



● Wally Stern

Former Campbelltown flyer Wally Stern has made it in a big way in South Australian pigeon racing circles since he migrated to Australia 18 years ago.

The 59-year-old motor mechanic finished fourth last season in the aggregate points of the SA Homing Pigeon Association.

Wally, who is married with three grown sons, had his grounding in the sport in Berlin where he was born.

Today he and his wife, Ilse, form a winning partnership.

The Stern loft gained six placings in the 12 association races last year, including two placings with a yearling red chequer Briko-Tiptoe-Jurion cockbird.

This bird won the "Bird of the Year" award in the Campbelltown club.

Wally and his wife also own the sister to this bird, and this pigeon was placed fourth in the SAHPA Finke event.

The Stern loft contains about 120 birds, and between 80 and 90 are racing birds.

Each year Wally buys 60 rings for breeding and he rears both hens and cocks.

Owners who have helped Wally and his wife include Max Bird (Glynde), Allan Pearce (Campbelltown), Trevor Butcher (former Campbelltown and SAHPA chairman) and well-known SA flyer Charlie Henderson.

Birds have also come from the Blanden and Whittington lofts.

And the result has been success.

Wally believes strongly in the old saying that a good cockbird will defeat a good henbird on a hard race.

He is quick to point out a slight fall in success in the years he has not bred cockbirds.

European racing is based heavily on the widowhood



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system, but Australian conditions tend to favor the henbird.

Wally and his wife are continually pottering around the loft during the day and the result is an harmonious loft.

The birds are fed mainly wheat and peas.

However the percentage of the latter grain is increased as the races become longer.

In winter-time maize is added to the birds' diet to give them added warmth.

Small seed is also placed out for returning race birds.

All birds in the loft are given a bath at least once a week, most of the time in condy's crystals.

This year Wally has decided to change clubs and he will be competing with Magill.

He is in the sport purely for the competition and the satisfaction he and his wife receive from seeing their charges well placed.

They believe owners only reap what they put into the sport.

And judging by the success of the Stern loft, Ilse and Wally Stern would be two of South Australia's hardest working owners.