

# Ray Fewings

1st SAHPA Farina Derby

When the imported birds first came in around 1990, Ray Fewings was a sceptic. Wild claims were being made like "These birds will revolutionize Australian flying" and "These birds will show up the old Aussie families".

As an admirer of the hard day pigeon, Fewings was suspicious of the intruders, more so of the studs and their claims. His theory was that the only birds to import were those from an active winning loft rather than grand-children of the big name winners.

After traveling through the UK, Ireland and Europe with his pigeon tours, Fewings decided he liked two flyers above the rest - the legendary Flor Engels from Belgium and Terence O'Brien from Dublin, Ireland.

So when the opportunity came he sought birds from these two sources.

The Flors Engels have done very well when crossed to his hard day family on a 3/4 to 1/4 situation. Looked upon as a fast middle distance bird, the Flor Engels have been placed up to 600 miles with a quarter of Aussie birds mixed in.

On the other hand the birds from Terence O'Brien were from the Belgian Louis Deleus strain. Not to be confused with Achiel Leus, Louis Deleus was middle distance champion of Belgium in 1995.

Terence O'Brien is a legend in Dublin. He is clearly the old bird champion flyer and has been for more that

a decade. His bird of the year for 2004 finished in the open result in eight races - a truly remarkable bird.

One of the birds Terence sent Fewings at no cost was a half brother to O'Briens winner from France named Margaret. A smokey blue bar with a pearl eye, the cock turns out to be a grand son of Louis Deleus' champion racer and breeder Semi.

He has been an immediate hit in the stock loft breeding two SAHPA placegetters before providing Fewings with the 2004 Farina Derby winner.

The Farina Derby win was appreciated by Fewings because it turned into a nine hour, 900 metre slog that found out many of the speedy type birds.

Club mate Gus Grunwald lives about three kilometres north of Fewings, direct in line from the race point. He reported seeing two birds, one about 200 metres in front of the other, heading towards Adelaide.

When the clocks were opened, Fewings had 90 seconds to spare over club mate Neville Kakoschlke, who obviously had a slower trap.

So perhaps Fewings has to eat humble pie. On one hand he has been proven right by obtaining stock birds from a champion winning loft but on the other had his winner is a great-grand-daughter of Semi.

But far more importantly, the friendship of the amiable O'Brien has been far more rewarding than the good pigeons obtained.