



RAKESHA GINGERNUT

FULL REGISTER
CINNAMON
POINT
TEMPLECAT

BORN
OCT 18, 2000

BEST NBC
EXHIBIT 2002

BRED BY
JUNE MATEER

BREED NAME (CURRENT)	TEMPLECAT
BREED NAME (Archaic/Historical/Allegorical)	"Birman Shorthair" "Tsuncatz"
PERIOD (dates)	28 th January 1995.
FOUNDATION CAT/S	Delavar Tabitha (Birman) / Noblenook Hershey
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS	Short plush coat on a Birman type cat, with same markings.
GEOGRAPHIC (Genetic Origin-Country)	BURMA
GEOGRAPHIC (Genetic Origin-State/County)	Western Burma (Unidentified)
GEOGRAPHIC (Genetic Origin-Locale)	The Temple of Lao Tsun (Location Unidentified)
GEOGRAPHIC (Developmental Foundation)	New Zealand, North Island
GEOGRAPHIC (Developmental History)	Pakuranga, Auckland, New Zealand
ORIGIN CATEGORY (Historical)	Domestic -Regional / Hybrid / Selected Semi-Shorthair
ORIGIN MORPHOLOGY	Shorten coat on Established Breed/Introduce New Colours.
ORIGIN PREMISE	Created / Conforms to Selection Criteria / Preservation
MANIFESTATION 1. (Coat)	White Gloves (Front paws) and Gauntlets (Rear paws) on Semi-Shorthair Pointed coat pattern. Plush coated.
MANIFESTATION 2. (Physical Structure)	Introduction of Cinnamon & Fawn into point colours.
GENETIC REFERENCE	Moderate physique, but with distinctive Roman profile to nose.
INHERITANCE	Cheeks full with rounded muzzle.
FIRST RECOGNITION	Not applicable
ACCEPTANCE / RECOGNITION	Recessive pointed pattern. Dominant White Spotting.
BREED GROUPING (Show Grouping)	CATZ Inc. August, 2001 as Provisional Breed with NBC status.
CHAMPIONSHIP (REGISTRY & DATE)	CATZ Inc.
PARENT BREED TO: (1st Degree)	SEMI-LONGHAIR BREED GROUP /LONGHAIR Show Division
HISTORICAL HEALTH ISSUES	CATZ Inc. 2004.
	Not Applicable
	None known. Birman Blood Group Compatibility & PKD possible.



BY
JOHN SMITHSON

THE TEMPLECAT

A CAT BREED FOR THE 21st CENTURY

ORIGINS AND FOUNDATION

As to what actually constitutes a “breed” is in itself a matter of debate and much conjecture in the world of fancy cats, but less so for a naturalist – who would see the domestic cat as one breed with many sub-varieties or mutations. Then secondary to that, is the debate as to whether coat length of itself justifies classification of a ‘variation’ as a separate breed within the fancy. That debate continues to this day, but history has shown that until now, that coat length has been regarded by fanciers as justification for a new breed or variety name. Let’s briefly take a look at some examples. The Somali, which is of course, the longhaired equivalent of the Abyssinian; - the Balinese, which in most registries, is the longhaired equivalent of the Siamese; - or the Highland Fold, (not in fact from the Highlands!), as the longhaired equivalent of the Scottish Fold; - or the Cymric, as the longhaired equivalent of the Manx.

But as Longhair is a recessive gene, it tends to be more difficult for a breeder to justify their desire to ‘reject’ long hair in favour of a shorthaired version of the same structured cat! The Exotic shorthair is a strong case in point. The challenge was to replicate the Persian type with a short coat – knowing full well that any structural inadequacies could no longer be hidden by a flowing coat, and that they would have their work cut out to make these cats competitive. But succeed they ultimately did, but not without antagonism at first, and when it came to their Longhaired counterparts born in the same litters, a virtual total rejection of the these ‘variant longhairs’ as Persians.

