

The Legacy of Silver Shadow "66"

by Paul Gibbs

Where does one start when trying to record the feats of a legend in any sphere within the sporting world, including that of a "Champion Producing Racing Pigeon" such as that of the Grizzle Cock GB-98X-67966?

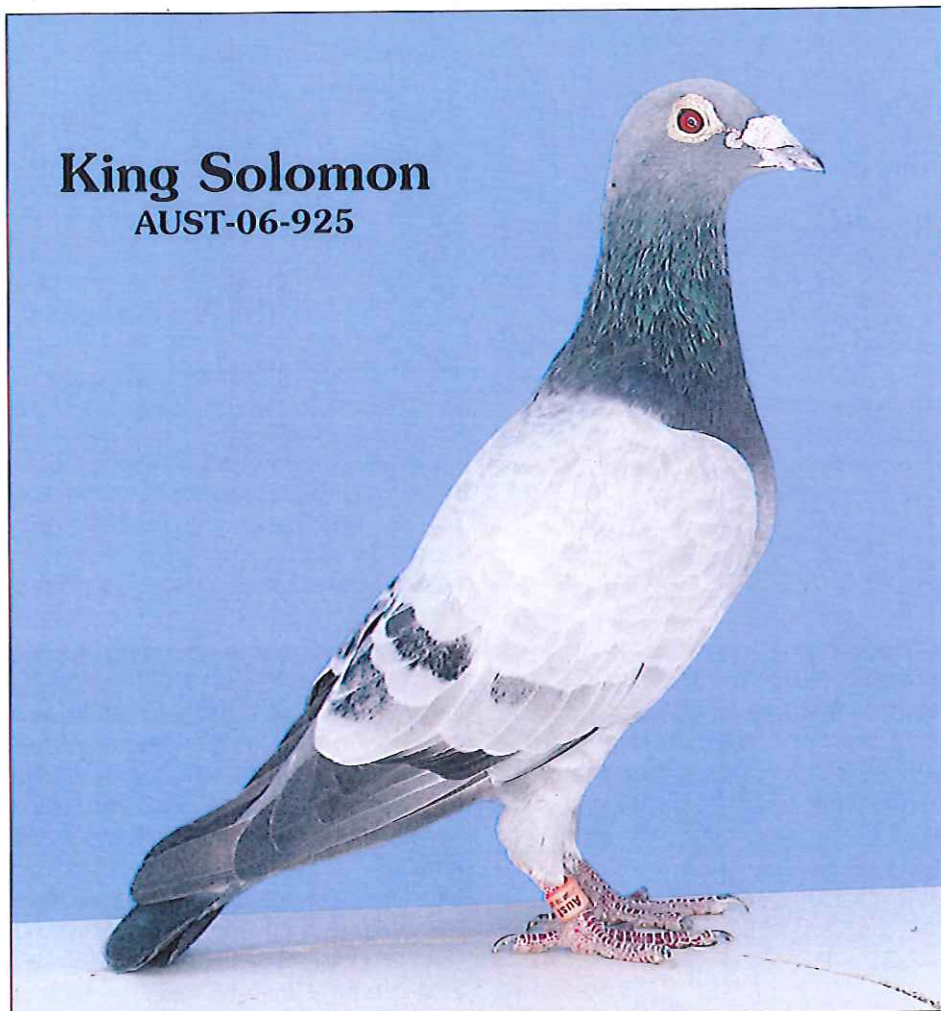
In trying to do so, I must first give recognition to John Hofman who a few years back wrote a two-part article for the Australian Pigeon Fancier Magazine. For those who have a copy, (and would like to refresh their memory) or for those who would like to try and obtain one, it was in Volume 50, NO 10.

In this article John gave a very detailed account re the history and development of many of the modern day Van Loons, in particular those of the Ponderosa Van Loons and their importation into Australia, and as a Van Loon fanatic myself cannot thank John enough for the time and amount of research that must have gone into writing such a detailed account of one of the most successful families of pigeons today.

