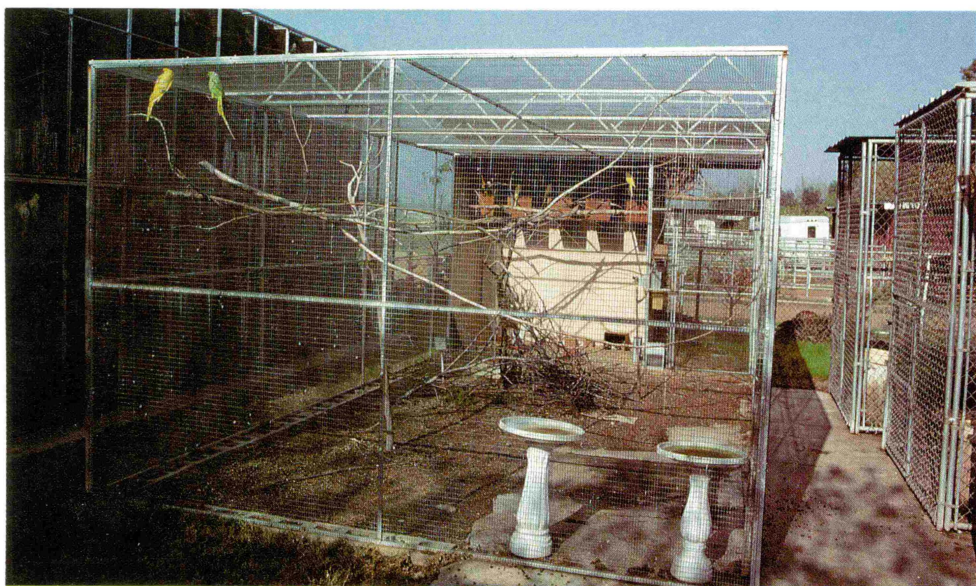




Magill's most simple aviaries are these six foot square chain link macaw cages. They have no safety zone, the Food dish is on a cement block on the floor and you can see the water dish on the wire about four feet above the floor.



This 12' X 24' flight cage has supporting trusses on top of the cage rather than in the cage. This provides strength for the 12 foot span but precludes the birds accidentally crashing into an inside obstruction.



This one inch mesh chain link aviary is nice but I was more impressed with its inhabitants. It's not every day one sees a colony of rosies.

A.F.A. Visits...

Mike and Barbara Magill

by Sheldon Dingle
Norco, California

Mike and Barbara Magill have developed a unique aviary complex in a rural little town of Southern California. In a modest sized back yard (about half an acre) they have arranged about 3,528 square feet of aviary floor space which will accommodate a lot of birds very nicely.

Though there are six different aviary designs on the place they share the common construction medium of steel and wire. Perhaps the most simple in design are the pipe and chain link cages used to house the macaws. Macaws, of course, are capable of chewing out of less substantial aviaries. These cages are similar to the standard dog run but with the addition of a slanted tin roof. Most of the chain link cages are placed up against an old barn that provides shelter from the wind and rain on one side. Heavy perches and a nesting barrel make the cages comfortable for the large birds. Food and water are served in heavy crocks placed on cement blocks on the floor. They are serviced through low doors with no safety zones.

A second, equally familiar style of aviary is found along the east side of Magill's property. It consists of 4' x 8' x 8' cages side by side formed into a long bank of ten flights. These cage frames are built of 1/2" square steel tube and covered with 1/2' x 1" weld wire. There



Most of Magills aviaries make use of these seed hoppers that are served from outside the flight and return the chaff to the plastic buckets also outside the flights.



You are looking down through the second story floor to the pair of cockatiels in the ground level cage. I thought all of the lower level cockatiels would be pied but such is not the case. This also shows a good view of the watering system.

