



THE EXOTIC SHORTHAIR

Rosemonde S. Peltz and Joan S. Uzee



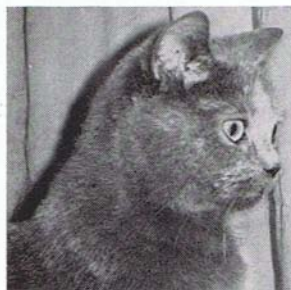
Dr. Peltz



Mrs. Uzee

THE BEGINNINGS: CAUSE AND EFFECT

Apparently there is great pleasure in maintaining an aura of mystery around the beginnings of a breed. How ironic it is that a breed with the fanciful name of Exotic Shorthair was created to turn sinners into saints and to provide baptism for the ill-begotten. Perhaps in years hence the beginnings of this breed will have its own legend; but for now the record should be kept straight.



British Blue-Cream Pensylva
Startip of Heritage (Imp.) Br.
J. Richards, Ow. D. Hansen &
R. Peltz.

The background of the Exotic Shorthair begins in England and concerns not only the British Shorthair there, but also the silver shorthairs in this country. It had been a common practice in England to cross Persian with domestic cats to produce a cat of Persian type with a short, thick, dense coat. The cats in England were of many colors, but the primary cross that occurred in the United States involved silver and the silver tabby pattern. The color silver, which results from the chinchilla alleles reducing yellow melanin faster than black, occurred first as a mutation in the Persian cat. Therefore, most, if not all, silver shorthairs have resulted from a transfer of silver from longhair to shorthair. It is conceivable, of course, that chinchilla occurred as a separate mutation later in shorthairs, but this would be extremely difficult either to prove or disapprove and is extremely unlikely.

The practice of crossing Persian to Domestic Shorthair was quite prevalent in the 1950's and continues to this day. At that time, the Domestic Shorthair, later called American Shorthair, was neither a



Pensylva full face; showing short muzzle and blaze.

shorthair nor did it resemble the hard coated, sleek, hearthside cat of our homes. The naivete of novice as well as experienced breeder was taxed considerably for these very beautiful cats received great acclaim in the show ring as American Shorthairs. As in the Emperors New Clothes, judges, breeders and the fancy turned blind eyes toward these cats and either refused to see or could not admit what they truly saw. The questionings and murmurings of the unindoctrinated were muffled for a time. There were those, who at the beginning, thought that these cats were, indeed, true American Shorthairs fancified to exceptional beauty. Yet those breeders, who could in no way reconcile what they saw with what they believed to be true, began seeking answers. Because of their integrity, certain breeders frankly admitted the practice of hybridizing. Much credit is due them for the amazing cats they produced. It is a difficult feat in the Persian-American Shorthair cross to achieve proper coat and tabby pattern in the same cat. Interestingly enough, other breeders were unaware of the heritage of their cats. They accepted pedigrees at face value and felt that silver was a natural shorthair color. The practice of crossing Persian to shorthair continued and was soon to become legitimate.

In 1966 Mrs. Jane Martinke suggested a program for hybrid recognition, one part of which provided a place for chinchilla and shaded silver American Shorthairs. This new "breed" was to be called Sterling Shorthairs.⁽¹⁾ In spite of the honorable intentions of this program



Grayfire's Cheyenne — Owner: Doris Walkingstick

to set things straight, it was not met with unbridled enthusiasm. Why should breeders of these cats suddenly transfer them to a hybrid class? For years the judges had obviously sanctioned their cats as American Shorthairs.

The matter was pursued by Mrs. Martinke, and in September, 1966, through Mrs. Jean Rose, she suggested that "a hybrid class for Domestic of mixed Persian and American Shorthair parentage" be established to be called "Exotic Shorthairs". A new standard based on the Persian Standard was to be written for Exotic Shorthairs, and they were to be given Championship classification. The Exotic Shorthair breed thus came into being.⁽²⁾ Although the minutes of that CFA Board meeting reflect that the class was designated for Persian-American Shorthair crosses, it was later more broadly interpreted to include all shorthairs. A standard was established which, for all practical purposes, described a shorthaired Persian. One striking difference was the absence of a nosebreak in the Exotic Shorthair. This was done in an effort to avoid difficulties with nose and mouth malformations that have occurred in some overly typed Persians.

After the standard was accepted, those breeders who wished to transfer their American Shorthairs of the "exotic" type to the new breed were given the opportunity. The numbers doing so were not overwhelming.

