

# THE CHARTREUX

*The Unique Blue Cat of France*



by

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This beautiful painting from 1747 entitled '*Magdaleine Pinceloup de la Grange, née de Parseval*' by Jean-Baptiste Perronneau (French, 1715 - 1783) is in the collection of the Getty Museum. The description of this painting includes, "With both hands, Magdaleine grasps a large gray-blue cat that bemusedly engages the viewer. Because of its large size and distinctive coloration, the cat can be identified as a *chartreux*, one of the oldest and most cherished French breeds."





BY  
ORCA STARBUCK

# THE CHARTREUX

## THE UNIQUE & HISTORIC BLUE SHORTHAIR CAT OF FRANCE

### EARLY HISTORY

The Chartreux cat is a natural French breed, with a long and illustrious history going back hundreds of years. Throughout its early history, the Chartreux was distinguished primarily by the blue color of its coat and the woolly texture of its fur. It was also valued for its practical utility, with a reputation as an excellent ratter and faithful companion.

The earliest evidence of the presence of these cats in France comes from the French poet Joachim du Bellay (1522 – 1560). In 1558, du Bellay wrote a poem in memory of a little gray cat named Belaud that he had befriended while living in Rome. The poem itself is quite delightful, praising Belaud's rodent hunting talent as well as the beauty of his features, and listing many details which are reminiscent of our Chartreux of today. Belaud clearly reminds du Bellay of the cats of home, except that he has white markings on his belly; du Bellay contrasts him with "the cats born in France" which are "entirely gray." We therefore infer from the poem that the presence of solid gray-blue cats in France was common knowledge in du Bellay's time, around 1550.

For the first mention of the Chartreux cat by name, however, we must skip forward in time to the *Dictionnaire universel* of Jacques Savary des Brûlons (1657–1716), published posthumously in 1723. Savary was a customs inspector, and his dictionary was developed from terminology that he found useful in the course of his work.

At the end of Savary's entry on the domestic cat and its various colors, he adds a special note: "In addition, there are a few that are bluish. This last type is called Chartreux because of the monks of this name who owned the first of the breed." Referring to Chartreux, we find that it is "the common name for a type of cat which has a blue coat. Furriers do business with their pelts."

Although the blue cats were relatively rare, there must have been enough of them to produce pelts for the fur trade. Similar descriptions appear in other 18<sup>th</sup> century texts, including Diderot's *Encyclopédie*.





De Sève del.

LE CHAT DES CHARTREUX.

G. S. f.

Copper Plate engraving of 'Le Chat des Chartreux'  
from the 'Histoire Naturelle,' by George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon  
Published in Paris in 1756



The Chartreux cat is also described in detail in Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* published in 1756. This important work lists four types of cats that were known at that time in France: the domestic cat, the Angora, the Chartreux, and the Cat of Spain (a tortoiseshell), with detailed engravings. The Chartreux cat is depicted as short haired, but with fur of a slightly wooly texture, compared to the flatter coat of the domestic cat. While the domestic cat is shown in a country kitchen, and the Angora is shown in a luxurious room, the Chartreux is shown standing on an urban rooftop, in keeping with its reputation of roaming the roofs of Paris.

Linnaeus also described these cats in his *Systema Naturae*, giving them the Latin name *catus coeruleus*, "blue cat." In early editions of this text (written in Latin), Linnaeus did not use the name Chartreux for this cat, but later 18<sup>th</sup> century editions identified *catus coeruleus* as the *Chat des Chartreux* of Buffon. An interesting note appears in the modified version of Linnaeus published by Houttyn, 1760: "One notices daily in France that there are people who eat these plump well-nourished cats called Chartreux that are bluish. They eat them roasted or cut up in stews."

Clearly, the Chartreux was well known in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is still left to us to wonder whether these cats formed a distinct population with its own characteristic traits, as in our concept of "breed" today, or whether this name was simply applied to any blue-gray colored cat in France. It does seem possible that given the abundant evidence of pelts being used in the fur trade, the blue cats may have been raised as a distinct breed for their fur and perhaps even for their meat, similar to rabbit husbandry. There may have also been some selection for utility as ratters and companions.

### MONASTERY CATS?

The Chartreux cat has been linked in literature and legend to the Carthusian monks since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. One legend states that a monk of the Carthusian order carried one of the blue cats from South Africa home to France. Others have speculated that the blue cats travelled with knights returning from the Crusades, who brought them from mountainous regions in the East to the French monasteries. The name of the breed is explained by the legend that these cats were selectively bred by the monks.

Stories of "monastery cats" accumulated many charming details over the years. Chartreux cats are known to be particularly quiet, so some say that they "took the vow of silence" with the monks. Some Chartreux even have a peculiar habit of sitting up on their back legs and holding their paws together in a pose that makes them appear to "pray." Indeed, these cats would have been excellent companions for the monks, with their calm and devoted temperament, and renowned ability to hunt rats and mice. It is no wonder that the legend has persisted for centuries.

However, this association with the monks is now believed to be untrue, or at least unlikely, as the monks themselves have no record supporting this claim. Instead, it is now thought that the blue cats may have been named after a type of Spanish wool known as "Pile des Chartreux," which was considered of high quality at the time. There are numerous mentions of Chartreux pelts being used in the fur trade and fashion industry, and the woolly texture of their fur may have reminded traders of this especially fine type of wool.