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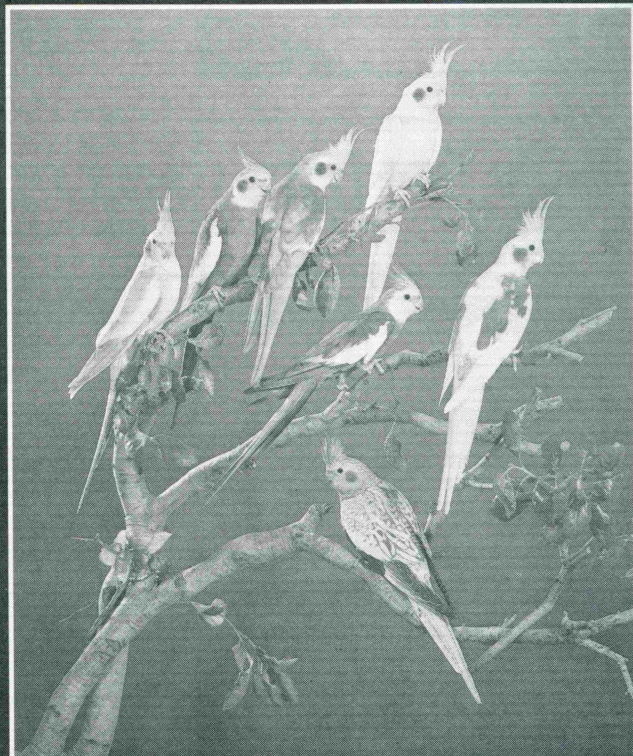
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Center—CHARCOAL (white face), PIED
Bottom—PEARL

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is a four foot safety zone along the back-side of the bank from which, of course, the cages are entered and serviced. The safety zone and four feet of the eight foot flights are roofed providing shelter for the aviary attendant as well as for the birds. These flights house smaller Australian parakeets including crimson wing, barrabands, pennants, kings, umbrella cockatoos, and assorted Amazon parrots, in other words, medium sized psittacines that seem to do well without great lengths of flying space. The nest boxes and feed hoppers are situated in the shelter area. Water crocks on the floor are hand filled.

The remaining aviaries on the Magill place are one-of-a-kind built by Mike to fit existing patches of open ground. One large flight is very impressive, more for the birds in it than its construction. It is a plain steel framed cage covered with 1" mesh chain link fabric six feet wide, eight feet high and 24 feet long. It has a service door at one end and nest boxes are hung on the other end. Large natural branches serve as perches for four pairs of beautiful rose-breasted cockatoos. Please believe me now, even if the rosies were a dime a dozen, a colony of eight birds is a grand sight. Being hardy birds Magill has opted to leave the large flight unsheltered in the mild Southern California climate. The birds are in beautiful feather and the picture of good health. Since these birds congregate in huge flocks in the wild, it makes sense to put together a captive flock.

The next large cage is double the size of the rosie aviary being 12 feet wide, eight feet high and 24 feet long. A major difference here though, is the addition of a safety zone and a sheltered area housing nest boxes and feed hoppers. At this point I might mention that the vast majority of Magill's aviaries contain seed hoppers that have a unique chaff-catching design. Little or no seed or chaff get on the floor. Another singular feature of this large aviary is the truss arrangement that allows for a 12 foot span with no posts. To preclude the birds flying into the truss it was installed *above* the roof. In effect, the roof hangs from the truss rather than rests upon it. This large cage is filled with five pairs of lutino and split lutino Indian ring-necked parakeets which makes a very pretty sight indeed.

The last two aviaries have no parallel in design that I'm aware of. Rube Goldberg would be proud of them. The first is a large L shaped aviary crowned by a complex dome. The second is a two story job that has to be seen to be appreciated.

The L aviary is adjacent to the Magill patio and houses an eclectic assortment of birds for viewing pleasure and just on hold. There are five crowned pigeons, some Indian ringneck parakeets and a pair of white-crested laughing thrushes all living harmoniously together.

The real eye catcher on the place is the double decker aviary — an avian condo, as it were. The complex covers an area just 16 by 30 feet but contains 60 flights. It was designed as a cockatiel breeding facility (one pair per flight) when Magill was disappointed with colony breeding results. The top deck is a mirror image of the lower floor. There are 15 two foot wide by six foot long flights on each side of a four foot aisle. The seed hoppers and nest boxes are hung on the door of each flight and serviced from the aisle. In this complex there are water crocks that are filled 30 at a time with the turn of a faucet. Although the structure looked a bit shaky to my skeptical eye it easily withstood my 230 pounds running up and down the stairs and through the aisles. This complex contains mostly cockatiels and a few lutino peachface lovebirds. It is a very economical arrangement regarding time and labor for maintenance.

Some of Magill's aviaries are on cement slabs and some are on block footings with dirt floors. Many of the birds — especially the rose breasted cockatoos — love to dig in the earth. The steel aviaries are set on 1/4" spacers so the entire length of the frames are not directly on the concrete. The space also allows easy draining of rain and hose water.

