

# Cats

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## THE FANCY

1972 Directory. 20-56  
At the Shows . . . 56  
To Show and Go . 57

## FEATURES

Cover . . . . . 2  
Editorial . . . . . 2  
Readers Write . . . 4  
Few Lines . . . . . 10  
Question Box . . . 12  
P.O.M. . . . . 14  
Cats Confidential 15  
Arabella . . . . . 61  
Back Fence . . . . 71

## ARTICLES

Cat Photography . 6  
Jane Martinke . . . 8  
Stepcat . . . . . 11  
Don Shaw . . . . . 16  
The Bristol . . . . 18

Photo—The Allens

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Havenwood's Taga



A DEVELOPING BREED—

## THE BRISTOL

by Patricia Elliott

THE ORIGINS OF the new breed which we call the Bristol Cat are rooted in a nondescript, many-colored cat who was adopted by a United States Army captain and his family during a stay in Australia. The cat (whose name I do not know) was so much loved by this family that they decided to bring her back when they returned to the United States.

What they did not know was that she was bred before they left Australia. Some six weeks after she arrived in America she gave birth to two kittens—a little female as nondescript as her mother and a fine black male who was kept by the family. The little female was wanted by no one and was destined for the animal shelter. Since we place many cats and kittens in homes, she was brought to our Havenwood Cattery where she stayed for many months. No one seemed to want her.

Merry Mary, as we came to call her, was sweet, lovable, remarkably intelligent and completely ugly. Her status as "unwanted" and her sunny disposition made us accept her as a

"house cat"—a very special position around Havenwood.

We found it easy to overlook her long lean oddly colored, striped and ticked body, her skinny, blunt-tipped tail, her unusually large wide-spaced ears when we looked into her clear, brilliant hazel eyes, and when she beguiled us with her winning manners and capacity to learn "play games."

Later, when Merry Mary grew up and informed us she wanted to become a mother we mated her with a Burmese stud from the cattery, hoping in this manner to improve the physical appearance of her kittens and thus be able to find suitable homes for them. We intended to have her spayed after this one litter. However, the unusualness and beauty of many of the kittens from this litter caused us to subsequently breed her to another Burmese stud. It is out of these two breedings that the basic Bristol stock was derived. Since we have no idea of Merry Mary's background, we can not guess as to what breeds she owes her own characteristics.

### THE BRISTOL CAT PROPOSED STANDARD

Base color to be fawn with gray overtones, shading to fawn on belly. Markings to be bittersweet chocolate on head, legs and tail, warmer chocolate color. All markings to be broken. Medium massive body—over all impression to be that of a powerful cat—a domesticated jungle cat.

Neck to be medium length and thick—again powerful. Chest broad and powerful.

Head to be medium massive, but not to be short and cobby. Muzzle should be medium length, with a firm jaw and chin. Chin and nose to meet

in a straight line. Whiskers break desirable. Boning of the cat to be medium heavy.

Legs to be medium in length. Boning of legs to be in proportion to balance of body.

Tail to be medium length and thickness. Tapering slightly from base to rounded tip.

Ears to be almost as broad at base as at tip. Tip is to be rounded and set slightly forward. Thumb print desirable.

Color of the eyes to be sea-green. Eyes to be forward in head, oval in shape with slight bias toward ears.

Stands in crouched position as in jungle cat about to strike.

The kittens from the original breedings have been bred back to both Chocolate- and Sealpoint Siamese to obtain the confirmation and color desired in the new breed. The line has now bred true for the past six generations.

Bristol kittens are small replicas of the adult except that the deep chocolate color of the stripes and blotch are not achieved until the cat is about a year old. Eye color usually develops by about four months.

Perhaps the most enticing aspects of the Bristol are their pleasing disposition and truly remarkable intelligence. They are "people cats." They exert themselves to please you and to gain your approval. Yet, they are not "lap" cats. Courageous and intelligent they gain your attention, your admiration and love. Their smooth chunky bodies and shining coats with lines and spots of deep chocolate on fawn remind one of a jungle cat, a domesticated jungle cat with a happy disposition!

No Bristols are yet available for purchase. However, many have been leased to selected families. More leasing will occur now that the breed is fairly well set and more kittens are available.

Havenwood's Diablo, Merry Mary's grandson is the only Bristol who has been shown so far. He has consistently placed best or second best in AOV and Experimental Breed classes in California, Arizona and Nevada cat shows. This coming season several new Bristols will make their debut on the show scene.

Merry Mary is now a great-great-great-great grandmother. She has been spayed and spends most of her time supervising the training of her descendants. She is a "house cat." The nursery is upstairs in the house. This is where she may usually be found, playing with the babies—licking them, teaching them tricks and games.



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