**Mistigri, Emeraude, and Espiegle de Gerveur, pictured around 1932. The largest cat in the photographs is Mistigri, a male.**

Image: 'La Vie a la Campagne,' April 15, 1935

### **EARLY SELECTIVE BREEDING and THE CHARTREUX OF BELLE-ÎLE**

Cat shows in France began shortly before the year 1900 with a few large shows held in Paris, but the French cat fancy was slow to get started. Philippe Jumaud, a veterinarian, formed the first French cat club in 1913.

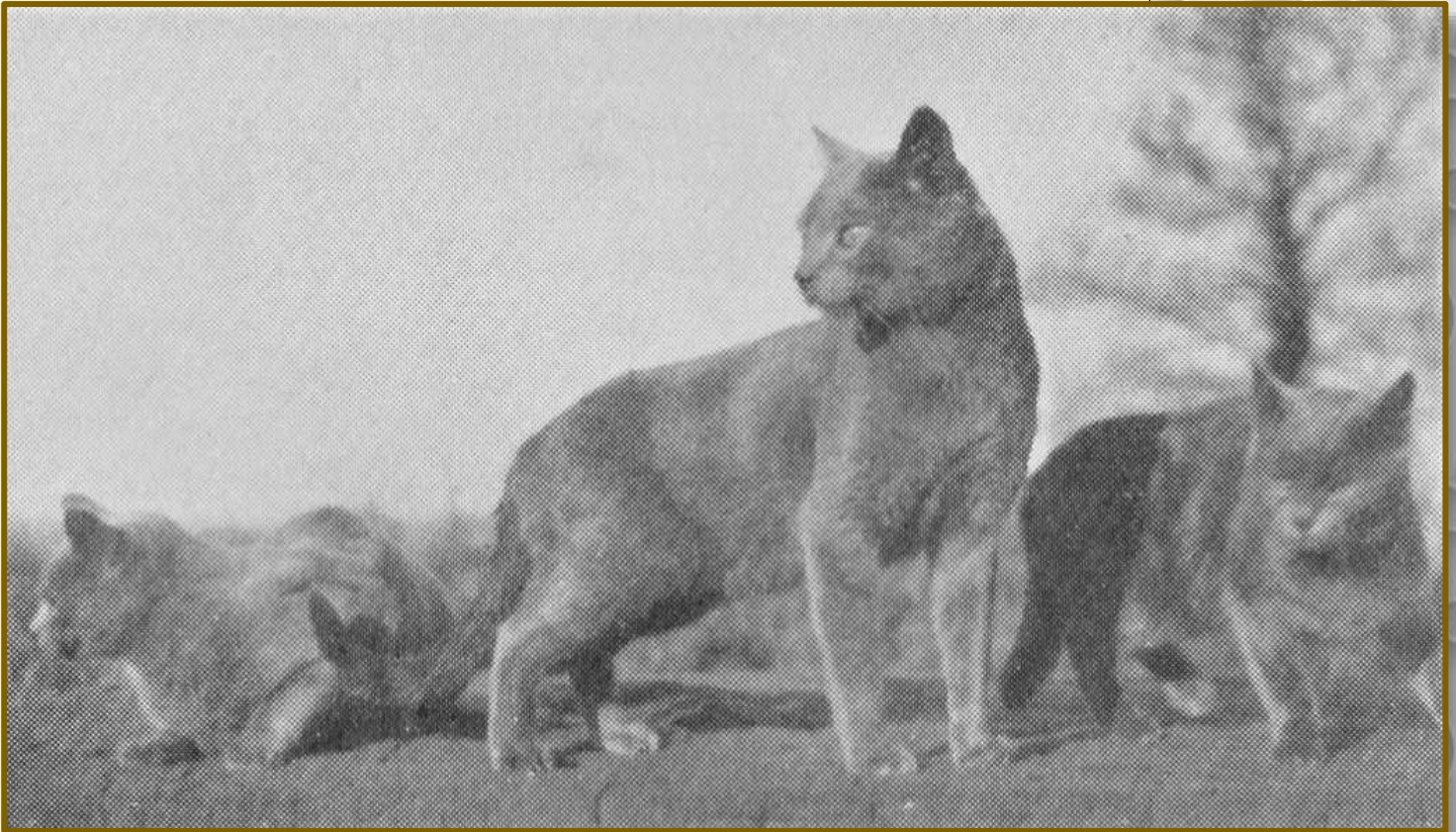
A booklet was released by the club in 1914 with a few breed standards, including a description for the Chartreux that appears to have been copied from older books, and a somewhat unrealistic illustration. There is no evidence for Chartreux breeding at that time in France, however. These early efforts to establish the French cat fancy were interrupted by WWI.

Not long after the war, around 1925, there was a great stroke of luck for the Chartreux breed, in the form of the sisters Christine and Suzanne Léger.

From all accounts, the Léger sisters were rather intense and strong-willed young women. They studied at the National School of Horticulture at Versailles, which was said to be quite unusual for young women of that period, graduating first and second in their class in 1925.

Shortly afterwards, the family moved to Belle-Île, an island in the northwest of France in Bretagne (Brittany). The sisters bought a property of 30 hectares (about 74 acres), planning to make their living there by farming and raising pedigreed animals.