I would like to pick up (to some extent) where John left off and concern the content of this article to that only of the "Super Producing Australian Silver Shadow Cock - "66". Now without covering too much of what John wrote, we will need a "little" bit of background history as to the breeding and race results of "66" himself before we devote the remaining content of this article to the feats of this bird itself.

"66" is a direct son of the Dutch Champion "Silver Shadow" NL-94-1380745, a winner of 3 X 1st place not an extraordinary feat in European terms or for that matter here in Oz, but where he has excelled has been as a producer of both race and stock birds. Birds both directly related to him, like his full brothers "Silver Bullet", "Silver Shadow II" and "Silverman" all being winner/producers.

Three of his best and well-known children are "Spice Girl", "Armstrong" (and here in Oz) number "66". G/children, which have worldwide recognition, include "Miss Antonia" and "Slim Shady". Add to these one of his famous Great Grandchildren, the super hen "Miss Ellis" winner of 1st prize o/a NPO National



from Maaseik against 39,438 birds.

The "Silver Shadow" dynasty of worldwide dominance seems to have no end with fanciers across the globe recording not just winners, but big time winners as well that has included both International, National, Derby wins and Federation and Club "Birds of the Year".

Let's now have a quick look at the breeding of the Dutch Champion, Silver Shadow NL-94-1380745, as this will prove interesting as you read further into the history of this champion family. His sire is the famous "Rominger" NL-88-2179972, his sire and dam being the well renowned "Louis" NL-80-869198 and "Suzanne" NL-82-1181843. The dam of Silver Shadow was NL-87-2042819 who in turn was bred from a brother of "Louis" (NL-83-845930) when paired to a full sister of "Rominger" from this you can see that the original Silver Shadow cock was quite in-bred which becomes

more interesting as you read on.

Now as for the "Grizzle" colouring in the Silver Shadow Van Loons, it is my understanding that Louis Van Loon did not have any Grizzles among his colony of birds, so where did the Grizzle colour originate? Well at this stage I would like to quote from an article in the APFA Pigeon Fancier - Vol 50, NO 10 by John Hoffman in which he wrote the following -

"There is quite a bit of speculation here in Australia as to where the Grizzle colouring comes from. "Silver Shadow" and his brothers "Silver Shadow II", "Silver Bullet", "Silverman" are very dark grizzles, almost Blue Checkers Pied's. i.e. flecks of white on their heads, around their eyes and under their beaks. They have silver grey under carriages and the pattern on their wings is chequered on a silvery grey background rather than a blue background, as is the case of a

genuine blue chequer. Another feature that has been noticed by many is the fact that their grizzle offspring are usually much lighter in colour and more of a recognisable grizzle with two distinct bars on their wings, and sometimes the partial appearance of a third, like a blue bar".

"Upon checking with Arno Brouwer, the Export Manager for Hans Eijerkamp & Sons, "Rominger" the father of "Silver Shadow" is quote "a bit into the line of the "Tournier". But with "Silver Shadow" and his brothers and sisters being so inbred, the Tournier must also be on their mother's side as well, but in a lesser proportion".

"Now let us see where the Tournier may have been introduced to this line of pigeons. The mother of "Louis" is a straight Van Loon, her father being a Van Loon and her mother being a sister to the "Oude Schallie". The father of "Louise" has no pedigree details what so ever so this is where it gets interesting and this is where it is pure speculation and guesswork on my part, but I may not be too far off the track. As the father of "Louis" is described as a Van Loon it would be a pretty fair bet that his father was a Van Loon and his mother was a Tournier and most certainly a grizzle. It is common in Europe when two strains are crossed that the offspring take the name of the sire's strain and even more

so if it resembles the strain of the sire. Therefore the father of "Louis" would be - Van Loon X Tournier. With the mother of "Louis" being a Van Loon then "Louis" himself would be 1/2 Van Loon, 1/2 Tournier. "Louis" mated to "Suzanne" a straight Van Loon, this would make "Rominger" the father of "Silver Shadow" 7/8 Van Loon, 1/8 Tournier, and as Arno Brouwer quoted "a bit into the line of the Tournier"

"So, who put the extremely successful grizzle Tournier cross into the Van Loons in the first place? Well the way I see it, it had to have been Antoon van Haaren because the Eijerkamp's obtained their first Van Loons from him in the 1980's and the "Silver Shadow" line descends from the Van Haaren Van Loons of that period. Remember, the Eijerkamp's did not get their first Van Loon's direct from Louis until 1996 and then another batch in 2004. Mystery solved?

