

Reference Birds of the Zazueta Vernazza family

The earliest beginnings - HANK VERNAZZA

1. **Belg 59-6020917 Red Check hen – “THE RED HEN”**. Called by some “the greatest Janssen ever imported into the United States”. Dam or grand dam of over 200 winners. This is the pigeon mostly responsible for igniting Hank Vernazza’s fame. She was imported to the States in 1963 by Hank through Piet DeWeerd via Albert Van der Flaes of Ravels, Belgium. Van der Flaes had obtained all of his pigeons directly from the Janssen Brothers just as their fame was ascending. Just after the “Red Hen” made her way to the U.S., one of her children (when paired to the “Poot Cock”) in Europe won a 1st National of Belgium. Her lineage was in the upper echelon of royal, as her sire was a crack racer, (winner of some 80 prizes) and was a descendant of the world famous “Wondervos”. Her dam, the “Old Blue 57”, was a direct daughter of the “Blue of 48” when he was paired to a daughter of the “Old Fox”. No doubt the RED HEN was line-bred to the “Wondervos”. “Blue of ‘48” and “Wondervos” were two of the best breeding pigeons the Janssen Brothers ever owned.
2. **Belg 59-6020917 Dark Check cock - “THE POOT COCK”**. Also a grandson of the world famous “Blue of 48”, this cock was a great racer for Vander Flaes. When paired to the “Red Hen” he not only bred a National Champion in Belgium, but became the foundation sire of Hank Vernazza’s loft and in so doing, also became the foundation of several other well-known fanciers’ lofts (Calia, Lumachi, Bellandi, Teague, etc). What is most interesting is that the dams of “Poot” and the “Red Hen” were full sisters...out of the “Blue of ‘48” and “Old Fox” from the Janssen Brothers, so all of the children that they produced carried 50% of the “Blue of 48” blood in their veins.
3. **Belg 60 – 250406 “THE DAX HEN”**. Winner of 2nd National Dax (nearly 600 miles). This hen was of Jan Aarden descent. She was sent to Hank by DeWeerd to add distance ability to the Janssens. When blended into the family, she did just that. Her most famous progeny was a son, the “1-2-3-4-5 Cock”.
4. **Belg 62 – 6046965 Blue Check hen “GARMS HEN”**. Imported by Vernazza, she was a half sister to the “Red Hen” through her sire, the “Old Fox”. She was a good breeder and she left her mark on the family.
5. **AU 66 MTZ 5475 Red Check cock. “1-2-3-4-5”**. Famous pigeon for Hank Vernazza. He won 1st at 500 miles, 2nd at 400 miles, 3rd at 300 miles, 4th at 200 miles, and 5^h at 100 miles, thus his name. He was a grandson of the “Red Hen” on his sire’s side and a direct son of the “DAX” hen (#3) above. On one of his trips to California, DeWeerd graded “12345” the finest cock that he had seen in the United States. Since Piet was so impressed with him, Hank gave “12345” to DeWeerd as a gift. DeWeerd took the bird and sold him to the Kluth Loft in

- Germany. This caused a rift between Hank and Piet for a number of years. Before he departed the States, though, "12345" did leave his mark. His genes played a part in the early formation of the Vernazza pigeons. In fact, "12345" was the sire of "Meadowlane" a pigeon that Hank gave to Jim Calia, and became the foundation hen in Calia's loft.
6. **Belg 67 – 340186 Blue Spash Hen "THE DEBOU HEN"**. Loaned to Hank Vernazza for one year by Piet DeWeerd, this hen was a fantastic breeder of middle and longer distance birds. Her genes are in the family mostly through her pairing to the "12345" cock. One of their best young was the famous "Silver Queen" (73 MTZ 164 Mealy Hen) a tremendous breeder for Hank Vernazza.
 7. **AU 64 – OHC – 2060 Mealy Cock. "THE FRILL"**. Excellent racer for Vernazza, never a first, but always one of the top two birds home. He was bred from two original Vander Flaes imports and he became a foundation pigeon in the Vernazza lofts and for many other lofts. His most famous son was "Chexmate" (71- SJ- 195) who was an excellent breeder for Vernazza and John Bellandi.
 8. **AU 64 MTZ 5478 Red check cock. "HANK"**. Bred by Vernazza and given as a gift to Jim Calia. He was a direct son of "POOT" and the "RED HEN" (1 & 2). "Hank" won 8 first prizes in his racing career, but as a breeder he was like gold. He became the foundation cock of Jim Calia's loft.
 9. **AU 69 MTZ 7956 Red check cock. "SKINNY"**. Bred and raced by Hank Vernazza. He was the best young bird in the Martinez Club in 1969, winning, among other positions, a 1st Combine at 300 miles. He was a full brother to "Hank" from "Poot" and "Red Hen" and as a breeder he was prolific, producing 11-1st place winners and becoming a foundation stock bird.
 10. **Belg 69 – 2110118 Blue check hen "DIKKE DUIVIN"**. Imported by Hank Vernazza from Albert Vancauwenbergh through Piet DeWeerd. "Dikke Duivin" was a famous hen in Vancauwenbergh's lofts and she became an outstanding breeder in Vernazza's. She was a direct daughter of Vancauwenbergh's famous "Blue 20". Vancauwenbergh was noted in Belgium at the time as being the best at flying pure Janssens to long distances. He had gotten his original birds from father "Driekske" Janssen some forty years prior to the Janssen craze of the 70's & 80's.
 11. **CU 73-WINNEPEG 13005 Blue WFT Hen**. Imported from Canada by Hank from Omer Van Wallingham from the best of his great family of Devriendts. She was linebred "Cendre" (1/2 brother to Zwarteband). She was a prolific producer with the Janssen-based birds, and became dam of at least 5 winners, including a club Hall of Fame winner in San Jose. Her genes were blended into the family.
 12. **AU 71 SJ 199 Blue Cock. "BLUE FOX"**. Bred by Bellandi and Hersey for Vernazza from Vernazza's breeders (thus the San Jose band). This cock was a

