

The Book on the Modern Day Horemans

By

Charlie Barbieri
Red Bank, NJ

[EMAIL----ADONIS517@VERIZON.NET](mailto:ADONIS517@VERIZON.NET)

Sometimes it can be difficult to know where to begin a story, and this story is certainly no exception. In sorting out the pieces, I guess it might be best to start with the rather unheralded American champion, Ed Lorenz.

Unless you are a competitor or you have been involved in the Fernando Valley club's (FVC) Snowbird Race in Southern California or you are a personal friend of Ed's, it is unlikely that you know a great deal about his accomplishments in this sport. This is primarily because Ed avoids the limelight at every turn. He seems quite content to be known as that fancier that lives out west somewhere.

While discussing Ed's accomplishments might lend some unneeded creditability to this particular story, those accomplishments are too numerous to list in a single article, so let me succinctly summarize Ed's racing career by saying that he is certainly one of the very best and maybe even the best fancier to ever race pigeons in this Country.

With the promise of a job in the citrus fruit industry, Ed's father, Leo, moved his family from Germany to the Southern California area in the 1950's. In 1966, after completing his tour of military duty, Ed decided to return to Southern California to be close to his family. At that time, Leo was racing pigeons as members of the powerful San Fernando Valley Club (FVC), and it wasn't long before Ed and his brother Pete became members as well. From the start, Ed had a natural feel for selecting good pigeons, and soon this ability put him among the top names in the club.

In those years, the great European selector, Piet De Weerd, used to frequent the San Fernando Valley on a regular basis. It was Piet that selected the four Stassart based pigeons that eventually founded Ed's famous Stassart based family, and, shortly thereafter, Ed became the man to beat in the FVC club.

This story took a rather unique twist in the early 1970's, when Ed's brother Pete, made friends with a Belgian coworker. As this friendship grew, Pete eventually mentioned to his friend that he raced pigeons, and, to Pete's surprise, his friend knew quite a bit about them. It seems that while Pete's friend was growing up

in Belgium, he had a neighbor that was reputed to be one of the better fanciers in the Belgian sport. As Pete's friend often visited Belgium, he offered to talk with the neighbor and see if he could bring back some eggs for Pete to foster under pumper pairs. Therefore, for two year's running and under the condition of anonymity, Pete received eggs from a well known but unidentified loft in Europe. The only information that came with these eggs was that this unnamed fancier owned a "Horemans based" family.

Unfortunately, only four of these transferred eggs ever hatched, but even so, they had an immediate impact on Pete's loft. Shortly thereafter, Pete raised a couple of youngsters for Ed to try on the race team, and when they started beating the Stassarts on a weekly basis, Ed quickly realized their value. Soon, much of the FVC membership was looking for faster pigeons.

Ed and I talk frequently, but it wasn't until about three years ago that I first started hearing him refer to a fellow nicknamed "The Book" (also known as Bill "The Book" Richardson, www.ehofkens.com). While Ed had apparently known Bill since the mid 1980's, they have become much closer in recent years.

Ed asked Bill over to go through the pigeons, and apparently Ed was quite impressed with his abilities. In fact, Ed has told me several times, "If you plan to stay in pigeons, 'The Book' probably isn't someone that you want to let loose in your loft."

It wasn't long before word about "The Book" started filtering back from Europe. Apparently, over there, he has become very well known for his articles, seminars and grading sessions. (There is an excellent interview about Bill "The Book" Richardson on Ali Stephen's Canadian site at: http://midislandracingpigeonsociety.com/mid_island_interviews.html).

Not long there after, I had my first opportunity to talk with Book, and since that time, we have been in regular contact. From discussions with Ed, I already knew that Book had obtained many of the best Horemans in Ed's loft, so when Book asked me if I would like to try flying a few, I jumped at the chance!

Given some of the losses that are occurring in my area, I am reluctant to brag about these pigeons too much, because as you all know, that is always the kiss of death in this sport, but I will admit to being quite impressed with them. Obviously, I wouldn't have gone to the trouble of writing this article if I didn't think they were something special!

The last time Book called, I asked him if he would mind answering a few questions for an article that I intended to write. The following are his responses to those questions:

I understand that prior to the Horemans, you were pretty heavily into the Hofkens. Is that true?

Yes, at one point, I imported a number of Hofkens through Mike Ganus and while they were very nice pigeons, I wasn't the one that selected them, which is something that later turned out to be more important to me than I might have thought.

What made you decide to switch to the Horemans?

I think I subconsciously trick myself out of the Hofkens when I decided to look for another family of pigeons that could be mated to the Hofkens to produce hybrids.

About the time I started looking for a second family of pigeons, Ed took what was supposed to be a year off from the sport when his brother Pete passed away. I always assumed that he would return to the sport thereafter, but with each passing day, it became increasingly clear to me that Ed probably wasn't going to race pigeons again. A year later, after continuing to search for that elusive second family and still seeing that Ed was no closer to racing, I decided to inquire about his pigeons.

The timing must have been right because when we went out to the loft, he said, "Take your pick," and I came back to Arizona with two pairs of Horemans. Had that been the end of our dealings, the Hofkens might still be a big part of my operation; instead, through numerous other dealings, the Hofkens were eventually totally replaced by the Horemans.

Can you tell us more about why you liked the Horemans so much?