**Mistigri, (centre) flanked by Emeraude, and Espiegle de Gueurveur.**

Image: 'La Vie a la Campagne,' April 15, 1935

After they arrived on Belle-Île, the sisters were intrigued to see a large number of blue-gray cats on the island, both in the main town of Le Palais, and in the countryside.

These cats were particularly numerous around the hospital of Le Palais, and the locals called them "Hospital Cats." Christine and Suzanne had studied Buffon as part of their education, and they immediately associated these blue-gray cats with the Chartreux breed that had been described and pictured by Buffon.

Taking as their foundation stock the cats that were found on the island, they started a breeding program under the cattery name "Gueurveur" and began to exhibit their cats in early French cat shows around 1927.

They quickly achieved remarkable success with a young female cat, Mignonne de Gueurveur. Mignonne became an International Champion and received a special challenge cup in 1931 from Miss Wade (a judge who had travelled from England) who pronounced her to be "the most beautiful Chartreux in the world," presumably comparing her to blue shorthairs she had seen in other countries.

Following this success, Suzanne Léger wrote an important article on the breed, published in the magazine *La vie a la Campagne* in 1935.

In this article, she described the Chartreux as a "reconstituted" ancient breed, referencing Buffon and other texts. She distinguished it from the British Blue and Russian Blue, and included a breed standard.





Left: **IC. Mignonne de Guerueur**  
Image:  
'La Vie a la Campagne,'  
April 15, 1935

Since the Léger sisters had a great deal of education on animal husbandry and also had wide experience with pedigreed dogs and other breeds of cats, they were able to write a very specific and detailed breed standard.

We can assume that their standard accurately describes the type of native French cat that they found on Belle-Île in the 1920s.

Unlike later Chartreux standards, the 1935 standard is based first of all on the female cat with allowances for the male, since prior to this time the most successful example of the breed had been Mignonne.

The standard describes an elegant and relatively slender cat with a long body, legs and tail. Musculature is strong, without being excessively large or massive; the standard actually penalizes excess weight or size. The nose is straight, and the ears are described as being set high on the head, giving the cat an alert look.

Although the Chartreux is always a blue-gray cat with gold eyes, there is considerable variation in shade of both coat and eye color, from lightest to darkest. All of this variation was already present in the original gene pool on Belle-Île, and consequently the full range of shades of coat and eye color is written into the 1935 breed standard.

Coat color is described as a range from the lightest "silver gray" to the darkest "slate blue," with eye color is described as a range from pale gold to deep copper. The range of shades is an important characteristic of this natural breed.

Christine and Suzanne Léger pioneered selective breeding of Chartreux and continued to breed these cats for more than 50 years. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Chartreux breed of today owes its very existence to them. The Léger sisters not only gave us the very important practical contribution of their Chartreux bloodlines created over many decades; but perhaps equally important, they were the first to define the Chartreux as a specific natural breed, native to France, and distinct from other blue cats of the world.



Right: IC Keekey de Champmol, born 1936

# THE CHARTREUX OF THE CAT CLUB DE PARIS

Another group of French breeders in the Massif Central area near Paris began breeding Chartreux in the 1930s. It seems quite likely that they were initially inspired to breed Chartreux because the Léger sisters had sparked interest in this breed in France, but their breeding program had a different philosophy. Instead of seeing the Chartreux first and foremost as a natural breed to be preserved as close as possible to its original type, they wanted to create a more impressive type of shorthaired blue cat, using the native blue cats as raw material. These breeders were associated with the Cat Club de Paris.

Our first knowledge of the Cat Club breeding lines begins in 1936, when a native blue cat from the countryside was bred to a blue Persian from the finest English lines available.

