

# **Marc Gielen (Maasbree, NL) A Special National Victory from Agen ZLU Yearlings in 2020**

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Marc Gielen from Maasbree, Netherlands had a special performance in the National Agen ZLU Yearlings race this year, winning 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> National vs. 5,578 pigeons with two nest sisters clocking both of them on the day later in the evening from 565 miles. This is not a common occurrence, first winning a National race is a dream for most fanciers and puts you at the top of the national and international stage, but to win the national and put a second bird in the top 10 is even more rare. Take that a step further and put two nest mates in the top 10 shows something extremely special. Could this be a new golden pair? Let's hear about Marc and his birds in the questions and answers below.

**What is the base of your family of pigeons (bloodlines)? How did you breed them to create your current family? How do you decide what goes into your breeding program?**

Marc started by getting in touch with Jo Lardenoye from the Dutch-Belgium fanciers Depasse-Lardenoye. Jo himself won 1st National Barcelona in 1995 and 1st National Marseille in 1991. Together with his partner Stéphane Depasse they are one of the best for the past 15 years from Barcelona and Perpignan in Belgium.

He visited Jan Corstjens numerous times and also wrote articles for 15 years about a lot of fanciers in The Netherlands. Both lofts have bloodlines (Van der Wegen, Aarden, Gebr. Kuypers, Cas de Graaf) which is a big score! Both lofts have a high quality because of selecting for more than 20 years.

In the beginning, Marc bought what was affordable for him, but now he only buys what he wants. Either from the best breeders, but believes it is better to get some from the best racers. Marc only looks for some extra quality and searches for the best to add to his family.

**What system do you race and how do you prep them for a long distance flight?**

Starting in the beginning of April all sexes are split, they will train and race as much as possible separately. Only a few times when they come home from a race they will have a short time to have fun and relax together.

A month before the first International race they are paired together to build a nest, but not all pigeons are paired at once. Marc prepares a schedule during the winter months and in April

and May he reschedules them where needed. He tries to race all pigeons on 2 International races a year, but this year 2020 it wasn't possible due to the covid-19 disease.

The yearlings will also be prepared for 2 races from 900 kilometers (559 miles) or more. He wants to know right away the quality of his yearlings and most yearlings have the spirit to get home the same day of liberation (morning release). His goal is to race all pigeons sitting on either babies 2-5 days old or laying on 10-14 day old eggs.

### **What supplements do you use or natural products?**

The birds receive water with garlic during the whole year and after the race they always get honey or Bonisol. During the season also iodine and something for respiratory is given. That's all they get because he prefers pigeons to be strong in a natural way, so he doesn't visit a veterinarian, only for the usual vaccinations.

### **How do you feed and what do you feed your birds during the training period and leading up to a race?**

All of his pigeons receive the same food which is used during the moulting period, for breeders, youngsters, all of them get the same food all year. The only difference is when the team is being prepared for the first International races, then he starts feeding a high-fat content food for 4 days. During the final week before basketing he will try to train the pigeons from a distance of 50-60 km (37 miles) several days in a row, just to build the drive to get home.

### **Thoughts on medications?**

As mentioned earlier he wants his birds to be strong naturally. For example he says, "If I am not sick I don't visit a doctor, so why should I visit a veterinarian for my pigeons when they look good, train well and I don't lose many pigeons." To check if the respiratory tract is ok he uses eye drops. If this drop doesn't dissolve immediately into the eye then he knows the pigeon is not in good condition and will never win the competition.

### **What are some of your best achievements, championships, titles or prizes won?**

Marc sent me quite an extensive list of super results, but I shortened it to the top 20. Still a fantastic list.

- 1<sup>e</sup> National Agen ZLU Yearlings 5.578 d. 2020
- 1<sup>e</sup> NPO St. Vincent 1.613 d. 2016
- 1<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Agen ZLU 786 yearlings 2020
- 2<sup>e</sup> NPO St. Vincent 1.639 d. 2017
- 3<sup>e</sup> National Agen ZLU 12.372 d. 2020
- 3<sup>e</sup> National St. Vincent 6.169 d. 2016
- 4<sup>e</sup> National St. Vincent 4.031 d. 2017
- 4<sup>e</sup> NPO Bergerac 1.421 d. 2020
- 4<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Agen ZLU 490 yearlings 2019

5<sup>e</sup> NPO St. Vincent 1.706 d. 2018  
5<sup>e</sup> NPO Bordeaux 1.491 d. 2018  
5<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Agen ZLU 786 yearlings 2020  
6<sup>e</sup> National Pau 2014 hens  
7<sup>e</sup> National Marseille 2.750 d. 2018  
7<sup>e</sup> International Marseille 2.130 hens 2018  
7<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Marseille 719 d. 2019  
8<sup>e</sup> NPO Bergerac 1.827 d. 2018  
9<sup>e</sup> National Agen ZLU yearlings 5.578 d. 2020  
9<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Agen ZLU 490 yearlings 2019  
11<sup>e</sup> International Agen ZLU yearlings 2020  
11<sup>e</sup> National Marseille 2.735 d. 2019  
11<sup>e</sup> National Bergerac 6.094 d. 2018  
12<sup>e</sup> International Marseille 2.651 hens 2019  
12<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Agen ZLU 490 yearlings 2019  
14<sup>e</sup> NPO Bordeaux 1.491 d. 2018  
14<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Perpignan 543 d. 2017  
15<sup>e</sup> NPO Bordeaux 1.491 d. 2018  
15<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Agen 972 old birds 2020  
15<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Marseille 719 d. 2019  
16<sup>e</sup> National Bergerac 4.194 d. 2020  
16<sup>e</sup> International Marseille 2.651 hens 2019  
17<sup>e</sup> National Pau 2014  
17<sup>e</sup> NPO Bergerac 1.908 d. 2017  
17<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Pau ZLU 258 d. 2020  
18<sup>e</sup> NPO Bordeaux 3.249 d. 2018  
18<sup>e</sup> NPO Bergerac 2.286 d. 2019  
19<sup>e</sup> Provincial Criterium Marseille 719 d. 2019

### **What is currently your best pigeon?**

At the moment "BEAU" is Marc's best pigeon (see her picture in the article). She won this year 1st National Agen Yearlings vs. 5,578 pigeons. Her nestsister "JOLIE" won 9th National in the same and their half-brother, "KNOLPOWER" won 11th National Marseille in 2019. All three are bred from the same mother, a hen bred by A. Saarloos & Son.

### **Goal for the future?**

Marc's next goal is to win Marseille, but you never know what will happen. Barcelona is also a dream for him as it is for many fanciers, but he needs to build a new team which will be competitive in this race as Barcelona pigeons are said to be a whole different breed of pigeon to tackle that race.

**What is the secret to your success or what do you attribute your success to?**

The road to success for Marc comes from good pigeons, high quality, tough selection, investing a lot of time in training and you need to see the small details during preparation.

Thanks to Marc Gielen for participating in this article and best of luck on your next national victory!