



The French Baghdad

Le Bagadais Français

Left: French Baghdad, brown grizzle.
Owner: Mr. Gérard Bailliet (France).
Winner in Limoges (F) 2011.
Photo: Patrick Gonzales.

By: Robert Ripaldi,
Pigeon Judge
(SNC, Société National Colombiculture, France)

It happens often enough that you hear the remark during judging the French Baghdad: "Is that a pigeon? Oh, it is so ugly!" Such a reaction is normal for people who are not fully conversant with Fancy pigeons in all their variety. Also, you cannot please everyone in this hobby. Tastes differ and every breed has people who like, or dislike it! but fortunately even the French Baghdad has its admirers and fans who love it for it's unusual 'Looks' and Character.

The breed is not easy to breed. It is a breed with some aggression, who is constantly trying to take possession of all the nest boxes or perches.

Yet this breed will rear its young well, although "prudence" is not their strongest trait, often resulting in breaking an egg (or two) in the nest bowl, or they may even accidentally trample their young.

But things like that can happen, being such a clumsy heavyweight breed, on the other hand the French Baghdad will tend and pamper its young like a benign turtledove. To increase breeding success and avoid accidents, it is usually a help when the breeding compartments are spacious and the nest bowl is lined with something soft.



Right:
Three white French Baghdad, in the
loft at Robert Ripaldi's (F).



Left: A pair of breeding white French Baghdad, in Robert Ripaldi's loft in France.

What are considered its most important characteristics by the fans of the French Baghdad, the non fanciers initially just have the impression of an ugly pigeon but the Breed is much more than it's unusual looks:

- The sharp curves
- The large beak
- The areas of non-feathered skin
- The total lack of elegance

And I cannot hide my surprise, when I see the French Baghdad as it is exhibited in

Germany. This is not the same bird as is seen in France! I cannot understand why the German breeders – who I usually I regard as highly skilled breeders - have wandered so far from the French Breed Type!

When breeding the French Baghdad, they, the Germans, (who created the fabulous Nuremberg Baghdad (Scandaroon) have chosen a breeding direction that ignores the most important qualities of our (French) Baghdad. They have created an elegant pigeon, but without any great challenge in its breeding and without the characteristic non-feathered parts of skin (either natural or 'trimmed'), also with a thick neck and without showing the 'Baghdad knot' (a kink in the neck vertebra), a Breed Feature! (Such a shame to 'leave out' such important breed characteristics!)

Right: Blue grizzle French Baghdad, Best in its class, Club Show of the French Baghdad, Metz 2010.

Breeder: Mr. Christian Carette (F).

Photo: Club Français du Bagadais.



My German friends, you, who have created so many great breeds, you have probably never seen a real *Bagadais Français*, or have you played a visual trick upon me with the birds you depict and exhibit? Are you such rogues, as to deviate from the Country of Origin Standard?



Left: French Baghdad black, has won National Champion of France in Metz 2012.

Breeder: Mr. Gérard Bailliet (F).

Photo: Club Français du Bagadais.

It is one thing that you may find something beautiful or ugly about our French breed, but do not expect us to adapt our French Standard description. However, if you are really interested, we should be able discuss the details of this Breed on good terms.

Robert Ripaldi.

Standard of the French Baghdad

(Note: this is a translation of the original French Standard).

Origin

This breed is thought to be of Arabian origin. It has been kept in France since ages.

Overall Impression

A large bird with elevated proud bearing, a balanced, high stance, rugged forms and powerful looks. Long neck and long beak. Wings and tail are short. The feathering is tight, several patches are scarcely feathered or even naked, showing the red pigmented skin. This is very typical for the breed. The weight is 700 to 900 grams, respectively for the hens and the cocks.

Features of the Breed

Head: Powerful and long, arched, while the back of the head is strongly rounded and passing into the neck. Seen from aside, the beak is proceeding in shape to the head line, with only a minor submerging right behind the beak. Seen from above, the head is wedge-shaped.

Beak: Long, from the beginning of the beak (the gape) to the tip, the length should measure 35 to 38 mm. Thick at the base, the lower beak as substantial as the upper beak. The tip of the upper mandible is slightly arched and stumpy. Beak colour preferably as light as possible, pinkish around the wattle. White to slightly yellowish in the Red, Yellow and Dun. Horn colour in the other colour varieties, a somewhat darker beak point is tolerated.

Beak wattle: Level, but somewhat rough on the outer surface, level. Colour is rose-white.