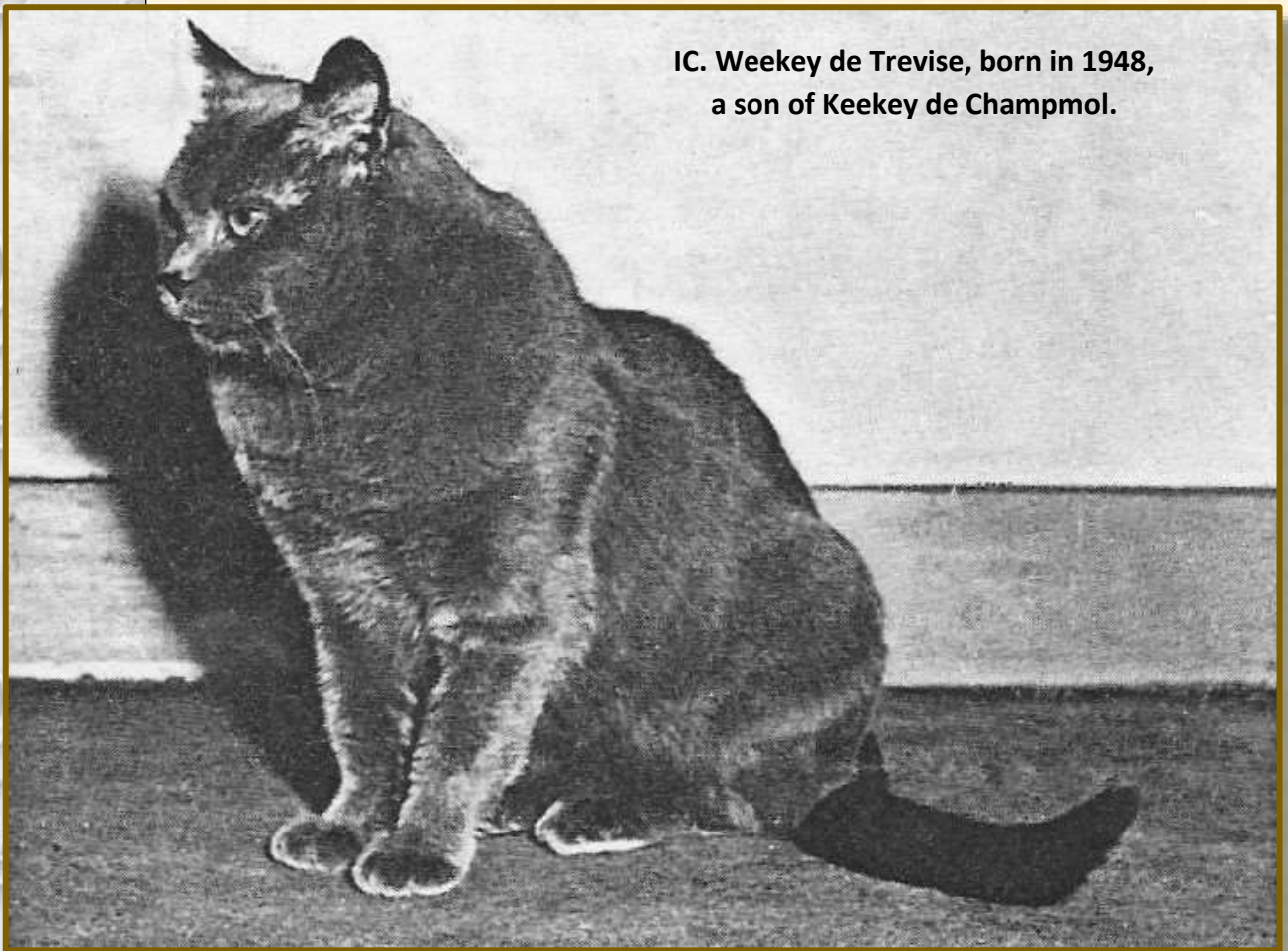
This combination produced Keekey de Champmol, who was to become an International Champion. Keekey was very different from the Chartreux of Belle-Île. Due to the Persian cross, he was significantly more massive, with a rounder head, shorter muzzle, smaller ears, cobbier body type, and shorter legs. He also appears to have had a more luxurious coat than the shorthaired native cats, which would have come from his Persian ancestry. These traits would have made Keekey stand out from the “common cat,” and he was a great success at the shows.

Shortly after the debut of Keekey, in the late 1930s, a relatively short and simple new breed standard was written for the Chartreux. In contrast to the 1935 standard written by Suzanne Léger, the Cat Club standard was written primarily for the male cat, and may have been specifically based on Keekey himself. Great emphasis was placed on the massive and heavy body of this cat. The head was described as “very round” with full jowls, a straight nose and ears placed high on the head. All shades of gray-blue were permitted, as well as all shades of eye color from yellow to orange.

In some ways, the Cat Club standard seems to be meant as a rebuttal to the 1935 standard. From the beginning, the Cat Club standard describes a cat that is “massive and heavy” in every way, in contrast to the 1935 standard, which actually lists penalties for “heavy structure, exaggerated size or weight, heavy or massive head type.”







IC. Weekey de Trevis, born in 1948,  
a son of Keekey de Champmol.

In a note at the end, the Cat Club standard includes the caution that “it is important to eliminate all intermediate forms between the Chartreux and the Russian Blue”; it is possible that these “intermediate forms” may have been intended to refer to the more slender Chartreux of Belle-Île, which were described disparagingly in later publications of the Cat Club.

It seems that the two breed standards, that of the Léger sisters and that of the Cat Club, may have continued to exist in parallel through at least the late 1940s. Perhaps the two standards were in use in different associations. In Marcel Reney’s 1948 book, *Nos Amis les Chats*, the 1935 standard of the Léger sisters is reprinted, along with a photograph of three kittens of elegant appearance, characteristic of the cats of Belle-Île. Ultimately, however, the Cat Club standard was the one that prevailed when FIFE was formed in 1949, and in Madame Marguerite Ravel’s 1955 book *Le Chat*, the Cat Club standard is printed with a note that this is the standard established by the Fédération Féline Française.

### **POSTWAR BREED DEVELOPMENT**

As with many other breeds, the early development of the Chartreux breed was interrupted by World War II. Tucked away on their island, the Léger sisters managed to continue their breeding program throughout the war, despite great hardship. On the French mainland, however, few Chartreux survived the war. We do know that Keekey de Champmol survived, along with his half-sister Trisette, sired by the same Persian but with a different mother. Both Keekey and Trisette produced offspring with other mates that appear in our pedigrees, but their most important contribution was in 1948, when Keekey was bred to Trisette and produced an extremely influential male cat, Weekey de Trevis.



