

# CAT FANCY

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## Meow, Pat, Purr, Rub: How Cats Communicate

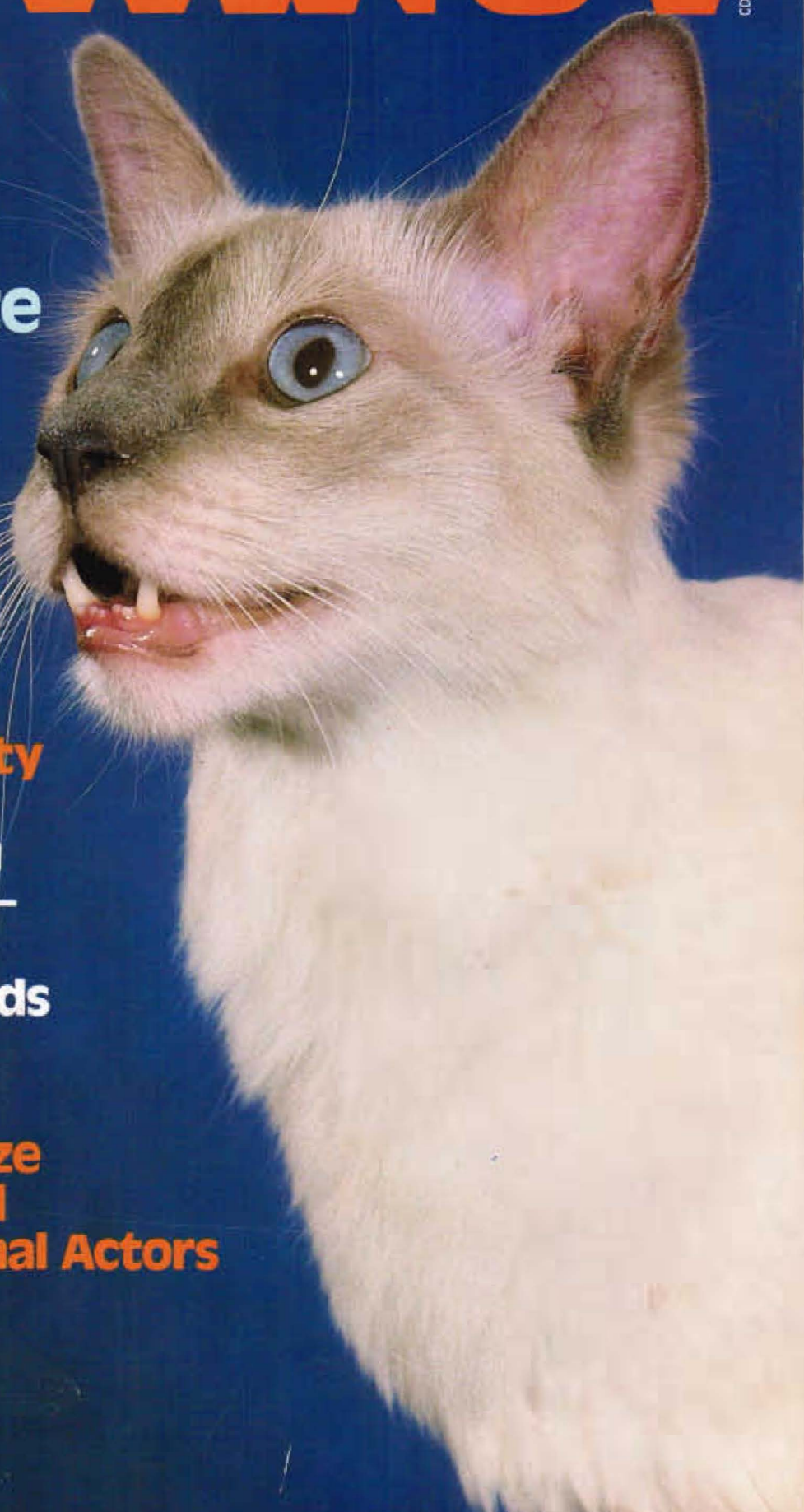
## Secondary Poisoning: Why Cats That Hunt Are In Danger

