

# FOUNDATION & DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY OF THE DEVON REX BREED

by Linda Peterson, Kristin Nowell & Carolyn Jimenez

The Devon Rex breed originated in Buckfastleigh, Devonshire, England and was discovered by Miss Beryl Cox. Miss Cox, and others, had previously sighted a curly coated tom cat living in a deserted tin mine near Miss Cox's home. One day, in July 1959, a feral tortoiseshell and white female gave birth, in a field near her home, and one of the kittens was covered with curls. Miss Cox was quite taken by this kitten, with his curls and ringlets down his tail, and decided to keep him, naming him "Kirlee".

It was later determined Kirlee's mother was the daughter of the curly coated male spotted near the tin mine, and she must have mated back to him, in order to produce a curly coated kitten. Miss Cox was delighted by Kirlee's wagging tail when praised, his intelligence, his fun-loving personality, and his ability to learn tricks; such as walking a tightrope and fetching toys. Generations later, Kirlee's descendants continue to delight us with these wonderful traits.

A full ten years before Kirlee's birth, another curly coated kitten had been found in Cornwall, England. That kitten was named "Kallibunker", and his descendants are now known as the **Cornish Rex** Breed (originally called the "Gene I" Rex cat).

Breeders were trying to establish the Rex cat as a breed and were very excited with the discovery of Kirlee. They convinced Miss Cox to send him to them for use in their Rex programs. Kirlee was bred to females descended from Kallibunker, however, all the kittens born were straight-coated! It became apparent therefore, that Kirlee did not carry the same genetic mutation for the curl in his coat, as the Cornish Rex. A second new curly-coated breed was subsequently recognized, and Kirlee and his descendants are known as the Devon Rex (originally called the "Gene II" Rex cat).

## DEVON REX AND CORNISH REX DIVERGENCE

Both the Devon Rex and Cornish Rex have a wave to their coats, but very distinctly different *characteristics* of the coat, head type and body. The Devon Rex coat is an **open wave** and *varies in density, texture, and length* (while remaining a short-hair breed). In contrast, the Cornish Rex coat is a **tight marcel wave**, with no guard hairs.





GC, BW, NW Karmakatz All Jazzed Up, in the ring with CFA Judge Donna Jean Thompson

Photo: Linda Peterson

The Devon has a **wide, short head**, with a distinctive “**pixie**” or “**elfin**” expression, and **large ears set low on the side of their head**. The Cornish has a **long egg-shaped head** with large **ears set on the top of their head**. The Devon has a medium style body, with what is referred to as a “wishbone stance” or “bulldog stance”. The Cornish has an elegant style body likened to a greyhound.

#### THE DEVON REX BREED IN CAT ASSOCIATIONS

The first Devon breeders based their standard for type and coat on the first Devon Rex, Kirlee, and continue to do so. Breeders, through careful outcrossing and health testing, have preserved Kirlee’s mutated coat gene and type while achieving genetic diversity. Today, Devon Rexes come in every color and pattern genetically possible.

Devon Rex cats developed quickly in England and in 1967 the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy (GCCF), the oldest registry of its kind, granted separate breed standards for the Devon Rex and Cornish Rex for championship status and the original GCCF standard was written referencing Kirlee. The Fédération Internationale Féline (FIFe) followed suit in the same year.

The American Cat Fanciers Association (ACFA) accepted the Devon Rex for championship status in 1972 and when The International Cat Association (TICA) was organized in 1979 they accepted the Devon Rex for championship status the same year. This was also when the names of Devon Rex and Cornish Rex were chosen for the two mutations.

The Cat Fanciers’ Association (CFA) recognition took longer as their position was all rex coated cats should only be registered in the already accepted Rex breed (based on the Cornish Rex standard).





**Gerri Logan's legendary 'GC, BW, NW Loganderry's Kiss And Tell'  
Still the highest scoring Devon Rex in CFA history.**

Devons could be registered, however, but not as a separate breed! The majority of Devon Rex breeders opposed this, so there was minimal participation in CFA at that time.

