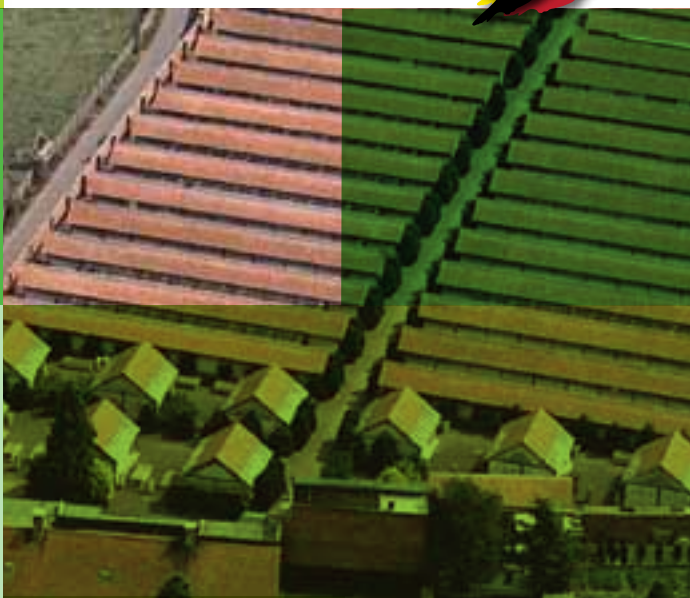


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# The Natural Breeding Station

The Golden Rings



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The largest breeding station for racing pigeons in the world was an enormous challenge. This is the first time that 55 pigeon lofts of 25m<sup>2</sup> each were built.











Noël De Scheemaecker was 45 years old and Robert De Scheemaecker was 43 when they started building the Breeding Station in 1955. This Breeding Station was the fourth major realisation of the brothers Robert and Noël.



### The history

In the early fifties the brothers Noël and Robert De Scheemaecker decided to build a large breeding station for racing pigeons. The building site was started in 1955. As early as 1956 the first **young pigeons** were delivered to **Natural clients**.

The Natural Breeding Station was the fourth largest project of the De Scheemaecker Brothers. In 1930 they launched the publication of a Dutch and French language magazine for pigeon fanciers. In 1936 the company Natural Granen was incorporated. In 1949 they introduced the Heirman race timer clock, followed by the Junior pigeon clock in 1952. The construction of the Breeding Station, which in no time developed into **the largest Breeding Station for racing pigeons in the world**, constituted an enormous challenge. Never before so many pigeon lofts were built at one and the same spot: 55 lofts of 25m<sup>2</sup>, divided into 660 sections. Never before so many pigeons of the most famous Belgian races were brought together.

This extraordinary project became a success thanks to the considerable financial efforts and commitment of the De Scheemaecker Brothers and their staff members. Two thousand breeding pigeons were purchased from the most famous **Belgian fanciers**, but also from some French and Dutch champions. These breeders constituted the basis for the Natural Breeding Station as we still know it today.





The object of the De Scheemaecker Brothers with the building of the Breeding Station, was to offer the ordinary pigeon fancier who has only limited resources the possibility to get a young pigeon that belonged to a famous strain without having to pay for it. Indeed, the purchase of 250 kilos Natural mixture entitled the buyer to a free young pigeon. However, in 1971 a law was passed in Belgium of the sale with a premium. As a result of this law it became forbidden to offer a free young pigeon for the purchase of 250 kilos of Natural mixture. The De Scheemaecker Brothers then decided to sell the young pigeons from the Breeding Station for next to nothing, a price that every pigeon fancier was able to pay. This is how over 1.5 million pigeons were supplied world-wide. Not everyone becomes a successful player with the pigeons from the Breeding Station. Not every pigeon bred at the Breeding Station becomes a top flyer or a top breeder. That is the die-hard reality and we do not try to deny this. Far more important than this is the fact that after more than half a century the Natural Breeding Station still exists and that almost every year the demand is higher than the supply. This is the best possible evidence for the quality of its pigeons and the earnestness with which the sale is handled.



## The working method

The pigeon population of the Breeding Station occupies 660 lofts and varies between 12,000 and 16,000 pigeons, depending on the time of the year. The job of the person in charge of **the daily management of the lofts consists of two things: to keep the pigeons healthy and improve the quality of the breeders.** This twin objective demands on the one hand excellent hygienic conditions and on the other hand a very strict selection of the breeding couples.