## All About Litter— How a Luxury Became a Necessity

## Four New Faces In The Feline Fancy— Ocicats, Sphynx, Curls and Spangleds

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- Deadly Antifreeze
- My Cat Is Stoned
- Protecting Animal Actors





# NEW FACES

*American Curls, Ocicats, California Spangleds and Sphynx are making a name for themselves in the fancy.*

**U**NLESS YOU attend major cat shows several times a year, you may never have heard of, much less seen, the four relatively new breeds profiled in the following pages. These four stories, provided by authors intimately involved with developing these rare breeds, do more than just introduce you to the cats, however. Taken as a package they also present a fascinating account of what is involved in developing and nurturing a new breed, whether it is based on an accidental mutation or a planned breeding strategy.

## The American Curl

by Nancy Reynolds-Kiester

A JOURNEY from the streets of Southern California to the exhibition halls of America began one bright June day in 1981 when Shulamith, the founding and first American Curl, arrived at the Lakewood, California, doorstep of Joe and Grace Ruga.

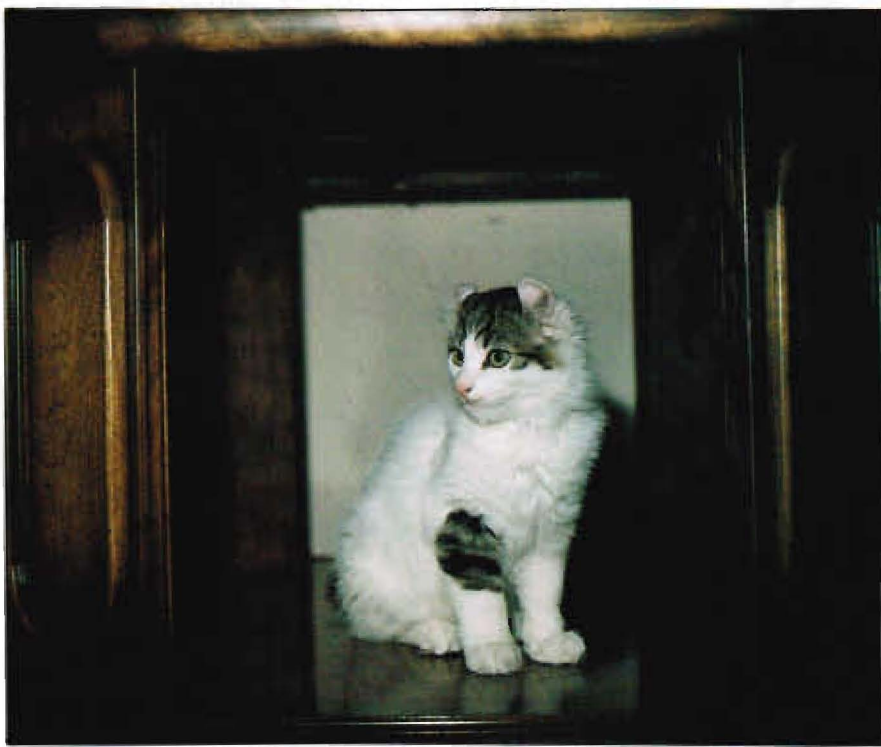
Grace and Joe had noted the firm, upright curving cartilage of Shulamith's ears, but they were surprised to find two of her kittens developing the same curved ears. For this litter, and those that followed, homes for the unique kittens were easy to find. Grace gave one of the curly-eared females to her sister, Esther Brimlow, who named the fluffy, tabby kitten Mercedes. About a year later, Esther received another curly-eared kitten from her sister: a longhaired, colorpoint male intended as a future mate for Mercedes.

In the summer of 1983, while visiting the Brimlow home, I met Mercedes, now grown, and the longhaired kitten. The tabby's ears curved up and backward. Long, fine hair fanned out and down from inside her ears. The male kitten was even more remarkable. His dark brown ears curled back beautifully, while his inner ear furnishings were very long, fanning in a balancing curve against his dark face, framing his large, blue eyes. As I watched the kitten pounce on the tail of the patient tabby, saw her grab him and hold him down for a rough lick that was half tenderness, half rebuke, I was hooked. I kept in touch with Esther, and after a couple of months, she gave me two of Mercedes' kittens—a brown mackerel tabby

longhaired female and her brother, a shorthaired brown spotted tabby.