This really comes back to the basic premise, that structure - or type, is what *usually* determines a breed. Colloquial expressions such as ‘if it looks like a duck, and walks like a duck, and it quacks like a duck, then it IS a duck!’ come to mind. The political issue for registries, is how to allow development of a new breed, or colour variety within an existing breed, without alienating those who are passionate about the purity of the bloodlines they have worked so hard to maintain over multiple generations. The answer is of course, to ensure that in registering such variations, genetic markers, codes, or numbers need to be recorded in both the register and on pedigrees so that the ‘purists’ are protected, while the ‘adventurers’ are allowed to pursue their dream. If there had not been dreamers wishing to pursue the pointed pattern in a Persian cat, it would not have been possible without such allowances.

How well I recall attending a Persian Breed Council meeting at the CFA Annual in Chicago when the debate was raging about what were then termed ‘Longhaired Exotics’, (which at that time could not be shown), knowing that in some parts of the world they were already treated as full Persians. The purist lobby on that occasion was strong, and I could fully understand their feelings on the issue, but the fact was, they had been unwittingly misled by their understanding of the history of their breed, just as earlier Boards had unwittingly not realised that they had created a precedence in accepting a Division of Persians which were already in fact ‘Longhaired Exotics’ in the terminology of the time (1995).

At that meeting, I was an attendee and delegate, and raising my hand to speak, was duly acknowledged and stood to deliver my bombshell. I feigned ignorance, and simply asked if the Himalayan Division was in Championship, and of course, was duly told, ‘of course!’



**Chocolate Point Birman female 'Rakesha Romance' bred by June Mateer
Sire: Ch. Larouge Christine's Bardot. Dam: Rakesha Jazz Singer. Born: September 25, 1997**

I then countered by declaring 'that if that was the case,' (which I knew it was) 'then it was already too late, as the horse had well and truly bolted!' There was a stunned silence for a moment or two, and then someone asked me to explain. I replied that "as Himalayans were themselves the product of a Persian to Siamese cross, selectively bred to purposefully steal the coat colour from Siamese and then bred back to the parent Persian breed to eventually create Pointed Persians, that they already had tens of thousands of registered Persians in Championship that were under the terms of their own definitions, EXOTIC LONGHAIRS!" I sat down, while this statement was digested by those attending. I am sure that some were thinking, 'who the heck let him in!'

I can look back at that now and laugh, as we know that since then, the Exotic Longhair has indeed been accepted as a Persian for competitive show purposes, and when I recounted this episode in a conversation on this subject with Lorraine Shelton in 2018, she laughingly declared, 'I remember that! Was that really you?!' I raise this now, only to show that it is more difficult for a shorthaired variant of an established longhaired parent breed to gain recognition for its establishment, than it is for a longhaired variant of an established shorthaired parent breed.

What is really needed, is a new attitude by registries towards breed development. Too often we have shunned the champions of new varieties or breeds, until decades have passed and necessity due to breed popularity finally pressures a registry to act. Cases in point here are the Ragdoll, and the Bengal, both of which were controversial in their development and recognition.



**Mrs. June Mateer at home with Seal Lynxpoint Birman male 'Rakesha Woven Threads'
Sire: Dhyana Shilavarga. Dam: Rakesha Nottingham Lace. Born: October 17, 1998**

With the Ragdoll there was much controversy over the mixed heritage, with the Bengal there was controversy over the mixture of domestic and wild blood, and certainly in the case of F1 and F2 crosses, the difficulty of fertility which is often the case when two species are mixed. While some of the early concerns were justified depending on your point of view, the fact remains that the real judge is the court of public opinion!

To the public, the Ragdoll and the Bengal appealed immensely, and the hand of registries was duly forced to recognise that to deny them recognition was financially irresponsible! So, this then begs the question, it is all about revenue? Or survival as a registry? Or is there another answer to this question? – one which should really be about analysing the reasons behind attempting to establish a variety... but I will leave that thought with you.

In the case of the Templecat, this breed or variety is essentially a shorthaired Birman. Its development was more accidental than planned, as originally the first cross was done with the intention of introducing the colour 'cinnamon' into a experimental Birman breeding program. But as it also produced shorthairs, then the prospect of a shorthaired Birman cat was only a secondary fact of practicality, which independently gained an impetus of its own, and over time became the *primary* focus of a new breeding program.

