



INTERVIEW REPORT FOR CHAMPION FLYERS

Michael Romano

2005 & 2006 Champion Loft and 2006 Open Award Winner
FLYING WITH THE CJC COMBINE



By Paul Walsh

Tell us a little about yourself? When you were born? Did your family have birds? When did you first start with pigeons? When did you first race? What was the name of the first club you flew in?

My father introduced me to racing pigeons. He had them on a three story tenement rooftop in Hoboken, NJ. My father worked as a longshoreman on the Hoboken docks, just like in *On The Waterfront*, with Marlon Brando.

I won my first race in 1954 in the Hudson County pigeon club in Hoboken. It was a 250 mile race and my father had to go to work that day. He allowed me to enter the birds in the race,

but, being so young I had to get a ride to the club after clocking. There were two cocks fighting over a hen, the loser of the fight was my first bird home and won the race. Has anything changed in fifty years? My father took a lot of teasing from his friends because the bird was not pooled.

Where do you fly today? Have you ever flown as a partnership, if so who was your partner and when?

I fly in the greater Elizabeth pigeon club, the OLC club and the Perth Amboy pigeon club. My father was my only real partner, although, I did have a lot of fun and a couple of good seasons racing with Harry Witt. We won the North Hudson Futurity race, and we did celebrate.

Do you think your position is a good one as far as combine races are concerned?

How big is Combine/Club?

I am in a good position for the GE club, because I am south of most flyers. In the combine, I am in the middle probably, an equal number north and south of me. The Central Jersey Combine averages around two hundred lofts.

Do you have an original family of pigeons?

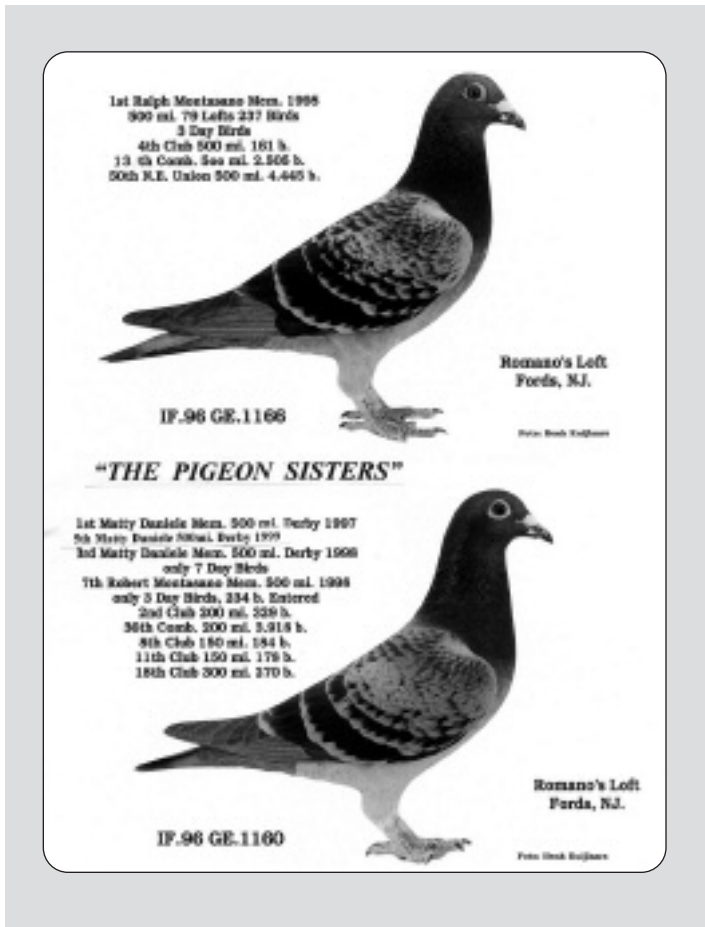
Yes, almost all my birds have some of the blood lines from Leo Gavron from Sayreville, NJ. I only have two birds in my breeding coop that I did not breed, and only one that is not trained to my loft. I could probably give you the pedigree of most of my birds going back over fifty years.

What championships have you won, in the club, combine or nationally?

I will send you some photos of some birds with their records on it.

What type of birds do you now fly?

Big, med, small? Big to medium.



Explain how you would prepare a team of birds for shipping to a 400 mile Old Bird race?

I love a hen on two week old eggs for the longer races.

Do you cut flights? Yes, but not on all birds.

Pull tail feathers? No.

Do you have your birds finished with body molt when races start, or are you a natural flyer, if so, when do you start to breed?

I try to breed as early as possible so the birds are more mature and have a better chance of moulting out before the bigger races. My problem is that I usually go on vacation two weeks in Nov., three weeks in Jan., and three weeks in Feb. I am lucky to have a very good flyer, Pete Contala (Wings loft), who takes care of my birds for me when I am gone.

Do you fly to the perch? Do you fly widowhood? Separated sexes, or just hens? If you fly natural or widowhood, please explain your method in old birds and young birds.

I have never flown widowhood, I'm sure it is probably the best, because, most of Europe does this method. I often thought I might like to try it, but, it is very difficult for me to let the birds loft fly because of the hawk problem that has come about in recent years.

Describe your loft. Do you have a separate breeding loft? What kind of airflow do you have in the loft, fans, etc?

I have a 24 ft. by eight ft. flying loft with 4 sections, and a 12 ft by 8 ft breeding loft with 2 sections.

Describe how you feed? Hopper or individual seeds?

I feed by hopper.

After a flight around the loft or is it when they return from training?

When the birds come home from training, I feed them light, then a little while later, I will feed them as much as they want without leaving any feed. This will not always work when they are on eggs. I am usually done with the birds between 11am and noon. For many years I fed twice a day, but this way it is so much easier for me to do other things the rest of the day. I have a nice boat that I enjoy, or if I want to go for a 5 or 6 hour lunch, I don't have to worry about feeding the birds in the evening. I try to make it as easy and enjoyable as possible. Pigeons have been my life long hobby, and I try to keep things in perspective. Years ago, when I was fortunate enough to win a good prize, I would tell my wife, "its cruise time!" and she would book us a cruise.

Which mixture do you use?

I use a commercial mixture from Browns that I purchase from Charlie Sarafer (Z Line Loft) Charlie is always very helpful with feed, medication and the electronic clock. And don't forget peanuts! The birds just love them.

How do you train your birds, single toss, in a flock, or on the training truck?

I go down the road as little as possible, once the truck starts I am on it every day unless I was partying too much the night before. We have a very good trainer in Vinny Degrado (Amoco Loft), from Staten Island, much of the success that I do have is from his dependable training.