Much credit is due Jane Martinke for envisioning and championing the program. For with the recognition of the Exotic Shorthair, two significant events occurred. The first of these was the founding of an honest place in the show ring for a breed that ultimately will be the ideal one in the fancy. Second, and equally important, the true American Shorthair once again could be judged properly by its correct standard.

With the 1967-1968 show season the new breed was placed in competition. As this is being written, the Exotic Shorthair has a history of five years in the show ring, and approximately 350 cats have been registered. For a breed so new, acceptance by most of the judges and the fancy has been an unusual if not an extraordinary accomplishment. What has been most exciting to breeders is the acclaim of the public. These cats are striking in appearance, and they attract a great deal of attention from cat lovers who are more interested in a sweet faced, beautiful cat than its pedigree.



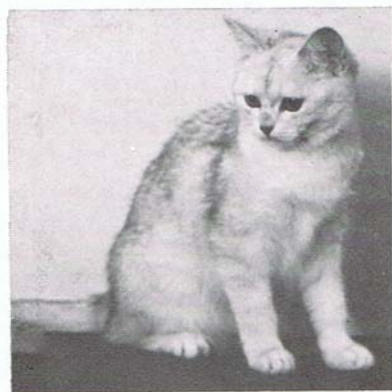
Aby — SH Silver Cross, 8 weeks old. (Stripes fade with age.)



Heatherwood's Happy Day. B-O: Dr. Peltz.

edges, for a soft effect. More than anything else, it is an attractive cat with a sweet expression. The head, like that of the Persian, is large, broad and round, with full cheeks. The nose is short and wide, but without a break. The eyes, full of expression, are big, round and should be as deep and clear as possible. The ears are small, rounded at the tip, and not too open at the base. They are set wide on the head, with a forward tilt.

The neck is short and thick, and blends into the broad chest and short straight back. The legs are short, wide and heavy boned. Forelegs should be perfectly straight. The tail is short, broad from base to tip, with no tapering, and never fluffy.

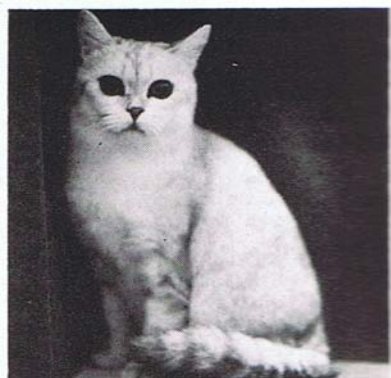


Heatherwoods Jasmin. B. O. Dr. Peltz.

THE IDEAL EXOTIC

The Exotic Shorthair is a round, sturdy cat that comes equipped with all of the architecture of the Persian, but with none of the entanglements of a long coat. It is a very practical cat; an ideal one for those who do not relish the grooming tasks of the Persian breeder.

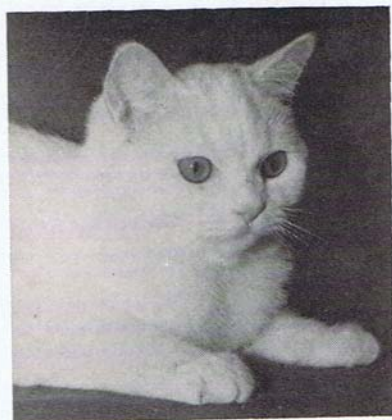
The overall appearance of the show quality Exotic Shorthair should resemble a square, but with rounded



Ch. Gay-O Naughty Lass of Hi Camp — Kay Campbell.

The Exotic chest is broad and deep, fronting a body that is solid and compact. When lifted, the cat should come up in one piece—not in sections like a string of railroad cars. Each part (i.e. legs, tail, head, etc.) should be in proportion to the whole, giving the impression of total balance. The chin is firm and in line with the upper jaw. It is never undercut or shallow.

Many people become totally confused over the coat of the Exotic. The standard, quite definitely, calls



Gr. Ch. Docia Dao's Patricia. Owner: Mr. & Mrs. Don Yoder.

and maintain, even the finest show animal will immediately reflect any neglect on the part of the owner. In order for the coat and eyes to appear shiny and bright the cat must be in excellent health. Poor care will not only dull the appearance of any animal, it also contributes much to ruin the generally happy personality of the breed.

for a short coat, however, in this case the coat is longer than that of most shorthairs. It is a thick, plush coat of closely set hair which lies flat, but because of its density at the base, has a tendency to puff out a bit, giving the cat a sort of chubby appearance. Most importantly the coat should have a very soft, cottony feeling. The texture of the hair is totally different from the hard coat of the American, and has none of the glassy slickness of the Siamese. In short, it is the Persian undercoat, consisting mainly of awn, awn down and down hairs.

