going back to the Wondervoske. This pair when in the hands of Freek Romein bred a dynasty of race winners and breeders of winners. De Rode Appie, De Rode Vechter, De Rode Duivin along with their offspring Zoon Appie, winner of 13 firsts, De Rode 69 and his 3 first prize winning brothers as well as many more. Also in this illustrious company I should mention the fantastic Helle Vos NL78 814983 of Gerhard Schleppehorst. Bred by the late Wout Smeulders of Neunen from a son of the Rode Appie. This loft has bred so many top racers and breeders using the blood of the famous Rode Vossen of Freek Romein. It could be said that in Holland the lofts of Smeulders were a source of top winning bloodlines for many of the best flyers in the country.

On the dams side (of 05 and Annie the dam of Bond) all lines go back to the Bange of 51. Her sire was Smeulders renowned 612 (De Goede 12) winner of many firsts, a son of the Olympiade 08 and the Schallie van 58 who left the loft of the brothers as an egg out of the nest of the Bange of 51. Her dam is the 626, a daughter of the same Schallie van 58 when paired to a cock of the line of Jos Klaks Vechter of 57 (fighter). Bearing in mind that the Olympiade 08

is also directly related to the Bange of 51 (if you can possibly make any sense out of the above) it then becomes clear just how inbred this hen was. It can be seen that in the case of the 05, along with his brothers and sisters, the strain was effectively split, inbred and then crossed. By doing this a certain amount of heterosis (hybrid vigour) is developed and of course this is one of the most necessary ingredients needed to win on the widowhood system on which these birds are flown. To step backwards for a minute, the Olympiade 08 was a winner of many firsts (I don't know exactly how many) his fraternal half brother the Kanon NL67 766379 won in his career 20 first prizes and also represented Holland at the pigeon Olympiade. Their common sire being a grandson of the Bange of 51.

Virtually the same goes for 007 James Bond. His dam being Annie the sister of 05. She was in this case paired to a cock that was a double grandson of Smeulders famous 531. In the opinion of many the biggest winning Janssen of all time. 15 first prizes and 87 other prizes, all in the high numbers. The breeding of this 531 is not accurately known beyond his parents but it is commonly known that he contains the best blood lines of Jos Klaks pre war purchases from the brothers. The 531 ended his days in Gerhard Schleppehorst's lofts in Langenburg along with many other European champions.

Let us now go to England. The year is 1984 and a "then" little known Welsh fancier called Alun Maull, hoping to improve on his racing performances attended the first sale that was held by Hans Eijerkamp in the U.K. It so happened that this sale was organised by a certain Tony Hayne, the present manager of Ponderosa U.K. At this sale Alun bought 11 pigeons in all. Each and every one bred 1st Fed winners for him. I would like to mention just a few, so that you the reader can judge for yourself the quality of the bloodlines available at that time. They were a direct youngster of Bange van 64, grand children of Jonge Merckx, the 019 etc. The most famous of the birds from that sale and the most relevant to Australian readers were a son from a brother of 019, a grandson of Bange van 51, a daughter of the Kaaskop of 64 and a grand daughter of the Supercrack. In order to deal with these last four pigeons properly and with due respect one would need to write a book. Since room does not permit that, the basic breeding will have to suffice.

The first mentioned was from a full brother of the 019 when paired to a grand daughter of Janssens Schoon Licht van 51 B51 6463692. This cock was known as the Old Merckx cock and was numbered NL77 607915. The second was from a double grandson of the Vechter of 57 (not the same as that of Jos Klak) a direct son of the Blue of 48. His dam was a daughter of the Bange van 51 when paired to the Geschelpte van 62 B62 6130361 a full sister of Oude Witoger. This cock was called the Dikke Blue by one and all, even though he was a dark cheque, an unusual colour for a Janssen pigeon. This can be explained by the fact that one of his grand dams was a daughter of the Oude Donkere of 59 a very dark pigeon. This dark colouring as I have already stated is unusual in a Janssen, and in this particular cock it is very dominant with the same colour coming out many generations later. The first of the hens was from the Kaaskop of 64 when paired to a daughter of Merckx, a full sister of the 019. She was B73 677093 one of the nest pair bought from the Janssens. This little chequer hen was just like her dam 093 and was simply known as the Kaaskop hen. The last and most famous of all was from a grandson of Schoon Licht of 51 NL67 692657 a winner of 40 top prizes. He was paired to a hen that was out of a sister of the 019 and the Supercrack, grandson of the Blue of 48 and a winner of 29 1st prizes. This last pigeon was called Marilyn. To date she has at least 60 Fed and Combine winners from her line, including Grenville Evans 500 mile winner in the V.H.A. Her offspring are such that they don't only win for fanciers, they win in spite of them. The name Marilyn is at present on the lips of virtually every serious Janssen enthusiast in the U.K. and elsewhere. She is very closely related to the above three birds and when paired to both of the cocks bred winners in just about every nest. The magic of Marilyn is that not only did she breed winners but her children and grand children did the same with tremendous regularity. They were a line of pigeons that won in all classes of competition from sprints to over 600 miles. My good friend, and in my opinion one of the best exponents of the widowhood system in the U.K., Rex Doe of Cornwall has always said that Alun Maull was the best all round fancier in Britain. That being the case, Marilyn certainly helped to put him there.