At this time, the Orange County, California newspaper, *The Register*, ran an article on rare breeds of cats. As I read about the simple farm origins of the Scottish Fold, the idea of a new breed of curly-eared American cats seemed a possibility. I called Esther to ask her opinion, and she told me to call her brother-in-law, owner of the original cat. Joe and Grace were interested, but none of us really knew what steps to take.

I called a local breeder who suggested that we contact a friend of hers who was both a breeder and a judge for shows. The judge agreed to meet with us and our cats. She told us that as far as she knew, these were



*The distinctive feature of the American Curl is easy to spot—those curled, tufted ears. This gray and white kitten was part of a litter owned by Nancy Kiester.*



really quite different, perhaps even a new breed! She helped us work up our first standard. While she encouraged us, she also gave us an idea of the work that lay ahead.

National interest was raised in this newest variety when *Cat World* published an article about the Curl in December, 1984. By this time there were three breeders working with the breed who had kittens available, and these kittens were soon in the hands of dedicated breeders across the country.

Specific requirements must be met for proposed new breeds to begin the arduous journey toward full recognition and championship status. Ten to fifteen breeders must be working with the breed, and to demonstrate a wide-based appeal, the sponsoring breeders must live in various regions of the country. There must be a minimum of 50 cats that carry the breed's noteworthy traits, those that make this group of cats significantly different from other recognized breeds. A standard of points is written, giving a full description of the breed. This standard should describe in detail the special characteristics identifying the breed, from type and length of hair coat, to length of legs and tail in proportion to the body, and more. The expression of the face is paramount, so a great deal of attention is on the eye and ear set and size, and the underlying facial bones. The final result is a description of the ideal cat that is the goal of the breed.

There are a number of cat breed registry organizations, each with its own rules. Early in 1985, The International Cat Association was first to accept the American Curl as having met the necessary requirements to be registered as a new breed and color. Curls had not been judged according to their standard, but had been shown in household pet classes where they always caused a stir. Later the same year, the Cat Fanciers Federation accepted the Curl for experimental status.

In February, 1986, the Cat Fanciers Association board of directors voted to accept the Curl for registration and to allow them to be shown in the miscellaneous class. CFA is usually the last to acknowledge the existence of new varieties, so this was a major advancement for the Curl. According to CFA rules, a new breed must stay in the miscellaneous class for a minimum of five years before it can apply to the CFA board for advancement to provisional status.

In August, 1986, Joe and Grace Ruga requested and received championship status for the longhaired American Curl under TICA rules. This advancement is effective May 1, 1987. The American Curl Shorthair is still in TICA new breed and color classes because they have not yet met all the requirements for advancement.

The Curl is classed as a mutant breed. Its identifying trait, curled ears, is the result of a genetic mutation that is passed on from the parents to the developing, unborn kittens at the moment of conception. Curls are said to have a single dominant gene, which means that only one parent must exhibit the mutation to produce kittens that show the traits of their breed, usually 50 percent of each litter. Most American Curl breedings have used one Curl and one straight-eared cat. However, when two Curls are bred together, one in four kittens has the potential to receive the Curl gene from both parents; this kitten would be known as a homozygote Curl. Such cats can produce only kittens with varying degrees of ear curl, regardless of the other parent.

We have done several Curl-to-Curl breedings. Litters averaged three to six kittens and all resulting kittens were normal. One male has proved to be a homozygote Curl, producing only curled kittens in his litters. Other kittens from Curl-to-Curl breedings are not yet old enough to breed, but more homozygote Curls are expected.

We are still looking for appropriate outcross cats for our breeding programs because it is not good to inbreed too closely or too often. A wide genetic base provides a healthy foundation for the new breed. It assures many lines to work with and, should one line develop hereditary defects, it can be removed from the breeding stock without eliminating the whole breed.