## Hygiene

Proper hygiene, a healthy environment and good care are essential for the pigeons' health and is necessary to improve

their natural resistance. The systematic search for improving their accommodation has led to important adjustments to the lofts. It may safely be said that the hygiene of the lofts comes close to perfection and that the pigeons are able to breed under the most natural circumstances. The grids on the bottoms of the lofts and in the nesting area, the grain container and the automatic fountain system outside the loft guarantee that the pigeons stay healthy and require **only very little medicines.** The combination of strictly selected breeders, healthy breeding lofts, a judicious diet and responsible medical care make sure that both in winter, spring and summer healthy and valuable pigeons will be bred.

Severe hygiene is essential for the pigeon's health. Every loft is thoroughly cleaned, disinfected every year and after that it remains unoccupied for one to two weeks.



## Severe selection

The quality of the breeding couples directly determines the quality of the next generation of young pigeons. The selection of the breeding pigeons plays an essential part in this. This selection is based on the visible and tangible qualities of the pigeons, regardless of its ancestors. Pigeons that do not meet the stringent, imposed standards are removed. Ten to fifteen per cent of the breeders do not survive the annual selection. **This is the reason why the breeding**

**lofts at the Breeding Station exclusively hold beautiful, well-built pigeons with first-class ancestors.**

The quality of the breeding couples directly depends on the quality of the purchased pigeons. Annually, the Breeding Station invests nearly € 25.000 in the purchase of pigeons from well-known and lesser-known champions. These pigeons are selected personally by the person who is in charge of the Breeding

Station. After a career of five years these stockbirds are severely tested and sold to the public. The youngsters of these direct purchases are not sold but are kept in the breeding lofts after a very strict selection. They are coupled with each other or with descendants of previous purchases. By doing so the basic blood lines are regularly changed. The Breeding Station already invested over €1 million in the purchase of pigeons.



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Before a pigeon leaves the Breeding Station it is severely tested for possible physical defects. The object is that only healthy and well-shaped pigeons are sent to our customers.



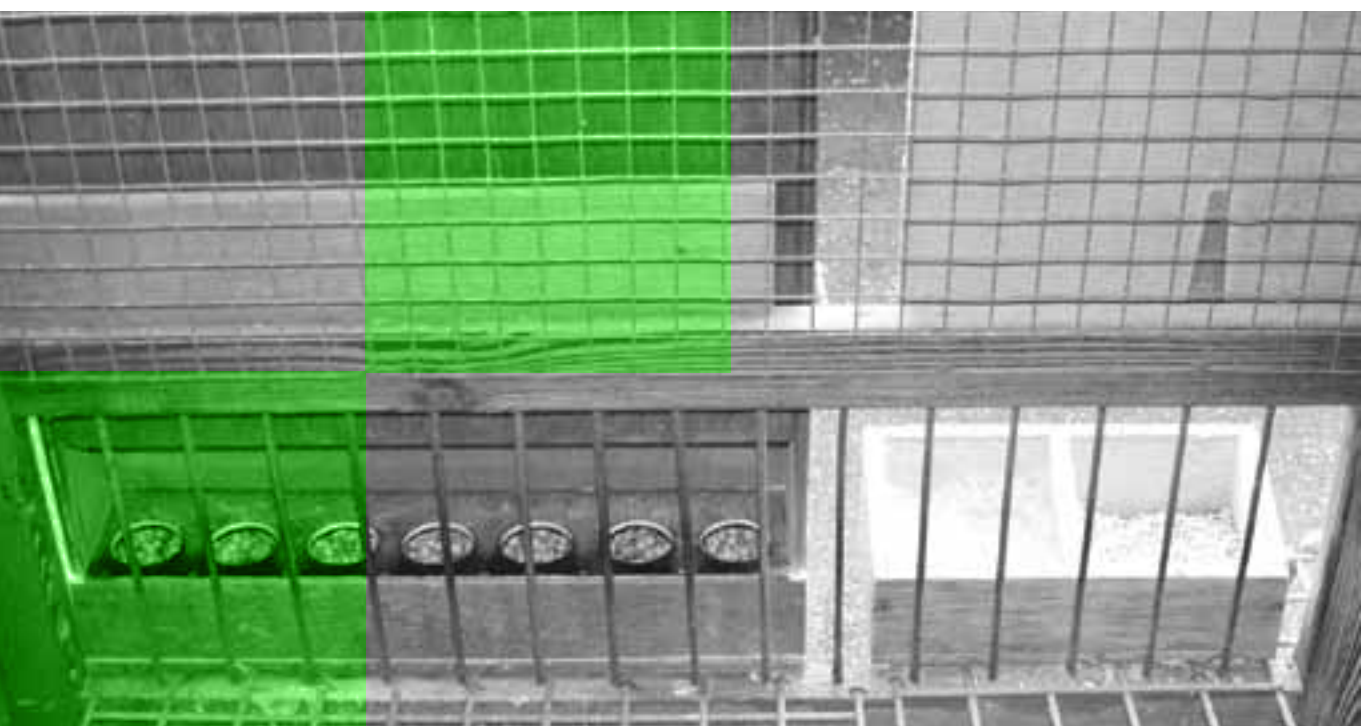
## The rule of the 'Golden Rings'