The champion in this case was Mrs. June Mateer, of Auckland in New Zealand – who was already an established Birman breeder of excellent repute and a sharp follower of genetics. It was her desire and success to introduce Cinnamon into a developmental line of Birmans, which then resulted in the establishment of the Templecat breeding program. In fact, it was her veterinarian) Ian Holmes who, upon regularly examining her shorthaired Birman lookalikes as pets when they came in to be vaccinated prior to going to their new pet homes, suggested that such healthy, charming kittens should be developed into a recognised breed in their own right!



**Above: 'Rakesha Nicodemus' owned by L. Hepple. Seal Tabbypoint Templecat. DOB: January 4,2008
Sire: Ch. Rakesha Woven Threads Dam: Rakesha Fawn Fantasia (Fawn Point Templecat). Photo: L. Hepple.**



Chocolate Point Templecat kittens in 2011. Photo: June Mateer

That which follows, is in the first instance, an article I wrote about the Templecat in 2011, a full 16 years after the first filial cross, ten years after it had been adopted by CATZ Inc as an NBC breed, and 7 years after it had gained recognition as a Championship breed. It should be read with that contextual setting in mind. It shows the early progression of the breed as it was developed, along with a mix of images of breeding cats, the occasional show cat and numerous Templecats that were sold as pets. As the founder of this breed is now retired and as an octogenarian can no longer devote the time to continue development of the breed, her valuable lines have been faithfully conserved by a new generation of breeders who have risen to the challenge of maintaining and enlarging the gene pool. That story follows on from this first one.

THE TEMPLECAT

'FOUNDATIONS' - AN EXCERPT FROM 'THE ALCHEMY OF CAT BREEDS'

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The Templecat was the brain-child of June Mateer, a well-known Birman breeder of long standing who had also served on the Genetics Advisory Committee of the New Zealand Cat Fancy and who later served on the Genetics Advisory Board of CATZ Inc, and in due course became Director of Corporate Services and Registrar for CATZ Inc.

The main purpose was to create a shorthaired version of the Birman – (The Sacred Temple Cat of Burma), famous for its sparkling white gloves and gauntlets, pointed coat colour and deep blue eye colour. This action was seen as similar to what had been achieved by developing the new Breed known as the Exotic Shorthair, simply by mating full Persians to a variety of different Shorthair cats, and then taking the first shorthair progeny and mating only back to the parent breed, the Persian. The practical application of this process, it would seem could therefore equally be applied the to the Birman breed to produce a Shorthaired Birman.



Littermates: Rakesha Gingernut (Cinnamon Point male) and Rakesha Golden Girl (Fawn Point female)
Born October 18, 2000 Photos: June Mateer

AN ALTERNATIVE BEGINNING

However, the Templecat was not the original purpose of the first outcross and the program to develop the Templecat (or Birman Shorthair as it was originally known) was in fact the by-product of a different experimental breeding program designed originally and solely for the purpose of breeding Cinnamon and Fawn pointed Birmans. The program was approved and conducted under the registration rules of the Provisional Register of the New Zealand Cat Fancy.

The first and only outcross was therefore to a shorthaired cat, namely a Cinnamon Spotted Tabby Oriental Shorthair, by the name of Noblenook Hershey. This mating had been done with colour and the retention of the pointing in mind. The full Birman female he was mated to was Delavar Tabitha, a seal-point, who had herself been sired by a Rakesha Birman male bred by June Mateer, "Ch.Rakesha Zachari".

The resultant litter, born on January 28, 1995, included a Gen 1 Sealpoint Shorthaired male, "Rakesha A Touch of Spice" and a Chocolate Classic Tabby Shorthair female, "Rakesha A Touch of Class". So although only one Birman Shorthair resulted as far as colour and pattern were concerned, the female being non-pointed, was still useful to the breeding program. But in "Rakesha A Touch of Spice" the breeding program for the Birman Shorthair had truly begun. However, at this early stage, the fact that he was shorthair was not the controlling factor, but rather, that he was a Gen 1 Birman carrying Cinnamon!