In February 1979, the CFA board unanimously voted to grant the Devon Rex separate breed status and registration effective as of that date and advanced to provisional status effective on May 1, 1981. Instrumental in this was Anita White, who provided the history and background of the breed, and Dr. Ann Gibney, who was the spokesperson for the breed, and played the key role in the breed's advancement. Breeders began to register their cats and also received CFA approval for a Devon Rex Breed Club that is still in existence. At the February 1983 CFA Board Meeting, the Devon Rex was **advanced to Championship** effective May 1, 1983. By 1985, Devon's were recognized in all colors and patterns that cats can come in.

#### **THE DEVON REX IN THE CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION (CFA)**

The Devon Rex standard in CFA was developed maintaining the look that Kirlee brought to the breed. Early versions of the 100 point standard, assigned most points to the Devon coat (35), with an equal amount of points given to the head (30) and body (30) and 5 points to color.

Changes to the point distribution were done based on the need to emphasize the unique aspects of the Devon Rex head as these features make it distinct from those other breeds with curly coats, giving it, its "impish" appearance which make it easy to identify as a Devon Rex.

The coat remains a critical defining characteristic and the redistribution of points did not reduce or diminish the value of the Devon Rex coat.



**The late Gerri Logan with 'Derry Hill Sugar-Toes'**

Photo: Carolyn Jimenez

These changes emphasized to the Judges the need to attend to the head, in addition to the coat, as a means of effectively preserving the defining characteristics of this breed. **Today's CFA standard gives the head 40 points, the coat 30 points, the body 25 points, and color remains 5 points.**

In the first show season, **GC Enshallah Sitamun**, a gold-eyed white female bred by John Benitez and John Gallagher and co-owned with Adele Gay, achieved grand championship status **as the first Devon Rex grand in CFA.**

The first **CFA National Win by a Devon Rex was in Championship** during the 1989-1990 show season. The cat was **GC, NW Kotickee's Rassy Sassoul, DM**, a copper-eyed white female bred and owned by Dr. Shally V. Carlson. This was seven years after the breed was accepted into championship status.

It was four more show seasons before another Devon achieved a National Win, this time in Premiership. **GP, NW Bluegenes Trouble**, a gold-eyed white female bred and owned by Judie and John Kethley.

The first **National Kitten Win** was achieved in the 1998-1999 show season by **GC, BW, NW Loganderry's Turtle of Dilettante, DM**, a chocolate tabby female, bred and owned by Gerri Logan and Wendy Renner. (shown opposite).

Turtle not only achieved the first Kitten National Win, but also a National Win in Championship the following show season. She was **the first Devon to achieve both a Kitten National Win and Championship National Win.**