direct son of one of the original Vancawenberg cocks (70-2002540 Red) and “Miss Blue Magic” (69- MTZ 7955) nest sister of “Skinny” (ref 9). “Blue Fox” became the sire of 18-1st place winners. One of his sons became the sire of the famous “180” hen. Note: 70-2002540 was eventually given to Bill Teague in 1978.

13. **AU 71 WCI 653 Mosaic Hen. “MISTY MAGIC”.** A direct daughter of “12345” (ref 5) when he was paired to Belg 66-6650698 blue hen from Vander Flaes. “Misty Magic” became the dam of at least 16-1st place winners and was the dam of the famous “Miss Magic Fox” (76 MTZ 168) who was a tremendous racer and breeder and noted by Brad LaVerne in his recent book as one of the best hens he has ever seen. “Misty Magic” and “Blue Fox” were a hit pair and they produced the sire of the famous “180” hen.

14. **AU 76 MTZ 180 Blue Hen. “THE 180 HEN”.** Considered the modern foundation pigeon of Hank Vernazza’s loft. She was a tremendous racer winning many top prizes including 1st at 400 miles and 1st at 600 miles. She was line bred to “Poot” and “Red Hen” as her grandparents on her sire’s side were “Blue Fox” (ref 12) and “Misty Magic” (ref 13). Her grandsire on her dam’s side was 68 MTZ 244 Mosaic Cock called “Hen Queen”, sire of 7 winners, and a son of “Hank” (ref 8) and “The Garms Hen” (ref 4). Her grand-dam on her dam’s side was a daughter of “Poot” (ref 1) and “Red Hen” (ref 2). Anyone who studies genetics can easily see how closely line-bred she was. “180” was not only a great racer, but she was a tremendous producer. She was so prolific that she has left her mark on many American lofts today and she is the fountainhead of Armand Zazueta’s loft. Brad LaVerne, in his new book, lists her as one of the all time best pigeons he has ever seen. (See reference picture.) (Brad’s book, cover, page 45 and page 90)

There were other birds that probably should be mentioned, but these are most of the key early breeders in the family and should give you a good idea of what the true make-up of the original Vernazza pigeons were. As Hank Vernazza has said, “Probably 80% of my blood was Janssen, but without the other additions, this family could not have accomplished what it did.”

Armand Zazueta took over the birds from Hank Vernazza in 1986. “180” was in her twilight, but she still did produce a few impact birds for Armand, even as an old hen. Following is a list of the reference birds of Armand’s loft. You should take note how these two masters of the game bred their pigeons. Hank used basic Janssen stock and introduced several key long distance pigeons to get the tenacity and distance ability into the birds. Armand has taken the Vernazza birds and introduced a little more speed through the use of a few very select, but key introductions. By now the reader should realize that these pigeons were never “pure” Janssens and it would be folly to think that the family could have accomplished the great feats that it has if only Janssen blood had been used. It would also be folly to ignore the fact the “core” pigeons were Janssens and the “core” was always kept intact through constant line-breeding. Armand and Hank

were both shrewd, masterful breeders, although neither one will ever be caught boasting of their abilities in that arena.

The Zazueta Foundation birds: Note: An asterisk in front of any number means the bird is currently still breeding in our lofts today.