Over the years I have heard many Birman breeders complain about the use of an Oriental Shorthair to establish the line, but it is important to remember that what is critical here is the introduction of the gene for short hair, (which could have been achieved with almost any type of shorthaired cat) but also the reintroduction and reinforcement of the pointing gene, which must be present on both sides of the pedigree to reappear.

The Oriental of course, carried the Himalayan pointed pattern, a necessary ingredient. The question of type is also irrelevant, since the breeding program was established with the intention of always going back to the parent breed Birman in successive generations, just as Persian breeders had done with the Exotic shorthair, and thereby reintroducing and reinforcing the parent breed type in a very short time.

THE FIRST HISTORICAL TEMPLECATS

And for the Birman purists who thought that it was sacrilegious to hybridise their "Sacred Temple Cat", the Birman as a breed had in fact already been extensively hybridised, since the



Rakesha Whiskey (Lilac Tabby Point) and Rakesha Willy Nilly (Chocolate Tabby Point)

Photo: Owner: J. Wakefield

Birman female SITA had given birth to the only pure Birman litter in 1920, in Nice, France, and a female kitten from that litter named “Poupee” was considered at that time to be the perfect example of a Birman. But without a male for “Poupee” to be bred to, she herself had been outcrossed to a Siamese cat, in order that the breed could be re-established.

Much later, after the Second World War, when only a small cache of the Birman breed remained, the breed was re-established a second time with the addition of other longhaired breeds, mostly composed of early Colourpoint (Himalayan) bloodstock.

So, in fact, by using an Oriental, itself a product of a Siamese, June was simply repeating an exercise that had already taken place with one of the foundation Birman cats, “Poupee”.

On consideration therefore, the very first Gen 1 Shorthair Birmans, would have actually been produced by “Poupee” herself as the entire litter from this mating between a Birman (Longhair) and a Siamese (Shorthair) would ALL have been shorthaired! (Shorthair is dominant over longhair). Furthermore, these first-generation **hybrid** Birman Shorthairs **would be in the pedigrees of every Birman cat produced since that mating in the early 1920's.**

THE QUEST FOR CINNAMON

By using this particular Oriental shorthair, June Mateer had cunningly introduced a stunning new range of colours and patterns. In one step, she had introduced Cinnamon into a Birman type breeding program and also a new source of the Tabby Pattern. She had now also included, even if unwittingly at this early juncture, the distinct possibility of a new breed, in the form of the Birman Shorthair.

Rakesha A Touch of Spice was subsequently retained as the new core of the breeding program and worked young as a stud. He was duly bred to a full register Chocolate Tabby point Birman,



Rakesha Quasar Blue (Blue Point Neuter) and Rakesha (Blue Tabby Point Spay)

Photo: Owners B. & J. Skinner

Rakesha Jazz Singer and on November 5, 1995 was born the second generation of Birman Shorthair kittens. This litter included two cats critical to the ongoing breeding program, “Rakesha Bruno Bear”, a Chocolate point Longhair and “Rakesha Bon Bon”, a Chocolate point shorthair.

June retained both for breeding, “Bruno” being a key cat in the existing program to eventually produce a Cinnamon or Fawn point Birman and “Bon Bon” for the same reason, not because she was shorthaired and could produce shorthairs, as that program had not yet really begun and was in reality, some years away.

Within 18 months these two were bred together in the hope of pulling through the recessive genes for Cinnamon, that were likely to be carried by both parents.

The gamble paid off, and although by breeding brother to sister, June sacrificed advancement by one generation on the NZCF Provisional Register, she succeeded in producing the first Fawn point Birman Shorthair, (Gen 3 from the first outcross) but officially Gen 2. This was “Rakesha Chanterelle”, born on April 15, 1997.

This breeding was repeated, and on September 1, 1997, the first Cinnamon point Birman Shorthair was produced in “Rakesha Café Royale”.

Like his grandfather “A Touch Of Spice “(The first Birman Shorthair), “Café Royale” worked relatively young as a stud and was bred to a full Birman female, a lilac point, Xamela Minkara.

This produced a third generation Chocolate point Birman Shorthair female, “Rakesha Destiny” on October 1, 1998. June saw “Destiny” as a potentially valuable cat, as she was a Gen 3 cat, carrying Longhair and Cinnamon and therefore possibly only one step away from producing a full register Cinnamon-point Birman (Longhair).