Although they are both based on ear mutations, there is no relationship between the Scottish Fold and the American Curl. The American Curl's ears are quite firm to the touch, starting at the base of the ear. They are open wide at the base, standing erect with varying degrees of curl backward from the face. They should be large and set on the corners of the head.

The Curl standard calls for a moderate-sized cat with a semi-foreign, slender rather than cobby, body. The head should be moderate in size, gently contoured, slightly longer than wide, with a slight rise to

the forehead. Eyes should appear large, set on a slight bias.

The coat for the longhaired American Curl should have a minimal undercoat so the hair lies flat, not bushy. It should be fine and silky to the touch, medium long overall, without a neck ruff. The tail should be as long as the body from tail base to point of shoulder, with long fine hair that gives the appearance of a plume.

American Curl Shorthairs need the same body structure as the longhairs, but their coat would be short overall including the tail, lying flat but not sleek.

American Curls are very affectionate cats—chin nibblers and shoulder sitters. As adults they are relaxed and playful, although usually less active than the Oriental breeds. Mother cats with small kittens will often nurse any and all comers, sometimes needing to be protected from the attentions of overzealous young cats weaned by their own mothers. Kittens are strong and sturdy with all the vigor and good humor of the American domestic cat. With their agile, muscular bodies and curious, inquiring minds, they are easily trained and make delightful companions. American Curls are especially good with children and dogs.

Soon a cat show in your town may give you the opportunity to see these unique cats. You will be putting your heart in the danger zone. Their appealing ways and wide-eyed looks will not soon be forgotten. Like others before you, you might find yourself sharing your home with the impudent charms of one of our newest breeds, the American Curl.

For further information about the American Curl, contact the North American Curl Breed Club Inc., Nancy Keister, Secretary, P.O. Box 81, Butte Falls, OR 97522, or the American Curl Enthusiasts, Shelly Good, Editor, 274 E. 60th St., Long Beach, CA 90805.

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## The Ocicat

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by E. Ann Hollier

"OH, LOOK! Spots! Is it tame? What kind of a cat is this? It must be something special."

Indeed they are. When I take my Ocicats out in public, I am constantly bombarded with questions about →



## NEW FACES

continued

them. This magnificent spotted cat never fails to steal the show, not to mention the heart of anyone fortunate enough to own one.

In the few short years I've been involved with the breed, typical comments at shows have changed from a perplexed "Oicat? What's that?" to "I've heard so much about them, we drove two hours just to come and see one," to "I've judged Oicats for years and they just keep getting better."

Why do Oicats create such a stir? After all, there are other lovely spotted cats, both domestic and wild.

The Oicat is special because it is a cat descended exclusively from pure-bred domestic ancestors that were selectively bred to resemble a jungle animal. Like the Ocelot, the Oicat displays an exotic pelt covered with large spots. Unlike the Ocelot, however, this pussycat will gladly roll over for a good stomach rub and won't take your arm off at the elbow in an unguarded moment.

The Oicat comes in many colors; a litter of Oicat kittens often looks like a basket of easter eggs. The large, thumbprint-shaped spots can be tawny (black or dark brown), chocolate, cinnamon, blue, lavender or fawn—all on a buff to gold-tinted background. There is also a silver version of each color, in which the spots are displayed against a snowy white ground. The Oicat usually has gold or copper eyes, although hazel and green also occur. There are occasional throwbacks to blue-eyed ancestors but this is considered a fault, and blue-eyed Oicats are no longer registerable with CFA. They are, however, in great demand as strikingly beautiful pets.

There is more to the Oicat than

just the spots. To capture the dramatic presence of a wild animal, the Oicat has been selectively bred to be a large cat. At 7 to 10 pounds females are dainty compared to fully mature Oicat males weighing in at 12 to 15 pounds or more.

The short, spotted coat looks almost as if it has been spray-painted on, shining like satin over rippling muscles, and an Oicat in motion radiates power and grace. Large alert ears, slightly slanted almond eyes and a strong, square muzzle complete the picture of a cat that looks as if it would be more at home in a Tarzan movie than in your living room.

