Vredeveeld-Leemhuis (Coevorden, NL): two modest and yet very successful and close knit pigeon families!

It is almost impossible to believe what Harm (63) and Robert (39) have achieved in the last few years. The two fanciers were enthusiastically supported by their respective families. Again, the champion’s loft from Coevorden seemed unstoppable in 2012.

There is no doubt that the Vredeveeld and Leemhuis families are both passionate about pigeon racing; they see it as a family business. The two families give everything they have to achieve top prizes at national level.

In the Vredeveeld family it is Harm (the father) who takes care of the pigeons and the lofts most of the time. He has two daughters: Angelique does the administrative tasks and Chantal maintains relationships with other national and international fanciers. Lenie, the mother, plays a very important role behind the scenes. She is the silent force of the Vredeveeld family. The Leemhuizen family has an impressive loft behind the house. A motivated Robert takes care of the pigeons early in the morning and in the evening. His wife Henriette is responsible for the administrative side of the loft, just like Angelique. Pigeon racing is a family matter. You can imagine how the entire family is waiting for the pigeons to arrive during a race, despite the tense atmosphere. This is a sensation many fanciers can only dream of.

Harm thinks there is no secret to running a successful pigeon family. It is all about winning first prizes, preferably in the races that matter the most. Harm will never forget his first victory: it was his talented Silverboy NL04-2235605 who took the win from Orleans (630km) in 2006 with a five minute lead against 15,855 birds. The wind was blowing from the north-northeast and temperatures rose to 33 degrees; it was a particularly hard day for the pigeons. This first victory was an unforgettable moment for the fanciers from Coevorden.
Silverboy is a strong bird that originates from Martin van Zon, where Harm has been obtaining reinforcements since 2004.

Silverboy is a great racing bird and winner of:

1st NPO Orleans - 8,626 p. (and the fastest of 15,855 p.)
9th NPO Etampes - 5,682 p.
19th NPO Ablis - 10,171 p.
61st NPO Ablis - 10,811 p.
87th Huy - 13,967 p.

etc.

He is also an excellent breeder. He is sire and grandfather of for instance:

2nd NPO Pithiviers - 7,749 p.
2nd Boxtel - 12,123 p.
3rd NPO Pithiviers - 7,749 p.
4th Menen - 2,110 p.
5th NPO Orleans - 7,270 p.
8th NPO Troyes - 8,721 p.
10th NPO Pithiviers - 7,749 p.

etc.

Adele

The top class hen Adele NL10-4796299 is another great descendant of Silverboy. She is a very talented racing hen with a great body and soft plumes. Adele is a young hen but she has already managed to win two top 10 prizes NPO. Impressive!

Click here for the pedigree of the amazing Adele. Adele has already won the following prizes:

2nd Boxtel - 12,123 pigeons
6th NPO Orleans - 7,270 pigeons
10th NPO Pithiviers - 7,749 pigeons
104th St. Truiden - 10,113 pigeons
116th NPO Troyes - 8,079 pigeons
129th Ravenstein - 9,166 pigeons
140th St. Truiden - 6,888 pigeons

etc.
Lucky Boy

Lucky Boy NL00-4727014 is another very successful racing pigeon of Vredeveld-Leemhuis. This temperamental cock stems directly from the renowned top couple Boy x Queen. This pair is also known as the Love Pair.

Lucky Boy is winner of:

1st Hasselt - 6,905 pigeons
3rd Beek - 4,600 pigeons
3rd St. Quentin - 1,509 pigeons
5th Hannut - 3,448 pigeons
9th Rethel - 2,329 pigeons
13th Boxtel - 3,563 pigeons
14th St. Quentin - 5,071 pigeons
15th Chimay - 2,082 pigeons
29th Boxtel - 4,571 pigeons
38th St. Ghislain - 1,883 pigeons
46th Nijvel - 4,117 pigeons
Etc.

In addition he is the sire of:

1st NPO - 8,056 pigeons
1st - 10,722 pigeons
2nd - 11,388 pigeons
3rd - 2,110 pigeons
3rd - 10,698 pigeons
8th - 1,559 pigeons
9th - 23,727 pigeons
10th NPO - 26,130 pigeons
11th - 14,967 pigeons
11th - 1,559 pigeons
15th NPO - 10,037 pigeons
27th - 16,545 pigeons
Etc.
Space Shuttle

The two families are only looking for the very best pigeons on the market. A good example is Space Shuttle (NL07-1229127). This star was owned by and purchased from Jan Oost (Elp, NL) and was awarded as First WHZB Middle Distance 2009, first National Ace Pigeon Middle Distance in The Netherlands 2009, first WENC Holland 2010, etc.