**1** The “Golden Rings rule” of the Breeding Station is: “no one is allowed to select the pigeons he ordered himself. Every client large or small is treated in the same correct way.”

**2** The Breeding Station has been in existence for over 55 years today and every year demand often exceeds the supply. For the major part this is due to the fact that no distinction is made between the clients. We do our utmost to satisfy every one of them.

**3** When a pigeon leaves the Breeding Station we guarantee its perfect health and a strong selection prior to the shipment. However, we cannot guarantee that this pigeon is or will become a good racer or a good breeding pigeon.

**4** We have already supplied over 1.5 million pigeons worldwide. The Breeding Station does everything within its power to breed and supply top quality pigeons. We are very proud of the fact that the Natural Breeding Station is the oldest and at the same time the largest breeding station for pigeons and has satisfied customers at the four corners of the world.



Inside the breeding loft, besides the grain containers from which the pigeons can eat as much breeding mix as they can, there is also a trough with grit, picking stone and beer yeast.

## Basic strains

From the very beginning of the Breeding Station it has never been our intention to produce a pure race. In other words we do not breed nor sell pure races. **However, we do believe in a basic strain, pigeons that are formed by the fancier himself, thanks to clever crosses and a very severe selection.** We are opposed to breeding



The quality level of the pigeons leaving the Breeding Station is very high. This is mainly due to the extremely strict selection of the breeders.

in pure blood relationship since at the Breeding Station with its over 4,000 breeding couples, this cannot possibly lead to an improvement of quality. Quite on the contrary.

It is impossible to take part in races with our breeding couples or their young ones

while this is possible in a private loft. This is why our selection is mainly based on the natural resistance of the pigeons in combination with the exterior and tangible characteristics of a good pigeon. In order to guarantee and even increase the vitality and the natural resistance against diseases we are obliged to cross the pigeons regularly. The possibility that a pigeon or its predecessors obtained from the Breeding Station stems from several crosses is very real. This is why we gave them the name of 'basic strains'.

## Start with strains belonging to champions who are personal friends


The Breeding Station was built to offer its numerous clients the opportunity to buy pigeons with a good descent at a reasonable price. Since the De Scheemaecker Brothers had been publishing their pigeon magazine since 1930 they had succeeded in building very good relationships with numerous champion's lofts and many of them had become very close personal friends. This is why it was not difficult for Noël and

Robert De Scheemaecker to obtain top quality pigeons from the best Belgian lofts.


