

# Birds & Birdkeeping

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## The Lütolf stud: an introduction

In the first of a series of articles, Fred Wright describes the birds currently being bred by Swiss maestro **DANIEL LÜTOLF**

### BUDGERIGARS

**J**UST after the Budgerigar Society Club Show in Doncaster, I decided that I needed to see the birds for myself in Daniel Lütolf's birdroom in Switzerland. I used to be a frequent visitor to central Europe over the years but I never visited Daniel's birdroom. However, I have chatted with Daniel many times at shows and he visited my birdroom more than 20 years ago.

For quite a few years now, Daniel Lütolf seems to have been leading the way with top exhibition budgerigars around the world. His birds have had a considerable influence on birds in the UK, all over Europe, in South Africa, Brazil, Pakistan and probably a lot more countries. Lütolf birds seem to excel in the cap, in both directional feather and length of the feather. All of his birds have the reputation for the same characteristics.

For some time I have wanted to see the birds for myself and a couple of days after the Club Show I was on a flight from Gatwick to Zürich to visit the birdroom.

It did not take me long to realise that Daniel has set himself clear goals and knows exactly where he is heading with his birds. He works full time with the

stock and it's all about dedication to the birds and the birdroom, together with a complete understanding of what he is working to achieve.

Three years ago he moved to a new home in Würenlos, on the outskirts of Zürich, and built a new birdroom. It's a huge room with a basement. The main room includes three blocks of breeding cages and two large mobile flights.

There is also a stainless-steel food-preparation area which includes a sink, industrial dishwasher and refrigerator.

In the basement there's a massive L-shaped half flight with storage beneath. Also here are another block of breeding cages and two storage rooms, one of which houses the industrial-quality air-conditioning unit and heating

system. There's also a WC. I have seen a toilet in several birdrooms over the years but this one comes with a shower too! Amazing.

All the breeding cages were with pairs, many of which had chicks and fertile eggs. The flights were full of birds and they seemed to be completely mixed, with both young and over-year birds. I was there for a full day plus a half day, so I spent many hours simply looking at the birds. I was amazed at the overall quality. They all had that extra feather in the cap: longer and wider



**Budgerigar HQ:** Daniel's house and birdroom in Würenlos, near Zürich.

*Photos unless otherwise stated: Fred Wright* **Inset:** Daniel has been a regular visitor to Britain's Club Show. Here he is at the 2017 event *Photo: Cage & Aviary Birds*



than most of the winning birds throughout the world.

My focus is always with the normals, yet I also saw quality opalines, opaline cinnamons and lots of cinnamons. The quality of the specialist varieties was far

better than I expected. I did not believe recessive pieds could come with such wide heads and faces (and without flecking or heavy marks on the wings). The lutinos were almost as good as the normals and came with the same features. I was expecting to see lots more spangles, but the quality of the individuals that were there was exceptional.

There were also some wonderful Texas clearbodies, fantastic yellowfaces, and a few dilutes that blew me away. What's more, I could see there was some work going on to be successful with clearwings in the breeding cages.

I was expecting to see the wonderful top-ends, but I thought they would come with big feathery bodies and that would be less appealing to me. Nothing could be further from the truth. Daniel has obviously spent the past couple of years trying to smarten up the bodies of his birds and he may be taking the body size back a bit.

The visit reminded me of walking into Jo Mannes's birdroom for the first time 25 years ago. It wasn't only the birdroom and the general management that made an impact: you instantly knew you were looking at budgies that would set the standards for exhibition birds throughout the world for the next few years.

It's difficult for me to say this, but I could not be more impressed!

● **Look out for further articles and photos by Fred about Daniel Lütolf and his birds in forthcoming issues of Cage & Aviary Birds.**



**New direction:** Fred was naturally drawn to Daniel's normals, such as this dark green



**Daniel's birdroom** is designed to be worked in comfortably full time. Unusual features include a massive air-conditioning unit (left) and a bathroom including WC and shower

*Fred Wright runs a champion stud in Wallington, Surrey.*