When the above 4 birds were showing signs of their age Alun very kindly gave them to Tony Hayne to stay their last days at Ponderosa U.K. Their offspring were priceless and could only be bought for large sums of money, if at all. To the best of my knowledge there are only five of them here in Australia. In my time in Northern Ireland

before emigrating, the bulk of Ponderosa stock coming into the country passed through my hands. Because of my close association with Tony Hayne, I was privileged to own stock off all the above, which under normal circumstances I would never have been able to afford. I well remember the last time I saw Marilyn, she was sitting on a window ledge perch in the back loft (the one where the visitors don't go) along with her daughter by the Dikke Blue GB88C13799 who was her spitting image. Now having handled 05, Stamvater, James Bond, Peter Pau and many others this old 77 hen beats them all. Over 60 1st Fed and Combine winners from her line. All of them in the big races and these are only the winners that are known of. She has what is known as the strength of the Janssen blood in her veins, and as with many other top Janssen pigeons their offspring produce winners for many generations. Many people here have asked me if the results gained by the Marilyn line are fair dinkum. Well for those of you who have not asked yet, yes they are, without a doubt, all of them.

The latest attraction at Ponderosa is the Bourges NL88 1222190. I first saw him in a pen by himself at the Greenfield stud in Holland, when I, along with John Hofman of Ponderosa Australia were on a visit there in 1991. At that time all I can remember was a little slate cock looking very much alone and miserable. He has since turned out to be, in the words of Tony Hayne "the hottest thing as Ponderosa since sliced bread". When one looks at his breeding, on the dam's side. She is a daughter of the Bond when paired to a grand daughter of Bange of 64. The exciting thing to me is that his sire is a son of the Supercrack and a sister of the 019. This makes Bourges a first cousin to Marilyn.

Another pigeon of note to have sons and daughters in Australia is Boniek NL81 1005994. He, like the 05 and Bond is direct from the lofts of Bert Camphuis. He is inbred to the lines of the 33 a winner of 11 first prizes, and is the grandsire of a Welsh National winner. Underestimated by many, but in my own humble opinion one of the best pairs ever to breed at Ponderosa U.K. and have youngsters out here were known to me simply as Pair 5 in the 1988 Blue Book. The cock was Raket 2, bred from two direct Janssens. His sire was a grandson of the Raketman and his dam a sister of the Good Yearling. The hen of this pair was a sister of the Bredacock, bred from a grandson of Romein's red fox pair and a sister of the Bond. Some fantastic breeding birds were produced from this pair.

Finally there is another direct Camphuis, the Wonderboy 05, NL88 2854505, 2nd ace pigeon of Holland and containing the blood of Smeulders 531, Verbarts 46 and the 05. Three of the biggest winners in European pigeon racing. All with pedigrees going back to the lofts at Schoolstraat, Arendonk. It may be of interest to Jos Klak fans that the 46 was a direct son of Klak's famous pairing of the Vechter (fighter) NL57 400174 and Witpenneke NL57 796196. One of the most successful Janssen pairings of all time.

Now on to the imports to Australia from L.P.W. Where better to start than the great Stamvater NL76 357147. Bred by Von Gorn of Tijnburg in Holland. If one is to study his breeding, it can be seen that the original breeder had him in mind for the stock loft all along. His sire was from the Bange of 59 and a daughter of the Oude Vos B67 6282030. The dam of Stamvater is B72 224836 from a daughter of the Oude Vos when paired to a son of the Bange of 59. Being highly inbred to the two lines of the Oude Vos and the Bange of 59 this cock would produce considerable hybrid vigour in the cross, and even within his own strain. That's exactly what he did, breeding a string of winners for Valentine Muller. Of course he did not do it entirely on his own. Val Muller was an excellent flier in his own right. Stamvater was purchased by Mr Maserella at Mullers sale in 1985, along with virtually every other bird of note that was up for auction.