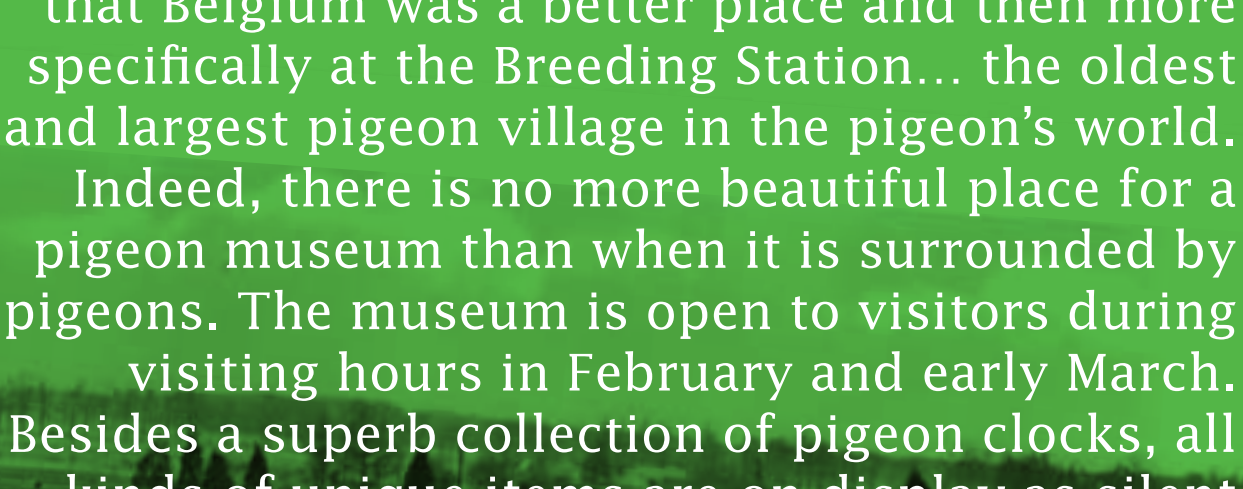
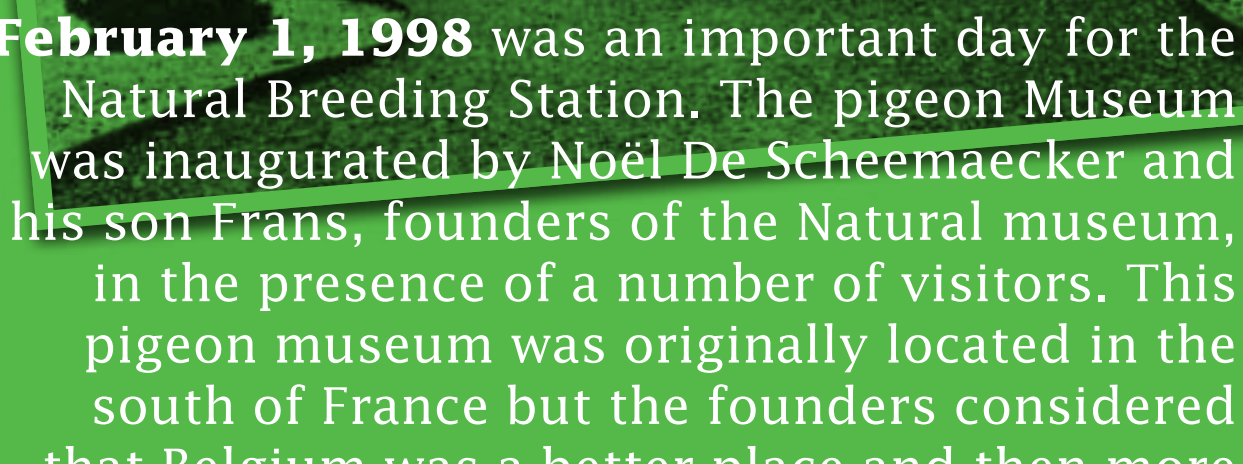
In this respect we are considering champions like the Janssen brothers from Arendonk, Huyskens-Van Riel from Ekeren, Georges Fabry from Liège, Pol Bostijn from Moorslede, Victor Torrekens from Zaventem, Maurice Delbar from Ronse, Aloïs Stichelbaut from Lauwe, André Vanbruaene also from Lauwe, the Cattrysse

brothers from Moere, Dr. Arthur Bricoux from Jolimont, Paul Sion from Tourcoing in France, Pierre Dordin from Harnes, France, Jacques and Edmond Tournier from Lommel, De Smet-Matthys Van Hee from Wervik, Raoul Van Spitael from Kain, Corneel Horemans from Schoten, Gust Ducheyne also from Schoten, Van Rhyn-Kloeck from Merksem and many others.





**February 1, 1998** was an important day for the Natural Breeding Station. The pigeon Museum was inaugurated by Noël De Scheemaecker and his son Frans, founders of the Natural museum, in the presence of a number of visitors. This pigeon museum was originally located in the south of France but the founders considered that Belgium was a better place and then more specifically at the Breeding Station... the oldest and largest pigeon village in the pigeon's world. Indeed, there is no more beautiful place for a pigeon museum than when it is surrounded by pigeons. The museum is open to visitors during visiting hours in February and early March. Besides a superb collection of pigeon clocks, all kinds of unique items are on display as silent witnesses of the history and evolution of the pigeon as courier, soldier and homing pigeon.



*Kweekstation „De Gouden Ringen“  
St. Antonius - Brecht België  
Bedeeltelijk overzicht*

While going through these we notice that it is particularly striking that most of them still sound familiar after more than half a century. This proves once more that Noël and Robert were excellent talent scouts.

The fact that these basic strains are still relevant and important allows the Breeding Station to refresh these existing races with pigeons from today's champions. Refreshing the existing basic strains using new champions is easier for some races than for others. As long as the family members of the initial basic strain still breed and race successful pigeons, it does not constitute a problem to maintain and even improve the basic strain.

