

## The Gurnays - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

OR  
WHY THE GURNAY STRAIN IS  
TRULY THE WORLD'S GREATEST

WINNING STRAIN OF RACING  
PIGEONS.

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PHOTOS ON THIS AND PAGE 30 ARE IN CONNECTION WITH THE METHODS  
OF THE MASTERS ARTICLE.

Through the annals of racing pigeon history one name stands supreme, the name of Gurnay. Gurnay of Verviers, the greatest fancier that Belgium and indeed the world has ever known.

But you say, "What of Stassart, Sion,



Geoff Wales, Yorkshire, England holding his champion Gurnay hen, winner of first club and east section, first open, York and District Federation Borges 509 miles 1970.

57-617 Fred Shaw Gurnay, never failed to clock 75 miles through 476 miles. A winner of pools for a number of years.

Bastin, Dordin, DeSmet and the other great champions?" Yes, what of them! Only one man in the history of the racing pigeon sport has been proclaimed "The Emperor" of pigeon racing and of course, that was Mons. Renier Gurnay. Only one strain compiled such a victorious racing record that it is known as "The World's Greatest Winning Strain of Racing Pigeons" — the Gurnay strain. Only the great Gurnay strain has come to be known as the Most Successful Strain to use as a Cross.

The Belgian journals referred to Mons. Gurnay as "the champion of the pigeon world" and as "the giant in the history of the pigeon art." Among the many descriptions written of the Gurnays when they flew in Verviers was this one: "Beautiful race! Powerful race! Energetic race! Characteristic race! Unconquerable race! Oh the race of the Gurnays! Perfection in pigeon!"

Need I add more? Yes, you say. Then let us look at the racing records Mons. Gurnay created that have never been surpassed. In one season, a team of 15 Gurnays won \$25,000. In seven seasons a team of 25 Gurnays won \$225,000. Six Gurnays won two National races in eight days and \$20,000 pool and prize money. In 1922, one of Mons. Gurnay's best seasons, a team of Gurnays consisting of 14 yearlings, five two year olds and four four year olds won \$47,000.

Overall between 1886 and 1936 the Gurnays won over \$600,000 in the most competitive competition in the world.

If this doesn't convince you that the Gurnays are "The World's Greatest Winning Strain" then let us recall some of the Gurnay champions: FRED first Limoges National; BRONZE FAVORITE first Grand National Angouleme; BON VIERZON first Vierzon National; BON BLEU first Grand National Angouleme; PETITE ECAILLE VIERZON first Vierzon National; FONCE ANGOULEME first Grand National Angouleme; BARIOLE first Grand National Angouleme; VERHOYE RAYE first Grand National Angouleme; LITTLE BLUE COCK first Grand National Angouleme; CHAMPION MEALY first Grand National Angouleme; BON RAYE first Angouleme, first San Sebastian; ILLUSTRIOUS RAYE 15 first prizes; CIGARETTE 12th Grand National; BRONZE VIERZON ninth National 20 prizes in three years and \$2,400; LE GROS first Limoges; OLD RAYE eight Grand National and \$2,250; LEON second Vierzon National; ANGOULEME, 14th Grand National \$2,000 etc.

For over 21 years Mons. Renier Gurnay was the champion of the strongest club in Verviers which has over 240 members. For 13 successive years the Gurnays won the most money, the most prizes, and the most first, second and third prizes. This was usually accomplished with a team of 25 racing cocks.

Ah, now you say, "yes, Mons. Gurnay was the master of the sport and his strain was superior, but what have they

done in the hands of others?"

In their first racing season in England, a team of yearling Gurnays won ten firsts in 11 races for Fred Shaw. In five seasons competing in 30 OB races Shaw's Gurnays won 14 firsts, ten seconds, eight thirds, etc. in the strongest club in England, the Manchester Flying Club. Shaw bred 50 different first prize winning Gurnays in the six years he raced.

Another loft won 299 first, second and third prizes in 17 years in races over 200 miles. This was O. I. Wood's famous loft of Gurnays located at Ilkley, England. The O. I. Wood Gurnays also won 902 first pool prizes in this time.



1225, second club, sixth Thurso national 1964. Bred by L. Clark, loft manager of Fred Shaw.

The National Loft, J. Massey, E. I., Jones, Jack Green, A. F. Brown, D. Forkes, R. G. Silson, Billy Lowe, J. E. Hart, T & D Perkins and many other Gurnay specialists distinguished themselves as English champions during the 30's, 40's and 50's. Their names and performances with the Gurnays have gone down in the record books.

In the early days of the Gurnay strain in America such men as Lee Ford, Prescott Bigelow, Van Nortwich, Jim Lyons, Forney, Kollar, McDermott, De Mooy and many others attained great success.

Now you say, "that was ages ago. What of today?" The true test of any strain is time. It has been over 30 years since Mons. Renier Gurnay died and his loft was dispersed, yet even today pure Gurnays are still winning.

In England today Bob Holmes has won



ANGOULEME bred and raced by Mons. Gurnay, winner of 14th grand national Angouleme and \$2,000.



LE FAVORI French Gurnay bred by Mons. Berteaux from his French Gurnays down from his Berlin national winner which was a descendant of Gurnay's FONCE ANBOULEME winner of first Angouleme national.

out of turn with his Gurnays. He has won 107 first, second and third prizes in the past six years. P. G. Smith of Kent has had the Gurnays since the 30's and they are still winning today. The Drayton Gurnays are winning in the English Nationals.

In 1970 W. Mellor won 20 firsts with his Gurnays, while Sam Rowbottom won over \$2,500 with three Gurnays in that one season. Geoffrey Wales won first Open York and Dist. Bourges 509 miles with a three year old hen in 1970 and in 1969 he won third and fifth National with two Gurnays. There are many more Englishmen winning with the Gurnays today.

In Scotland William R. Black has won 209 first prizes since 1947. His Gurnay family was based on six birds bred by Mons. Gurnay a year or two before his death. Between 1947 and 1956 the Black Gurnays won 145 firsts. Willie Black was dubbed "The Fred Shaw of Scotland." In 1970 he had a "bad season" winning only four firsts. There are also other successful Gurnays fanciers in Scotland, but Wm. R. Black's the best of the best.

In America we have Al Beekman who has won the Michigan State 500 with a Gurnay. And there is Frank Soares and his A. F. Brown Gurnays, and several others. The Gurnay strain is still winning here although it has been crossed into many families and although the new vogue is to import fancy named birds from Belgium.

As was stated previously, the true test of a strain is time. How many strains that were popular in the early 1900's are still around today? Very few, very few indeed.

Mons. Gurnay laid a solid foundation that is still bearing fruit today. Created around 1886, the traditionally great Gurnay strain in the right hands is still "The World's Greatest Winning Strain of Racing Pigeons" and it shall be for years to come.

## Congratulations

On behalf of the International Federation of American Homing Pigeon Fanciers, Inc., its officers and various committees, it is indeed a profound pleasure to congratulate the fine work of the Racing Pigeon Bulletin staff for its dedicated services to the pigeon fanciers for the past 25 years.

This Silver Anniversary of the Racing Pigeon Bulletin we hope will be a memorable one for years to come, and we hope to enjoy the association and continued assistance until the Golden Anniversary.

We dedicate ourselves for a happy 25th Anniversary.

Clarence E. Martin, I. F. President  
Sincerely,

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