In 1975 Mr. Maserella went to the brothers and bought birds directly from them. Of these, three of the most noteworthy were Arjaan B71 6103507, his nest hen Irma B71 6103521 and Firske B74 6696301. A lot of winners were bred from the direct Janssens, but the above three pigeons bred more than their fare share of them. Arjaan was a son of the Grote Geschelpte van 64 (the big cheque of 64) when paired to a daughter of the Bange of 59. Irma was from the Late Licht of 63 and a daughter of the Dikke Witoger (fat white eye). Firske was from the Oude Witoger of 65 and the Goei Duifke (the best daughter of the Young Merckx), which makes him a full brother to the famous Raketman. Like all direct Janssens they have quality in depth, and as in the case of Louella, that quality came out even generations later with winners galore being reported from the above pigeons. I cannot leave the direct birds without a mention of the fabulous Le Bon Reproducteur and his hen Madame Pompateur. This cock, bred by the

Brothers, had already served its time in the stock loft of the famous Maurice Verheye, where it already had left its mark. Many of Verheyes champion racers had its blood coursing in their veins. I'm sure many of you already know of the outstanding quality of the Verheye birds, their ancestry coming from the early Desmet Matthijs with a fare share of Janssen thrown in as well.

Other great Janssens owned by L.P.W. and imported into Australia are the Andre Berte pigeons, of all the Louella birds these are my favourites. Beautifully balanced pigeons with extreme good looks and a mass of silky feathers. These pigeons managed to retain a bit of keel, where so many breeders today seem to want to breed shallow keeled birds. Its not surprising that Andre did so well at the pigeon Olympiades with them. Regardless of their looks they were great breeders and produced many prize winners.

The great Sheer Elegance was the best known of them but her brother Sheer Excellence and a sister with no name GB85V53723 were also of great stock value. The latter was a special hen especially when paired to the direct Berte cock B79 6673406 a grandson of Facteur. A really magical pair. I once owned a brother to Sheer Elegance he was rung GB80V84033 and was quite a good pigeon, but the best I had apart from a cock of the last mentioned pair was GB80V84027. An incredible breeder of winners. I called him Browns cock as he was purchased from a certain Alan Brown of Dundonald in Northern Ireland. An excellent flier who had amassed a great number of open and section wins with his progeny. Including one son that won the NIPA section 8 times .

John and Gary Squibb alias the Planet Brothers need no introduction. Their fabulous Van Loons and direct Janssens have done that for them all over the world. I have no idea which of their Janssens were imported here, all I do know is that they got the very best from Arendonk including a couple of daughters of the 019 which have bred exceptionally well for them.

Possibly two of the biggest misconceptions in the fancy are that all Janssens have white eyes and that they are only short distance pigeons. Both are entirely untrue. The Janssens have always bred birds with both white and yellow eyes, and on some occasions other colours as well. As regards the short distances, they most likely have this reputation as the Brothers only put them in the short races because they were too valuable to them. When they left the lofts at Arendonk they were put to all distances and have won at them all both pure and crossed.

Many great fanciers have used them as a cross to speed up their existing family. Names such as Felix Pauwels, Karel Meulemans, Jan Grondelaers, Staf Van Reet, Raoul and Xavier Verstraete, Jos and Philip Herbots, Maurice Verheye, Dr.Piet Linssen, Jacques Tournier and Louis Van Loon to name a few. For the longer distances many men have also found them of great use, men such as Gerard and Michael Van Hee, Viktor Fabry, even the great Marcel Braakhuis is not above using a dash of Janssen in his family of long distance racers. In Australia we have my friend Grenville Evans winning at 500 miles with a pure Janssen, 500 miles is definitely no sprint in my opinion.

Janssens are without a doubt the number one crossing pigeon available today. They are very inbred, and one really needs to see an extended pedigree to appreciate this. Most of the top fliers in Europe with pure Janssens try as near as possible to copy the breeding methods of the Brothers. By doing this they can still breed birds that are true to type, both in looks and in racing. There are many top fliers who are in the prizes each week with their Janssens. As far as crossing is concerned, they cross well with just about anything. The purer and more inbred the strain the better they cross. Probably the most favoured cross is with the Meulemans but they do very well with the Aardens, Linssens and Desmet Matthijs. This is why the pigeons of the Janssen brothers have found universal acclaim. Not particularly because of the success gained by the Brothers themselves, but by success gained by the many thousands of fanciers all over the world with their pigeons.

I believe that a great debt of gratitude is owed to these little men from Arendonk by the many people who have had so much pleasure flying their fantastic pigeons and winning with them.

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