An example of this is among others Louis Janssens who successfully bred pigeons until 2012. Families such as the Vanbruaenes, Vanhee, De Smet-Matthys or Delbar are still successfully racing their pigeons. Other basic strains have been refreshed with pigeons of present-day champions.

## **New basic strains are continually being attracted.**

All through its 57 years of existence and even today the Breeding Station continues to invest in pigeons.

Old basic strains are being refreshed, as a result of which some of them will disappear and new basic rates are attracted from local and foreign providers. These include pigeons of e.g. Dirk Van Dyck from Zandhoven, Jos & Jules Engels from Putte, the Houben family from Itegem, Karel Meulemans from Arendonk, Albert Marcelis (†) from Brecht, Gaby Vandenabeele from Dentergem, Jos Toné from As, Sylvère Toye from Otegem etc.

Moreover pigeons from various long distance specialists from The Netherlands have joined ranks at the Breeding Station in the past few years. These have been labelled as basic strains Jan Aarden and Jef van Wanroy.

It is important to know that it takes several years to find enough quality breeders of a basic strain before they can be offered for sale. This is the reason why it takes a few years before the most recent introductions at the Breeding Station are communicated to the outside world.



**Pigeons from various Dutch long distance specialists have also joined the ranks of the Breeding Station.**





Brief description of the present basic  
strains at the Breeding Station

## Basic strains

### Janssen

The Janssen brothers from Arendonk need hardly any introduction. This is undoubtedly the most popular race in the world from which the Breeding Station has been buying a very large number of pigeons from the very beginning.

### Leus

Achiel Leus from Lede scored phenomenal results in the field of speed. This basic strain is known for its black pigeons.



### Marcelis

Albert Marcelis from Brecht was one of the high-flyers of Antwerp speed racing. Even at a very advanced age he became both provincial and national speed racing champion and represented our country at the Olympiad with the famous "Sprint". Today Eric Berckmoes continues his life-long ambition in the semi-long distance races.

### Pauwels

Felix Pauwels from Herne won a large number of speed titles including that of national champion. He succeeded in doing this with pigeons from the Janssen brothers and Jan Grondelaers.



### Soontjens

Jos Soontjens from Wommelgem has been the Antwerp speed menace for years. The basic strain was refreshed with pigeons from Luc, Bart and Jurgen Geerinckx, also from Wommelgem.

### Tournier

Anyone who pronounces the name Tournier immediately associates this with their typical sea-gull colour. These pigeons can allegedly fly any distance.

### Wouters

Lou Wouters from 's Gravenwezel with his small colony has been one of the top semi

long distance racers in the Antwerp area for many years. André Roodhooft as one of his good friends has managed to buy a lot of his pigeons for the Breeding Station.



### Van Dijck

Dirk Van Dijck from Zandhoven became

internationally famous with pigeons like "Kannibaal", "Rambo" and "Bourges". This species is in particularly great demand with speed and middle-distance racers.

### Engels J. & J.

Jos and Jules Engels from Putte have been continuing the life's work of their father Flor for many years. They are formidable in the middle-distance with the likes of their "231" and his son "178".

### Fabry

The Fabry family represented the leaders in the "Indépendante" of Liège for many years. The pigeons of father Georges and later of his sons Victor and Georges mainly scored in middle-distance.



### Geerts

The late William Geerts from Schilde was one of the main attractions of Union Antwerp and of the Olympiads. His life's work is now carried on by his wife and his son Serge.

### Grondelaers

Jan Grondelaers from Opglabeeek scored historic victories in Limburg in the middle-distance discipline and forms the basis of a number of champions' lofts with such pigeons as "Goede Jaarling", the "Orléans I", the "Orléans II" etc.



### Horemans

Corneel Horemans from Schoten is still one of the old Antwerp legends, whose pigeons still constitute the basis of a number of champion's teams.



## Houben

The Houben family is owner of a pigeon race that is the envy of every pigeon fancier with "Jonge Artiest" as the absolute basic pigeon.



## Huyskens - Van Riel

The gentle pigeons of Huyskens-Van Riel wrote history in national pigeon racing. In fact they were middle-distance pigeons but they also led the pack in races such as Sint-Vincent, Barcelona, Libourne, ... In 1969 the Breeding Station purchased the complete loft of Jef Van Riel, manager of the Huyskens-Van Riel loft. The basic strain was later refreshed with pigeons of the son Georges Van Riel.

