

**Fort Knox is a stud that has been put together by myself and Eric Brown.**

**Over the years we imported a few main lines.**

- 1 The 109 Pigeons
- 2 The Van Moorsel Pigeons
- 3 We had 6 Grand Children of Kleine Dirk – Koopman
- 4 The Janssen pigeons which we have kept pure.

**Our pigeons have been successfully raced by the following fanciers:**

Julius Urtel

James Willoughby

Enrico Van Reenen

Johan Gunter

JR Lofts – Gert vd Merwe and Jappie

We have also many winners reported from other fanciers.

**Reason for the Auction**

The main reason for the total auction sale is time and the need to free up the lofts to convert it to a quarantine station.

Over the last few years, especially after Covid19, my interest in active racing has declined. It is very seldom that I go and wait for pigeons at the race loft as I have many other responsibilities to take care of.

It is with a sad heart that we say goodbye to a line of pigeons that began 22 years ago.

If you want to get to the top in the sport and be competitive, even if you have a good racing family, I would encourage you to purchase some of these beautiful pigeons as they truly do race well and they do make exceptional crossing material.

**The Janssen lines**

We imported a number of pure Janssen pigeons over the years. These pigeons did well when crossed to the “109” pigeons and many wins were achieved through Virgo x Laika and crosses to the “109” line.

The children of the latest imports that are on auction, they have DAN rings on, were not tested in racing as yet.

We imported them to keep the Janssen line pure and to improve the breeding alternatives in the loft.

It was always a project to ensure that the Janssen line never came to an end but that we could keep it going for many years to come.

These are very good lines when you speak of the Janssen pigeons.

Out of Virgo and Laika crossed to the "109" line we bred NRHUP 16 – 3781. This was the first Union winner for Enrico and went on to sire NRHU 20-0170 who won - 1st Laingsburg vs 8983 birds, 1st Leeu-Gamka vs 9860 birds and 1st Leeu-Gamka vs 7436 birds. This pigeon was sold for R 400 000 and the family is well represented in this auction.

### **The 109 Story – Janssen pigeons at their best**

It was a windy day in Cape Town on 14 July 2018 with a cold South Easterly wind blowing over the peninsula.

It was just after 14h00 and we were looking in the direction we expected the pigeons to pass over our loft. Given that they were liberated at 09h00 the morning at Beaufort West, which is 401 KM from our loft, we were expecting to see pigeons passing over soon. Looking at the Benzing Live we could see that the velocity was now just over 1300 mpm and it seemed that a normal 5 hour flight would be on the cards.

We were discussing the message that we had received on our LIVE Club WhatsApp group, posted by Jacques Le Roux, which read that Paarl had clocked at 13h54. Based on the Paarl time we expected to see pigeons in our area at about 14h15 at the earliest and 14h30 at the latest depending on the fancier in Paarl having good time or an average time and the line which the pigeons were running. Paarl is situated about 30km to the front of our position for racing.

Given that 5 440 pigeons were liberated that morning we expected some large packs to pass over us. As my partner, Enrico, is new to the sport he tends to be very optimistic and kept saying "we need to be ready, that Paarl call may be from a fancier that is late". Now the more experienced fancier is more realistic when it comes to pigeon times and obviously I replied to him that it is a little early to see birds now and that 14h15 would be a very good time.

Suddenly at we saw one lone pigeon pass over us and about 80m behind that pigeon a pack of about 8 pigeons working hard against the wind. There was no doubt that they were race pigeons as they were "on the job" as we say in this sport.

Enrico had a "dropper" in his hand and as we looked at this small pack of pigeons he called and three pigeons broke out of the pack and as they made a turn he released the "dropper" and within seconds all three were down and through the trap recording times of 14:08:52, 14:08:53 and 14:08:55.

If you see where the loft is situated at Enrico you will know that the pigeons do not have a clear drop and trapping is always a challenge. On most races we sacrifice at least 40 seconds to get the pigeons down and clocked, and that is a good trap for us, as normally it can take between one and two minutes to get them down and over the antenna.

However in spite of the trapping challenge that is normally faced, this time the pigeons had a dead trap. Enrico was jumping up and down with excitement and walked, or perhaps the correct word would be strutted, back to where we were standing and he was babbling a little and all that I could hear was **"all three are 109's"**

As far as my knowledge goes it has only happened twice before in the modern history of pigeon racing in Cape Town that a fancier has scored 1,2 and 3 out of 5 000 plus pigeons.

Now perhaps one would think that given it was a normal velocity of just under 1300mpm it was a bit of luck but the combine results show that these pigeons were about one minute ahead of the others

on the day. James Willoughby who races with my Benzing partner, Eric Brown, clocked at 14:30:28 and he is at the back of the combine and scored 9<sup>th</sup> out of 5 440 pigeons. On the day he had a bird in the front pack and his position did not deter him from a great top 10 result in the combine. In addition they won the SWPC as well. James and Eric race from Plumstead which is 25Km behind us and James likes to say that the pigeon that was 80m ahead was his and we gladly accept that as he is a master pigeon fancier.

Now back to the three pigeons that scored 1,2 and 3. They are all related and two of them are full brothers. The first over the antenna was Knox 17-086 which is bred from two grandchildren of "109". Added to the "109" in these pedigrees you will find a pigeon "5354" from Julius Urtel and some Koopman blood on the Kleine Dirk line and some of the Johnny Boy line of Geert Munnik.

The third pigeon over the antenna was NRHUD 17-0517 which is bred exactly the same as the first pigeon over the antenna.