"Now we look at the inbred mother of "Silver Shadow". Her father being a full brother to "Louis" would naturally be a Van Loon X Tournier. Her mother was a full sister to "Olano", direct off "Louis" and "Suzanne", would be 7/8 Van Loon, 1/8 Tournier. Therefore the mother of "Silver Shadow" would be 13/16 Van Loon and 3/16 Tournier. Put these together, "Rominger" 7/8 Van Loon 1/8 Tournier X "Mother of Silver Shadow"

13/16 Van Loon X 3/16 Tournier, then "Silver Shadow" is 27/32 Van Loon and 5/32 Tournier. Breeders claim that anything containing less than 1/16th of another strain as pure. So we can safely say that "Silver Shadow" and all his full brothers and sisters are actually pure Van Loons but still carrying the legacy of the Tournier grizzle colour.

The above exserts in italics courtesy of John Hoffman's article Vol. 50 N08.

So back to GB-98X-67966. He was originally imported to Australia by NSW fancier Ken Marshall, who in 2000 sold this bird to the late Keith Saggars. Keith had phenomenal success with the progeny of "66" breeding winners not only for himself but numerous other fanciers in most states of Australia with his best recorded achievements being in Victoria, Sth. Aust, NSW and Qld. Today "66" is owned by Phil Murphy of LPM Stud and right up to the 2012/13 breeding season is still producing young birds and as you can imagine, these being bred especially for stock.

It would nearly be impossible to list all the winners related down off this cock. His progeny continue to breed winners year after year with many of these birds being more than 10 generations away with many lofts being based on his bloodline. Many of the major breeding studs within Australia attribute much of their success to the "Silver Shadow" dynasty and in particular birds related to "66", these include VIP Lofts (Nigel Jarvis), Hamilton Racing Pigeons (Greg Hamilton) and Flights of Fancy (Brian Catling) to name a few.

When we talk about the achievements of "66" we cannot do so without talking about his famous inbred daughter "Grizzelda" who also has, like her famous father, bred numerous winners, again being impossible to list the exact numbers. She is attributed to have bred 11 federation winners but this is an old figure and as with her father she is still producing. In recent times her current owner has lent her to LPM Stud to mate back to her father. One can only imagine the value of their progeny, not only in money terms, but their long-term value in the breeding loft.

One only has to access the web sites of those breeding lofts mentioned above and view the pedigrees there to get a very brief over view of the winners that can be attributed to both "66" and his daughter "Grizzelda". These winners would only be the tip of the "Ice Berg". There are countless fanciers who have purchased offspring related to this pair, either direct



from Keith Sagers (when alive), and or from those fanciers listed above. This makes it very difficult to really get a true picture of the number of winners that are related to this pair.

In an effort to give some indication of just how phenomenal these birds have been and still are until this very day, I will list some of those results that I am aware of that may not be that well known.

To start with I will outline some of my own personal successes with the Silver Shadow Van Loons. I acquired my first Silver Shadow Van Loon direct from Keith Sagers in 2003. This bird being a white grizzle cock that I planned to cross to my current family of Ray Hunt and Des Sippet Planet Brother Van Loons. This cock bird rung AUST-02-23013, was a direct son of "Grizzelda" on her sire's side with both his G/sires (on his sire's side) being the champion "66". As it turned out just after purchasing him I was speaking to my close friend Steve Beverley in Queensland and mentioned that I had just acquired this cock from Keith Sagers. In an amazing stroke of luck Steve told me that he had just come into possession of a Silver Shadow grizzle hen (rung OPF-02-8866) who's G/sire was "66" on her dam's side with her dam being a Van Loon off imported birds from Lol Stanbrook in the UK.

