

Preface to a series of articles about Natural Granen company.

The firm Natural was founded 80 years ago and the Natural Breeding Station slightly over 60 years ago.

If you reach the age of 80, it is likely that you no longer know exactly how things have turned out to be the way they are now. What you will probably recall are some of your realisations and if you don't recall them yourself, someone else might remember them for you.

These articles will give you an insight into the achievements of Natural Granen, a company which has been owned and managed by the De Scheemaecker family since its founding in November 1936. The founders, the Noël brothers and Robert De Scheemaecker, were so fascinated by the pigeon sport that the firm had become their life's work. Noël not only continued racing birds passionately up to his death at the age of 92 but he also followed what happened in and to his company from up close, even though he knew his sons Joseph and Noël had successfully taken over the company's management. That second generation spared no effort and no expense in offering high quality products which allowed Natural Granen to gain international recognition. Stephan De Scheemaecker, Joseph's son, continued and continues down this paved road and as a result Natural Granen now sells mixtures, complementary products and pigeon sport articles to no less than 55 countries. Stephan De Scheemaecker also had a brand-new production unit for feed mixtures installed. You will find more information on the unit and a series of photos of it in one of the following articles.

We wish to point out in this preface that these articles are not a summary of the De Scheemaecker family's achievements. That would no doubt start to bore you after some time. Just like it was the intention of the company's founders, the Noël brothers and Robert De Scheemaecker, to help pigeon fanciers race their birds by providing them with information in pigeon magazines, Joseph and Stephan De Scheemaecker aim at giving the readers of these series of articles practical tips in pigeon racing through fluent articles.

That is why these articles will start with a series of six articles in which the former head of the Natural Breeding Station André Roodhooft will share his experience with all of you. He will talk about the caretaking of his breeders and racers, about his loft, about feed and medical guidance, about the caretaking during winter, about the selection process his birds go through and about young birds.

We will of course inform you about the Natural Breeding Station and in particular about the new project called Elite of Natural.

Furthermore these articles also offer five interesting and extensive reports. One of those interviews was conducted with the German fancier Lothar Leßmeister, the 2016 winner of the international race from Barcelona. Two other reports try to tell you the secrets of the famous middle distance aces Dirk Van Dyck and Gaston 'Kaasboer' Van De Wouwer. Fanciers who fancy long distance racing more can enjoy interviews with long distance champions Etienne Meirlaen and Joost De Smeyter. Both reports, however, also hold a few tips for specialist racers who focus on racing from a particular distance.

We hope you enjoy reading.

Patrick Philippens