

# Ross Chapman's Record Breaking Suzie Q

By John Hofman



In the SAHPA penultimate race of the 2018 season from Benalla (Vic) 795 birds representing 67 owners were released at 5.30 am on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October with a light southerly wind and a blue sky. Light variable winds were experienced at first and then changing to northerly for a large part of the journey and finishing off into a fresh SW-W wind for perhaps the last 3 hours or so of the race. I rang Ross around 3.30 pm that afternoon to see if he had clocked as that was the time I thought the leading birds may have arrived home. He hadn't seen anything up until then and I remarked that he would need to have one by 4 pm to be somewhere around the mark. I spoke to Terry Underdown a couple of days later he also thought

that 3.30 pm would have been about the time they should have been arriving but obviously the fresh westerly wind at the home end slowed them down considerably. I said to Ross, give me a call back when you clock. He rang back at 4.39 to tell me that he had clocked at 4.37 pm. Ross had no idea how his time compared with other members but feared he would be somewhat behind, partly due to the fact that I thought the birds would have been home earlier and partly because the bird he clocked was not one of his "stars" as in previous races she had been a consistent homer but was always a little way back behind the leading arrivals to the loft.

It turned out that Ross topped the Federation with the pigeon he later called Suzie Q. Not only did he win it in a style but he did something I have never seen done in the SAHPA before in an on-the-day race. Ross' loft is the longest marker on the South East line (707 km) into Adelaide yet Suzie Q arrived home 15 and a half minutes ahead of the second placed bird flown by Cook & Edwards whose loft is nearly 12.5 km shorter. I would say that this was the best performance by a single bird in an on-the-day race, possibly ever, into Adelaide. In fact I would rate this performance right up there with Alf and Michael Vella's "Home Alone" who several years ago was the only bird home on the day in the VHA from Carrieton (840 Km) with quite a bit of daylight to spare.

I have just received a number of pedigrees of birds that feature in the bloodlines of Suzie Q. We will look at her sire's side at first. There are quite a cosmopolitan mixture of strains in the background including Silver Shadow Van Loon (Silver Mirage bred by Desira), Lucifer & Lucinda Van Loon lines bred by Hofman & Dave Allen (GB) Van Loon via Steven Brown of Melbourne. There is also Janssen via W. Verco's "Silver Pair" which originate from R. Wilson's "Golden Pair" x a descendant of S. Ferguson's noted imported Janssen hen. We will also find a dash of Smeulders Janssen i.e., "The Generaal" via Reg Muller, DeWeerdts via G. Vella (Melbourne) and Huysken's Van Riel, a sister to W. Verco's SAHPA Nyngan winner. Ross purchased Peter Matthews (Port Adelaide) number 1 stock pair which produced him numerous winners in his early days of racing and there is a smidgen of that blood in there plus a bit of what he calls his "Old Port Blood" which is made