Weekey was to become an International Champion and produce numerous descendants. Photographs of Weekey appeared in many publications from the late 1940s through 1960, so he also had a significant influence on the public perception of Chartreux breed type. Since Weekey was the product of a half sibling mating, and line bred on his Persian grandfather, he exhibited many features similar to the Persians of the 1930s, and was more massive and cobby in type than the typical British Shorthair of his era. He also appears to have had an impressively plush coat, and is likely to have been a longhair carrier.

**Jean Simmonet's first Chartreux.**



**IC. Guilleri d'Andeyola, born in 1957.**

Image: The CFA Foundation, Inc.

In later generations of Cat Club breeding programs, additional outcrosses were added from various sources, including the French countryside, and breeders worked through selection to gradually reduce the influence of the Persian.

Although we don't have many pictures of the Cat Club lines during their development from 1948 to 1960, one very handsome example is Guilleri d'Andeyola, an International Champion born in 1957. Although Guilleri has a slightly shorter muzzle and broader face and body compared to the cats of Belle-Île, he is still much less heavy and coarse than Weekey, with more of what we recognize today as a typical Chartreux appearance.





**Two portrait views of IC. Jimmbo, born 1960.** Photos: The CFA Foundation, Inc.  
**Sire: Vasska (son of two foundation Chartreux)**  
**Dam: Grichette de Sytka (Cat Club bloodlines)**

### **‘JIMMBO’ & HIS SON ‘MICHOU’**

In 1960, a very important male cat named Jimmbo was born, who was to become an International Champion and the best Chartreux of France in his generation.

Jimmbo’s mother was from the Cat Club lines, while his father was the offspring of two foundation Chartreux. Jimmbo was considered to be an ideal example of Chartreux type of his day, free of the unwanted aspects of the Persian influence, while keeping the desired characteristics. Consequently, he was used extensively in breeding programs, and all Chartreux of today can be traced to Jimmbo many times in their pedigrees.

Jimmbo’s son Michou de Fernine also became an International Champion, and was the best Chartreux of France in 1967. In turn, Michou also sired several very influential cats.

Two of Michou’s sons, Taquin de St Pierre and Vandale de St Pierre, were among the first Chartreux imported to the United States by Helen Gamon, the founder of the breed in North America.

Another son of Michou, Titus de St Pierre, went to Belle-Île in 1970 to become part of the Léger sisters’ breeding program, and produced excellent results when bred to the Léger sisters’ females.



## **‘MICHOU’ & SONS - ‘TAQUIN’ & ‘VANDALE’**

Photographs of Jimmbo, Michou, and his sons Taquin and Vandale show that these cats had a distinctive look, with straight profiles, medium length muzzles, high-set ears, low-set jowls, very expressive eyes, and a general appearance of both solidity and refinement.

Although the Persian influence still made these cats more massive in the body than the early Belle-Île cats, the Cat Club had clearly developed a distinct breed type that was not nearly as heavy in appearance, cobby in type, or round-headed as the early generation Persian hybrids, Keekey and Weekey.

**All photos courtesy of The CFA Foundation, Inc.**

Right:

**IC Michou de Fernine, best Chartreux of France 1967.**

**Sire: IC Jimmbo Dam: IC Idole de Bertouget**

Below Left:

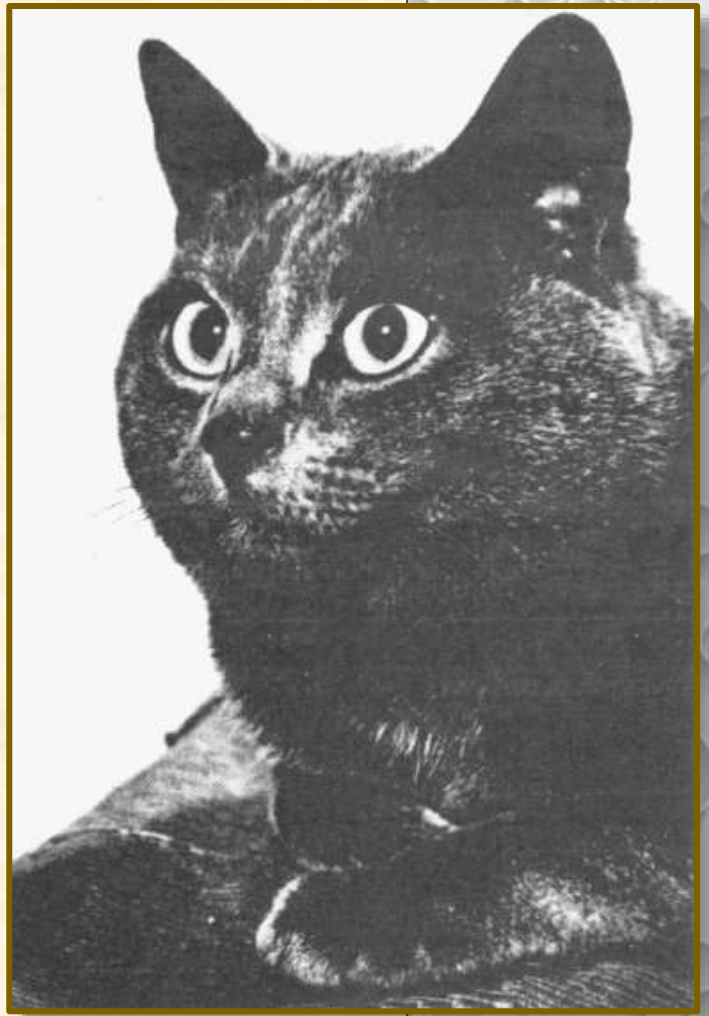
**Taquin de Saint Pierre, born 1970, imported to USA.**

