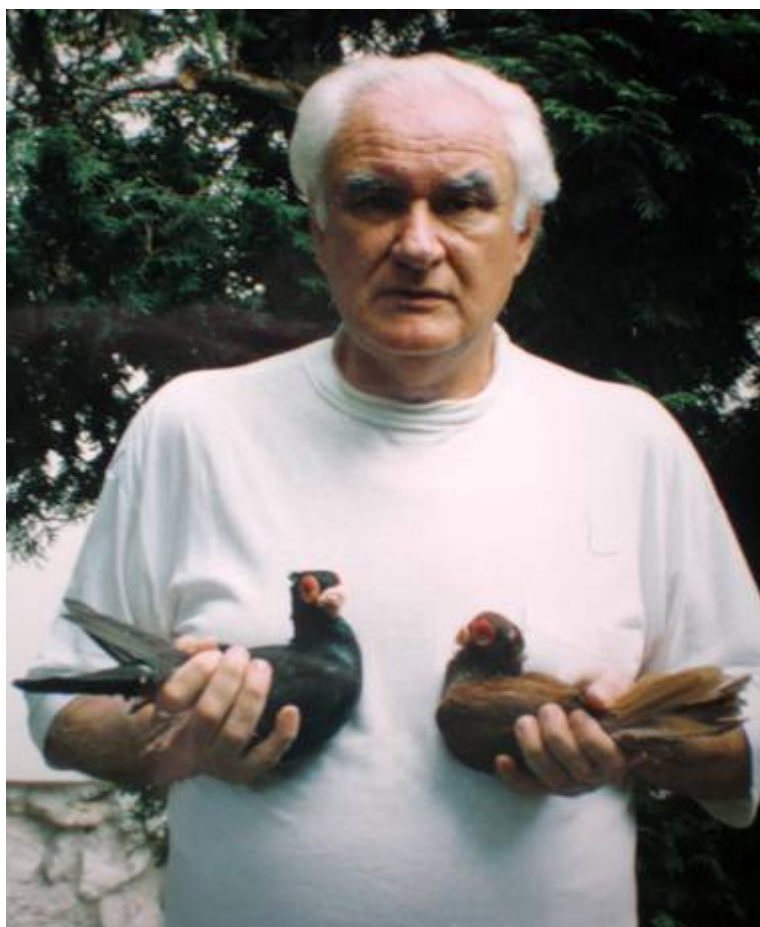


Crested Barbs . . . ***still exist***

Text and Photos: Josip Pekanović (Serbia)

The following article was sent to us in German by a pigeon breeder from Serbia, Josip Pekanović. He describes his "Indianer" – a breed known in England as "Barb", but he was writing in the German language so he used the German name "Indianer". In Europe there is a lot of confusion in this area. We give Josip the benefit of the doubt. His birds look more like the English Barbs than the German Indianer. So in this English version we stick to the name Barb.

'MY WAY WITH THE 'INDIANER' – by Josip Pekanović



The "Barb" is a very old pigeon breed. A hundred years ago they were bred very often - in those days not kept in aviaries, with most pigeons being able to fly free. Indianer really like to fly. Apart from the plain-headed ones, there were also some crested Barbs. They fly very good because the type (body) of the Barb makes them resemble the Tumblers and Homer pigeons. In the old pigeon books there is only very little to read about Barb with a crest. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find any photos of crested Barbs.

I purchased my first Barb in 1952 from an old breeder, Andria Karba, in Sombor (the former Yugoslavia). These Barbs dated from the time before World War II. Some of them had a crest. To me, this was nothing special. In about ten years, the crest had disappeared in my line.

Left: Josip Pekanović from Serbia, holding two crested Barbs in his hands.

In 1965 I was as student at a Summer course in Kaufhof in Köln. There I bought several pigeon books by Edmund Zurth and in those books I read about Barb with crest being a rarity. Zurth had seen the last of the crested Barb in 1954 at a Swedish breeder, Henry Hansson. Later I contacted Hansson.

CRESTED BARB

In 1980 I was able to visit Henry Hansson in Höllviksnas. I saw beautiful Barbs there, but he had not have the crested ones for a long time. I took a pair of his high quality Barb home with me and mated them to my best birds. Because the two lines were still heterozygote from the past, after a short time, some crested Barbs appeared again!