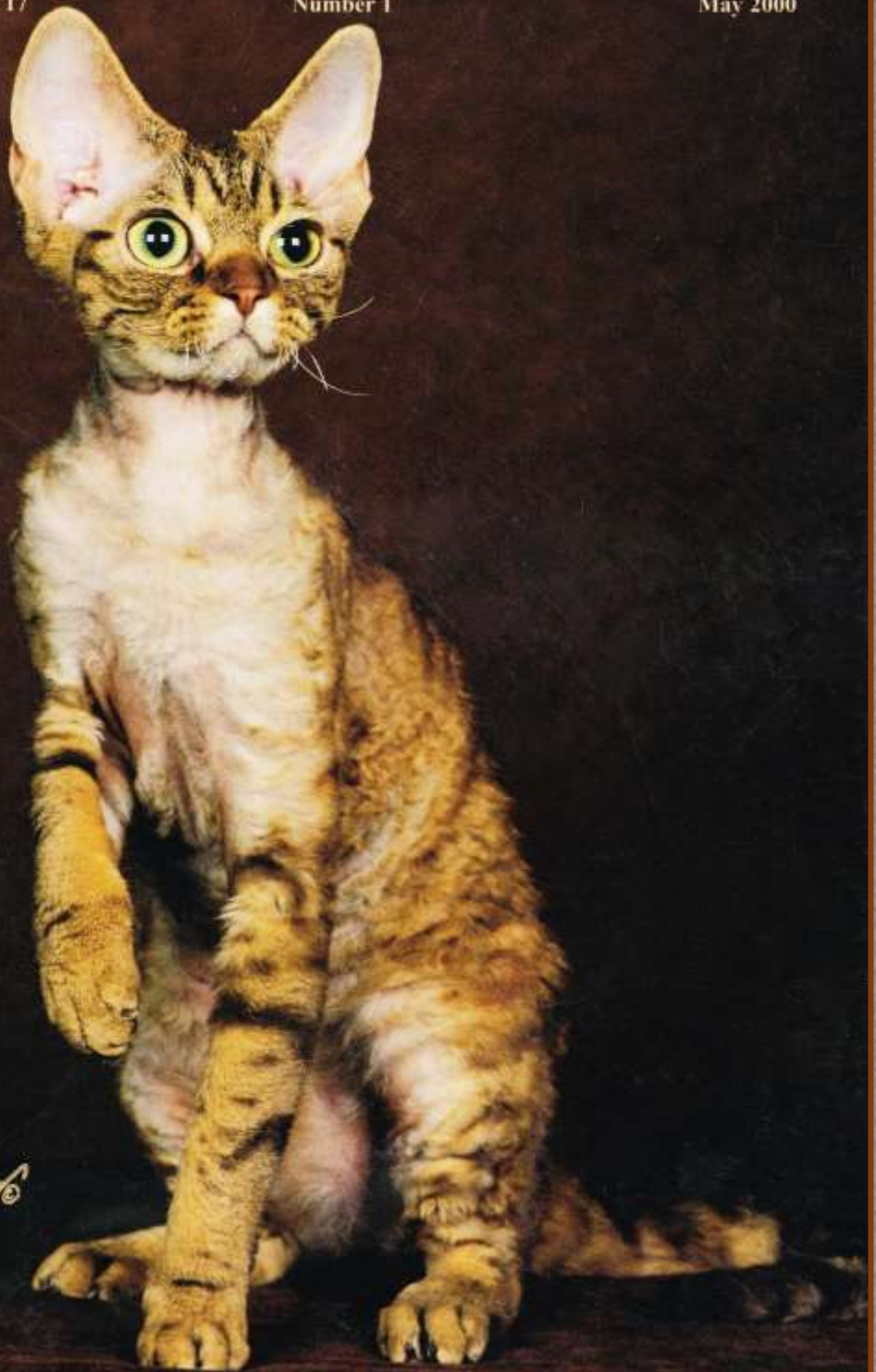
# CAT FANCIERS' ALMANAC

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GC, NW Loganderry's Turtle of Dilettante

CFA Almanac Cover May 2000, featuring GC, NW Loganderry's Turtle of Dilettante.

Image with permission of The Cat Fanciers' Association.

In the 2000-2001 show season **GC, NW Karmacatz Angelina of Tigerwings**, a gold-eyed white female, bred by Linda and Susan Peterson and co-owned with Kathy Rutledge, achieved a National Kitten Win. What makes this notable is that Angelina was born to an F2 straight-coat hybrid dam bred to a curly coated sire. One of four kittens, Angelina was the only curly coated kitten in the litter. Next to her three





**GC, BW, NW Karmakatz All Jazzed Up with CFA Judge Wain Harding**

Photo: courtesy of Linda Peterson

straight-coat siblings, and her brown patched mackerel tabby straight-coat mother, Angelina truly looked like a little alien pixie.