Chocolate Tabby Point Templecats 'Rakesha Willy Nilly' and Lilac Tabby Point 'Rakesha Whiskey'
Note the plush coats, described by founder June Mateer as 'Birmans in Polar Fleece'

Photo: Owner J. Wakefield

In the same month, "Café Royale's" older fawn-point sister "Chanterelle", who had been bred to a full register Bluepoint Birman, Dhyana Shilavarga, produced a Blue point Birman Longhair, "Rakesha Double Delight" on October 17, 1998.

As it happens, both Gen 3 females, Chocolate-point "Rakesha Destiny" and Blue-point "Rakesha Double Delight" would play an important part in sealing the final stages of production, especially when their lines were worked together into a pedigree. When "Double Delight's" dam "Chanterelle" was outcrossed to a Seal-point full register Birman "Westview El Morocco" this produced a Gen 3 Seal-point Birman male, "Rakesha Dupontii," on March 30, 1999.

Double Delight (also known as Dee Dee) was subsequently bred to full Birman Chocolate-point Ch. Larouge Christine's Bardot of Rakesha, and this produced a chocolate-point full register Birman "Rakesha Emile" on 16th November, 1999. A full register Birman which may carry Cinnamon....

"Dupontii" was subsequently retained and bred to "Destiny" to produce a Gen 3 Cinnamon-point Birman (Longhair) "Rakesha Fudge Frosting" on 1st March 2000. June's quest for a full register Cinnamon-point Birman, was now very close to fruition.

A CHANGE OF PLAN

However it was during the period between mid-1999 and 2000 that June's veterinarian sowed the seeds of suggestion as to the development of the Birman Shorthair as a new breed. Over the years that June had been seeking the elusive Cinnamon and Fawn-pointed Birmans, there had been produced, a good number of shorthairs, mostly retained for the furtherance of that



Chocolate Tabby-point “Rakesha Willy Nilly” and Lilac Tabby-point “Rakesha Whiskey.” relaxing at home. These two are much loved pets owned by Juliette Wakefield of Auckland. Photo: J. Wakefield.

aim of achieving this singular goal of Cinnamon and Fawn-pointed Longhairs. But any shorthairs which were considered as not necessary to the furtherance of that aim, were originally sold as pets.

These “shorthaired Birmans” had become popular with pet owners and over those early years, the vet had seen many fine examples of the shorthaired variety and was enamoured with them.

He suggested to June, that perhaps there was indeed a place for a short-haired Birman breeding programme in the world of pedigreed cats and as an alternative option for lovers of Birman breed who perhaps did not want to own a long-haired cat.

One only has to look at the history of the Birman Cat in New Zealand to note that the Birman had grown from relative obscurity in the mid 1970’s to amazing heights of popularity by the mid 90’s.

A catalogue from the first All Birman Show, hosted by the Birman Cat Club of New Zealand held in Papatoetoe on June 29, 1985, shows no less than 85 exhibits in competition and 4 on exhibition.

This was a phenomenal effort, even on a world scale. And this amazing achievement would soon be super-ceded, with even bigger shows into the 1990’s, several with well over 100 plus Birman exhibits.

With this incredible growth, at one point in the history of the Birman Cat Club of New Zealand, the membership of the club exceeded 300 individuals! It was by far the largest breed specialty club in New Zealand and the quality of New Zealand Birmans was beginning to be recognised worldwide.



Templecat pets, showing their gloves and gauntlets (laces)

Photo: J. Wakefield

THE BIRMAN SHORTHAIR

So by this time, June had now considered the options and had come to the same conclusion as her vet, that perhaps as well as continuing her quest for a full register Cinnamon-point Birman, why not also benefit from the 5 generations of pedigree building and acknowledge that the option of a Birman Shorthair (perhaps under a new breed name) was a good option, which could possibly also win favour with a New Zealand Birman-friendly public.