**Sire: IC Michou de Fernine Dam: Nina de Saint Pierre**

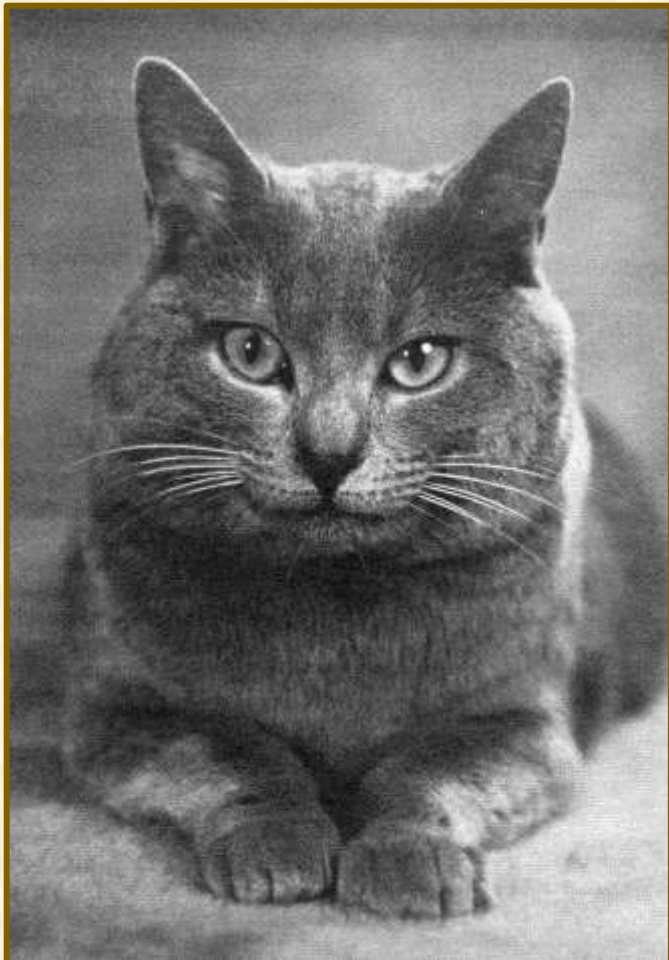
Below Right:

**Vandale de Saint Pierre, born 1972, imported to USA.**

**Sire: IC Michou de Fernine Dam: Roma de Saint Pierre**



**IC. Michou de Fernine**





## JEAN SIMMONET'S EFFORTS to preserve The identity of a UNIQUE FRENCH BREED

Around 1960, a few of the Cat Club breeders began to exchange cats with British Shorthair breeders in England. This seemed to be a very reasonable way to add genetic diversity to both breeds, as the British Shorthair breed was not as different at that time from the Chartreux as it is today. In addition to the practical consideration of reducing inbreeding, some of the Cat Club breeders did not believe that there was an essential difference between the British Shorthair and Chartreux. These breeders saw the British Shorthair as "English Chartreux," and in fact, the imported British Blues did very well in the French shows when registered and shown as Chartreux!

Some of the most important British Shorthair imports of the early 1960s included Bonaventura Beau Brummel (blue male), Pensylva Julia (blue female), and Pensylva Noelle Joyeuse (blue-cream female), all of which achieved the title of International Champion. Photographs of the first-generation crosses between these British Shorthairs and the Chartreux of the Cat Club, show the British Shorthair's influence: with more

rounded heads, wider set ears, broader muzzles with softer contours, shorter noses with more of a dip in the profile, stronger chins, and heavier bone in the legs and feet. Most of these changes were not desired by breeders, although some were welcome (breeders did want to see a stronger chin, for example). Most important, the combination did seem to reduce inbreeding depression and improve health and fertility.

Unfortunately, over the course of the 1960s, the two breeds became increasingly confused. By 1970, most breeders of the Cat Club were working with lines that had been crossed to British Shorthair to some extent, and many of the Chartreux being actively shown were 50% British Shorthair by pedigree or even more.



**CH Broughton Jane, a British blue-cream appearing in Chartreux pedigrees of the 1960s. Her sire was Danehurst Peter, a cream Persian.**  
Image: from *Our Cats Magazine*, February 1957.



Jean Simonnet, later to be considered the "father of the breed" by many Chartreux breeders, was at this time still relatively new to breeding Chartreux. Simonnet's first cat had been Guilleri d'Andeyola, born in 1957. Later on he had purchased a female, Pivoine de St Pierre (a daughter of Michou de Fernine, born 1966), intending to breed her, but without success. After that, in 1969, he had bought a female from the Léger sisters, Sidonie de Guerveur. Simonnet believed strongly in the identity of the Chartreux as a native French breed. He intended to build the foundation for his breeding program upon the Belle Île bloodlines, mated to the lines of the Cat Club with the least British Shorthair influence.