Finally, although the Exotic is probably the easiest cat to groom

BREEDING EXOTICS

Although it may not be apparent at first, the Exotic is not a cat for the novice or dilettante. The breeder who feels that the short road to fame in the cat fancy is to be traveled with the Exotic is due for a few surprises.

The cat fancier interested in any breed contends with type, coat, color and health. The exotic breeder must deal with each of these factors, not just in one breed but rather in three. In other words, the problems are tripled for the Exotic Shorthair breeder. Each breed coming together to produce the third must be considered. The breeder must know in advance or at least have a fair notion, of not only what each breed has to offer, but how the two breeds will interact to produce the third. It would seem obvious that the shorthair breed which is most like the Persian in type would prove to be a better selection than one of the elongated body types.

Consider then what each shorthair breed has to offer with a Persian cross.

Abyssinian To some extent the ticking of the Aby coat can be an asset in working with silvers. The authors feel that the Aby crosses produce an almost stereotyped pencilling on the head and coat. The resultant cross is also higher on its legs and finer boned than the Exotic requires. The coat of the Abyssinian is hard and springy, and this too must be considered in using this shorthaired breed.

Burmese The Burm has been used successfully in producing good Exotic Shorthairs. Again the breeder must select a very typy Burmese to produce the best Exotic Shorthair. Although sable brown of the Burmese is recessive, inbreeding will produce colors that, at present, are not allowed for showing.

American Shorthair This breed is an ideal cross not only in type, but it offers also a tremendous variety of coat colors and patterns. To be considered is the fact that many present day Americans have Persian behind them; and if the breeder is unaware, he or she will be surprised to find a large number of longhaired kits showing up in litters that should contain only shorthairs.

Manx The Manx is mentioned merely for the purpose of deploring such a cross. This breed has absolutely nothing to contribute to the Exotic Shorthair.

Rex The Rex has nothing to offer to the Exotic Shorthair.

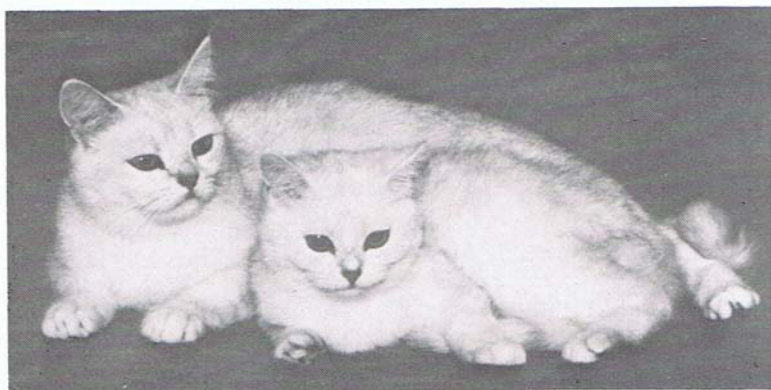
Korat This breed will prove interesting to cross to the blue or cream Persian and should be explored not only for color but for coat quality.

Siamese The Siamese can offer color but little else to the Exotic Shorthair.

Perhaps the brief resume of some of the possible crosses to the Persian will afford the potential Exotic Shorthair breeder a glimpse of the not so insignificant problems he can expect.

What is to be stressed, is that if the breed is to continue to be valuable to the fancy, it must not be a stock pile of mismatings, a hodgepodge of trial and error breedings. Type must be emphasized above all else; color will come. If type is stressed, line breeding must occur and with it will come a number of longhaired kittens. These will be the "no where" by-products of hybridization for which the breeder must find homes. This is a serious problem, and the breeder must find a happy solution.

Already there is a tendency to cross Exotic to Exotic, and one



Grayfire Cree & Kitten. Owner: Doris Walkingstick

cannot help but wonder if this is happening too soon. The question is, should it ever happen? The breed was envisioned as a hybrid offering an ideal cat and should remain so.