## Meulemans

Karel Meulemans became known through his famous stem couple "Donkere Witpen Van Den Bosch" x "Blauw Janssen". They became parents to a large number of middle-distance champions such as "Kadet", "Prins", "Benjamin" etc. During the last two decades Karel Meulemans successfully took part in long-distance races.

## Roosens

Marc Roosens from Leernes probably owned the fastest long-distance pigeons which scored both in speed, middle-distance with national victories in the races to Bourges, Argenton, La Souterraine, and even long-distance to Barcelone.

## De Scheemaecker

The pigeons of the basic strain De Scheemaecker are still particularly popular. Today this basic loft still includes a large number of descendants of the "69". They are particularly successful on both the one-lofts and the traditional championships. The first national middle-distance ace-pigeon of the Royal Belgian Pigeon Racers Association (KBDB) 2011 moreover has a grandson of the "69" as father, whereas the

1st ace-pigeon of the Million Dollar Pigeon Race 2005 in South-Africa was a daughter of the "69".

## Vandenabeele

The pigeons of Gaby Vandenabeele from Dentergem in fact do not need any further comment. It suffices to pronounce the names of "Kleinen", "Wittenbuik", "Turbo"...

## Thoné

Jos Thoné from As turned a champion in no time by racing the pigeons of his father-in-law Thomas Peeters. These are pigeons that can easily hold their own in middle-distance and long-distance races.



## Toye

Sylvère Toye from Otegem bred from the lines of "Tarzan" and "Dikkop" the modern long-distance pigeon who was successful on middle- and long-distance.

## Aarden

This basic strain groups pigeons from different successful Dutch very long distance racers having pigeons from Jan Aarden as a basis.

## Bostijn

Pol Bostijn from Moorslede won numerous national and international victories in long-distance and very long distance races. Indeed, everyone knows pigeons like "Benoni", "Chico" and "Pasport".

## Bricoux

Dr. Arthur Bricoux from Jolimont won historic long distance races. He was almost unbeatable on races such as Pau, Bordeaux, Dax, Sint-Vincent, Libourne, Angoulême and you name it.

## Cattrysse

Cattrysse-pigeons are the basis of a large number of present-day champion's colonies in long-distance racing and still appeal to everyone's imagination.



## Delbar

Maurice Delbar was one of the flagbearers of Belgian pigeon-racing and in fact does not need any further explanation. He bred many aces in long-distance and very long distance. His son Mic Delbar is still racing them very successfully.

## De Smet-Matthys

The “Klaren” of Valère De Smet-Matthys scored historic victories that are recorded in the history of Belgian pigeon racing. The son Roger is still a fierce competitor in long-distance and very long distance races.

## Sion

Paul Sion from Tourcoing was a good friend of Noël De Scheemaecker and was owner of one of the finest French breeding lofts. Most of us still remember the red colour of his pigeons although the blue and pearly-coloured pigeons performed equally well.



## Stichelbaut

The basis of the Stichelbaut pigeons originates from Derumeaux where Cattrysse also went for greater resistance. The pigeons of Aloïs Stichelbaut have contributed to the basis of the champion lofts such as Vanhee, Bostijn and Van Spitael.

## Vanbruaene

André Vanbruaene has been one of the long distance icons of Belgium for many years. These include international victories from Barcelona in 1966 and 1984.



Louis Janssen successfully bred pigeons until 2012. Pigeons that made his family famous in our little world of pigeon fanciers.

## Van der Espt

The basic strain Van der Espt is undoubtedly one of the oldest of the Breeding Station. It was never sacrificed because it still constitutes the basis of a number of Flemish long-distance lofts.

## Vanhee



Gerard, Michel and today Annemie Vanhee from Wervik belong to the record holders as far as national victories are concerned. They have made a great contribution to the history of Belgian pigeon racing.



## Van Spitael

Raoul Van Spitael from Kain has been a true celebrity for long-distance racing. Most of us will remember that he constituted the basis of the champion team of Marc Roosens from Leernes.

