

Extreme
more extreme
most extreme

Focus

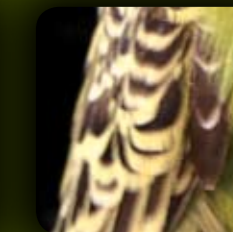
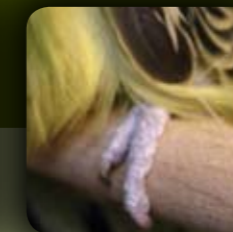
Daniel Lütolf

A story
full off superlatives!

Bert Sempels

March 16th 2007 would obviously be a very special day for me. My wife had a present in mind for my birthday... and I do agree she managed to make it a real surprise for me. Around 6 am I heard the doorbell. Our webmaster, Maarten Heylen stood in front of me. I had to hurry up and when I also received an envelope with some money in it, I really realised what was going on. The surprise was a trip to Würenlos in Switzerland. On the way, we had to pick up our treasurer William Dierickx in Rillaar and a little bit further in Houthalen our final participant André Goossens joined the "celebrating team". So far, so good. The start to Switzerland was taken at around 7.15 am. The weather was beautiful and thanks to the driver we managed to arrive at Würenlos at around 3.00 pm.

My colleagues already visited more than once this top breeder, so they had less stress compared to me. Obviously, there was only one topic to talk about during the trip from Belgium to Switzerland: the fantastic birds we would see as well as the friendliness and hospitality of Daniel. And indeed, several times we heard terms like 'super', 'fantastic', 'extreme', 'unbelievable'... As I am rather sceptic, I could not believe these words and preferred to see it with my own eyes before agreeing. And now I can confirm it, I saw it with my own eyes! Often, one says that pictures don't tell everything about a bird. A PC freak can modify pictures to let the bird look more impressive... on picture! To be honest, that was also what I thought when I look at pictures of Daniel's birds for our monthly BGC magazine. Well, the pictures indeed don't represent the reality! The reality showed us birds that are even more impressive than on pictures: unbelievable length, fantastic head and long feather. It's just too difficult to describe these impressive birds.



Detail of the wonderful long feathering of the birds...



Back to our trip

At around 3.00 pm Daniel welcomed us very friendly and soon I noticed that we would enjoy a relaxed atmosphere. Personally, I expected a more dominant attitude of an international top breeder; The respect he had for four Belgian breeders, made us feel like we knew each other for years. Of course, we wanted to see the birds, because each minute lost was a minute too much. The first flight we saw was constructed outside and contained mostly birds born in 2006 which should be used during the breeding season. However, at that time, we did not know that this flight should play an important role in our visit. Also important to mention was the fact that André had a present for Daniel. Daniel had expressed interest in one of the birds of André, a light green opaline bird, the winner of the 2005 BGC Brabant Show. The wish of Daniel was to swop this bird with one of his birds. You can read more about this later in this story.

Now we went down in the cellar, where the aviary and a large flight are situated. The large flight is meant for the babies and some reserve birds. We also noticed the large number of certificates and medals, which Daniel won the last 20 years. Being in the breeding room, we noticed a wide range of breeding cages:

white, green, ... some very large, others rather small. It was not a real professional infrastructure as one should expect. What I spotted immediately was that the aviary was extremely clean. Daniel told us that he is cleaning the room twice a day to avoid all kind of diseases. In the breeding cages, Daniel uses newspapers on the bottom to accelerate the cleaning of the cages (note that also Siegfried Szesny is doing this).

Of course, we wanted to see what we came for: birds, top birds. Spontaneously, we had a moment of real silence, eyes and mouth widely spread open. We all had seen some top birds from other breeders, but what we saw here were top birds all over the place! One even more extreme than another, one even longer than another. We saw some birds, when placed in a show cage, whose tail was so long it reached the bottom and even more. Other points were the impressive length of feather, width of head, full necks and great backskull. Also impressive were the masks. Most of Daniel's birds have a very deep mask, with big round spots.