The Oicat looks wild but its temperament is anything but ferocious. It is a lot like a dog in that it is absolutely devoted to its people. The Oicat is not a demanding, clinging vine type, but I often feel like the Pied Piper, followed from one room to another by a troupe of spotted companions. Most Oicats are also quite extroverted around strangers, not at all bashful about checking out the possibilities for a new playmate or a lap to curl up on when visitors come to call.

Oicats are quite bright and easily trained. Many will fetch, walk on a leash, respond to whistled commands and readily adapt to household rules. Because of their adaptability, they are a joy to work with in the show ring. If accustomed early to traveling and being handled by strangers, they look forward to road trips and conduct themselves in the show ring with aplomb. Their adaptability also makes them ideal companion animals, whether you are a stay-at-home or a frequent traveler in search of a travel companion. Their sociable nature may make them less suited than some other breeds to being left alone for long periods on a regular basis, but it does make them a good choice

for a household already blessed with other cats and dogs.

For all of its dramatic appearance and obvious appeal, we might not have the Oicat today but for a happy accident. In the early 1960s, Virginia Daly, owner of Cats of Dalai, mated a ruddy Abyssinian to a sealpoint Siamese. The breeding was an attempt to create a Siamese with Abyssinian ticking at the points. This matter produced kittens that all resembled their Abyssinian father, but when a female from this litter was crossed back to a chocolatepoint Siamese in 1964, she produced a litter containing the sought-after Abyssinian/Siamese and one kitten that was a total surprise: an exquisite creature with bright golden spots on an ivory ground. This was Tonga, the original Oicat.

Tonga was sold as a pet with a neutering agreement. However, spotted Oicats were produced through additional matings of Tonga's dam, sire and other relatives that formed the foundation of the Dalai Oicat breeding program. Today, the ancestry of most Oicats is still primarily Abyssinian and Siamese. However, some American Shorthairs have been used to increase size and introduce new colors, particularly silver.

The Oicat was promoted to provisional status in the Cat Fanciers Association in 1986. At that time, the registry was closed to Siamese and American Shorthair outcrosses, although Abyssinians may be used until 1995. The Oicat reached championship competition status in both CFA and The International Cat Association for the 1987 show season, and the breed is gaining numbers in most of the other registries as well.

The Oicat clearly answers the yen many cat fanciers have for an imposing, intelligent cat that emulates the spotted cats of the wild while displaying the gentle temperament of a domestic cat. The popularity of the Oicat in the cat fancy has risen rapidly in recent years. In 1980, there were 10 active breeders registering kittens with CFA. Today there are five times that many, and an active breed club, Oicats International, provides a network for Oicat breeders, owners and fans.

For further information on the Oicat or the breed club, Oicats International, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to E. Ann Hollier, Secretary, Oicats International, Rt. 1 Box 49, Dyke, VA 22935.



This silver Oicat, bred by Kaye Cambers and owned by Marshall and Mary Silver, is Kayzie's Clyde Silver. Oicats combine wild good looks and great personalities.

Photo: Vickie W. Jackson



# The California Spangled

by Charlene Beane

YOU SAW pictures of these cats in the Neiman-Marcus "Christmas Catalog," you read about them in *People* magazine and in major newspapers from coast to coast, and you probably heard some of the uproar about them from cat breeders and humane organizations. There's been much ado about the marketing, but what about the California Spangled Cat itself?

Fifteen years ago, Paul Casey, a Hollywood scriptwriter, met Dr. Louis S.B. Leahey in Beverly Hills. Casey tells what followed:

"The following year, I visited his digs at Olduvai Gorge, in Tanzania, Africa. At that time, there had been the tragic poacher-killing of one of the few remaining leopards of that territory. We lamented the fact that all the wild "spotted cats" of the world are now on the endangered list, and many may disappear entirely within a few decades.

"We thought it was too bad there wasn't some domestic variety that would sit on your lap and purr, eat ordinary cat food, use a litter box and satisfy the public's fascination with spotted cats. Soon afterward, Dr. Leahey died, and I decided to begin the project of breeding such a cat on my own. Since there was a genuine purpose to the project, my first step was to identify all the requirements of my final breed. The cat had to be something recognizable as distinctly different from all other breeds, both domestic and wild. It needed to be beautiful, and above all, affectionate.

