

Lemon Blue Modern Chickens

Lemon Blue Modern game birds make for a welcome addition to most backyard flocks. As an American Bantam Association recognized variety since 1874, these birds are tame and inquisitive. They are known for their long, thin legs and neck with a pinched tight “whip” tail and upright body stature.

Lemon Blues are a variety of modern game bird that originated in England in the mid-1800’s as the result of breeding Old English Games with Malays. The idea was to create a better show bird, as cockfighting was fast becoming illegal while poultry shows began to explode in popularity.

Their popularity peaked in the 1900’s, and many varieties are currently classified as “at-risk” in both the U.S. and U.K. Today, the breed is undergoing a bit of a revival as more backyard chicken owners discover their appeal.

While these birds were technically not bred for fighting, they are still classified as game chickens. Thus, Moderns have closely fitting feathers around their neck area, known as hackles. Tight hackles pose an advantage in cockfights, as it makes it harder for their opponents to grab onto their necks.

Today, you can find Moderns in more than a dozen color variations. For Lemon Blues, the comb, wattles, and earlobes are a deep mulberry, while the plumage is lemon-blue, and the shanks and toes look black.

The ideal Modern Game show bird should have a slender body that resembles a flat iron when viewed from above, a short back, long neck, fine tail, and an upright posture.

Modern Game chickens have a noisy temperament and need space to roam.



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While individuals may lean more towards the aggressive side, the breed as a whole tends to be friendly and curious. The hens are notoriously broody and make excellent mothers. Backyard owners can even use these birds to hatch eggs from other varieties.

This breed grows slowly and isn’t winter hardy. They will need insulated or heated coops to survive cold temperatures.

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In addition to finding a rat in 2 minutes, the dog must go through a tunnel and climb on bales.

Rat Hunting Competition Great For Dogs

If you’re looking for a new activity for you and your dog, longtime FARM SHOW reader Ed Shively brought our attention to the sport of Barn Hunt. Harkening back to what many dogs were bred for - hunting vermin - the sport involves straw bales, rats, and giving canines a chance to show off their scent skills. With six levels of competition, young and old dogs can compete.

“They love to have a job to do,” says Ed’s wife, Joyce Shively, who also judges Barn Hunt events.

Up to 70 bales are set up in a fenced area and, depending on the class, one to five tame rats protected inside ventilated PVC tubes are hidden among the bales, along with other tubes filled with litter. For example, in the novice class, just one rat is hidden. When the dog indicates to his handler that he found the rat, the handler says “Rat”, picks up the tube and hands it off to someone who takes it out of the pen. In addition to finding the rat in 2 min., the dog must go through a tunnel and climb on the bales. In the Master and Champion classes there can be anywhere between one to five rats to find in 4 1/2 min. Dogs must only react to tubes with rats.

Barn Hunt was developed by Robin Nuttall as a sport that allowed her dogs to compete.

A big range of dogs of all sizes and ages compete in Barn Hunt, the Shivelys say, including their German Shorthaired Pointer dogs. The dogs love it, and the Shivelys appreciate the opportunity to educate people about the solid black and solid liver shorthaired dogs they breed. That’s unusual for the breed, which is typically spotted or ticked.

“The solid liver looks like a chocolate Lab, and it looks chiseled and muscled,” Ed says, adding that interest in them is catching on.

With good tracking skills and nose work, the Shivelys’ dog Trapper, a liver-colored German Shorthaired, has earned top places and Master level status and many ribbons at Barn Hunt events.

Barn Hunt started in 2014 and some call it the “fastest-growing dog sport in the U.S.” Information about rules and events throughout the U.S. and Canada can be found on the Barn Hunt Association website (www.barnhunt.com). There are many YouTube videos of the sport as well.

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Tree Sculpture Honors U.S. Barns

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

After carving 11 barns into the side of an oak tree in 2020, chainsaw carver James Denkins says he’s now going to focus on carving barn designs on benches he makes at Iowa fairs and town celebrations.

The Michigan chainsaw artist caught the attention of Jan Corey Arnett, an author and barn enthusiast, who lives near Battle Creek, Mich. When their red oak tree with a 13-ft. circumference started to die, she and her husband had it cut down to a 15-ft. stump for a sculpture. After considering other ideas, they decided to make it a tribute to barns.

Denkins studied the tree and marked out places for 11 barns with three of them three-dimensional and the rest relief cut. Going through photos from her research, Corey Arnett chose her favorites as well as barns that represented different eras and styles. An octagonal barn tops the sculpture that includes 10 barns from Michigan and one Wisconsin barn.

“Oak isn’t as bad as you think to carve,” Denkins says. Though pine and softer woods are more common for U.S. carvers, he had experience carving oak at Germany’s world carving competitions. “That’s all they use there. Oak lasts a long time.”

Using photos, Denkins carefully copied each barn’s details starting with a chainsaw. After that, he used a 4-in. angle grinder with heavy grit sanding discs, followed by a 1/4-in. die grinder with Saburrtooth bits. He burned depth lines with a torch to define rocks, logs and other details before finishing up with a



When Jan Corey Arnett’s red oak tree with a 13-ft. circumference started to die, she and her husband had it cut down to a 15-ft. stump for a sculpture.

band file, a mini 1/2-in. belt sander and a radial bristle brush to smooth it off. Finally, he protected the sculpture by spraying it with Australian Timber Oil.

For Corey Arnett and her husband, the sculpture has a dual purpose. It saves part of a 150-year-old tree they treasured, and it pays tribute to American barns.

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The Malsam toy collection includes pedal tractors, scale model tractors and implements.

Toy Museum Housed In A Former Church

Like many farm toy collectors, Conrad Malsam may have gone a bit overboard with his hobby. His friends even say it’s become like a religion to him. That’s not because he worships his collection but because it’s now located in a former church that Malsam bought to display his wares.

Malsam began collecting by accident, although his wife might say otherwise. In March 1991 his wife was in labor with their first child and Malsam hurriedly drove them to the nearest hospital in Aberdeen, 60 miles away. When they arrived at the hospital, Jacquelin and the baby had other thoughts, and the delivery was delayed. Not wanting the couple to sit around and wait for things to progress, a nurse suggested they might want to visit the Aberdeen Toy Show and walk around until the delivery was closer.

As the couple walked around the show, Malsam took interest in five model tractors. He was ready to buy them when he got a tug on his arm from his wife saying, “It’s time

to go back to the hospital.” A short time later their healthy son, Christopher, was born. Malsam, not to be denied his purchase, returned to the show and bought the tractors.

As Malsam’s collection grew, he rented a warehouse to store them and when the Catholic church in their town closed, he purchased the building and remodeled it into a toy museum.

Malsam and his son removed the wooden pews and made them into side wall shelving to hold smaller boxed items. Enclosed glass shelving from a local store now sits in front of the altar, displaying unboxed toys. The main part of the church holds large storage racks that neatly display row after row of colorful pedal tractors. Their collection also includes many farm implements. One of his most unique models is a Farmall M with an American Coleman grader.

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