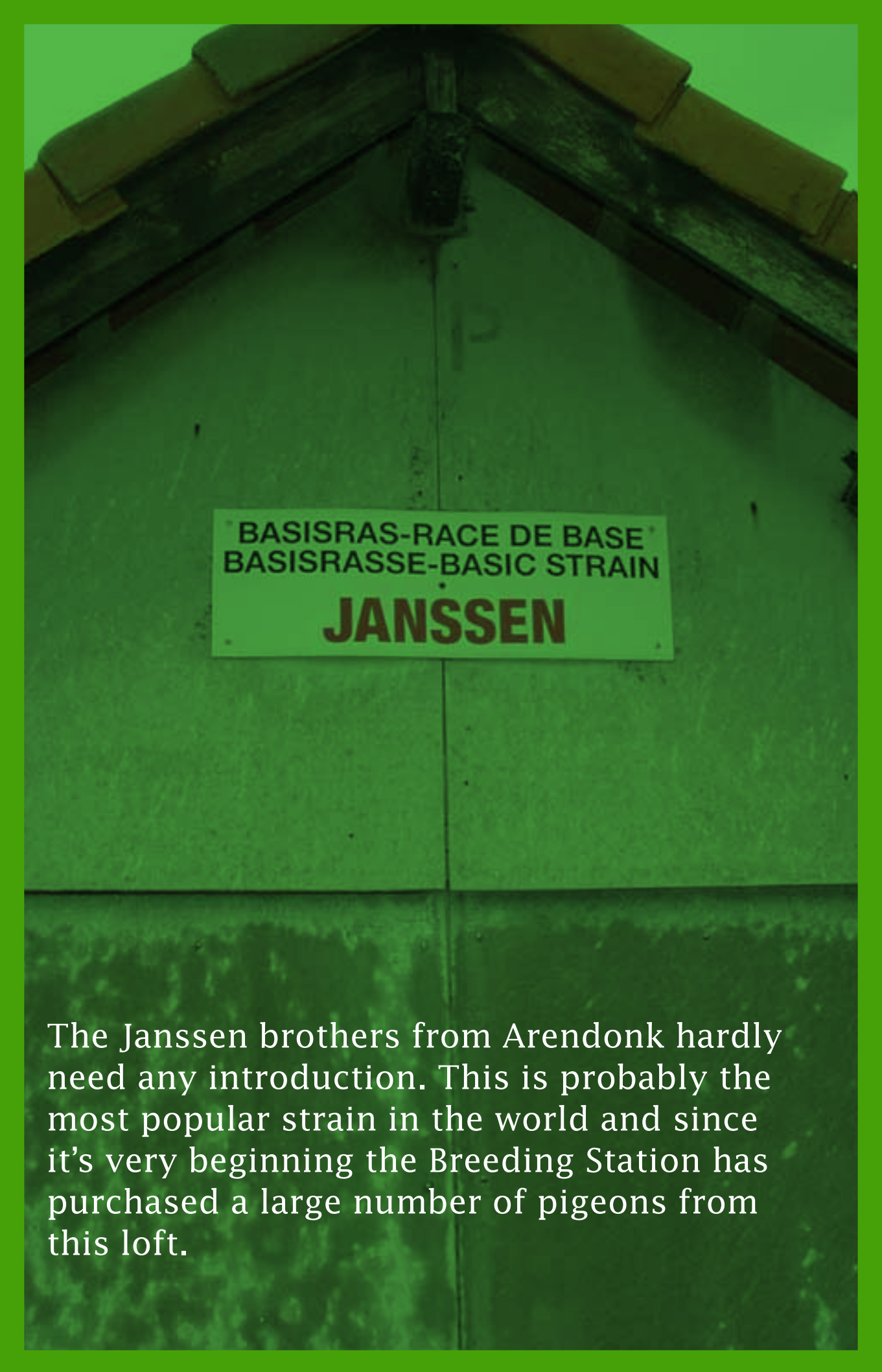
## Van Wanroy

This basic strain includes pigeons from various successful Dutch very long distance amateurs with a basis constituted by pigeons from Jef van Wanroy and mainly J.B. Hendriks.

## Wuyts-Comines

This is a combination of two basic strains Wuyts and Comines because of their white colour.





BASIRAS-RACE DE BASE  
BASIRASSE-BASIC STRAIN

**JANSSEN**

The Janssen brothers from Arendonk hardly need any introduction. This is probably the most popular strain in the world and since it's very beginning the Breeding Station has purchased a large number of pigeons from this loft.



## 30 years of TOP PERFORMANCES on a national and international level, thanks to the Natural Breeding Station.

Thousands of pigeon-fanciers in Belgium and abroad put their confidence in Natural, by ordering pigeons year after year.

Every year a national or international top result is scored by a pigeon from the Breeding Station, or by a pigeon whose parents were bred at the Breeding Station or whose father or mother have blood from a bird that was originally bred at the Breeding Station.