"There is a spotted pattern that appears occasionally in a few domestic breeds, but it is recessive and will not hold against a striped pattern. The trick seemed to be to isolate this pattern into a purely spotted strain that I could use as my core breeding stock.

"It took four standard bloodlines and four generations to get my first truly spotted breeder. In my original plans, I had decided to infuse some characteristics of one African cat and one Malayan cat, but these cats had been isolated for so many thousands of years that they were no longer able to cross and produce offspring. However, each could interbreed with

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## NEW FACES

continued

our common domestic varieties, so in the fifth generation I introduced an African half-breed (crossed with Abyssinian) and on the opposite side of the pedigree, I introduced the Malayan line in the eighth generation.

"To extract only what was desirable and discard everything else was the final task. Just as predicted on paper a decade earlier, the eleventh generation produced my first full-blooded Spangled Cats."

From this rich gene pool, once the pattern was set, colors could be developed. At this time, the color range includes silver, bronze, black, charcoal, gold, red, blue and brown. Another variety is called the "snow leopard." Cats of this color are born white and develop their spots later.

California Spangled kittens become more beautiful over time, but do not reach their adult color and coat texture until they are between 1 and 2 years of age. Casey is working for brown eye color on all of the colors except snow leopards, which have blue eyes. "We're aiming for the brown eyes," he said. "They're hard to get in domestic cats, but they give the cat more of the look of a wild one."

In 1985, the characteristics of the breed were well enough set to plan a marketing strategy. Since Spangleds have only three to five kittens per litter, they are hardly candidates for mass production. When Neiman-Marcus selected the cats as its prestigious his/hers Christmas gift for 1986, 40 of the spotted cats were designated to be surprises from Santa. The purchase price, \$1,400 each, included the "leopard for your living room," personal delivery by Casey or one of his representatives, the cat's registration document (in the California Spangled Cat Association), its pedigree, a breed history, description of the breed and the cat's medical records. The Neiman-Marcus sales projections were conservative; available kittens were sold almost immediately and the waiting list grew. Casey and his cats will be working off the 1986 Christmas season during most of 1987.

The price and marketing approach outraged vocal members of humane organizations and some purebred cat breeders. Accusations flew, protestors picketed, boycotted and mailed back their Neiman-Marcus credit cards.

The retailer has offered live animals before—camels in 1967, ostriches in 1980 and Shar-pei puppies in 1983—and there had been ripples from the humane contingent, but never had there been such an adamant reaction. Objections that the kittens were being sold as expensive trinkets rather than long-lived companion animals were countered by a Neiman-Marcus spokesperson: "Neiman-Marcus is making every effort to find good homes for the kittens. We are very selective about the homes they're going to."

Casey confirmed this. "The woman who takes the orders interviews the people who want to buy the kittens and then calls me and tells me her feelings about what kind of a home she thinks the prospective buyers would give the kitten. It is especially exciting to deliver the kittens and meet their new owners. You should see their faces when I hand them their new kitten! These people are true animal lovers and they can afford to give the kittens the best veterinary care, the best of everything."

Detractors who object to the expensive price tag on the cats simply have not thought through the costs involved. Although Casey has been asked not to discuss his financial agreement with Neiman-Marcus, it is not difficult to figure out his approximate piece of the \$1,400 pie. First subtract average air fare for Casey and a cat to anywhere in the country. Then take off promotional expenses—space in an expensive catalog; part of the order taker/interviewer's salary and her phone bills; travel, care and display space for the cats that were exhibited at Neiman-Marcus stores around the country.

Cut the remaining amount at least in half for a conservative retail markup and you'll end up with a final figure very close to the price of many good cats. If you still think Casey's making too much money, remember he spent 15 years of work and an estimated \$200,000 to develop the breed. Beyond that, ask yourself what it is worth if because of a Spangled cat, one more spotted cat is left in the wild?

The California Spangled Cat has been accepted by The International Cat Association as a new breed, so it can be exhibited at TICA shows, but it will be some time before the breed is eligible for championship competition. Even though this new spotted cat has rocketed to stardom, it still

must meet the same requirements for acceptance as any other breed.