It would be nine years before another Devon achieved a National Win in CFA. In the 2009-2010 show season **GC, BW, NW Karmacatz All Jazzed Up**, a chocolate silver patched mackerel tabby and white female, bred and owned by Linda and Susan Peterson and Denis Downey, broke the dry spell.

Since the 2013-2014 show season, there have been Devon Rex National Winners *every year*. Often, multiple National Winners in a single season. Of note, in the 2013-2014, two female **littermates achieved National Wins in Championship, a first for the breed**. These cats were **GC, BW, NW Jobara's Nicolette of Java Café**, a silver mackerel tabby female bred by Bobbi Irie and Jade Kleider, and owned by Gavin Cao and **GC, NW Jobara's Opal**, a natural silver mink mackerel tabby female bred and owned by Bobbi Irie and Jade Kleider.

In Premiership, after **GP, NW Bluegenes Trouble**, it was 23 years before another Devon Rex achieved a National Win. In 2016-2017 there were two. Of note, **GC, GP, BW, NW Curlfect's Aphrodites of Marcus**, bred by Terry and Stephanie Michaud, owned by David Raynor and Mark Hannon, was CFA's Second Best Cat that year in Premiership, and achieved the honor of being **CFA's Highest Ranked National Winning Devon Rex**.

32 Devons have achieved a total of 35 National Wins since the breed's acceptance to CFA. There have been 16 National Winning Devons in Championship, 13 in Kittens, and Six in Premiership. There have been 28 Females (One achieving a win in both Kitten and Championship, two achieving wins in Championship and Premiership), and four Males.





**GC, BW, NW Jobara's Nicolette of Java Café with CFA Judge Darrell Newkirk. Owned by Gavin Cao.**  
 Photo: courtesy of Linda Peterson



**Below left: GC, NW Jobara's Opal with CFA Judge Vicki Nye. Owned by Bobbi Irie & Jade Kleider.**  
**Below right: GC, GP, BW, NW Curlfect's Aphrodites of Marcus with CFA Judge Melanie Morgan**  
**Owned by David Raynor & Mark Hannon.**  
 Photos; courtesy of Linda Peterson



In 2004 the CFA Board approved Feline Agility competitions, which had become increasingly popular throughout the feline world. In October 2018, top 10 National Awards for Feline Agility were added.

Devons are well known for loving to romp, run through tunnels, jump, and play with toys, so agility was right up their alley.

In the 2018-2019 show season **GPD, RW, AGN Meikai's Toberlone** ("Dale"), bred by Doug Schmidt and owned by Rhonda Smith, was *the first National Winning Devon Rex in Feline Agility*.

### EARLY DEVON REX BREEDERS

Devons became very popular as many fell in love with their unique appearance and distinctive personalities. Breeders from many European countries, as well as New Zealand and Australia have been working with the breed since the late 1960s.

In 1968 the first North American breeding program was established when Marion White and her daughter Anita imported two female Devons from England to their home in Austin, Texas.

Annelida Aubretia and Wigmel Black Witch were the foundation for their cattery, Anglo-Tex. Shirley Lambert (Bob'N Shir) imported the first two pointed Devons in America in 1969 and worked with Marion and Anita White to establish a larger genetic breeding pool of Devons.

Between 1968 and 1980, Devons gained popularity and several new breeding programs were established in the United States and Canada, becoming the foundation of Devon Rex in North America.

In the United States, Becky Curneen (Far North) in Washington State and Delores Johnson (Dee Jon) in Oregon imported Devons in 1974. Frank and Wendy Chappell (Yclept) in British Columbia and Frances Kirkham (Cal-Van) in Alberta imported Devons.

Ann Gibney (Scattergold) in 1977 brought back from England her first Devon and in 1980 added her second one. British breeders Roma and Lajla Lund (Homeacres) moved to the United States in 1978 with several of their Devons.

Mary Robinson (Marya) imported three Devons from New Zealand to Canada in 1980.

