

"TWENTY-FIVE YEARS WITH CAMPINES."

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As a breeder and exhibitor of this beautiful fowl for the last twenty-five years, I have nothing to regret. Before taking up Campines I read an article by the Rev. E. Lewis Jones, and I have proved what he wrote as regards their good quality. I can justly say they are little wonders for egg production, that is if breeding is carried out on proper lines. The first time I saw Campines was at Pope Bros. Poultry Farm at Hectorville many years ago. They appealed to me as wonderful birds in type. They follow the Leghorn in many ways, of course. I would not say so before a real Campinist, but they have that smart racy and working type the Leghorn always carries. The Campine is a native of Belgium, in a country district called La Campine. The word Campine is French, and most people pronounce the end of it as pine, but it is really "een" as in queen, "Kampeen." The Campine is a great forager, and if at large will find most of its own food. The hens have a habit of stealing their nests, why, I do not understand, as they are non-sitters. I myself have never had a bird that has set a full term, in fact, one very rarely gets one to show any signs of broodiness. The chicks are very hardy and easy to rear. If fed right from the start they will stand a lot of hardship when they are full grown. The cockerels, like those of the Leghorns, are very precocious, and must be separated at about six weeks old. As my old friend, Mr. T. Blee, always says, the Campine cockerel can crow when that small that he has to stand on a brick to be seen. The pullets usually commence to lay at from four and half to five months old, and when six months old are laying more than a two-ounce egg. I will not say they lay six eggs a week, but find them laying when my Leghorns are easing off. If I had the space I would keep a large number of these fowls for utility purposes. I think they have a great future as regards a utility fowl, as they lay well over 200 eggs a year. There is a farm in America which keeps no other breed, and they speak very highly of their qualities. In New South Wales there is also a farm which carries a large number of Campines and prefer them to all other breeds. There is no doubt the Campine, when young, is very good eating and carries a great deal of breast meat and very little offal in proportion to its size. The cockerels usually go 5 lb. and the hens 4 lb. I find my best plan to mate a young vigorous cockerel to second or third year hens of good, sound dark colour. The markings of the true Campine should be barred all over, except the neck hackle, so as to form like rings around the body. These bars should be as clear as possible. The saddle hackle (if you would call it hackle) and tail should be more or less V-shaped in the bars.

The neck and hackle must be in Silvers at white as possible and free from any black markings, but usually when one gets a good sound neck it fails in breast colour. Golden variety must, of course, have a clear golden neck and hackle.

The eyes should be bold dark brown and a black pupil, and not red like we often see winning birds.



A Typical Silver Campine Cockerel.

A red eye is a disqualification. The comb should be upright like a Leghorn, but not so big, with serrations even and more pencil shape. Lobes white and legs a leaden blue. Both sexes should have a rich beetle green sheen in their feathers, perhaps brighter in the males. This is also a point often overlooked by judges in Royal Shows. There are three colours, the Silver, Golden and Chamois, but here in Australia only Silver and Golden are known. There is also a Rosecomb variety in England, but up to now have never been imported. The Silver is the most popular in Australia, and only a few years ago it looked like the Golden variety going right out here in S.A., and would have, only for my old friend and true fancier of the breed, Mr. H. W. S. (Spen) Twelftree, of Urania, Yorke Peninsula, who said to me one Royal Show time, "We will have to do something about the Golds and cannot let them slip." He had at the time two old hens, and I had not any. Mr. Twelftree got busy and in a few years had a number of Golden, and now there are quite a number again and, thanks to Spen. During the last twenty years' review of the Royal Shows, of which Mr. Twelftree and myself have shown these birds, there has been just about the same numbers shown each year. Why they are not more popular I cannot understand, and can only come to the conclusion that it must be only because they are a two-coloured variety, but they are not hard to breed. This last Royal there were, I think, only five competitors. Of course, we know the whole coloured fowls are much easier to breed, as if White is not white, or Black is not black, we know we are wrong. I have often been asked if there is no fear of getting sports by crossing Golden and Silver together, but up to the present I say no, there is not.