

As a reporter we sometimes write something like, "To introduce ... is the same as kicking in an open door". Well, and it certainly is here. Because who doesn't know her, this 78-year-old ambassador of the pigeon sport? As I know them, she comes across as a positive person. She herself came into contact with the pigeons during her first marriage. Acquaintances gave them a couple of pigeons for the children. And this dates back to the time of her first marriage around the year 1969 when the pigeons arrived. The canaries disappeared, and the pigeons came. Later, and most know this, she was married to greatness Marijn van Geel. However, this marriage only lasted four years because Marijn exchanged the present with the eternal on March 12, 1983.

And the name of Marijn van Geel is indisputably linked to names such as the legendary "De Dolle" and his grandson "Het Vlekje".

### Total sale

After the death of Marijn, Martha decided to continue the pigeon sport independently, Equally with a formidable victory in 1984 from Dax 2nd and 4th National + car. After a few successful years, her health started to decline, back pain and in 1989 she decided to sell this world loft and breed for a half total. Before that, a record amount was raised during this sale of the life's work of the late Marijn van Geel. Martha herself had also become completely sold on the pigeon sport at that time. With a round of late youngsters, a single pigeon that was bought back, she continued to enjoy her pigeons in a very calm way. She got to know her current partner, Heinz Kramer, with whom she has been together for 27 years, and together they started to work on a kind of come back, specializing in the Marathon flights that they loved so much.

### Cup of Flanders

It was quickly clear to me that winning the Toppigeons Champions League is not the only highlight of the loft of Geel. A few years ago, when I was still writing for another magazine, I already wrote about them, given that they won the much-coveted title of the Cup of Flanders with your first ten nominated from Barcelona. She won this cup in 2012. And Martha her predecessors also won this title so it turns out, if you want to conquer this title, then you are a big one. (wants out)

### Some results 2018-2019

It is clear that I, as a reader, will not and do not want to overload you with results. That's why I made an overview of only ZLU results of the last two seasons.

### The pigeons

The basis of Martha's loft was, as is understandable, laid with the pigeons of the late Marijn van Geel. So the original Aarden pigeons are still at the base here. This was later supplemented with the "Frans". A pigeon received from an old fancier, Frans Heijboer. Martha got this because Frans could always fly to Roosendaal for the ZLU. "Frans" was a super Barcelona racer and produced several good racing pigeons in the breeding season French". A pigeon received from an old fancier, Frans Heijboer. Martha got this because Frans could always ride with her to Roosendaal for the ZLU. "Frans" was a super Barcelona racer and produced several good racing hens in the breeding season. She bred the cock "Quasimodo" with a hen from the line of the "Dolle" and the "Vlekje", the later stock father of the current pigeon stock. Because the current pigeon stock can be seen up to a good 80% with descendants of this topper.

"Quasimodo"

This cock was immediately put into breeding as a late youngster because of its build, appearance and origin. He was paired with several hens and eventually with a hen from Leo Kouters. This was a great pairing. Parents of such; "Quasimodo Boy", "55555", "Daughter Quasimodo" etc. Unfortunately, the hen from Kouters stopped laying very early. Anyway, you'd get one like "Frans". Besides the hen of Leo Kouters, something was also obtained from the very strong male-female combination Belleter.

But the offspring of "Quasimodo" is also more than sublime, which proved so, an inbred son "Quasimodo 55555" x sister x hen from Carteus, this couple has been together for several years, with great results.

Some new couples

Here too, despite their strong base for years, Martha and Heinz continue to search like all champions do. As a result, they also came to the following couples who have been put together here.

"Couple 7", cock "Jos", received from Jos de Ridder x hen "Miss France" received by exchange with Flandrin. This hen comes from the 1st Nat and Intern. Pau. This couple has been together since 2012 and has produced several super pigeons such as "Marcio-Mephisto", "El Diablo" and a few others.

Unfortunately the cock died last summer. Normally the breeders are regularly paired, only if the youngsters turn out to be good, then this pair stays together.

One of the last pigeons purchased is a hen from Sjaak van de Velde & Zn from Breskens in Zeeland. This hen comes from the "Blauwe Superkweker" x "t Super 11je". Has already produced some good pigeons coupled with "55555" and "Quasimodo Boy" such as; "Young Boy" and "Little Boy".

But talking to both Martha and Heinz with his, for me, great accent, both indicate, "You have to be lucky with good pigeons, breeding, health and breeding pigeons on time. Even though they haven't flown yet. Of the late youngsters, a few that seem special are regularly put into the breeding program".

Loft and numbers of pigeons, etc.

The racing loft is oriented to the South East and has a length of 18 meters and is divided into 8 sections. Two pigeons for the widowers, 2 for nest pigeons, then 2 for widowers, yearlings and then 6 meters separately for the youngsters. The breeders are also separate. The loft is still owned by the Buitenhuis company from 1984. However, it is indicated that the first years were a lot of problems with the ventilation. Then, on the advice of Reind Breeman, the ceilings closed and the front open with windbreak mesh. The floors are normally wooden, sunlight through the front windows. There are also some heating plates on the wall that are only used in very humid weather.

In terms of numbers, Martha, and I must not forget Heinz, have 28 couples of breeding pigeons (80% "Quasimodo" line). A 48 old racing pigeons, a 20 old racing hens and then a 40 yearling cocks and hens. Also, they always keep a pigeon or 10 to 15 on hand just in case... ..

