

Belgian pigeon flies high in record 1.25 million euros auction

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Homing pigeons are raced by releasing them sometimes hundreds of kilometres from home, with the first back home winning

A star racing pigeon named Armando has fetched a record 1.25 million euros in an online auction, Belgian media reported Sunday.

The prized bird—Belgian's best long-distance racer of all time according to those in the know—was snapped up by a Chinese buyer for a princely sum that caused a flutter of excitement among fanciers.

Armando had been expected to break the previous record of 376,000 euros (\$425,000) paid for a pigeon called Nadine—but not by such a wide margin.

"Earlier this week it became clear that Armando would be the most expensive pigeon ever sold in an online [auction](#)," wrote the specialist website Pigeon Paradise (Pipa.be).

"However, no one expected that the magical cap of a million euros would be pulverised," it added. The final amount was 1,252,000 euros.

Pigeon Paradise did not say who had bought the pigeon, but according to the Belgian news agency Belga it was a Chinese buyer who will no doubt use his new acquisition to breed other champions.

Armando was just one of more than a hundred birds sold by respected Belgian breeder Joel Verschoot.

Verschoot's stable of [pigeons](#) is based in Ingelmunster, in the west of Belgium, and his [online auction](#) of his pigeons has been open for several weeks.

By Sunday, the family had sold 178 pigeons for around two million euros.

Homing pigeons are raced by releasing them sometimes hundreds of kilometres from home, with the first back home winning.

Racing them is a tradition in Belgium, Britain, northern France and the

Netherlands, although it has been going into decline.

But interest from Asian buyers in recent years has given the practice a new lease of life.

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