CATTERIES AND BREEDERS

Since the history of the Exotic is short, at this point in time the numbers of breeders are limited. **Heatherwood** cattery registered in 1960 has used Aberdeen stock in crossing silver tabby American Shorthairs to Kohinor and Delphi Persian stock of **Carnival** cattery. The first litter was born in 1970. The Don Yoders of Texas established **Docia-Dao** cattery in 1962 and in recent years have exhibited some fine Exotics. In 1967 Doris Walkingstick of Oklahoma registered **Grayfire** cattery. Joan Uzee of Atlanta, Georgia registered **Carnival** cattery in 1968, the same year that Mal and Kay Campbell of Redmond, Washington registered **Hi-Camp**. Mrs. Campbell acquired a complete cattery of Shaded Silver American Shorthairs, and was one of the first breeders to publicly acknowledge that she had transferred all of her Shaded Silver Americans to the Exotic breed. In 1969 **Leprechaun** cattery was registered by Nancy and Robert Lane of Delaware, and in the same year John and Mary Martin registered **Jo-Mar**. In 1972 the authors registered **The Saints** cattery in order to work more closely with silver Exotic Shorthairs.

The Exotic Shorthair Fanciers, the first breed club, was begun by Nancy and Robert Lane in 1969. The membership list continues to grow.

THE CATS THEMSELVES

In spite of the fact that the Exotic Shorthair history is a limited one, some very fine cats have been bred.

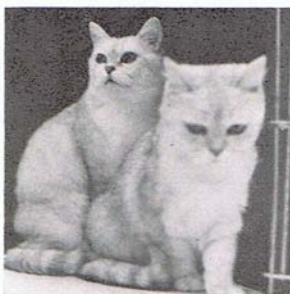
Kay Campbell's cat **Silver Secret of Gay-O**, although a Grand Champion Domestic Shorthair in another association was, started as a novice Exotic Shorthair in CFA and was the first Exotic Shorthair Grand Champion and was CFA National Award Exotic in 1971. Fortunately **Secret** sired many fine kittens before his recent death. In addition Mrs. Campbell has two excellent females **Gay-O Silver Lullaby of Hi-Camp** and her litter sister **Lassie**.

Nancy and Robert Lane's **Gr. Ch. Leprechaun's Texas Tea**, an extraordinary black male, went from novice to grand champion in three shows at the age of ten months; and has consistently been in the top five cats.

Gr. Ch. Grayfire's Cheyenne is the sparkling chinchilla exotic bred by the Walkingstick's of Oklahoma. Cheyenne placed high in the regional awards of his area and achieved grand championship status in two shows. Litter sister and son **Pow Wow** are also grands.

John and Mary Martin acquired **Leprechaun's Tornado**, litter brother of Texas Tea, and have shown this fine black male quite successfully.

The Yoders have produced **Gr. Ch. Docia-Dao's Patricia**, a very lovely copper-eyed



Gay-O Silver Lullaby of Hi Camp and Lassie. Owner: Kay Campbell.

white Exotic.

Thus far, Joan Uzee and Rosemonde Peltz have bred seven shaded silvers and Dr. Peltz has one shell cameo male. Ch. Heatherwood's Hasty Pudding, Ch. Heatherwood's Hi Hope and Ch. Heatherwood's Happy Day have been shown only once or twice and have done well. Heatherwood's Jasmine has done extremely well as a kitten.

THE BRITISH SHORTHAIR

Although the practice of hybridizing Persian or Russian Blue lines into the British Shorthair began many years ago, for just as many years notable breeders have deplored the practice.⁽³⁾ No doubt, hybridization has continued in some catteries. The situation is no different from that of many breeds in the United States. Sub rosa breeding occurs in all countries; the British are about the only ones who are frank about it. The truth is, however, that the numbers of British catteries interested in the British Shorthair and producing pure British Shorthairs constitute the majority. The blue shorthair of England has been the most popular import, and in some associations has been shown as the British Blue. In other associations it has been called an American Shorthair. Now, neither of these designations is entirely correct. It would seem most appropriate to call the breed what it is, simply, the British Shorthair. To do so would not establish a precedent since Persian, Siamese, Russian Blue and Rex have been imported from the United Kingdom and have retained their respective breed names.

The British Shorthairs imported to this country are now called Exotic Shorthairs. As a result of the action we again have two different types of cats in the same class, being judged by the same standard. This has a familiar ring.

A recent popular cat book written and published in Britain describes two different British Shorthairs in succeeding chapters. The problems can be summarized by the two following descriptions:

"These are the most amenable of cats and their coats are incredibly soft and silky".⁽⁴⁾

"In adulthood it is a large cobby-shaped cat, with a good deep flank, strong broad chest, thick-set shortish legs with well rounded feet. The tail is slightly thicker at the root, tapering only very slightly towards the tip, and is approximately the same length as the body.