Daniel showed us every couple in the breeding cages, even took them out to take a closer look. But most important was that these impressive birds were breeding without any problems. Very strange to us, because we are used to the fact that birds with long feathers are difficult breeders. Outcrossing was the driver of his success, told Daniel. He invested for a long time, but now he is getting the results of these efforts. Although he is one of the best breeders in the world, he is still looking for some 10 to 15 outcrosses annually. Daniel is not really supporting the theory of pure line

breeding. He is convinced that fertility of his birds is still at a high level thanks to outcrossing. And we had to agree that the outcross birds he uses are often of less quality, but they have a positive impact on the fertility. The offspring of these birds are then paired together with birds that are 100% of Daniel's line with very fertile birds as a result. Most couples had several fertilized eggs or babies in the nest boxes. Each bird was described in terms of brothers, sisters, ... Most of the birds were hand-tame. Daniel placed some birds in a show cage without grills and these birds simply stayed perched. I tried this at home afterwards but, unfortunately, without much success.

Time passed by very quickly and at about 8.00 pm we decided to go to the hotel to check in. 30 minutes later, Daniel arrived as well and we had dinner together. Around 10.30 pm we went back to Daniel's place, where he started cleaning the cages for a change. These were cleaned completely, injected with Ardap and new materials were put in. We also asked him prudently if we could buy some birds.

As part of the exchange deal, André had the opportunity to choose a bird from Daniel. He wanted a young grey cock (4.5 months old). We all agreed that it was a top bird, but at the same time we realised that this choice was too ambitious. And indeed, Daniel explained that this bird was part of the show team and so not for sale. However, André did not give up and tried a few times more. At 1.30 am we went to the hotel because we had to be back at Daniel's place the day after at around 10.00 am to eventually buy some birds.



Two superb cocks...



Extreme long and long-feathered gray spangle cock



The monster...



Wonderful graygreen dominant pied hen

André was still very impressed by the grey cock. He woke up at around 7.00 am. Having had a relaxed breakfast, we went back to Daniel. Again, Daniel welcomed us very friendly. He preferred to finish the cleaning of the aviary first. So we decided to take a look at the outside flight. The

day before, we only had a quick look in this flight, but as we now took a much closer view, we noticed quite a large number of very good birds. Just like the day before, Daniel took out each bird we wanted to see. Surprisingly, but very lucky, we could buy some of these birds.

And the most important question of the day came up: the price of these birds? I have to agree that my friends have build up a very good relationship with Daniel, which made it a bit easier...

André was still focused on the grey cock. When looking for some other birds to buy, negotiations went on between André and Daniel. And guess what: André managed to get the grey cock bird. Daniel showed us some other birds which were for sale and the choice became difficult. We asked for the price several times and were very happy in the end, because we were able to buy

budgies for a reasonable price. Mid afternoon, we decided to say goodbye, even not before writing an impression in Daniel's guest book, which we did with great enthusiasm. We went back to Belgium with some 20 birds. Everybody happy! It's obvious that we will go back to Daniel in the future. Just like on the outward journey, we just talked about one topic on our way back: the fantastic birds of Daniel. Personally, I remember one bird, a grey green opaline cock, which was named "the monster". A very extreme bird but very fertile and so father of a lot of birds in

Daniel's aviary. Never seen a bird like this before! After a trip of 7 hours, we arrived in our home town in Belgium at about 11.00 pm. I hurried to thank my wife for her wonderful present. I told her extensively about the two days in Switzerland.

I can recommend a trip to Würenlos to every budgie breeder. Even if you do not want to buy a bird, a visit helps you as well. Enjoy the pictures of Daniel's birds. More pictures can be found on his website: www.daniel-luetolf.ch/

Daniel

Lütolf

Fantastic graygreen opaline cock



Blue Texas Clearbody- split ino. Never seen before in this quality



Very nice graygreen hen



Superb blue cinnamon cock