There are so many things that I can say about these pigeons! They are on the smaller side and they have an excellent strength to weight ratio, they have super vitality, they love to fly, and they inbreed extremely well. They have had tremendous success from 100 to 500 miles, and because they mature quickly, they do especially well at young bird distances of 300 and 400 miles as evidenced by the fact that they won the 400 Snowbird Futurity in 2000 and 2001 against some of the best pigeons this Country has to offer.



Silver Streak - Brother to the 2001 Snowbird Futurity Winner

Could you give us a little background about the Horemans family and the inbreeding that has gone into it?

Let me start off by saying that there are generally three stages to an inbreeding program. These stages include inbreeding, hybridization, and backcrossing. Inbreeding is the mating of close relatives to concentrate the gene pool. The percentage of inbreeding associated with a particular pigeons can be derived using the inbreeding coefficient formula. Hybridization involves the crossing of an inbred pigeon to another pigeon, line-bred pigeon, or inbred pigeon. Most super champions are the product of hybridization. Backcrossing allows the fancier to incorporate new bloodlines back into the existing family. Both Ed and I have integrated these steps into our breeding programs.



06 Book 6110

06 Book 6110 - An example of a Horemans/Verbart 46 hybrid

As Charlie mentioned, only four of the original Horemans hatched, and this meant that from the start, both Pete and Ed pretty much needed to out-cross these pigeons. Ed chose to mate a Stassart hen and a Waterhouse Beckert hen to his foundation Horemans cock. The two matings produced Ed's two greatest flying cocks 1192 and 737. Because of their success, Ed's good friend, Dave Hunsicker, acquired several pigeons directly from these cocks. Several years later he entered a daughter from the full brother of 1192 into the 1993 Summer Classic. This hen, 1207, went on to win the Summer Classic with an average speed by over 20 minutes.

To form what is now called the Blue Line, Ed mated both 1192 and 737 to 1207 as a backcross. This mating produced the super breeder 7730 cock. Ed then mated 7730 back to his mother, 1207. This mating produced two nest mates 4716 and 4717, which I mated together to form my foundation pair. I stocked 11 of 12 youngsters from their first year of breeding. I am still breeding out of nine of them including the cock 05 Book 955, which I will mention in a minute.



05 FVC 2963
Pit Bull

*The Pit Bull – Inbred Grandson of Ed Lorenz's two greatest Racers, 1192 and 737
when mated to Dave Hunsicker's
'93 Summer Classic Average Speed Winner 93 SYV 1207,*

As you can see, the children from the foundation pair were getting pretty inbred, so once again it was time for an outcross. Therefore, I crossed the double inbred Horemans cock, 05 Book 955, to another hen from Dave Hunsicker's loft, named the Verbart hen. She is a descendant of Campbell Strange's Verbart 46 pair. I have since backcrossed their offspring to brothers and sisters of 955, so now the Verbart 46 blood as been incorporated into the Horemans family.



2002 SW 2570
Verbart Hen

*Verbart Hen – a current outcross hen from the Verbart 46 line, which was bred
by Dave Hunsicker*

Ed also developed what is known as the Silver Line from the prolific 611 cock, which was the half brother of Ed's great winners, 1192 and 737. When mated to the Silver Hen from Tom Fahmie, they produced a number of highly successful children and grandchildren at all distances. I am currently backcrossing two of the children from this pair into the Blue line.



*Silver Streak – A son of 611 and part of the Silver Line and
Brother to the 2001 Snowbird Futurity Winner*

Looking to the future, Dave Hunsicker allowed me to borrow a Black Spread hen with a small percentage of 1192 Horemans in her background. Although this is truly an excellent pigeon, in this case, it is her feather color that I was most after. Next year, not only will I be backcrossing in these bloodlines, but I will be backcrossing in the color as well.



2002 SYV 2614
Hunsicker Hen

Black Spread Hen – A current outcross hen on loan from Dave Hunsicker

Without going into another long explanation, Pete out-crossed and backcrossed his Horemans in approximately the same manner as Ed, with the single difference that he used two Janssen's for his outcrosses. Skipping to the more modern day version of Pete's Horemans, he eventually developed what is known as the "Hit Pair", which has produced several generations of highly successful breeders and flyers. I am currently building an inbred nucleus around these pigeons. While Pete's pigeons are obviously also Horemans based, they are far enough removed from the Blue line that the two lines can be crossed against each other to produce hybrids, and I will begin that process next year.



06 FVC 1698
Red Slate Hen

Red Slate Hen - Inbred Granddaughter of the Pete Lorenz's Hit Pair

Is there anything else that you would like to add about the Horemans or anything else that you think the readers might want to hear?

In my view, the Horemans are a truly unique family of pigeons that have proven their excellence from distances of 100 to 500 miles and at speeds from 1200 to 1600 ypm. Because they mature so quickly, they are very good at the longer young bird races through 400 miles. They inbreed, cross, and backcross extremely well.

Both Pete and Ed deserve a lot of credit for maintaining this excellent family of pigeons for so many years, and Dave Hunsicker has been instrumental in providing the crosses necessary to keep this family going. I can't thank Ed enough for his friendship and making these pigeons available to me, and I can't thank Dave enough for his generosity in loaning me the Black Spread Hen, as her youngsters will have a huge impact on this family for years to come.