The second pigeon was bred from a top producing son of "109" who is a full brother to the sire of the "Wonder Cock" of Wynand Wolmarans, which incidentally has bred over 20 winners and numerous Ace Pigeons, mated to hen of the lines of Alfons Klaas. This Klaas pigeon is a grandchild of Schalke 04 and Constantine which won 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> at the MDPK respectively. This mating has produced many great racing pigeons for us.

At this stage you may be wondering what this "109" pigeon is as many think it is the famous Janssen line of the "019". The "109" hen is indeed a Janssen pigeon and if you go back in her pedigree you will see the famous names of Rik Wouters, Piet Manders and Jos Leurus, who were all Janssen enthusiasts.

How the "109" hen ended up in South Africa is a good story to tell. Back in 2006 or 2007 we had the pleasure of having Dr Henk De Weerd visit us in Cape Town. We had driven him and his wife to Hermanus where they were staying for a holiday. After the holiday we picked them up in Hermanus and took them to the airport. At the airport we said our good byes and Henk turned around and said "I am sending you some pigeons". My reply to him was "Henk, it is really not necessary".

About 2 months later we received six pigeons from Henk, whom I would rate as one of the best pigeon fanciers in the world and certainly one of the most knowledgeable. Amongst these six pigeons was a small hen that I did not like. We bred a few babies from her and two late bred ended up in the racing loft where I raced with Julius Urtel. Now Julius is not someone that pampers pigeons and by some miracle these two small hens "4805" and "4806" survived the season and showed some promise. Julius said "they are good, we race them again next year". The next year they did not disappoint with "4805" winning a first and a second Union for us. "4806" also raced like a champion and these two pigeons scored in many Federations for us. What was really great was that their children went on to race very well with "08369", a daughter of "4805" also winning a first and a second Union and top two or three in the combine. By now we knew that we had something special and then "08370" her nest mate went on to win second Union on the classic Hanover three bird race in 2011.

Pigeon racing is a unique sport and it is made even more difficult by us thinking that we know something about genetics or pigeons. The reason that I say this is that when Julius came to visit me one day and we were standing and looking at the pigeons in the breeding loft "109" came into view. Now she was a small bird with big wings and always looked a little odd to me as far as her build goes. I said to Julius, I do not like this hen and he replied, I will take her and breed from her. When this hen was mated to "5354" an explosion took place in the loft. Julius bred what we now call the Funny

Mealy Cocks and one Funny Mealy hen. The children and grandchildren of this mating has changed our racing achievements in the Western Cape and have gone on to breed a SANPO Gold Medal winner on the short distance as well as the best bird in the combine of over 350 members, on the short distance, for James Willoughby who lives at the back of the combine. Given his position it is an amazing achievement for him given that he is definitely at a disadvantage on the short distance.

Aside from the best short distance bird in the combine, Willie Loots bred the best Long Distance bird in the combine out of a "109" mated to his family. So they are very good on the shorts and the longer races if crossed correctly.

The SANPO Gold Medal winner for Hendrik Huyser this year also has some "109" blood in it through a pigeon NL 05-1499445 in the pedigree which is bred from the Grand Parents of "109". Surely that goes to show the class of these pigeons.

For James there is a double SWPC combine winner in the last two seasons and this year two SWPC combine wins out of the "109" line. These two SWPC combine winners also won the combine in the Western Cape or as we call it the WCPTA which has 300 members.

James says that the introduction of the "109" pigeons has lifted his loft to a higher level. That is wonderful praise from a fancier that is one of the best in the country. James has had many winners from this line and the same can be said for Julius Urtel who bred the SANPO Gold medal winner.

To name a few top fancier that have had and are having great success with these pigeons one would have to include, Team Benzing, Enrico Van Reenen and myself, Willie Loots, James Willoughby and Eric Brown, Gert VD Merwe (2 x PPL champion, mainly with "109" crosses, Wynand Wolmarans and a few others.

To sit down and list all the great performances of these pigeons would take some time and I am sure we would leave out a number of performances that we have not taken note of.

Thinking back to the day that Henk offered these pigeons to us for free I am sure that neither Eric nor I had any idea as to how good these pigeons would be. Of the six pigeons sent to us by Henk I can tell you that all six went on to breed winners! That is why I say that he is one of the best in the world.

The influence of Julius Urtel on this line was massive as well, he is truly a great pigeon man or should I rather say a very good stockman. He is also rated as one of the best in the Western Cape and probably one of the best in South Africa.

Today Fort Knox Lofts, our stud, is lucky to have many children and grandchildren of "109" in the stock loft. Thinking back to "109" I can only say that I was horribly wrong in thinking that she was not a good one. Eric and Julius made the right call on that hen and the rest is history.

My current racing partner, Enrico Van Reenen, is a beginner and has only been racing for two years. His achievements have been amazing thus far and he has already been the young bird champion two years in a row for the baby races in January and the BPK young bird champion last year. He is competitive at Union and Combine level and is currently leading the Union points in the NRHU by over 100 points and is the leader in the combine out of 300 fanciers racing 5 000 pigeons plus per week. It would be difficult to imagine a better start in the sport of pigeon racing than Enrico has had. Aside from the quality of the pigeons he works really hard to ensure that the pigeons are fit and healthy.

In closing I must say that when great pigeons come your way, cherish them, cross them with good pigeons and pigeon racing will become easier.

As we know pigeon racing results are balanced on a knife's edge and today you may be leading the combine and then the wheels can come off, we just hope that the "109" pigeons keep us as competitive as we currently are.

I have not added the achievements of 0117 to this story!

A hearty thank you to Dr Henk De Weerd and to Julius Urtel for playing such an important role in creating a super strain of pigeons. A thank you to James as well who was able to cross them so successfully and of course my partner at Fort Knox Lofts, Eric Brown, who allows me so much freedom to breed as I think necessary at fort Knox Lofts.