All of the birds are fed appropriate seed mixtures — parakeet and sunflower for the small parrots to which safflower is added for the medium sized birds. The macaws get that mixture with the addition of rabbit food, dog food, hemp, and pumpkin seed. All of the birds get goodies two to three times per week. Frozen corn and whole wheat bread do it for the cockatiels and lovebirds. The larger birds also get a mixture of diced apple, orange, cucumbers, carrots, celery and broccoli. Mineral block and cuttle bone is available most of the time. Water, of course, is changed daily with the crocks being scrubbed weekly.

The Magill back yard is definitely dedicated to the birds. Since Magill prefers to keep just one pair of birds to a flight it was necessary to have as many flights as possible. He has risen to the occasion with imagination and vigor but, like many aviculturists, still has more birds than he has room. We should all have the problem.

Additional photos for article on next two pages.



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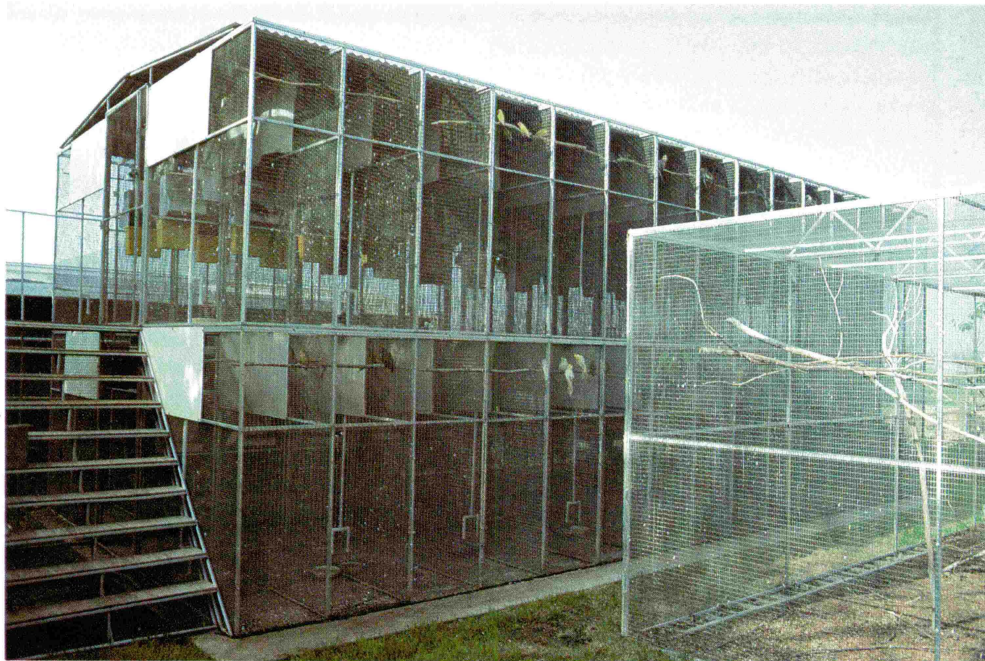
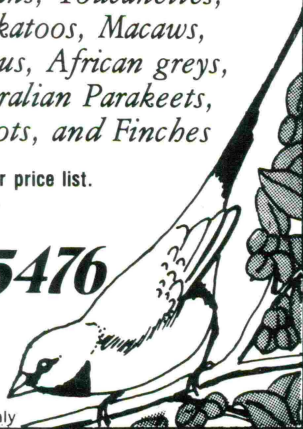
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This 60 flight double-decker occupies an area only 16' x 30'. Now that's a true bird condo. It was designed with 2' wide flights to accommodate one pair of cockatiels each. All of the water crocks on each story are filled at once with the turn of a faucet.

Photos by Sheldon Dingle



Looking down the second story aisle the seed hoppers are evident. They are, of course, served without opening a door.



These 4' x 8' aviaries are ideal for medium sized parrots. The safety zone to the rear provides access to the flights for feeding and checking nest boxes. There are 1/4" spacers between the steel frames and concrete floor to allow easy drainage.



An end view shows the stairs to the upper floor. The upper flights have open wire floors but the birds beneath don't seem to mind. The upper and lower floor perches are strategically placed.



White crested laughing thrushes enjoy life in Magill's large domed aviary. These views show the construction that Mike said was so difficult he'd never build another aviary like it.





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