"The texture of the coat is deceptively hard . . . is really short".⁽⁵⁾

Therefore, there are two types of British Shorthairs, one of which fits the Exotic standard, the other of which does not. It is not difficult to understand why the Cat Fanciers' Association found it both truthful and expedient to call these cats Exotic Shorthairs. But what of the American breeder who goes to significant expense and diffi-



Ch. Leprechaun's Tornado of Jo-Mar. B: N. & R. Lane; O: J. & M. Martin.



British Blue Male. *Pensylva Carrini* of *Dundorhan*. Breeder: *Joan Richards*; Owner: *D. Hansen*.

culty to acquire a British Shorthair, and either accidentally or purposefully obtains the second type? All are classified the same and are judged accordingly to the Exotic Shorthair standard. Interestingly enough, in competition the British Shorthair of the second, harsh coated type has done exceedingly well. Apparently thirty years of breeding was not for naught or judges have not learned their home work. Or perhaps this is the way the Exotic Shorthair should look. Either the American breeder incorporates the British Shorthair to improve his stock and thereby causes the heritage of the British Shorthair

to become subservient to a five year old breed, or he breeds British Shorthair to British Shorthair. The latter course is an expensive proposition, but not necessarily a foolhardy one. For the time being, the British Shorthair is in the Exotic Shorthair breed.

Perhaps the ambiguity of breed designation has discouraged many breeders. *Dallas Sidlo* of California has exhibited the blue British Shorthair for many years. Her cat **Timothy** is a well known example of the British Blue.

Dorothy Hansen of Florida has imported fine British Blues from *Mrs. Joan Richards* of England and has had recent successful show seasons.

Mrs. Hansen and *Dr. Peltz* have established *Heritage Cattery* for the purpose of continuing British Shorthair breeding in this country. Their first import is a blue cream **Pensylva Startip**, sired by *Pensylva Prince D'Or*; the dam is *Pensylva Carissima*. The cat was bred by *Mrs. Joan Richards*.

If British Shorthair breeding is to continue in this country, greater interest must be shown in importing the best possible stock.

THE FUTURE OF THE EXOTIC SHORTHAIR

Each breed can be described by one or two adjectives which, in truth, define its essential characteristics. The rest is embellishment. Ticked and resilient define Abyssinian; cobby and sable mean Burmese; shorthaired Persian is the Exotic Shorthair. The emphasis is on both words—shorthair and Persian type; and this emphasis should remain.

If this breed is to continue to be as successful in the future as its incredible debut would indicate, there are requirements upon which breeders must insist here and now.



British Blue Female. *D. Monty's Julia*. "Monty", Sire; *Sabrina Capulet*, Dam.

First, intelligent breeding must be utilized to produce healthy, beautiful cats of good disposition; second, only the best cats must be shown. An esprit de corps must permeate Exotic Shorthair breeders to such an extent that they will not tolerate the exhibition of second rate cats. There should be a no nonsense attitude toward judges who repeatedly demonstrate their lack of understanding of the breed characteristics. There are and will be judges under whom the Exotic Shorthair will win too easily. There are other judges to whom the idea of a hybrid is an anathema. Both extremes should be avoided until there is a realization that each breed deserves the unprejudiced objectivity for which the judge is being paid.

This is the only path for any breed. The road opened for the Exotic Shorthair breeders in 1966. It will remain open and without too many impediments if Exotic Shorthair breeders decide now, and continue to observe among themselves and the fancy at large that honor and cooperation among breeders that benefits all.



Heatherwood's Hi Hope of Carnival. Breeder: R. Peltz; Owner: J. Uzee

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- (1) Christine Streetman, ed., *Year Book Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc.*, 1966, p. 113.
- (2) Christine Streetman, ed., *Year Book Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc.*, 1967, p. 142.
- (3) Grace Pond, *The Observers Book of Cats*, Frederick Warne & Co., Ltd., London, 1959, p. 65.
- (4) May Eustace, *The World of Show Cats*, Pelham Books, Ltd., London, 1970 p. 143.
- (5) *Ibid*, p. 150-151.

NOTE

About five years ago the authors began a plan for breeding silver shorthairs. We were fortunate to be members of the fancy when the Sterling Silvers and ultimately the Exotic Shorthairs came into being. The ideas of Jane Martinke fitted our scheme, and we proceeded from that point.

We wish to thank all of the breeders who contributed photographs and information to this article.