

NORTH AMERICA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL RACING LOFT

CLAUDE ROTHGIESSER

TOTAL DISPERSAL SALE OF HIS WORLD-CLASS BREEDERS DUE TO SERIOUS SPINAL SURGERY

Claude was born in South Africa in 1939, and is now almost 73 years old. He raced in the Western Province Homing Union (a federation of 160 lofts) and in the Western Cape Racing Pigeon Combine of 1300 lofts, from 1965 to 1984 with enormous success – so much so that when he sold out in 1985 on emigrating to North America, his sale broke all existing South African records. As is well known, South Africa is one of the strongest pigeon racing countries in the world.

Claude started in racing in Toronto, Canada, in 1989 and won from his first race. He raced first in the Toronto Federation and from 1997 in the Up North Combine. Although racing up to 120km longer than the short lofts he has had great success in young and old birds.

In 1998 Claude sent his first bird to a futurity race – the San Diego Triple Crown. This bird –“San Diego Queen” won the first race (100 miles) by 7 minutes, winning over \$47,000 (a San Diego record). The same bird got 6th in the 300 miles race a few days later and 1st in the 400 mile race 10 days after that.

That started an incredible run of futurity wins which earned Claude the American Racing Pigeon Union's Breeders Cup the first 3 years it was presented in 2002-2003-2004. In 2001 Claude won top prizes in 12 out of 13 leading futurities (SNOWBIRD RACES, AU CONVENTION RACE, DETROIT MOTOR CITY etc.). In the “toughest test of all” the FVC Premier Yearling Series (300-400-500 mile races in 5 weeks open to Snowbirds and Premier Y/B of the previous year) Claude was:

- 2nd Overall 2000
- 1st Overall 2001
- 1st Overall 2002
- with 3 different handlers.

In his first 10 years in the American Racing Pigeon Union Claude won:

- 8 X 1st A.U. President's Cup
- 2 X 2nd A.U. President's Cup
- (for all – round home racing results) and the highest number of A.U. Hall of Fame Awards.

Claude was selected by the A.U. to represent the USA in the FCI (World Pigeon Organisation) international race in Mexico in 1999 and got 4th place ahead of Belgium, Germany, and Holland.

Claude also won many Open races in Canada and:

- 1st Braggs Futurity Race
- 1st Empire Classic Futurity
- 2 X 1st Canadian Young Bird Classic (Hamilton Englehart)
- 2nd and 3rd Oshawa Gold Bond Race
- 4th and 10th Canadian International One Loft Race

Claude then turned his attention to what had become the “world championship race” -the Sun City Million Dollar Pigeon Race in South Africa.

- In January 2010 he was 19th and 78th in the final race.
- In December 2010/January 2011 Claude was 1st in the Sun City International Car Race, and was in the first drop and seconds out in the 3 other car races.
- In December 2011 Claude was 1st out of 5200 birds in a Sun City Official Training flight.



THE SECRET? Since 1964 Claude has visited the champion lofts of Belgium and selected young birds out of their best. Claude speaks the Flemish language, and many of the all-time greats have become close friends. The great **Maurice Delbar** visited Claude twice in South Africa and so did the famous **Piet de Weerd**. Claude now has enquiries to supply birds to some of Belgium’s top lofts.

In addition to the greatest of Belgian birds, Claude bought from the Dutch champion **Wout Spierings** around the same time as Mike Ganus did (Mike called them “**The Creators**”) and these birds have done well.

One of the greatest additions in 2000 were the Putterie breeders of **Morris Adler** when he returned from the Fernando Valley to South Africa in 2000. Morris was a loft boy for the great **Frans Putterie** in South Africa and had the very best of this wonderful strain. Before he passed away the great **Art Hees** told Claude that the best bird he ever owned was a pure Putterie.

Claude is ruthless in his selection. If any bird – irrespective of cost or pedigree – does not breed good ones in the first 2 years it is disposed of.

Claude very seldom sells birds. This “once in a lifetime” opportunity comes because Claude suffers from very bad arthritis and has already had both knees replaced. He now faces major spine surgery in February/March and must sell his breeders on doctor’s orders. If the operation is a success he will breed from his best racers – if not the racers will be sold.