Space Shuttle has won these impressive titles thanks to a number of great achievements:

1st - 4,461 pigeons
1st - 1,505 pigeons
1st - 1,011 pigeons
2nd - 10,276 pigeons
2nd - 1,334 pigeons
4th - 7,651 pigeons
4th - 12,126 pigeons
7th - 1,399 pigeons
10th - 12,111 pigeons
Zorro

The latest addition to the loft of Harm and Robert is Zorro NL10-1608146. Zorro belonged to the racing team of the successful partnership of Wim and Ria Van de Kooy from Voorhout until a few years ago. He has now made the move to Coevorden, where he was praised for his outstanding achievements. He was awarded as First WHZB Middle Distance 2012, First National Ace Pigeon Middle Distance The Netherlands 2012, first Ace Pigeon Middle Distance District 12, etc. These titles were the result of his excellent achievements:

1st Moeskroen       - 1,987 pigeons
1st Nanteuil       - 1,218 pigeons
3rd Mantes la Jolie   - 5,583 pigeons
5th Mantes la Jolie  - 1,805 pigeons
15th Nanteuil l. H.  - 1,040 pigeons
18th Peronne        - 1,275 pigeons
21st Charlevilles   - 2,311 pigeons
23rd Strombeek      - 2,524 pigeons
etc.
X-Factor

The two fanciers are always interested in buying back some of their own bloodlines when looking for new birds. That is because these birds will likely fit in the existing breed and they are probably used to the demanding training regime imposed by the grandmasters. Vredeveld-Leemhuis have had some newcomers that seemed useless because they could not cope with their training regime. X-factor NL07-1208418 was one of those newcomers. They decided to keep X-factor in the loft anyway and it proved a good choice: he is now the sire of the talented young bird NL12-5210188, which was third National Ace Pigeon Young Birds in 2012. The 12-188 is not the only outstanding descendant of X factor; he has bred several other great birds. His youngsters have won for instance a First Peronne - 213 pigeons, first Isnes - 2,457 pigeons, first NPO Pommeroeul - 8,056 pigeons, sixth NPO Morlincourt - 4,550 pigeons, 7th Duffel - 16,545 pigeons, 8th Duffel - 16,545 pigeons, 8th Lommel - 9,059 pigeons, 9th Heteren - 10,662 pigeons, 9th NPO Morlincourt - 5,731 pigeons, 11th NPO Morlincourt - 5,731 pigeons, etc.
Caretaking

Harm and Robert put their pigeons to the test quite often. The pigeons are basketed every single week from April until the final old bird race of the season. In addition they try to release the pigeons twice a week for an 80km flight, even during the racing season. This means the pigeons are on a busy schedule so they have to be ready for it. To make sure the pigeons are fit they are fed with Beyers mixtures and they are given protein powder and electrolytes as well. When the pigeons come home from a race they can eat grit and fresh minerals as well.

The large sized lofts are easy to keep clean and they are very conveniently built. “I’d rather spend my time observing the pigeons than clean the lofts”, Harm admits, while quietly walking through the lofts, keeping an eye on every single bird.

Many fanciers are afraid of making any changes to their loft during the season. Harm used to be a carpenter and Robert works as a carpenter as well at the moment. They do not see any harm in changing or adapting the lofts during the season. In fact they would do anything to do 1% better than their opponents. “Keep in mind that a 1% improvement in a race of 100 minutes means a one minute lead”, says the fanatic fancier Robert.

Pigeon racing is a family matter for Harm and Robert, especially when they are on their way to basket the pigeons on Thursday. The other family members seize the opportunity to thoroughly clean the pigeon lofts. Even the ceiling is cleaned with a type of leaf blower. That explains why the pigeons will do anything on Saturday to be back in their loft as quickly as possible. This also illustrates the great ambition and the discipline of the two families, who are not willing to give up their place among the very best fanciers in the country.

Click here to learn more about the caretaking of the pigeons in this loft.

Ready for 2013

Harm would like 2013 to be even more successful than the previous seasons. “This is the first season in which we can completely focus on our pigeons. In previous years we were too much concerned with rebuilding our lofts. This is now behind us and we noticed that our pigeons are working towards the new season more relaxed than ever,” says pigeon virtuoso Harm. “In addition we are always trying to raise the bar and to select even more. This improves the quality of the pigeons and it helps us to win more prizes.”

We are convinced that these wonderful and down to earth families will have a great 2013 season. The fanciers from Coevorden are all set for the new season. Let this be a warning!

Click here for the achievements of 2012
Click here for the achievements of 2011
Click here for the achievements of 2010