The wash-up of our conversation was that Steve sent down this hen to pair with my cock and to share the youngsters. In so doing, I ended up with a cock I named "Sargent Pepper" and a hen I named "Silver Lady". Both these birds have gone on to breed both excellent racers and producers. As an example I will list what I believe to be their best achievements to-date.

The highlight for "Sargent Pepper" would be the race results of two of his G/daughters, one a Blue Bar Hen rung PMPC-07-1775 that went on to win 1st Club, 1st MNCF All Age National, 461 klm by 39 mpm. She was to also win 7th Fed. 278klm and 10th Fed Young Bird National 407 klm. The same year (2008) a full sister was to win 1st Club, 16th Section CCF 419 klm winning the club by 18 mpm.

Another full sister, a Grizzle hen that I bred for a friend in Newcastle, rung APFA-11-



Grizzelda
HILLCREST-99-1213

4158 that in 2012 went on to win 1st Club, 19th NCF from Collarenebri, 470 klm, then winning 3rd Lake Macquarie RPC National from Barrington and 11th O/A NCF National Barrington 707 klm. (Two full sisters to win top National positions in two different federations).

"Silver Lady's" best progeny to date would be a Blue Bar cock rung AUST-06-925 known as "King Solomon" who went on to be the MNCF's "Bird of the Year" winning the following prizes – 1st Club, 10th Fed 380 klm, doubled back the next week to the club's YBD to again win 1st prize at a distance of 504 klm flying a velocity of 1007 mpm. He then went on to win 2nd Club, 2nd Fed All Age National 560 klm finally winning 1st Club, 7th Fed 660 klm on the second day from a very hard race.

As you can imagine, these two Silver Shadow Van Loons and their progeny are now a large part of my family of "NexGen" Van Loons.

Another Silver Shadow Grizzle hen belonging to Kevin Gambell of the Mt. Druitt Pigeon Club put up another fantastic result by winning the CCF "Bird of the Year" in 2009. This hen rung MTD-07-440 who's sire came from Dean Hull of Campbelltown and the dam was bred by John Hoffman and purchased from Greg Hamilton in Sth. Aust.

The performance of this hen in Australia's largest federation was truly remarkable, with her attaining the following results:

1st Club, 1st Sect, 28th O/A from Carrathool a distance of 505 klm, 5150 birds.

1st Club, 1st Sect, 9th O/A from Hay a distance of 559 klm, 2496 birds in a very hard race, winning the club by 1 & 1/2 hrs and the Section by 1 hr with only 9 club birds home on the day, 4 belonging to Kevin with 3 of them being Silver Shadow Van Loons.

1st Club, 3rd Sect, 10th O/A in the Federation All Age National from Balranald a distance of 676 klm, 1086 birds (5 bird limit).

To top it off, MTD-07-440 is the dam of a cock arriving one week late from the infamous "Galah Smash" when there was only 1 bird home on the second day and very few other birds to get home at all. Further more this hen bred a 1st and 3rd Club position in 2012.

In 2009 the Hills District fancier, Jeff Jones purchased a Grizzle hen (via his good friend Greg McLaughlin as Jeff was unable to attend) at the annual Campbelltown City Pigeon Club's Squeaker Sale. This hen, rung CTN-10-1696 was a Silver Shadow Van Loon bred by local fancier Dean Hull, she was lost off her first race and was fortunately reported and returned to Jeff and after this she turned out to be one of his most reliable race birds going on to in fact win the Squeaker Sale Race from Ballina a distance of approximately 500 klm.

After winning the Squeaker Sale race she was mated to a cock that won 2nd in the 2011 YBD. In her first season at stock, she in turn bred the winner of the 2012 CTN Squeaker Sale which just happened to be a Grizzle as well, just like it's dam 1696. Jeff saying he believes this hen will be a force in the stock loft now for years to come.

Now here's as a very interesting note, the sire of CTN-10-1696 (belonging to Jeff Jones) is also the sire of Kevin Gambell's "Bird of the Year", Grizzle hen MTD-07-440 above. What a fantastic result for the "Silver Shadow" dynasty.