The requirement of having a number of breeders spread throughout the country appears to be a very real possibility. Casey said, "Many of those now owning our babies are anxious to join in our breeding program. By the end of this year, we may have as many as 16 breeding females and 9 breeding males."

Championship status, however, is not the only goal on Casey's horizon. "One of my adult 'snow leopard' females did a scene in Mel Gibson's latest film, and we have another appearance in a feature film at Universal Studios. But the best pay-off for me is the materialization of our Spangled Cat Foundation for the environment. In March, 1987, our nonprofit foundation began its own programs of funding research, education and active support for the control of persistent toxic substances—specifically those known to cause genetic damage to the DNA in all life forms, including our own children."

The scientific community has perked up its ears as well. "Because of a genuine scientific interest in our breeding history, our notes and records will be turned over to researchers engaged in the problem of saving some of the endangered species for which the available gene pools are now very limited."

Casey is a patient man with an enormous vision. His California Spangled Cats have made a big splash, and the ripples will be felt for a long, long time.

For additional information, mail a self-addressed stamped envelope to Paul Casey, P.O. Box 24096, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

## The Sphynx

by Carol Richards

MY LOVE affair with the Sphynx began when I sent one of my Devon Rex queens to be bred to a Sphynx male at the request of Dr. Solveig Pflueger, who is vitally interested in propagating the Sphynx as a healthy and aesthetic breed. Dr. Pflueger theorized that while the Sphynx and Devon Rex are both recessive to the normal coat, the Sphynx (hairless) is dominant over the Devon Rex (curly)





*Glennacre Rousseau of Colasberos, a male chocolate Ocicat bred by Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Cappella, is a fine example of the conformation and markings Ocicat breeders strive for.*



*It isn't just the spots that give the California Spangled its wild look. Note the rounded ears and distinctive "wild" face of this 6-week-old gold Spangled named Mojave.*



*Although most Spangled Cats have dark eyes, the snow leopard variety has light blue eyes.*

**ON OVERLEAF:** Siskiyou, a charcoal California Spangled Cat, is only one of the special cats developed by Paul Casey in his one-man crusade to develop a domestic breed with the look of a wild cat.





*Sphynx are active cats, but they love to cuddle with their owners. E.T. is owned by Joan and Bill Bensen of Sacramento, California.*

Photo: Robert Peasey



*Sphynx cats develop "coat" colors and patterns just like their more furry counterparts. This is Britanya's Lady Godiva, a blue tortie and white female owned by Carol Richards.*

Photo: Bob Martin



## NEW FACES

continued

She wanted to determine through this Sphynx/Devon Rex breeding if her theory was correct.

The queen I sent for this breeding was a 2½-year-old tortoiseshell, Britanya's Aida Lott (Lottie). I chose her because she has been proven, through test-mating, not to carry the recessive gene for muscular dystrophy (or spasticity, as it is commonly called) which has been known to appear in some Devon Rex lines. She had previously produced two healthy litters of four each. Her personality is delightful—playful, relaxed and with a fervent and manifest love for all.

Lottie arrived home pregnant and we all waited with baited breath for her little ones to arrive. It seemed the day would never come; but right on time (which, loosely interpreted, means the wee hours of the morning) she went into labor. At 3:17 AM the first kitten started to appear.

"Good grief—it's pink!" I called to my husband. Actually the baby was arriving hind feet first and the pink I saw was just her little bare feet that were white when dry. She was a blue tortie and white, big and loud, and absolutely the most unusual and adorable looking little creature imaginable, covered with a short fine down, ears folded down to her cheeks, and a droll little face that simply stole our hearts at first glance.

Next came a red mackerel tabby and white boy and another lovely blue tortie and white girl, both just as undressed and adorable as Lady Godiva, the firstborn. For her finale, Lottie produced a brown tabby and white boy with such a funny face we both broke out laughing when we saw him! Lottie was quite indignant that we were laughing at her beautiful baby—but they were all beautiful and certainly didn't look like my Devon Rex newborns or any other breed of kittens I'd ever seen.