- A) **AU 76 MTZ 180 Blue hen “The 180 Hen”**. (see reference pic). Since she was the later-day foundation pigeon of the Vernazza loft, and Armand took over the birds, she naturally became the foundation pigeon of Armand’s loft too. So prepotent was her genetic makeup that she is in the pedigree of literally every bird in the loft today.
- B) **AU 80 SJ 136 Blue Slate Hen. “Hank’s Dream”** (see reference pic). Transferred from Hank to Armand. This hen was a super racer for Hank and became one of the all time best breeders in Armand’s loft. She was a grand daughter of “180” on her sire’s side and her dam was a Durkin hen. Her usual mate was 81 MTZ 4199 who was a direct son of “180”. They produced “Dora-Z”, 84 MTZ 1160 Blue Hen (see ref E) the hen that has to be considered the modern foundation bird of the Zazueta lofts.
- C) **AU 81 MTZ 4199 Mealy Cock. “4199”**. Direct son of “180”. This cock was paired to “Hank’s Dream”, 80 SJ 136 (ref B), to produce “Dora-Z” (ref E), “Nana Adella-Z” (ref G) and 1679 (ref F) all of which were important breeding pigeons in the Zazueta lofts. He was such a prolific breeder that he is in the pedigree of most of the modern Zazueta birds. Unfortunately, he was killed by a hawk before Armand could have him photographed.
- D) **AU 81 MTZ 299 Mealy Hen “Hank’s Love”**. (see ref pic). Great distance racer. This hen is, to this day, the only pigeon in the Bay Cities Combine ever to fly the treacherous Salt Lake City, Utah station, 600 miles, on day of toss. A direct daughter of “180”, she was also a full sister to “4199” (ref C above) and a prolific breeder in her own right. Her genes are present throughout the present day family.
- E) **AU 84 MTZ 1160 Blue Hen “Dora-Z”**. Daughter of “4199” & “136” (ref D & C). This bird became the foundation hen of Armand Zazueta’s loft. She was the dam of “Zeke” and “The Animal” who were two of the best long distance cocks in Armand Zazueta’s loft in the late eighties. She carried 37.5% of the “180” blood in her veins.
- F) **AU 84 MTZ 1679 Blue Cock**. Full brother to “Dora-Z” above. This cock’s most notable impact on the family came through his son, “Papa-Z”, 86 MTZ 2399 (ref I), who was a great racer and breeder for Zazueta.

- G) **AU 84 ABF 506 Blue Hen. “Nana Adella-Z”.** Full sister to Dora-Z and 1679 (ref F). She is the dam of “Tedra-Z” (ref L), 1st California State Hall of Fame winner. Her genes are present in many of the birds throughout the family.
- H) **AU 84 MTZ 4948 Blue Check Hen.** Double granddaughter of “180”. She was the dam of 86 MTZ 2377 (ref N) and grand dam of “Samm-Z” (ref O) and Zapata (ref P).
- I) **AU 84 MTZ 1193 Blue Bar cock.** Selected by Armand from a group of late hatches from the loft of Lee Schneider. Lee had a famous breeder 77 TVR 1528 (see Brad LaVerne’s book, page 92) who was responsible for many top long distance cracks. 1193 was a son of that cock and paired to Dora-Z became the father to “Zeke” and “The Animal”. Note: 1528 was a Devriendt cock and his mate was a Sion/Delbar hen.
- J) **AU 85 MTZ 1411 Blue Cock. “The Animal”.** (see ref pic). As a racer, even better than his full brother “Zeke”, but as a breeder he was disappointing... until his grandchildren starting making waves. Armand eventually eliminated “The Animal” from the family because his children didn’t fly as well as Zeke’s, but has since found out that “The Animal’s” grandchildren are just as good as “Zeke’s”.
- K) **AU 85 MTZ 1412 Blue Cock. “Zeke”.** (see ref pic) Two-time 600 mile winner (1987 and 1989). He was a great racer, but his true value has been in the breeding loft where his genes are present throughout the family. He is a son of “Dora-Z” (ref E) and 1193 (ref H).
- L) **AU 86 ABF 0221 Blue Bar Hen. “Tedra-Z”.** 1987 1st California State Hall of Fame winner. This outstanding hen was not only a great racer but a top breeder as well. Her genes run throughout the family. She is a daughter of “Nana Adella-Z (ref G).
- M) **AU 86 MTZ 2399 Blue Bar Cock. “Papa-Z”.** A top racer who won many excellent positions in the races. Equally potent as a breeder, he is the sire of “Samm-Z” who became the best racer that Armand ever flew. He is a son of 1679 (ref F). Note: “Papa-Z’s” dam was a Bekeart hen from the best of Danny Hinds’ outstanding family of Waterhouse Bekearts.
- N) **AU 86 MTZ 2377 Blue Bar Hen. “2377”** One of the best breeders in Armand Zazueta’s loft. She was a daughter of 4948 (ref G) and she is the mother of “Samm-Z” (ref O) and “Zapata” (ref Y) two of Armand’s all time best.
- O) **AU 87 BBM 987 Blue Bar Hen. “Samm-Z”.** According to Armand, the best distance hen he ever flew. She won many top prizes, including 1st at 500 miles and 1st at 600 miles. She was a daughter of “Papa-Z” (ref M) and “2377” (ref N).