The Year 2000 was a critical one for both sides of the breeding program. A breeding between the Gen 3 Chocolate-point Birman “Rakesha Dupontii” and Gen 3 Birman Shorthair “Rakesha Destiny” (who was very appropriately named), produced a Gen 3 Cinnamon-point Birman “Rakesha Fudge Frosting”, who has since left a lasting legacy in the subsequent development of the Templecat. Then toward the end of the year, when “Emile” (a full Register Birman), was also bred to the same “Rakesha Destiny”, this produced the first full register Birman Shorthair, who just also happened to be a Cinnamon-point! A new century and a new breed with a full 5 generation register status had been achieved!

The cat in question was “Rakesha Gingernut” who is featured in the lead photograph of this chapter. “Gingernut” was a superbly built cat, and in the six generations it took from the original outcross to produce him, you can see from the photograph that he is a comparably typed Birman of substance. No faults can be hidden behind long hair, this is essentially a Birman cat of excellent type and for those of us who have had the privilege of handling him and judging him he had a better Roman profile, as described in the Birman standard than many a full Birman longhair, and his colour was both unique and superb. This cat, whose overall excellent type and rich colour won me over to the cause of the Templecat, also had the excellent temperament of all the “Rakesha” Birmans.



Templecat pets at rest, the perfect short-haired cat for the home or apartment.

Photo: J. Wakefield.

And amazingly, in this same litter (born October 18, 2000) was produced the first full register Fawn-point Birman Shorthair, "Rakesha Golden Girl". Truly a golden result from an amazing breeding queen.

A NEW MAJOR DEVELOPMENT

Then in March 2001, CATZ Inc, a new New Zealand National Registry was formed. June Mateer was one of its early supporters and she saw this as an opportunity to seek recognition for the new Birman Shorthair breed, under its own breed name.

The hard yards had already been done, and she could produce a full six generations of New Zealand Cat Fancy registrations, with "Gingernut" and "Golden Girl" already registered as 4th generation full register Birman Shorthairs with the NZCF. So June also registered her breeding stock with CATZ Inc, and in fact the first cat to be registered on the CATZ Inc Experimental Register was her Gen 3 female "Rakesha Destiny", the dam of both "Gingernut" and "Golden Girl".

In due course, application was made to CATZ Inc. for breed recognition, along with full pedigrees showing the entire process of breed development from the initial outcross to full register status with the NZCF. For several months there had been discussion on possible breed names, one of which was "Tsuncatz", taken from the name of the legendary temple from where the Birman history is said to have begun. But June settled on the name "Templecat" and this was included in her final submission to the Board of Directors.

The Board of CATZ Inc. ultimately granted recognition to the breed under the breed name "Templecat" in August 2001, granting the Templecat **Provisional Breed Status** with the ability to be shown in the **New Breed and Colour** (NBC) Show Category only.



A NEW ERA FOR TEMPLECATS AT SHOWS

TICA Judge Pascale Portelas explaining to exhibitors, what she looks for in a Birman, at a CATZ Inc. show held in 2009.

The Chocolate Point Birman is 'Rakesha Fine N Dandy' who won Best All-Breed Championship Cat.

His sire, was the Templecat 'Rakesha Gingernut'

THE TEMPLECAT AT SHOWS

In 2002, "Rakesha Gingernut" (Cinnamon Point Shorthair) was shown in this non-championship show category and was the first Templecat ever be exhibited under the breed name. At one show, he was subsequently placed Best NBC exhibit by Australian Judge Bambi Joy Edwards.

Now the quest for continued improvement and consistency in type of the Templecat, took on new meaning. June Mateer also began producing good quality Seal Tabby-point Templecats with breedings between her Templecat females and her excellent Tabby-point "Ch. Rakesha Woven Threads" an impressive Seal Tabby-point male, carrying chocolate and dilute.

By late 2003, a lilac-point Birman Granddaughter of "Rakesha Fudge Frosting", "Rakesha Tudor Rose", was bred to "Gingernut" and this produced another Cinnamon-point male Templecat, "Rakesha Zenith of Trelliams" on January 23, 2004. (Co-owned by Lee Williams).

Also in 2004, three years after the breed had been granted Provisional Breed Status, the Templecat was upgraded to Championship status with CATZ Inc. and the first Templecats could now compete on a level playing field with other qualifying Championship breeds.