The well-known Victorian fancier, John Shore is yet another who has had great success with the "Silver Shadows", both straight and crossed.

In an e-mail I recently received from John, he had said that his main Silver Shadow cock, MELB-99-285 is a full brother to "Grizzelda" (the inbred daughter of "66") and has done exceptionally well in the stock loft, being the sire of John's 1st VHA Young Bird Derby including among others a 5th Fed 300 mls . 285 progeny, as with many other of the "Silver Shadow" bred birds, have continued to breed on as he is the G/sire of many other federation placed birds including a 1st VHA Derby, a 3rd Fed 150ml, 2nd

Silver Lining MTD-07-440



Fed from Parkes along with being the G/sire of 1st Fed VHA from Tasmania.

Another son of 285, known as "The Fog Cock" and to quote John, "Was sent on a toss when only idiots would send pigeons came home through fog that was so thick you couldn't see 30 metres in front of you, however after 1 hr he popped through the fog to be the only bird home after 4 hours".

After this effort "The Fog Cock" went on to win 1st Club, 1st Section, 5th O/A in Fed from 300 ml on a fairly tough day. Since then "The Fog Cock" has gone on to produce many exceptional pigeons including a double fed prize winner for John, who in turn has go on to produce a 5th Fed VHA from 300ml plus two Fed winners for a country fancier with many other country fed placing's being reported. John also said that he had

two birds, a 1/2 brother and sister (both grizzles) land together from Tasmania, taking equal 1st prize in the Fed, with both being bred off "The Fog Cock". (A nephew of "Grizzelda" and an inbred G/son of "66") potentially making MELB-99-285 the G/sire of two Fed winners from the same race - "the legend continues".

Neither the last, nor the least by any means are the results obtained with Silver Shadow based birds by the well-known Newcastle (NCF) fancier Geoff Garland.

Geoff informed me that his first pair of Silver Shadow Van Loons were gifted to him by his good friend and club mate Mick Jones from a pair of Silver Shadows purchased from the late Keith Sagers.

The dam of this pair that was gifted to Geoff, was a Grizzle rung VHA-02-

13793 with her sire and dam being "66" and "Grizzelda" with the sire of the gift pair being a Blue Checker rung AUST-02-23023, his sire being "Silver Ghost" a son of "66" when paired once more to "Grizzelda".

Over the last 2 years (2011/12) Geoff has had tremendous results with a crossing of the "Silver Shadow" hen obtained from Mick Jones when paired to one of his Deweerdt cocks. These being a young grizzle cock, rung LM-10-3039 that won 1st Fed (NCF) from Port Macquarie, a distance of 205 klm after previously winning 4th

Fed (NCF) from Taree 141 klm, with a full sister winning 3rd Fed from Taree as well.

In 2012 another full brother, a grizzle rung LM-11-2657 was to win the federation "Young Bird Derby" from Lightning Ridge a distance of 522 klm also winning the federation "Breeders Plate" from the same race point, literally make him a double Fed Winner.

The "Silver Shadow" pigeons having a record that is second to none, either raced crossed or inbred, with many fanciers crossing their most successful outcrossed birds back to the inbred ones again to keep the line going.

In my endeavour to outline the many successes of the "Silver Shadow" dynasty of champion racers, I believe I have only begun to scratch the surface as

there would be literally hundreds of wins recorded across the country down off the "66" that both I and many others would not be aware of.

In my opinion, and I know I am not alone in saying this, but I have no hesitation in saying that the Grizzle Cock GB-98X-67966 (better known as just "66") would be the best ever producer of winners and breeders of winners, to ever be imported into Australia.

As of the 2012/13 breeding season, and speaking to Phil Murphy (owner of LPM Stud) the "66" cock and "Grizzelda" have, and are still producing to this day, having been paired to each other for the breeding season just past, having produced I'm told 7 youngsters. These 7 youngsters no doubt will see the dynasty of "Silver Shadows" continue for many generations to come.

A fitting end to the above story could well be the following quote by William Shakespeare - "Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them".

