

SOUTH AFRICAN BOTTERNEK TUMBLER



(Compiled by Chris de Bruin and edited by Johan van Hengel).

The SA Botternek Tumbler (Tortoiseshell) was developed by the deceased Boet (Jan) van der Walt of Pretoria Gardens . During 1954 Boet got hold of some Birmingham rollers with the unique colour of Almond / Tortoiseshell as well as some muffed tumblers, which were blue in colour with a white (bald) head. Finally (1990), after 45 years of selective breeding and cross breeding, with muffed tumblers with white heads, colour and stance, the birds were ready to be registered as an independent breed. Boet van der Walt, Hans de Bruin, John Saunders and Charles Pottas put lots of effort into this breed to make it what it is today. The largest contributors in terms of development were the Van der Walt's, from Pretoria and Krugersdorp.

In May 1990, Jan van der Walt made a presentation, to get the breed and its standard recognised. Various Botternek Tumblers were exhibited at five regional shows in 1990 and six pairs were entered at the South African Championship Show in the Paarl 1990. The SA Botternek Tumbler was finally accepted as a South African recognised breed in 1992, at the South African Championship Show in Johannesburg . During the 1993 South African Championship Show, a speciality club for the SA Botternek Tumbler was established, with Willie van Zyl as President, Louis van der Walt as Vice-President and Benard van Zyl as Secretary.

The main feature of this breed is it's old gold to brown colour with white blue and black spots in the neck. The body is mainly white with brown, blue and black spots or mottle marks. A light brown bar on the wings appears mainly on the hens, with a minimum of 5 white primary feathers starting on the outside of the wing. In ageing, cocks normally show more spots than hens , some cocks become darker, sometimes almost turnig black. Blue barred birds with white heads and almost totally white birds , is somrthing that also appears in the breed, and are very important in the breeding program. The blue barred birds (mostly hens), strengthens the colouring in the neck and the white birds (mostly cocks) have stronger muff feathers.

Taking the colour factor, which is the main characteristics of the breed into consideration, white and blue birds may also be shown under the Any Other Colour category, but cannot be considered as Best in breed. A few years ago, Willie van Zyl showed a white male on the Northern-Transvaal Regional Show, and in my opinion, this bird was the best SA Botternek on show, but because of the restriction in the standard, I could not make it the Best in Breed.

The bird's size is that of a normal roller, with the exception of the chest being prominent. Another characteristic of the breed is that it has 14 tail feathers instead of the normal 12. The tail feathers are carried loosely, and have a flattish structure, allowing the wings to be carried under the tail. These characteristics, originating from the Oriental rollers from England, were maintained by the breeder / developer.

The birds are very lively by nature, but very calm when breeding. They make the best parents, because they easily raise their own young and make excellent foster parents. The muff feathers can reach a length of up to 10 cm, but are preferably cut during the breeding season. When the young leave the nest, it is also advisable to cut the muff feathers, so as to allow the young to walk and move more easily.

This breed is no longer scarce, as was the case a few years ago, as they are now seen on many shows. Charles and Jenny Botts even took a few with them, when they immigrated to Ireland, so now this breed is also in Ireland. It is possible that this is the only South African developed breed that is now available internationally.

In order to give recognition to the deceased Boet van der Walt, the Northern-Transvaal members decided on a meeting on the 7th November 1997 to use the SA Botternek Tumbler as their official emblem.

During the South African Championship Show of 2006 at Stella, Willie van Zyl exhibited the 4th Reserve Bird on show with a SA Botternek Tumbler, ring number 1728/05. This was the first time that a South African developed breed received a Top Seven award on a Championship Show. This particular bird had 18 tails feathers instead of the normal 14. I think that Willie is the best person to have received this award, considering that at times he was the only person breeding and keeping this breed. He has been the leader in ensuring that more breeders obtain these wonderful birds to breed and they are now readily distributed all over South Africa. From the time that he has been showing these birds, he has taken the Best SA Botternek Tumbler on all the South African Championships Shows, definitely something to be proud of.

SOUTH AFRICAN BOTTERNEK TUMBLER STANDARD

STANCE AND SIZE

Medium size, short, compact and well balanced with proud erect bearing. Cocks stand approximately 200 mm high and hens approximately 180 mm.

Head:

The head is medium sized with the forehead rounding out from where it originates behind the wattle. It must appear relatively broad and be clearly rounded between the eyes, not flat or angular. The space between the eyes must be wide and full. The head joins the neck forming a neat unit without irregular curves.

Beak:

The beak is short, straight and of medium length, but long enough to feed their young. It must be flesh coloured.

Eyed:

Eyes may be light pearl or bull-eyed. Both eyes must be the same colour. Different coloured eyes are a disqualification.

Neck:

The neck is short to medium in length and rather thick at the broad shoulders. The neck is carried proudly upright.

Chest:

The chest is full, wide, round and prominent.

Wings:

The wings must be carried below the tail at all times. They are carried slightly forward and held tightly against the body, forming an essential part of the body.

Legs and Feet:

Legs are of medium length, shorter rather than longer. The toes are covered with feathers between 50 to 100 mm in length.

Tail:

The tail feathers are loose from one another, giving the tail a broad appearance. There must be a minimum of fourteen (14) tail feathers, which lies flat on each other forming an even unit.

COLOUR AND MARKINGS

Head:

The head is white above, a line approximately 8 mm below the eye, forming a straight line around the head. There are no coloured feathers on the head.

Neck:

The colour in the neck, the main characteristic of the breed is old gold, bronze and brown, with white, blue and black speckles. The colour must be rich and remind us of the almond colours of some Tumblers. A white bib below the throat is not desirable and must be penalized accordingly.

Body, Wings and Tail:

The colour is mainly white with black, brown or blue markings or shades thereof. The wings may also have light brown bars. Bars occur more frequently in the hens. A minimum of five (5) flights in a row from the end of the wing are white. Cocks normally present more coloured marks than hens and darken with age.

Any Other Colour (Mismark):

White, blue barred and other colours. As the main characteristic of the breed, its colour does not appear on mismark birds, these birds cannot be considered when selecting the best bird in the breed. They may, however, still be shown in their appropriate classes.