"Rakesha Zenith of Trelliams" went on to become a CATZ Inc. Templecat Champion. A repeat breeding then subsequently produced "Rakesha Fawn Fantasia", a Fawn-point Templecat female on November 21, 2005.

In the same litter was produced the Chocolate-point Birman "Rakesha Fine N Dandy" who went on to win many Best in Shows and the title of CATZ Inc. Supreme Double Grand Champion.

Among his many BIS wins were Best in Shows under TICA Judges, Karen McInchak in 2007, Pascal Remi in 2008 and Pascale Portelas in 2009.



Much-loved and renown Birman breeder of 'Trelliams' cattery fame, National Chairman of CATZ Inc. & Judge the late Lee Williams, presents the Himalayan male GC Helenca Seal With A Kiss, her selection for Best Cat in Show.

By now, June had passed "Zenith", to long-time friend, Birman breeder, CATZ Inc. Chairwoman and Longhair Specialty Judge, Lee Williams, so that she too could further the Templecat breeding program.

Lee already had long proven credentials and considerable renown through New Zealand as a breeder of top Birmans. Her speciality was in Seals, Reds and Tortie-point Birmans and she had already garnered wins at NZCF National Shows with two of her famous Tortie-points, one of which took Best Cat at a National Show under the TICA Judge, Phillipe Noel.

Lee bred "Rakesha Zenith of Trelliams" (the Templecat male) to her own "Iddibiddi Tuscany Sky", a full register Blue Tortiepoint Birman and this produced both a Sealpoint Templecat that she named "Trelliams Practically Perfect" and a Blue-point named "Trelliams Shorter N Sweeter".

"Trelliams Practically Perfect" was an extraordinarily well-marked example of the Birman Shorthair, and as we can tell from her kitten photograph on the opposite page, her gloves and gauntlets (laces) were indeed, practically perfect.

Having handled this cat myself, I can personally vouch for the fact that her gloves met the standard and her gauntlets were perfectly spearhead to half way up the hocks, so that in her markings were indeed as her name suggests, practically perfect!

As a kitten she was the first entire Templecat to gain a Best in Show Kitten award from TICA Judge Yuki Hattori of Japan.

HEALTH ISSUES?

June and Lee have reported no health issues of any significance, and it should be noted that the foundation stock has shown no propensity for any major health issues, and this is supported by the vets own personal support for the breed over a sixteen year period (Ed: now 25 years!). Nevertheless, as the foundation stock will continue to be bred back to the parent



Ch. Trelliams Practically Perfect, a Seal-point Templecat, shown here as a kitten. The first entire Templecat to win a Best In Show, on this occasion under TICA AB Judge Yuki Hattori (Japan).

Birman breed, then care must be taken to recognise that in Birmans themselves, there have historically been issues surrounding blood compatibility (with breeding stock), and this needs to be recognised and tested for in possible introductions of new Birman lines into any future Templecat breeding program.

COAT STANDARD, & THE FUTURE

The only difference between the Standard of Excellence (Standard of Points) for the Templecat and the Birman, is in the description of the coat. In all other respects it is exactly the same. The description for the coat is as follows:

Short and thick, although slightly longer than most other shorthair breeds, with no undercoat. All Traditional Himalayan pointed colours are accepted, including Cinnamon & Fawn. ***The only allowable outcross for a Templecat is a Birman.***

At the time of writing, it is now more than 16 years and 7, 8 and 9 generations to the current breeding lines. Although the Templecat is still in its infancy as a breed on the world stage, the hard groundwork has clearly been done and the initial standard set, has been very high. It's now only a matter of time before the breed is taken up by other open-minded Birman breeders who truly love the Birman and are willing to share in this dream of the Templecat and the unique colours and warmth of this wonderful breed, which truly had its **first genesis** with one of the best and earliest Birman cats, "Poupee".

Having seen more Templecats than most, I firmly believe that they have the potential to become extremely popular as ***a breed for the new millennium*** and very worthy ambassadors of the "Temple of Lao Tsun".

(ED: Note, that in the interim period, the Templecat has now been recognised by the New Zealand Cat Fancy and adjustments made to the original standard, around coat texture.)