Eyes: Very large, prominent and expressive. Pearl colour, some tolerance for granulation (sand colour). The Whites and Pies have dark or bull eyes, but pearl eyes are allowed. The eye ceres are wide, fine structured with a blood red colour.

Neck: Very long, in proportion to the length of the legs, almost the same thickness from the shoulders to the sharply defined throat. Held vertical and in the middle, slightly curved forward (the Baghdad Knot/ a slight kink in the fourth neck vertebrae (a breed feature) Shoulders powerful and square set.

Breast: Broad and lightly rounded with a lifted and prominent breast bone.

Back: Broad, short and wedge-shaped, slightly hollow and narrowing towards the rear.

Wings: Short, wing tips carried on the tail, reaching up to 4 to 5 cm of the end of the tail. Wing shields are flat with the wing butts slightly lifted and held slightly away from the Breast.

Tail: Well closed, not too long and slightly sloping.

Legs: Long and powerful, heavy in bone and very muscular, bent in knee joints. When we hold the legs against the tail, the legs are 3 cm longer than the tail. Legs are set well apart, about 5 cm. The thighs are broad and very muscular, protruding. The shanks are very long, featherless, the toes long and wide spread. The nails are large, white or black depending on the plumage colour.

Plumage: Very short, tight and sparsely feathered. At several places the naked skin is showing, i.e. the face, shoulder, around the eye ceres, thumbs and along the breast bone. An intensely red skin colour showing at these spots will increase the breed value of the bird.

Colours: Unicolour: white, black, dun, red, yellow, brown, khaki and Andalusian blue.

Chequered, barre dor barless: dominant red, dominant yellow, blue, silver, brown and khaki.

Grizzle: red, yellow, blue, silver, brown and khaki.

Blue indigo, barred and chequered.

Pied: black, dun, red, yellow, brown, khaki, and Andalusian blue.



Faults: Too small, too round in body, bad neck carriage, short neck, tail and/or wings too long, short legs, drooping tail, very noticeable forehead, submerging between beak and forehead, thin, pointed or curved beak, rough beak cere, too densely feathered, plumage too long and soft, pale eye ceres, noticeable dewlap, no pearl eyes (except White and Pied, which have dark eyes) or too coarsely granulated eyes (sand colour).

Evaluation: Overall Breed Type and Balance – Body Posture - Neck and Legs – Head and Beak – Plumage – Colour.

Ring size: 10 mm

Class: Wattle pigeons.

For more information please contact the French Specialty Club for French Baghdad, Nuremberg Baghdad (Scandaroon) and Moravian (Ostravian) Baghdad: Club Français du Bagadais, website: <http://club-Francais-des-bagadais.jimdo.com/>

President: Cristian Carette

Address: Chez Poirier, F-16380 CHAZELLES, France, e-mail: christian-carette@orange.fr

Today this Specialty Club has 54 members; apart from the French breeders also one from the Netherlands and several from Belgium. Together they entered a total of 300 Baghdads at the National Championship Show in Metz, 8 – 11 November 2012.

In the Netherlands, breeders of the French Baghdad are joined in the Nederlandsche speciaalclub voor de Wrat- en Kipduiven. (Dutch Specialty Club for Wattle pigeons and Hen pigeons) Secretary: Jan Buurmeijer, Fluitenbergseweg 47, 7931 PA FLUITENBERG, Netherlands. E-mail: whistlemountain@home.nl

This Club has 32 members amongst them 3 breeders of the French Baghdad.

The following photos have been taken by Sytze de Bruine, from Sas van Gent (NL). He visited one of the few breeders of the French Baghdad in the Netherlands, A.C. Pijcke, also from Sas van Gent. This breeder fully agrees with the opinion of Robert Ripaldi (the author of this article); the French Baghdad is a French breed, therefore its Standard should be determined in that country and in particular by the French specialty club and its breeders.



Above: A spacious aviary with a nice collection of French Baghdad in various colours, at A.C. Pijcke's in the Netherlands.



Above: An outstanding pair of blue black barred French Baghdad.



Above, right: A young blue black barred French Baghdad.

Right: Another blue black barred French Baghdad.



Below, right: A pair of white French Baghdad.

Below, left: French Baghdad, blue grizzle, in the grass of the aviary.





Above: French Baghdad in red and black.



Right: A couple of white French Baghdad.



Above: A beautiful collection of French Baghdad in white and blue black barred in the aviary.