

STEPHEN GREEN-ARMYTAGE'S
PIGEONS ARE A FAR COO FROM
THE GRAY FLOCKS OF CITY
STREETS. BY RUSSELL HART

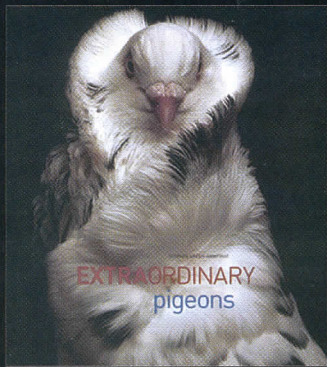
BIRDS OF A FASHION

Look inside a field guide to birds and you'll discover that the real name for a pigeon is the glamorous-sounding *rock dove*. And as photographer Stephen Green-Armytage shows in *Extraordinary Pigeons* (Harry N. Abrams, \$25), there is more to pigeons than the tattered feathers, club feet, and dull gray of statue-fouling urban flocks. Pigeons, it seems, come in an unexpected variety of shapes, sizes, and colors, having been bred to human fancy for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. The photographer calls them "designer birds."

Green-Armytage, whose work has appeared in *Life*, *Forbes*, and *Sports Illustrated*, has made a franchise of shedding new light on misunderstood birds. His *Extraordinary Chickens*, now in its fifth printing, was a publishing blockbuster, its sequel the more ordinary *Extraordinary Pheasants*. The pheasants were photographed mostly on location, but as with his chick pix, Green-Armytage treats pigeons like fashion models. He doesn't shoot them with a telephoto lens on the fly, like ordinary bird photographers. He sets up a miniature studio at bird shows and breeder's homes, lighting his subjects with strobe and placing them against a seamless background that eliminates the customary need for shallow depth of field.

Green-Armytage's only common trait with nature photographers may be his preferred film, Kodachrome, which he used for these studies of a puffed-up Pigmy Pouter (a dove on steroids?) and a Jacobin pigeon with a headdress worthy of a Las Vegas showgirl. For outdoor pictures he switched to Kodak Portra 160NC. And what kind of bird photographer shoots instant-film tests? Fortunately, Green-Armytage's fine feathered friends had no power of approval, despite their glamour.





**Win A Copy of Stephen
Green-Armytage's
Extraordinary Pigeons**

This photographic essay on avian glamour will totally change your image of our most familiar bird. To win a copy of **Extraordinary Pigeons**, send a postcard with your name, address, phone number, and school affiliation to *American Photo On Campus*, 1633 Broadway, 43rd floor, New York, NY 10019. Be sure to write "Pigeons book" on your card. The deadline for entries is May 31.

