



An Introduction to the Burmilla

by Keith Kimberlin

Editor's note: This article is reprinted with permission, from 2011, when the breed was newly recognised by CFA.

The Burmilla is the newest breed to grace the cat fancy as a CFA breed. It was most recently approved for Miscellaneous Class, which will permit the Burmilla to register all offspring in CFA. With a unanimous vote by the board at the February 2011 board meeting, the Burmilla now has an opportunity to grace the show hall, seek recognition by exhibitors and spectators, and work its way into full acceptance following all guidelines set up by CFA. As of May 1, 2011, they will be shown in the category of Miscellaneous, allowing for the Burmilla to be assessed for type following the CFA Burmilla standard and rated amongst other Burmilla's. This category is a pre-requisite to the Championship status which other recognized breeds are judged in.

The origin to the Burmilla dates back over 30 years ago. Baroness Miranda Von Kirchberg had bought a Chinchilla male, Jemari Sanquist, as a pet for her husband. Shortly before being neutered he accidentally met up with a precocious Lilac Burmese female, Bambino Lilac Fabergé, when a cleaner inadvertently left Fabrege's door open, she was able to escape and mated with Sanquist thus producing the very first litter of Burmilla. The result of this mating produced 4 female kittens, all short haired & Black Shaded Silver in color. These kittens, born on September 11, 1981, were so attractive to the breeder that it was decided to embark upon a breeding program. The aim of the Burmilla program was to produce a shorthair cat of Burmese type, with the sparkling silver coat. One of the special features of the Burmilla are the lambent green eyes, the shape and set is seductive, giving them "bedroom" eyes. Combined with the "mascara" of matching eye and nose liner bred from the Chinchilla, the eyes are set off to perfection. Primarily the main objective of the program was to develop a shorthaired Agouti cat of medium foreign type showing a striking contrast between the colored Tipping/Shading and the Silver base. In 1984 a Burmilla standard was agreed & the breed received official recognition in 1997.

The Burmilla's appearance is that of an elegant cat of foreign type of medium size. Gently rounded top of head with medium width between ears, the type or overall look should be somewhat like a Burmese, but with a sweeter, more open look as the eye shape and brow line does not have the infamous Burmese "frown". The eyes can be any shade of green and are often gold to yellowish in youth, with the green coming in as they mature.

The head is sculptured in appearance, where the rounded top-head, nose profile, short broad muzzle and well-developed chin set the balance. The head is short, with a broad face with full round cheeks tapering to a short blunt triangle. The muzzle is wedge shaped to accommodate a gently dipped nose profile and then tapered at the end to be neither blunt nor pinched.

The Burmilla is more elegant in appearance than the Burmese, not quite as heavy or muscular.



They have slender legs with paws that are neat and oval in shape. The coat is thicker with a silky texture and softer than the "brick in a silk glove" feel of the Burmese. Rather than the short close lying coat of the Burmese, the Burmilla coat should have enough undercoat to provide a slight lift, without being plush. Like all cats, they do shed coat, its just more noticeable in the Burmilla as the hair is white. As the breed progresses breeders are trying to develop a coat that has less undercoat to cut down on shedding. Many Burmilla owners like to wash their cats, the cat is quite co-operative if started when young.

The Burmilla comes in a variety of silver colors, all of which are shaded or tipped having a white undercoat. These colors include Black, Brown and Chocolate silver, Blue and lilac silver, and their genetically sex linked Red, Cream and Tortie silvers. While only the Shaded or Tipped pattern is considered a Burmilla, other patterns, such as Smoke, Self or tabby do exist but are not registrable as Burmilla. With few exceptions. these other patterned cats are recognized in associations around the world as a separate breed, the "Asian".

Due to having Chinchilla in their lines, Burmillas can carry the longhaired gene. This means that it is possible for longhaired kittens to be born to shorthaired parents. The Burmilla Long Hair is a true semi-long hair, a fine silky coat, feathering to the britches, plume and bib. These cats should not require intensive grooming, should not look like a pet quality Chinchilla with a big full coat, short legs and cobby body, extreme short face and little ears. The use of extensive Chinchilla outcrossing is discouraged in this breed. They should be a Burmilla in fancy dress.

The temperament of the Burmilla is quite exceptional, the demanding and mischievous nature of the Burmese mixed with the easy going and laid back personality of the Chinchilla, gives the Burmilla its own unique personality. Impish and mischievous, but quiet and gentle, this sweet natured cat is people oriented and loving. A little lazy, not the curtain climbing athlete like the Burmese, the Burmilla is quite content to lounge on the couch after a bit of playful exercise. In all, an intelligent inquisitive nature and a most affectionate seductive personality are some irresistible qualities of the Burmilla.