She was used extensively as a breeder and her genes are present throughout the family.

- P) **GB 87 452. Dark Check Cock. “Blackie-Z”**. Bred by the Planet Brothers in England from the best of their super fast Van Loon family. This cock is a descendant of their famous “Scumpy”, and he was purchased at auction by Armand in 1987. He made his mark in the loft, producing many outstanding racers. One of his sons “Zorro” won 1st California State Hall of Fame in 1990. Another son “4504” (ref X) is one of the top modern day breeders. “Blackie-Z” was always paired to one of the more inbred Vernazza-based hens and his blood can be found in a number of the Zazueta birds today.
- Q) **AU 87 MTZ 0646 Blue Bar Hen. “Old Lady Z”**. Last daughter of “180” still alive in Armand’s loft. She was a great breeder and her genes are present in many of the modern Zazueta birds.
- R) ***AU 89 FVC 5254 Blue Check cock. “5254”**. Bred by Art Hees from his nationally famous “Short Face/Verheyen” family. This cock was one of several that Art sent to Armand to race. He was the best of the lot and ended up winning a 300 mile race, so Armand tried him in the stock loft. His impact was immediate, and his genes are present in many of the present day Zazueta birds.
- S) ***AU 90 MTZ 2979 Plum Cock. “Plum-Z”**. Son of “Zeke” (ref K) and “Hank’s Love” (ref D). This cock has been a great breeder for Armand and he is currently still a viable member of the breeding stock in the loft.
- T) ***AU 91 MTZ 3991 Blue Bar Cock. “Z”**. A great racer and breeder, this cock was the champion cock of the Martinez Club in the 1994 Old Bird race season. He was also a 500 mile 1st place winner. He is a direct son of “Dora-Z” (ref E).
- U) **AU 91 SJ 0001 Blue Check Hen. “Number One”**. Bred by John Bellandi and given to Armand as a gift for nursing her mother back to health after a tragic loft fire. She was a tremendous racer, scoring several top diploma positions including 1st in the Martinez Auction race (winning over \$10,000.00). She was given to Armand just after her victory and when Armand put her to stock she bred one golden pigeon after another. She is actually part Vernazza, tracing back to the famous “12345” cock, but she is also a granddaughter of the famous “White Bandit” of Hapyco Lofts and she carries some royal Leen Boers blood in her veins and one of her great grand dams is the “Julianna” hen from Ed Jankowski. “Number One” was paired to several cocks at Armand’s lofts and her genes are present in many of the Zazueta birds today.
- V) ***AU 92 MTZ 4145 Plum Hen. “Wild-Z”**. Super racer and breeder for Armand. She is a daughter of “Plum-Z” (ref S) and “Tedra-Z” (ref L). This hen has left her mark in the current Zazueta family and is still breeding.

- W) ***AU 92 MTZ 4158 Blue Cock. "I'm a Slate 2"**. Excellent racer and top stock cock, he is a son of "Zeke" (ref K) and "Samm-Z" (ref O). His genes are so prevalent in today's Zazueta pigeons that he must be considered the modern foundation cock of the loft. He is heavily linebred to Dora-Z (ref E) and her brother 1679 (ref F).
- X) ***AU 92 MTZ 4504 Blue Pencil Cock. "Pencil-Z"**. Superior racer. Son of "Blackie-Z" (ref P) and "Samm-Z" (ref O). He is a full brother to "Zorro", California State Hall of Fame winner and when bred back to the core Vernazza birds, he is proving to be a superior stock cock. His genes are present in a number of the modern Zazueta birds.
- Y) ***AU 93 MTZ 4495 Blue Cock. "Zapata"**. Great long distance racer and superior breeder. He is a son of "Zeke" (ref K) and "2377" (ref N), making him heavily linebred to "Dora-Z" (ref E) and therefore to "180". He too, must be considered one of the current foundation cocks of the family.
- Z) **AU 94 Hapyco 646 White Cock. "The White"**. Given to Armand as a gift by his good friends Brad LaVerne and Chic Brooks at Hapyco Lofts. This cock is a grandson of their famous "White Bandit" and he proved early on that he had the great genetic makeup to produce the goods. He produced several birds for Armand that became outstanding racers, and even better, outstanding breeders. The few birds in Armand's loft carrying the white gene are sons of this cock.