Photo: Jean Simonnet, *Le Chat des Chartreux*.





**Madame Ravel (on right) with two UK judges, Kathleen Yorke & Cyril Yeates, admiring CH. Southway Crusader, a Persian that appears in some Chartreux pedigrees of the 1970s. Image: *Our Cats Magazine*, January 1949.**

In 1971, Madame Marguerite Ravel, President of FIFE and Secretary General of the Cat Club de Paris, published a new edition of her book *Le Chat*, which contained FIFE breed standards along with other information. While in the 1955 edition of her book the Chartreux had been separate from the “Bleu Anglais,” each with its own standard and history, in the new edition the two breeds were combined under one breed standard, entitled “Chartreux (British Blue).” This came as a surprise to breeders, as the change had not been generally announced before the book’s publication. Ravel described the “Chartreux (British Blue)” breed as having been originally created by combining a Persian with a gray countryside cat, and further advised that a Persian should be used every few generations to improve the fur texture and eye color.

A few breeders were indeed doing this cross, as Gisele Barnay wrote in the magazine *La Vie des Bêtes* (October 1972): “From time to time, one offers to a handsome Chartreux a blue or black Persian mate which possesses the same large orange eyes. The result is magnificent.” Barnay’s article includes photographs of IC Sphinx de Bertouget, a handsome cat who nevertheless was only one quarter Chartreux by pedigree, having a Persian father and British grandfather.

As soon as Simonnet received a copy of Ravel’s new book, he wrote a long reply which was published in the Cat Club’s newsletter, *La Vie Feline*. Simonnet expressed his surprise and shock at the elimination of the Chartreux as a distinct breed, as well as at the new summary of its history. He argued that the Chartreux had not been initially created by hybridization with a Persian, but instead had been known since the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a distinct natural breed, and had been selectively bred by the Léger sisters since the 1920s from native French cats.





Ravel published her response to Simonnet in the following issue of *La Vie Feline*. FIFE no longer had a separate breed standard for the Chartreux, she explained, because judges and officials from FIFE and GCCF had met three years before and agreed to combine the Chartreux and British Blue, with the reasoning that “the two cats were made of the same cocktail, a cat with long hair and a cat with short hair.” Both were now to be registered with the same code (16) and judged under the same standard; these standards were in the process of being printed and distributed to the clubs.

Following this exchange, Simonnet was asked by Professor Nouvel, President of the Cat Club de Paris, to investigate the question further and produce additional documentation related to the breed and its history. Fearful that the Chartreux breed would be altogether lost if there was any undue delay, Simonnet applied himself to this research with urgency, and in 1972 produced a paper entitled “*Etude sur le Chat des Chartreux*,” which later formed the basis for his much longer book on the Chartreux.

In 1977, the question of whether to separate the Chartreux and British came up again with FIFE. By this time, Madame Ravel had come over to Simonnet’s side, and FIFE finally separated the two breeds, each under its own breed standard.

There were many positive developments during the 1970s. Simonnet increasingly took on a leadership role in the breed, with other breeders gradually becoming part of his general project: to combine the cats of Belle-Île with the lines of the Cat Club that had the least influence of British Shorthair. Perhaps due in part to the public discussion of the Léger sisters and their work, an increasing number of breeders in France, Belgium, and other European countries took an interest in the cats of Belle-Île and their offspring. Cats from Belle-Île also traveled to the United States and Canada and became a key part of the North American lines.

1970s first generation crosses between Belle-Île and Cat Club bloodlines. Note that Simonnet’s cats were closely related to North American Chartreux of the same era. Ingrid and Ixion de Gueurveur were full siblings, and Titus de St Pierre was a half-brother to Taquin.

**At left, from top to bottom:**

**IC ICARE DE GUERVEUR, born 1973**

**Sire: IC Titus de Saint Pierre    Dam: Titoune de Gueurveur**

**GIC LANCELOT DU VAUMICHON, born 1975**

**Sire: IC Ourson de Conteneuil    Dam: Ingrid de Gueurveur**

**Photos: Jean Simonnet ‘Le Chat des Chartreux’**

**ARISTA NADIA OF GAMONAL, born 1977 (United States)**

**Sire: Ixion de Gueurveur    Dam: Arista Kallista**



During the 1970s, Simonnet's group worked on the construction of a new and more detailed breed standard, in order to better replace the old Cat Club standard. The resulting draft standard was created in 1975. Even though it never became an accepted breed standard on its own, this is still one of the best descriptions of the breed, and the work on the draft standard had a positive influence on the later breed standards in FIFE, LOOF, and the North American associations.

The 1975 draft standard brings together elements from the standards of both the Léger sisters and the Cat Club, just as the breeders of this time were in the process of combining these two bloodlines.

The harmonious unification of these two types of Chartreux is clearly expressed in the draft standard: "A robust cat, while remaining very elegant."

The body is powerful and muscular with a large chest, but it is not cobby in type; "the Chartreux cat should never give the impression of a heavy and fat animal with short legs." The head is large, with full jowls in the adult male. Ears are placed high on the skull, giving the cat an alert appearance. The nose is straight without a break. The coat is short and very dense, slightly wooly and "having the feel of otter fur." The tail is tapered at the end, "carried very often vertically." As with all previous standards, the color in this breed is defined as a range of light and dark shades, with eyes ranging from gold to copper, and coat color ranging from ash to slate.



