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# Our far-flung fancy

With the internet making birdkeeping (and bird-selling) a far more international hobby than in days gone by, we thought we'd talk to a few budgerigar breeders around the globe who keep in contact with the British fancy and have forged contacts right across the world in pursuit of their hobby. Words by **NICK WEST**

## BUDGERIGARS



### Spangle man

**GIORGIO PERUGINI** lives in Rome and has been keeping budgies since 1993. Giorgio competed at the Reggio Emilia show in his home country for the first time in 2009, as a beginner, and won best in show with a cinnamon green cock.

**HE SAYS:** My first birds came from an Italian breeder and I kept that line until six years ago, when I went to Switzerland and Germany to get some quality birds from Florian Boek, Daniel Lutholf and Frank Habegger. I then went and got some birds from Milan Habrachi in the Czech Republic and really started to breed quality birds. I love spangles, especially the double factor.

the Egyptian Budgerigar Society forum. He says he's delighted that it looks as though democracy will now come to his country.

**HE SAYS:** We are in Egypt happy that [Hosni Mubarek] is gone. And we want to see other oppressed countries in the Middle East take a step forward, like we have done. My budgie hobby began with a visit to one of my friends who used to breed adorable budgerigars. I started breeding budgies when I was 12 years old. There are some good birds, all imported, but there are no regional clubs in Egypt, so all competitors are on bird forums on the internet.

breed, show and judge budgies. I breed normals, opals, pieds and spangles with some rarer ones like dilutes and greywings. All our main shows are mixed varieties in New Zealand. We don't have the numbers to run budgie-only events. I'm now a qualified federation budgie judge. Stockwise, there's not a lot to choose from in New Zealand, as we can't import birds. I've bought from Alan Gamble and Jason Walker. I spent a few years in England recently and visited shows. I think we're OK at the top end, but as a country we don't have the depth of quality you have in the UK. Our birds generally fetch £600 a bird, for good quality.



### Pioneer policeman

**JAVED KHAANZADA** was the only breeder in Pakistan working with exhibition budgerigars up to 2004. He won best in show in 2009 at the Budgerigar Society of Pakistan open show. He works as a policeman.

**HE SAYS:** I had budgies in the 1990s, but had to give them up when I joined the police force. But in 2000 my son, Abdul Rafay, insisted that I start up again. Although the internet was new in those days, I turned to it in order to find out how the rest of the world was keeping budgies. Through this method, I met Deayne Weldon, Betty Gerdes, Lee Marshall, Gordon Davies and Didier Mervilide, who all taught me a lot. They advised me to start with lesser birds. In 2006 the Budgerigar Society of Pakistan was established and we had a show judged by Ghazi Al-Nasser. Some of us began buying birds from him. I've also bought birds from Glen Norris, Fred Wright, Frank Silva and Gerald Blinks.

### Rainbow warrior

**DIDIER MERVILDE** lives in Aalter, Belgium and first became interested in budgies in 1965. He's one of the founders of the first budgie club in Belgium, the Belgische Gasparskieten Club (BGC) and is also a judge.

**HE SAYS:** It was in 1986, after a visit to the aviary of Gerald Blinks, that I decided to breed budgies of show quality to compete in shows. Since I was always fascinated by the colours, I decided to build an aviary for only rares. This was not the easy way to start, but it was a challenge and I still have the rares today. Currently, I breed anthracite, slate, recessive pieds, dominant pieds, clearbodies, lutinos and of course normals. My challenge is to breed rainbows, in the format of a show budgie. My stock comes from Gerald Blinks, Mr Reynders (Belgium), Dieter Keller and Gerd Bleicher (both Germany) and Milan Habrachi (Czech Republic). There are a lot of good breeders in my country, but there is also a lot of jealousy and that is not a benefit to the hobby.



### Dominant winner

**BRUNO CEBULJ** lives in the lovely Alpine country of Slovenia, formerly part of Yugoslavia. He has free outside flights and his best year for showing was in 2006 with an Australian dominant pied.

**HE SAYS:** I started with birds from a petshop. My stud is now based on birds from Jo Mannes with additional birds from Ralph Jenne, Florian Bock and Daniel Lutholf. In my stud I have mainly normals, cinnamon, spangles, some Australian dominant pieds, opalines and Texas clearbodies. I tell new breeders to watch and listen. And if you remember, when you will learn a lot. I really enjoy my hobby. I would not have seen the world and made so many friendships if I did not have the birds.



### Champion partners