They were all strong and healthy, ate well, grew and thrived from the day they were born. They also seemed more precocious than other kittens. At 4 weeks they were eating food ravenously, growling at one another as if it were their last meal. Their personalities quickly became apparent: lively, inquisitive, active, playful and extremely affectionate. They meow as do ordinary cats, but when they are playing or "talking" to

you, they chirp—a unique and appealing sound that is impossible to describe.

In the ensuing months they matured into beautiful, personable young adults, each with its own individual personality. Lady Godiva is a perfect little lady in front of the camera and in the show ring, posing and presenting herself beautifully; yet she will race like a madwoman all over the house and wrestle with her sister every waking moment. Baroness Quizit is definitely a "Daddy's girl." She loves nothing better than to cuddle inside my husband's shirt or drape herself around his neck.

Then there's Lord E., I'm Naked!—who is possibly the world's biggest ham. He loves the whole human race and just a word to him will trigger his entire bag of tricks. He jumps to the top of the cat tree; talks, rolls over, lays his head sideways and reaches out with his long "fingers" to wrap them around yours. Then, if you turn your back, he will leap unbelievable distances to land on your shoulder and smother you with kisses.

Gremlin, the red and white boy who now makes his home with Peter and Vicky Markstein, is just as lovable and naughty as the others, and has stolen their hearts as well. None of the four have ever been ill or displayed any health problems.

They are incredibly agile, muscular and strong, and can travel completely around the kitchen and living area (including the drapes) without ever touching the floor. Sometimes I wonder if they're not really monkeys in cats' clothing (skin?). They are certainly the most intelligent, affectionate and entertaining creatures I've encountered.

I hope to continue breeding the Sphynx because they have wrapped themselves around my heart completely. At this writing Lord E. has "honeymooned" with two of our Devon Rex queens and hopefully in a few weeks we shall have more of them to love. According to Dr. Pflueger's predictions, these breedings should produce litters wherein 75 percent of the kittens will be Sphynx and 25 percent will be Devon Rex. I would like to see this breed flourishing and viable, using outcrosses as necessary to increase the gene pool, but keeping their appearance intact.

We definitely do not want the Sphynx to have frail body type or delicate constitutions. My goal, along with that of Dr. Pflueger and some other dedicated breeders, is to help

develop the Sphynx into a strong, healthy and attractive breed that will increase in numbers and continue to grow in popularity. However, since the breed is just now becoming established, availability will be limited for the next few years.

Although The International Cat Association is the only American association now registering and accepting Sphynx for championship status, I have shown them in TICA shows on the east and west coasts and in Texas, and I have found the public's reaction to be almost the same everywhere. People will look at them, watch their antics for a few minutes, and then say, "They look so ugly in the newspaper photos, but in person they are just beautiful—I think I'm in love!" Bob and La Donna Martin, who photographed them, made the statement, "These cats don't have personality, they have *charisma*."

Our vet had some misgivings when we told him Lottie was to be bred to a Sphynx. He was concerned that the kittens might have health problems, have weak immune systems, be vulnerable to any virus floating around or have fertility problems. He wondered why we wanted to breed such cats. However, after caring for them since birth and watching them develop into hearty, robust cats who've never had a sick day in their lives, he sees them in an entirely different light.

Unaccustomed to hairless kittens who were solid wrinkles from head to toe, the vet viewed them with some trepidation at first, but they quickly won him over with their sweet natures and wild antics. Before long he was carrying them around cuddled in his arms, kissing their soft skin, showing them off to everyone and saying, "These are the neatest cats I've ever seen!" Now he feels as much a "proud parent" as my husband and I do and is looking forward to Lord E.'s forthcoming litters with the same enthusiasm.

It takes only a little while in the company of a Sphynx for a person to capitulate and lose his heart completely. Bringing them into the world, living with them every day and watching them grow into beautiful, loving, magnificent animals, I can't imagine life without them now. I believe the Sphynx must be the best-kept secret in the cat fancy.

For more information on the Sphynx, contact Carol Richards, P.O. Box 2512, Universal City, TX 78148-1512. ☐