At first I was able to breed the black and white crested. In 2000 a friend in the fancy, Rolf Pillen from Germany, visited me and brought me a black crested *Indianer*. At his place, the young of these *Indianer* had free flight and were flying home from a 20 miles distance! This old genetic line is very strong and the birds are still very vital. Today I have the crested Barb in almost every colour.

Right: A black crested Barb of respectable age, as you can see by the developed under (beak) wattle and eye ceres.

Unfortunately, Hansson died and then the last breeder of the Barb in Sweden was Per Persson. Several years ago, he also died. In 2005, I imported 16 Barbs from Persson's line. The pigeons did well at my place and provided the needed fresh blood for my birds. Of course, the South European climate is beneficial to them. For years, the breeders from many countries have been bringing me Barbs. Now I have more than 100 Barbs in all colours.



Left: Because the crest is a recessive factor, he also gets many plain head Barbs.

Note from the editor:

This ancient breed – the Barb – has developed in different ways in different countries and is now split into several rather different but very special Breeds, all with certain breed-points in common, and an ancient “source-breed” (or breeds, as the case may be). In the Netherlands we know it as the “Valkenet”, in Germany it is named “Indianer”, in France “Polonais” and in Spain “Ojo de Fresa” (Strawberry eye).



The latter is the smallest Breed and probably the closest to the original (African) breed. The birds that Josip purchased in Sweden could have been the English type of Barb, we don't know. All these breeds have at least one thing in common, they all have well developed eye and beak ceres and they come in red, recessive yellow, black and white. All these colours have the smoky factor, making the beak light in colour.

Right: One of Josip's Black Crested Barbs.



Regarding the Crested variety, James C. Lyell wrote in 1881 in his book 'Fancy Pigeons':

It is owing to some importations of Barbs from the South of France, made by Messrs. John Baily and Son about twenty-five years ago, that this pigeon exists in our country in its present excellence. Its French name is the Polish pigeon (pigeon Polonais), and though it is now known in Germany as the Barbary pigeon, from its English name, it was formerly called the Indian pigeon (Indianische-taube). Neumeister says: "There is no explanation for the origin of the name 'Indian' or the French destination 'Polish'."

It is allowed, both here and in Germany, that the Barbs of the South of France are the best, or, at least, were so lately, and though its name in French literature is pigeon Polonais, it may have another name in the south.

It is evidently an ancient variety, and it is more nearly allied to the highest type of the owl tribe than any other. Both may be from the same stem, and both may have existed from pre-historic times. The Barb should be smooth-headed and clean-legged; at the same time a crested variety has existed for long, and is mentioned in our old pigeon books. The legs are occasionally slightly feathered, which is so far faulty. A sub-variety is bred in Germany, with frilled breast like an owl.

**Right:
A collection crested Barbs in
various colours at Josip
Pekanović's.**



**In 2010 Josip Pekanović wrote
an extensive article on the
crested Barbs in the magazine
Feathered World, as you can
see below.**

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*Crested Barbs — Josip Pekanovic traces the
history of this ancient breed*

It is undoubtedly true that there is a clear relationship between the today Barb in the UK, the Ojo de Fresa in Spain, the Valkenet in The Netherlands, the Indianer in Germany and the Polonais in France. But don't forget that all these breeds have been developed over the years to meet the taste of the fanciers.



**Left: The 'today' Indianer pigeon has been developed in Germany in a totally different way than the (English) Barb.
Photo: Mick Bassett (Germany).**



**Right: Valkenet on the Champion Show 2009 (The Netherlands).
Owner: H Voerman.**



**Left: Valkenet red, M/O.
96 points on the Keistadshow (Amersfoort 2010, The Netherlands). Owner: H. Voerman.
Photo: S. de Bruine.**

Right: Ojo de Fresa (Strawberry eye) from Spain. Probably the most closest to the original.





Left: A red cockbird Ojo de Fresa (Strawberry eye) of José Antonin (Spain).



**Right: An adult pair of white Barbs.
Photo: Jan Buurmeijer (The Netherlands).**



Left: In France the Polonais are hard to find. This oval painting from the 18th century by an unknown artist, is in the collection of a French Museum.

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