- 1981** ● **1st prize international Alicante** – 1,300 km – 1,487 participants  
Oscar Deroanne from Libramont (B)
- 1982** ● **1st prize national Marseille** – 700 km – 1,183 participants  
Gustave Dauphin from Arlon (B)
- 1983** ● **1st prize international Perpignan** – 900 km – 3,541 participants  
Luc De Geest from Ninove (B)
- 1984** ● **1st prize national Bourges** – 400 km – 9,975 participants  
Mario Kepski from Mons (B)
- 1984** ● **1st prize national Bergerac Noord** – 900 km – 12,817 participants  
Geert Thiemes from Didam (NL)
- 1984** ● **1st prize national La Souterraine** – 500 km – 5,753 participants  
Pierre Jennequin from Baileux (B)
- 1987** ● **1st prize international Pau** – 900 km – 4,928 participants  
Anton Jedem from Merzig (D)
- 1987** ● **1st prize national Bourges** – 450 km – 1,013 hen-pigeons  
W.& J. Fagot from Nethen (B)
- 1988** ● **1st prize national La Souterraine** – 500 km – 2,550 participants  
Guy Capelle from Dinant (B)
- 1989** ● **1st prize international Perpignan** – 900 km – 10,892 participants  
M. Celesteyns from Zottegem (B)
- 1990** ● **1st prize international Dax** – 900 km – 4,730 participants  
Frédéric Fernand from Bléharies (B)
- 1992** ● **1st prize national Perpignan** – 850 km – 17,331 participants  
Michel Petelak from Duidans (F)
- 1992** ● **1st prize national Brive** – 680 km – 1,242 hen-pigeons  
Henri Thienpondt from St.Martens-Latem (B)
- 1993** ● **1st prize international Dax** – 1,000 km – 9,163 participants  
Raymund Hermes from Hamm/Sieg (D)





- 1997** ● **1st prize national Bourges** – 450 km – 11,396 participants  
Gaston Van Froyenhoven from Boutersem (B)
- 1998** ● **1st prize international Marseille** – 700 km – 19,968 participants  
André Guebs from Longchamps
- 1998** ● **1st prize national La Souterraine** - 500 km – 7,419 participants  
A. Henriques-Cunha from Waltzing
- 1999** ● **1st prize national Antwerp** – 1,021 km – 5,420 participants  
J. & J. Dziegielewski from Gdansk (PL)
- 2000** ● **2nd prize national Narbonne** – 874 km – 6,929 participants  
Gebr. Martens from St. Lambrechts-Herk (B)
- 2002** ● **1st prize national Marseille** – 897 km – 5,352 participants  
Horst Wassmuth from Bottendorf (D)
- 2003** ● **2nd prize national Bourges** – 450 km – 16,496 participants  
Robert Rock from Grez-Doiceau (B)
- 2005** ● **1st Ace pigeon One Million Dollar Race** – Zuid-Afrika  
Gebr. De Scheemaecker
- 2006** ● **1st prize Europa Classic One Loft Race** – Edinburgh – 480 km – 1,277p.
- 2006** ● **1st prize national** – 600 km – 971 participants – Susum Okino from Tokyo (JP)
- 2008** ● **1st prize international Bordeaux** – 710 km – 7,358 participants  
Vanhassel-Gusbin from Anderlues (B)
- 2008** ● **1st prize international Marseille** – 736 km – 13,954 participants  
Christian Belliot from Missilac (F)
- 2009** ● **11th prize international Soustons** – 929 km – 11,030 participants  
Stefaan Anthoons from Kortenaeken (B)
- 2009** ● **1st prize Grote Prize Gaspar Vila Nova Portugal** – 275 km –  
898 participants – Mader Family from Germany
- 2010** ● **1st prize international Soustons** – 872 km – 10,190 participants  
M. Van Der Beken from Overboelare (B)
- 2011** ● **1st prize international Tarbes/Agen** – 730 km – 10,695 participants  
Michael Mascart from Brunelle (F)
- 2011** ● **1st National Ace pigeon middle-distance race K.B.D.B.  
cat. young pigeons** – Rudi Diels from Beerse (B)

Besides these, there are certainly many top performances abroad that were never reported to us.

## Inside the Natural pigeon museum



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The museum is open to visitors during visiting hours in February and early March. Besides a superb collection of pigeon clocks, all kinds of unique items are on display as silent witnesses of the history and evolution of the pigeon as courier, soldier and homing pigeon.





For more information on the Natural grain mixtures and complementary products please visit our website:

**[www.natural-granen.com](http://www.natural-granen.com)**

For Natural news read our blog:

**<http://blog.natural-granen.co.uk>**

For more information on the racing pigeons supplies

please visit: **[www.haspeslagh-natural.be](http://www.haspeslagh-natural.be)**



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