Anita White created a series of drawings in the mid-1970's showing the proper head and body of the Devon Rex. These drawings are still used today by breeders and in breed presentations at judges' workshops as a resource for learning the proper head and body structure.



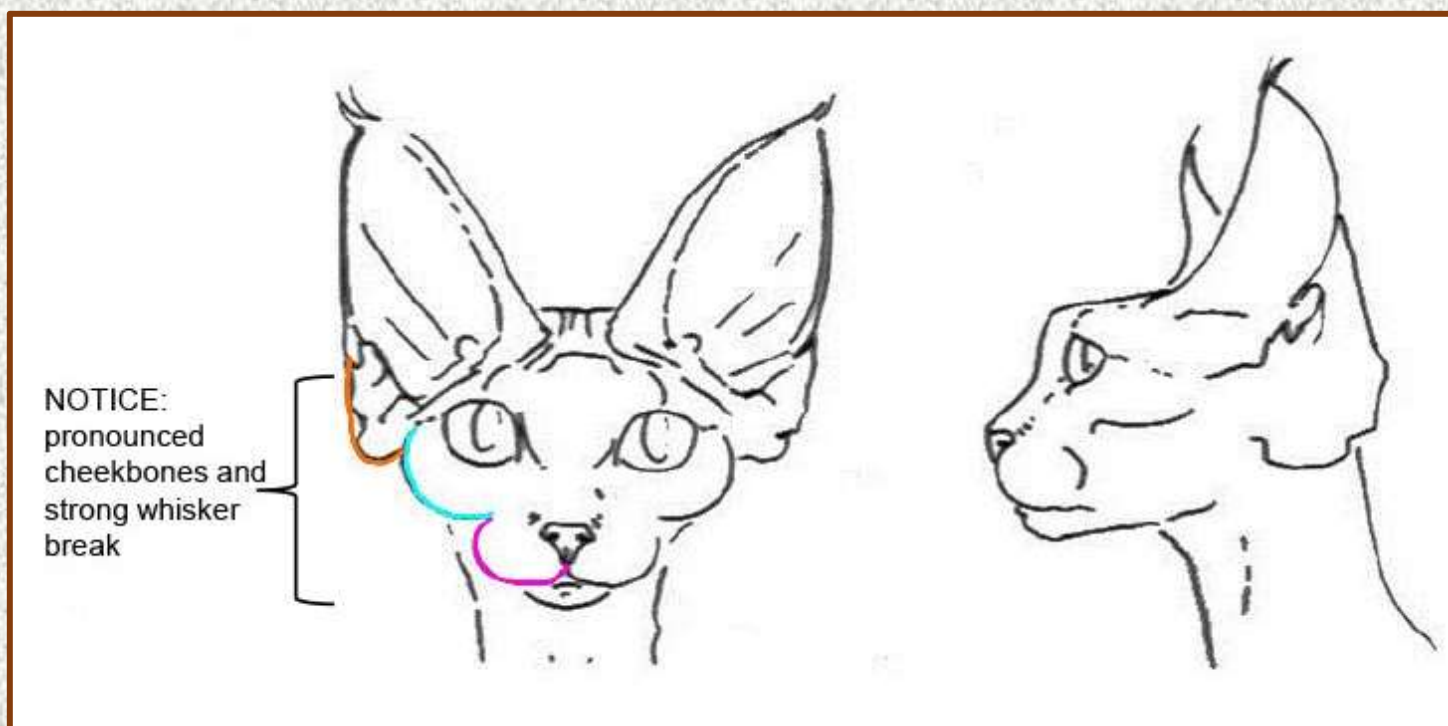
**The distinctive 'Pixie' look to Devon Rex head shape shown here was drawn by Anita White and is considered to be the correct interpretation of the Devon Standard.**

Image courtesy of Linda Peterson





Above and below: Two additional views indicating proper head structure drawn by Anita White.  
Images: courtesy of Linda Peterson.



