A little parrot which is more challenging than the Zebra Finches and Budgies with which they started. Turquoisines have long been one of my favorite species. Off and on over the years I've kept and bred them with excellent success. Years ago, when almost all aviarists had dirt floors and piperazine was the commonly used worm medicine, internal parasites were the bane of the Turquoisines (and numerous other ground-foraging species as well). They seemed fore-ordained to die of ascarid infestations.

With the advent of suspended cages and a whole spectrum of excellent wormers available, the Turquoiseine has a much better chance today. I used to spend hours with the old microscope monitoring the droppings of the whole flock and keeping a sharp eye out for the ova of various species of ascarids. And I always had trouble mixing the right dose of piperazine for the various species of birds in the flock. Some of you old timers can recall, I'm sure, birds weaving drunkenly and occasionally falling off their perch -- overdosed on piperazine.

I once tried breeding Turquoisines colony style and determined that it was disastrous unless the little bugs were in a huge, well planted aviary. A normal 8 foot by 4 foot aviary just right for one pair of Turks. Two pairs equals total death and destruction and three or more pairs per aviary creates mass chaos but not much blood. Not much breeding either. At least that has been my experience with the species. When I was young and foolish, I tried things no prudent person would do and I once put one pair of Turquoisines in an 8 by 8 foot aviary containing four pairs of them quite rare lutino Cockatiels. Believe me, gentle people, Turquoisines can be downright savage. The pair of Turks trounced and terrified all eight of the Cockatiels. It was the female Turk who was the roughest. She commandeered all of the nest boxes -- actually entering the boxes to drive the nesting Cockatiels out. Needless to say, that experiment didn't last long.

Turquoisines do well on a diet of Budgie mix with a few sunflower seeds included and lots of greens. Some fruit, mostly apple, was eaten by my Turks but they really relish leaves of chard, lettuce, spinach and several species of weeds I commonly fed.

For aviculturists in high density areas where noise could be a problem, the *Neophemas* are ideal aviary birds. They are very quiet but do have a pleasant little chirp that I always enjoyed. A normal sized backyard (50 x 100 feet or so) could contain many beautiful flights for the various *Neophema* species without the neighbors even knowing they were there. And believe me, dear friend, if you want to splurge and lay in a supply of expensive birds, the Turquoisines can help you do just that. There are several color mutations that are rather costly. In fact, one of the most beautiful birds in the world is the lutino version of the Turquoisine (again, my considered opinion). There is also a red-bellied variety where, through selective breeding, a German breeder has extended the red, normally on the thighs only, to the point where the entire belly and breast are brilliant red. I don't know the current market, but these extremely dazzling mutations used to sell for pretty hefty prices -- enough to pay the seed bill with a little left over to save for a Hyacinth Macaw. All things considered, I believe the Turquoisine to be one of the most desirable and beautiful of all aviary birds. Your collection can be greatly enhanced by adding a few pairs of *Neophema pulchella* whose very name means beautiful.