**GIC Regent du Clos du Lendit,  
born 1980**



**CH Rose Bleue du Vaumichon, born 1980,  
Sire: IC Icare de Gerveur Dam: Ingrid de Gerveur  
Pictured with litter of kittens sired by 'Regent' (above)  
Photos on this page both by: Jean Simonnet, *Le Chat des Chartreux***





**Hugo de Ventadour** – Breeder/Photographer: Serge Ostrogradsky

## A PROMISING FUTURE FOR THE CHARTREUX



**Lacay Bleu Cosmo**  
Breeder/Photographer:  
Lella Febi Fedi

Simonnet's project was ultimately a great success. Chartreux bloodlines that had been heavily crossed with British Shorthair and Persian fell out of favor, and Simonnet's views on the breed became established as canon. From just a handful of French breeders in 1970, fifty years later the breed has now grown to hundreds of breeders in France alone, and is one of the most popular breeds in LOOF, with thousands of kittens registered each year.

Vibrant breeding programs exist all over Europe, North America and Japan. Even the GCCF, birthplace of the British Shorthair, is now in the process of recognizing the Chartreux as a distinct championship breed.

These handsome young males illustrate the range of shades of gray-blue coat color in the Chartreux breed, from dark to light.

The variation of light and dark shades has been observed in the breed since Chartreux of Belle-Île were first described by Suzanne Léger in 1935, and is an important characteristic of our natural breed.





**FIFe SC NW ANGELO BLUE AMBER DVM**

**Breeder: Ivija Līce-Tane**

**Photo: Ludmila Pankova**





**Above Left: CFA GC, BW, RW BLUEBIJOU'S NICHOLAS OF LUTECE**

**Breeder: Carol & Doug Menzel Owner / Photo: Orca Starbuck**

**Above Right: TICA IW, SGC & CFA GC, MABUHAY ILONSE OF CARCHET**

**Breeder: Carla Bizzell Owner: Carole McFadden & Chet Walborn Photo: Larry Johnson**

**Litter: Alex Blue Amber, FIFe GIC Anabella Blue Amber, FIFe IC Angelina Blue Amber,**

**and FIFe SC NW Angelo Blue Amber DVM**

**Breeder: Ivija Līce-Tane Photo: Ludmila Pankova**





**Top: CFA GC, MABUHAY ILLUSION – Breeder: Carla Bizzell Photo: Larry Johnson**

**Left: FIFe GIC, ANABELLA BLUE AMBER – Breeder: Ivija Līce-Tane Photo: Ludmila Pankova**

**Right: IPSIMAE DES BLEUS D'YTTRIUM – Breeder/Photo: Isabelle Noël**





**Opium, Oxalys, and O'Calypso de la Vimeusi re (RIA4)**

**These kittens have a foundation cat from Belle- le in the fourth generation.**

**Breeder/Photographer: Patricia Dourin**

### **LOOF'S RIA PROGRAM: KEEPING THE FOUNDATION STRONG**

Although we have much greater numbers now, Chartreux everywhere in the world still go back to the same small set of bloodlines from the 1970s, with the most important cats like Jimmbo appearing over and over again. Where are breeders to find fresh outcross lines today?

Outcrossing to any established breed such as Persian or British Shorthair would be a horrifying idea to any Chartreux breeder of today, as these breeds have become much more extreme over the years, and are now far too different from the Chartreux to be of any use.

French breeders today follow in the steps of the L ger sisters, bringing in new foundation cats found on Belle- le and in the French countryside.

LOOF's RIA program allows cats with unknown ancestry to be registered on the basis of appearance. If several judges agree on a cat's close resemblance to Chartreux type, the cat can be registered as a first-generation foundation cat. Each generation in the RIA program must be exhibited and judged as excellent in order to be eligible for breeding.

After four generations, the offspring of the RIA line have full registration and can be used freely in breeding programs. In recent years, the RIA program has produced outstanding Chartreux that have reached the highest levels of championship competition in Europe.



**At Right:**

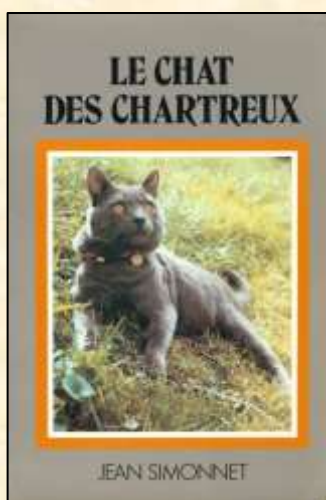
**FIFe NW16 CH Leonidas de la Chabanade JW (RIA4)**

**Breeder: Claire Luciano**

**Owner/Photographer: Davor Anić**

## DEDICATION

This article is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Jean Simonnet, who passed away on December 18, 2016. Honorary President of the Cat Club de Paris, Founder and President of the Club du Chat des Chartreux. His book, *Le Chat des Chartreux*, is still an important reference work for Chartreux breeders. Jean Simonnet was a great expert on this breed, its history and bloodlines, as well as a kind and helpful friend to Chartreux breeders all over in the world.



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