

From the Egg to the Showroom

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I was asked to walk you through the Modena breeding season and discuss what I look for in my young and how I determine those that will make the cut for the show season. This journey will take us through the breeding season, the summer heat and the fall weather on our way to the show season.

To begin our journey, it is the middle of March and I finally have my first set of eggs.

As you can see by the second photo, only one of the two eggs has hatched in this first clutch. We all experience the headaches of the early breeding season, however we did have one egg hatch so our journey is about to begin.



The third and fourth pictures are at seven days of age and it is time to band the new youngster. I give the youngster a 1/4 canker tablet at this time because of success I've had as it seems to keep the canker in check at this early age.

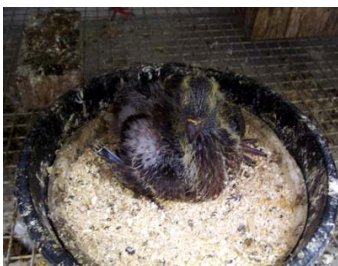


The fifth photo on the right she is 14 days old and just beginning to get some features, which is an interesting time.

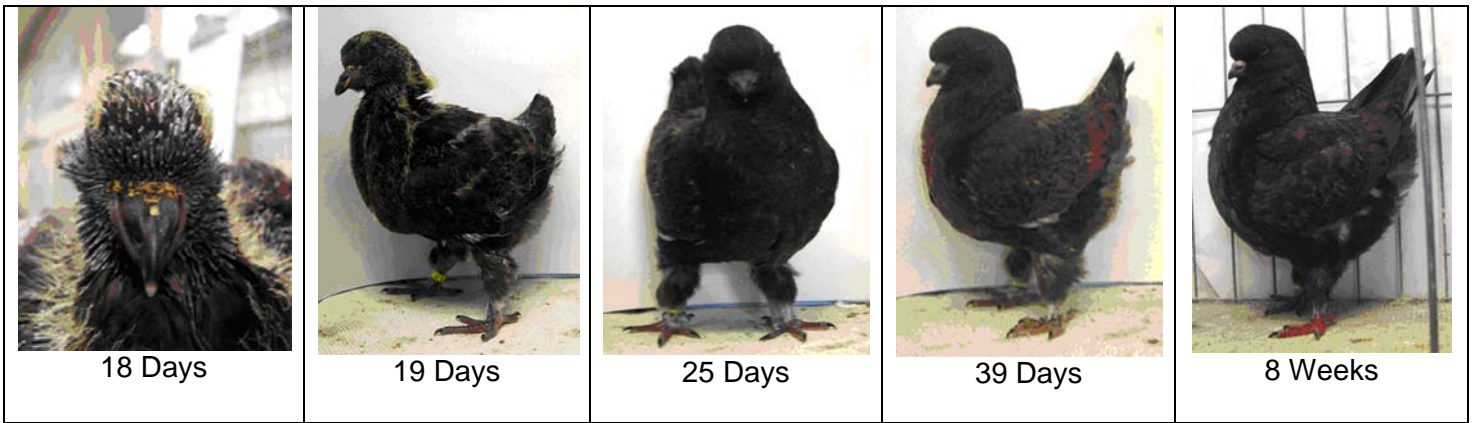
The five grouped photos below include a head shot at 18 days old. As you can tell, this youngster is going to have a nice wide frontal that we Modena breeders like to have in our stud of birds. You will also notice the short wide beak we strive for in our Modena family of birds.

You can also begin to see the small pin feathers that will be on the feet if you are lucky. In the case of my stud of Modenas, I have bred this into my family to strengthen the appearance of the legs. I like to have my young birds develop this trait that I call "gate post legs."

The next picture is at 25 days of age and you can see how thick the legs appear. Another feature I look for is the width between the legs. Notice in this photo how wide the leg setting appears. I already know at this time that this bird will be setting on a good base and everything else will fall into place.



The next photo shows the youngster at 39 days old. Now you can see how well she is starting to station and the roundness that she is developing. At this time, I check to be sure the bird is beginning to balance out. This bird is already showing good power and roundness.



18 Days

19 Days

25 Days

39 Days

8 Weeks

Another feature to look for is in the tail. We see so many Modenas with the long tails, which is not desirable when trying to obtain a rounded Modena. Modena breeders prefer the short tail to compliment the overall bird. Two features that I work to eliminate in my breeding season are the long tails and the narrow frontals.

As you can see in the photo at 2 months of age, the bird is starting to look like a Modena that may be successful in the show pen. Notice the deepness of the keel, the round body and the thick neck and legs.

At this time, I begin to give the youngsters their special vitamins and feed them high protein so they will go into the summer healthy and molt out the best they can. I use some oils on the feed to bring out the glossy look that we breed for in Modenas. I also treat for canker and I will worm them before they go into a molt. Make sure to not worm when molting, as that really raises havoc with the new feathers. With the bronze birds I have found that if they start feathering in a dark color and their feet are dark then with my stud of Modenas the color will be enhanced when they molt out.



As you can see at 5 months of age, this hen has a nice bronze color and you will notice the roundness, bull neck, short tail and nice legs. You will also notice that before I show her I have plucked the feathers on her feet and also up above the band as required by the Modena standard.

We are only days from the show when I begin to trim her toenails; trim the beak and give her a bath one week before the show.

It is now show time and you should feel good knowing that all your hard work has paid off. In this case, we have watched a young Bronze Schietti hen go from the egg to the showroom. As of today, she won Best Young Bronze hen at her first show and she was selected to grace the front

cover of Foy's Pigeon Supplies catalog 2006/2007. As a proud member of the International Modena Club, I am honored to have my Modena selected for this first-ever color edition.