## Game method

Also in this well-known marathon loft, whatever here with widowers flies outside the nest pigeons. Because it strikes me, many lofts that I visit and or write about do it with nest pigeons. But Martha and Heinz predominantly own widowers. Here the pigeons are coupled around mid-March. After about 10 days of brooding, the nests are broken and they go into widowhood. So, certainly no young are raised. It sometimes happens, or has happened, that instead of brooding for 10 days, they let the pigeons brood over. They did not have a real reason for this and they did not notice any difference. Only very few good racers have the eggs submitted. Because normally they don't breed any Also in this well-known marathon loft, whatever here with widowers flies outside the nest pigeons. Because it strikes me, many lofts that I visit and or write about do it with nest pigeons. But Martha and Heinz predominantly own widowers. Here the pigeons are coupled around mid-March. After about 10 days of brooding, the nests are broken and they go into widowhood. So, certainly no young are raised. It sometimes happens, or has happened, that instead of brooding for 10 days, they let the pigeons brood over. They did not have a real reason for this and they did not notice any difference. Only very few good racers have the eggs submitted. Because normally they don't breed any youngsters from the widowers. And if they have satisfied them very well, they can later go to the breeding program to hopefully pass on their skills to the next generation. This method is the same for the nest pigeons. They start as a widower and / or widow hen to be coupled later, depending on the flight, preferably on positions of, or eggs of 10-12 days or youngsters of 5-6 days. And to my question whether the widowers are shown the reaction is, sometimes yes, sometimes not and usually this is between returning home and basketing for the next race.

## The care

Looking at the lofts, which are cleaned here every day and while talking about the care, it turns out to be reasonable to very punctual. Feeding is done in a communal food bowl. Except when some have to go with the flight. These are then fed separately in pots. The feed that is used here is from Mariman and own mixture from Camp Boeckhout. Water is actually refreshed daily.

## Medical

When it comes to this subject, I always find it different. Because many just know the tricks of the trade. And given the experience around here, I was curious. The simple answer I got was, that if necessary medication is provided and otherwise only, and certainly in the autumn and winter months, a lot of garlic, apple cider vinegar and products from Peeters such as amino acids are recuited. But as far as medical guidance is concerned, this is in the hands of and through Dr. Peeters from As in Belgium. They go 5 to 6 times a year for a control visit and only if it is really necessary, also during the flights, something will be given. Staying attentive during the flights and a yellow pill when returning home from a flight. So, individually per pigeon. If necessary, a Cocc pill. And SAS drops from Travipharma before basketing for the respiratory tract. Before the flights, lots of fat-containing seeds, peanuts, sunflower seeds, hemp, etc. and oil over the food. Actually just like many of us.

## Martha, an ambassador for the sport

It was twenty years ago, 1999, when Martha was elected secretary of the then starting FCI Grand Prix flights at the Olympiad in Blackpool. As the right-hand man of FCI president and initiator Carlos Marquez Prats. Initially these OLR were all over the world, from China-Japan to Argentine-Mexico, etc. Unfortunately, due to the bird flu, this fell sharply because it was difficult to send pigeons. For several years, flights were therefore only flown in the EU.

In December 2010 they talked about a new set-up of the Grand Prix flights, unfortunately Carlos

Marquez Prats died shortly afterwards but they continued together with the committee. Which has resulted in many more OLR competing for the FCI OLR World Championship. Currently there are even  $\pm$  30 flights. Martha herself stopped at the Olympiad in 2017 as a secretary. She was then appointed as an honorary member, and is still active once a year as an auditor of one of the OLR. She then handed over the familiar baton to Frans Hermans, who was also able to train them. She says she always enjoyed doing this, but because of the increasing crowds and age she stopped after 18 years.

Some years ago.....

I then wrote, "if they are doing well in terms of health, pigeon-loving Holland and far beyond will regularly encounter the name of Martha van Geel, supported by Heinz Kramer, in the head of the results". These are just empty words, but long distance loving Netherlands, and then the emphasis on the tough Marathon flights that know what Martha and Heinz have shown and what their pigeons are capable of.

Some of the results 2018-2019

Knowing that it has been two tough seasons and then over the 11 races selected by me, an average of 52.7% is played. I'd say go get it on.

Some championships 2018-2019

1st National Marathon 8 nominated

1st 3 signed Narbonne

1st 3 signed Narbonne

2nd General FBZ

2nd Designated FBZ

3rd Not nominated FBZ

3rd National Marathon

5th Marathon FBZ

6th Pyrenees cup

9th Long Distance champion

13th Super Prestige

14th Keizer Extreme Long Distance

16th Pyrenees cup

24th Super Prestige

2nd ZLU-Pigeon Track of Champions

2nd Ace pigeon all flights

3rd Ace pigeon FBZ

3rd Ace pigeon Agen over 3 years

6th Ace pigeon Agen over 4 years

8th Ace pigeon Marseille over 3 years

10th Ace pigeon Agen over 4 years

11th Ace pigeon Barcelona over 3 years

13th Ace pigeon Barcelona over 4 years

16th Ace pigeon Narbonne over 3 years

18th Ace pigeon Marseille over 4 years

21st Ace pigeon Marseille over 4 years

And in the very strong basketting center in Hoogerheide with its many well-known players, last year was also played out with the next series.

1st General Champion, 1st Prix Méditerranée (East Line), 1st Marathon Champion, 1st Grand Prix de Boulevard, 1st Grand Prix and 1st Ace Pigeon with the NL 15-3530665 “Mephisto”.

And as icing on the cake, the 1st National Super League Championship of Toppigeons made it complete.