

## **A Brief History of the Mallee Classic 1998 -2007**

The Mallee Classic, the brainchild of Barry Trewin, commenced as a one loft race, in 1998 in the small Mallee Township of Sea Lake, where it received an Australia Day award for "Community Event of the Year" in 2000.

When the race started it was, at first, met with some scepticism, due to the change from the conventional style of pigeon racing, but as we've come to realise with change comes progress. It wasn't long before astute fanciers understood the race and embraced the concept. The Mallee Classic was up and running.

Due to the relative remoteness of Sea Lake, situated 350 kilometres north east of Melbourne, it was decided to relocate to Windermere just out of Ballarat so as to become more accessible to the many interstate and international participants who wished to attend on race day.

The race weekend was a social occasion with many lasting friendships formed. The Race Eve ball, otherwise known as an evening at the Windermere Hotel, was a highlight with fanciers getting together for an evening of merriment, stories, more merriment and of course even taller stories.

Unfortunately, due to other business commitments, 2007 was to be the last race for the Mallee Classic. During the amazing journey the Classic notched up many firsts for pigeon racing;

- 1st and only "One Loft" race to go the distance - 10 continuous years
- 1st "One Loft" race to secure outside sponsorship with Best Western Australia providing accommodation vouchers for a total in excess of 30 nights. The vouchers being distributed to the various "Ace Bird" winners.
- 1st "One Loft" race to secure alternatives to the \$10,000.00 cash prize in the form of a fishing boat valued at \$13,000.00 from JV Marine or a \$14,000.00 Off Road Deluxe Camper from Ozzie Campers.
- 1st to enable "INTERNATIONAL" entrants to race in Australia. Because of the strict quarantine in Australia the Classic engaged some of the best flyers in the country to breed birds on behalf of the internationals on a prize sharing arrangement.
- 1st, not only "One Loft" race but any pigeon event to secure a regular radio spot on a "COMMERCIAL RADIO STATION" with its own time-slot on SEN 1116 (Sports Entertainment Network) Melbourne.
- 1st and only "one Loft" race to introduce and support a variety of Charities such as the McCallum Disability Services with Celebrities such as Sarah Jane attending and assisting in raising funds via the race day Charity Auction. Many thanks to Ken Letch for his yearly services as Auctioneer.
- 1st to introduce the "Spare Bird" format whereupon extra birds could be purchased for race day performance only. Importantly many of these birds were picked up by non-pigeon people thus introducing them to the sport.
- 1st to introduce and maintain an on-line pigeon auction site that enabled fanciers to promote and sell their birds.

- 1st to promote individual fanciers, their birds, lofts and stories via electronic media on the Mallee Classic Internationale site.

During its' 10 year journey the Mallee Classic was at the forefront, an innovator and leader in the promotion of pigeon racing across all spectrums, not only those already addicted but the wider community by utilising media, initialising a variety of market initiatives and just simply doing the hard yards.