

OLD BULL, YOUNG BULL

By Duncan MacGregor



Les Fenton & Jessie Egan

Whilst Les Fenton may be past it, and Jess Egan has yet to prove his value at stud, they are without doubt two of Victoria's premier flyers, as has been proven over the 2006 Young Bird season just completed with both winning their respective Fed Derby as well as their Young Bird Aggregate.

The age difference is somewhere around the fifty year mark but both show equal enthusiasm when it comes to racing pigeons. With Les living in Langwarrin and Jess some ten minutes away in Hastings they have become such firm friends that they train together throughout both the Young and Old bird seasons. Needless to say neither will reveal exactly what their training regime is, other than to say that it is exhaustive and that they fly on the darkness system and feed light.

Jess races a team of mainly Houben/Van den Beel birds in partnership with Marg and Greg Warren flying in the Greater Melbourne Pigeon Federation and has done so for the

past two and a bit years. Marg and Greg take care of the breeding program whilst the racing comes down to Jess.

It's not an understatement to say that Jess lives, eats and breathes pigeons. He studies his birds in a meticulous manner keeping check on their health, fitness and performance, not only training and around the loft but also on the perch, in his words "if you watch and listen you learn". He is the first to admit that he's learning every day and places great importance on talking with others in the pigeon fraternity. He is also grateful for his friendship with Les 'the prince of darkness' Fenton and attributes a great deal of his recent knowledge and success to their association.

The Greater Melbourne races a Young Bird series of seven races, all counting for Federation points and this young season Jess managed to win the fed in five out of the seven races to give him a total of seventeen Federation wins in his short career. Not bad for a twenty four year old!!!!

Les Fenton on the other hand has been around pigeons since Noah got the contract to build the Ark. He has been a stalwart member of the strong Victorian Homing Association for more years than he cares to remember racing with a number of clubs before shifting south where he now races with the Cranbourne club. Les's birds nowadays are mainly a cross of the Van Loon/Janssen lines and to quote him, "they say the imported birds can't fly the distance but I won the 400 mile race two years in a row. So what's that say about their capabilities?"

Les, like Jess, is fanatical when it comes to his birds and leaves nothing to chance working hard to achieve good results. He is one of the earliest pioneers to fly the 'Darkness System' in Australia and attributes a lot of his recent Young Bird success to this system.

The VHA also races a series of seven races, but unlike the GMPF, the first two classed as Club races and the remaining five for federation positions. This year, 2006, Les had the best bird in the fed for both club races as well as winning two feds and not finishing below sixth in the other three races to give him an overall total of sixteen fed wins. He has not missed a fed place in the past twenty-two consecutive races.



Les Fenton holding his 1st Fed Winner

It's often been said that those that live in the deep south of the Melbourne suburbs do so in order to reap the benefits of the strong northerly that blow and therefore gaining an advantage on the shorter flyers. Well the 2006 year also helped stuff that theory up with nearly all races being won with velocities around the 1000-1100 metres per minute mark. These birds had to fly over the shorter flyers and pick up speed to win!!!

Again congratulations Jess and Les and may your Old Bird season be a mirror of your early 2006 successes.

Footnote; This year Les intends to make available for sale, a small number of early bred squeakers. These birds will be off of his fed winners, and out of continuous fed winning families. Enquiries can be directed to Duncan on 0421 168 344 or deamac@iprimus.com.au. The purchase of these birds can only be done by pre-booking and the limited number available will ensure that they will sell out fast.