## A BREEDER OF DISTINCTION

In 1982 Gerri Logan attended a cat show and fell instantly in love with a Devon Rex. Gerri went on to establish her cattery, Loganderry, with the blessing of her husband, Bob. Initially, Gerri showed primarily in ACFA, and some in TICA and CFA. In 1993, she moved to showing exclusively in CFA. Gerri was considered the "Grande Dame" of the Devon Rex Breed as she worked tirelessly to improve the breed utilizing outcrosses, and breeding to the look she wished to pursue. She selected breeding pairs based on her endless study of pedigrees, working towards her inner vision.





**Two portraits of Gerri Logan, as we remember her exhibiting her Devon Rex cats at shows.**

Images: Courtesy of Linda Peterson.

She wanted to create a line that other breeders would recognize as a particular look that was distinctive yet met the Devon Rex breed standard. She succeeded and this day, many refer to “the Loganderry look” when speaking about her cats.

Gerri joined the Devon Rex Breed Club (DRBC) in 1991 and served the club in many leadership roles. In 2015, the DRBC established the Gerri Logan Kitten Award in her memory and recognition for her outstanding commitment and valuable contributions to the Devon Rex breed as breeder, exhibitor, and mentor. Gerri was deeply passionate about the Devon Rex. She had a special affinity for kittens, which she felt represented the future and potential of the Devon Rex Breed.

Gerri’s first CFA National winning Devon Rex was the incomparable **GC, BW, NW Loganderry’s Kiss And Tell**, a beautiful brown patched mackerel tabby female, in the 1995-1996 show season, and who is still the Highest Scoring Devon Rex in CFA history. Kissy has been behind the pedigrees of many National Winners since.

## **DEVON REX HEALTH**

All Devons descend from one cat, Kirlee, so there is the concern of small gene pool. As a result, the Devon Rex is still allowed by CFA, as well as most world-wide cat associations, to outcross to other breeds for genetic diversity. Current approved outcross breeds for CFA registered Devon Rex are limited to the American Shorthair and the British Shorthair. First generation kittens will be straight-coated and these hybrids are registered as Devon Rex using the AOV prefixes.

Devons are no more susceptible to injuries, ailments or congenital conditions than any other cat. Devons have historically been diagnosed with Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM), Hip Dysplasia, Polycystic





GC, BW, NW Loganderry's Kiss And Tell – bred and owned by Bob & Gerry Logan.

Photo: Chanan





**The DEVON REX Banner and Breed Booth at the CFA International Show.**

Photo: Devon Stalker Productions.

Kidney Disease (PKD), and Luxating Patella. Breeders have utilized heart scans, genetic testing, and careful breeding to reduce these health issues.

Devons come in all three blood groups: A, B and AB and breeders utilize blood typing to determine how they want to proceed with their breeding cats. Breeding a B female (queen) to an A or AB male may result in A or AB blood type kittens developing a life-threatening condition called Neonatal isoerythrolysis, if these kittens nurse during the first 24 hours of life. The queen produces colostrum





**Above left: GC, NW Bellshire's Delphinium of Karmakatz.**

**Above right: GC, NW Karmakatz Chloe (in front) & GC, RW Karmakatz Kokomo (behind).**

Photos: Linda Peterson

which contains alloantibodies and in the A, or AB kitten, these will lead to the destruction of the kitten's red blood cells. These kittens must not nurse from the mother for the first 24 hours. Breeders will either place the kittens on a lactating A or AB queen or supplement every 2-3 hours with a kitten milk replacer. After 24 hours they can be returned to their mother.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Devon Rex is called the "Pixie of the cat fancy" due to their wide cheekbones, large oval shaped eyes, large low set ears, and elfin expression. They have a mischievous, yet intelligent look about them and their personality fits their description.

Devons range in size with the typical female being between 5-8 pounds and male between 7-10 pounds. They are considered to be a small to medium sized breed.

