There are many ways to build a good loft, but there are also a few crucial mistakes that can doom a loft for successful racing. Most notably these are designs which create poor ventilation, wide temperature variations, dampness, drafts or over crowding. While the most important design aspects are to address the needs of the birds, it is also a good idea to accommodate the fancier and his or her needs for convenience and efficient work flow.

One of the problems for beginners is that they have to build a loft before they can get birds and so often the loft is built before they really understand what the requirements are for a good loft.

What I have provided here are the plans for a backyard loft that meet the requirements as I have come to understand them. There are many ways the plans can be altered to fit the specific needs, situation and preferences of individual fanciers. I think though that it is a good starting point.

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March 16, 2009
Training Aviary – It allows the young birds to spend lots of time seeing the backyard. Helpful in settling them.

East

The east orientation is to maximize the affects of the sun on ventilation.

During the Young Bird season, pens 1 and 5 can have their pocket doors closed, both aviaries open and the pen doors opened. This provides more space for the young birds. This can be useful since the number of young birds often starts out high and then reduces to a lower number with losses in training.

Basket Loading – can be placed anywhere along the isle at floor level. The birds learn very quickly to load themselves. Once in the basket, the birds should still be examined individually to be sure they are fit for the toss and there are no injuries. A longer basket that fits into the bed of a pickup truck and has three sections is very handy.

Scale: 1 inch = 4 feet

Size shown is minimum. Proportionally larger is OK.
This is the "Chimney Roof" design of Alex Bieche. This high chimney causes wonderful natural air exhaust.

Key:
- Red: Vent
- Green: Solid
- ←→: Slider
- Blue: Air Flow

Ventilator slides parallel to the isle
Ventilator slides perpendicular to the isle

Trap door to the outside aviary
Waterers outside in wire floored aviaries – spills don't get excessive moisture in the loft

Scale: 1 inch = 1.5 feet
Size shown is minimum. Proportionally larger is OK.
Backyard Loft Design – Pen Front View

- Pocket Door
- Sliding Door
- White Board for notes (with nests permanently marked)
- Slider door to close access to pen from the isle
- Half inch Thin Wall Conduit set on 2 inch centers works great for dowels
- Feeder with cover
- One way Bobs to enter pen
- Top of the slat floor
- Solid at the floor level so walking birds in the isle are not distracted by birds in the various pens

Scale: 1 inch = 1.5 feet
Size shown is minimum. Proportionally larger is OK.
Ventilation Opening
Top of the slat floor

Slider door to control access to outside aviary – use rope pulley. Located in the corner for when you need to herd them outside to the aviary (e.g. to clean the nests).

Nests with false floors. The bottom slides out for cleaning.

Nest boxes are fitted with a removable and configurable divider that allows for nest management.

Wire nest floor

Solid front panel to keep birds from perching (or nesting) on the top of the nest structure

Nest boxes are fitted with a removable and configurable divider that allows for nest management.

Ventilation Opening
Top of the slat floor

Scale: 1 inch = 1.5 feet
Size shown is minimum. Proportionally larger is OK.
Extra perches are good (not true for extra nest boxes – close nest boxes that are not in use). Don't fill pen beyond proper capacity just because you have that many perches. You should stock each pen with NO MORE than one bird for each 18 cubic feet. This means an 8 x 8 x 7 foot pen can accommodate 24 pigeons (12 pair).

Scale: 1 inch = 1.5 feet

Size shown is minimum. Proportionally larger is OK.

Plywood nest cover with mounted perches. The plywood is in four vertical sections so they can easily be moved in and out of the pens.
Nest open, bowl section closed

Nest open, bowl section open

Nest closed
1 inch hardwood slats – they lift out for cleaning once a week

2 x 6 Tongue and Groove

Hard smooth surface – sheet metal is good. Make so it can be removed if insulation or sheet metal needs to be replaced or maintained.

Insulation
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Based on 8 x 8 pens this will accommodate:
- 12 pair of breeders
- 24 OB Racers (12 Cocks and 12 Hens)
- 48 YB Racers