Devons are good for anyone looking for a companion. Regardless of age or abilities, a Devon Rex owner will find their cat to be attentive, affectionate, and devoted. Any owner must be prepared for a cat that is always "in your face", as Devons love to be on your shoulder, your lap, your papers, keyboard, or just about everywhere you are. Their goal is to always be front and center.

Given their very social nature, Devons will share their love with all family members, friends, the visiting repair person, and even the vet. They do best with some form of constant companionship - a person, another cat, a dog, or even a rabbit. Devons are the consummate cuddlers and can think of nothing better than snuggling in bed at the end of a long day.





**Above left: GC, NW Bellshire's Delphinium of Karmakatz with CFA Judge Teresa Keiger.**

**Above right: GC, NW Karmakatz Rudy with CFA Judge Melanie Morgan.**

Photos: Linda Peterson

Devons are playful throughout their lifetime. They are a moderate energy cat, engaged without being destructive. Devons can turn just about anything into a cat toy - bottle cap, wadded paper, lipstick tube, or box. They frequently will "fetch" their toys and wait for the toy to be thrown, so they can retrieve it. They enjoy being up high, so are quick to jump on a passing shoulder, scamper to the top of a door frame, or hop on a windowsill. A tall cat tree for scratching and climbing are ideal for Devons.

They are also curious little cats. It is always a good idea to do a head count before leaving to be sure they are not locked in a drawer, cabinet or closet. It is their natural personality to want to be involved, so it is inevitable a Devon will be in the middle of any project you are attempting. You may find your most frequent expression is "Stop helping!"

Devon vocalization varies from cat to cat. They frequently communicate with coos and trills, but have also been known to sound off with a loud "Meow". They do not have natural predatory skills, so a Devon should never be permitted outside. Nor should they be declawed, because given their small size, they need some way to defend themselves.

Devons love food. It is easy for a Devon to become overweight, as they will readily convince you they have never been fed. Not to mention, they also enjoy people food. One has to guard against the theft of a pizza slice, or chicken wing. Anything left out on a counter becomes fair game and will be quickly surrounded by Devons, who will enjoy the feast. Even when "naughty", it is hard to resist those darling little faces and those big expressive eyes.





**Above left: GC, NW Jobara's Opal with CFA Judge Pam DelaBar.**  
**Above right: GC, RW Karmakatz Rudy with CFA Judge Gene Darrah.**  
 Photos: courtesy Linda Peterson

## FUN FACTS

In 1978, a white Devon Rex was cast to play "Pixie", in the widely acclaimed "Superman" movie. In the opening scene, Superman rescues Pixie from tree, returns the curly feline to her young owner, and then gives Pixie an affectionate pat.

It is rumored that film director, Steven Spielberg, had a pet Devon Rex and it served as the inspiration for the appearance of E.T. and Yoda in his movies.

In the 2019 Disney live-action remake of the film "Lady and the Tramp" two fun-loving Devon Rex kitties, replaced the original movie's Siamese cats, and played the mischievous characters of Devon and Rex.

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**GC, NW Karmakatz Chloe, with CFA Judge Ellyn Honey**  
 Photo; Linda Peterson





**GC, NW Permaret Boogie Child, as a kitten (left), & (right) with Bobbi Irie and CFA Judge Darrell Newkirk.**  
Photos: Bobbi Irie.



**GC, NW Karmakatz Simply Ear'Resistible, as a kitten (left) and an adult, (right).**  
Photos: Linda Peterson, and Mary Kolencik.







Above left: GC, NW Castellija's Lite Brite of Jobara. Above right: GP, NW Jobara's Nijiirō  
Photos: Bobbi Irie.



Gerri Logan, (left), with GC. Loganderry Darkman of Hilltop Park & Ch. Loganderry Buddha of Hilltop Park  
And (right), with 'Derry-Hill Got Milk' (aka. Millie)  
Photos: courtesy of Linda Peterson