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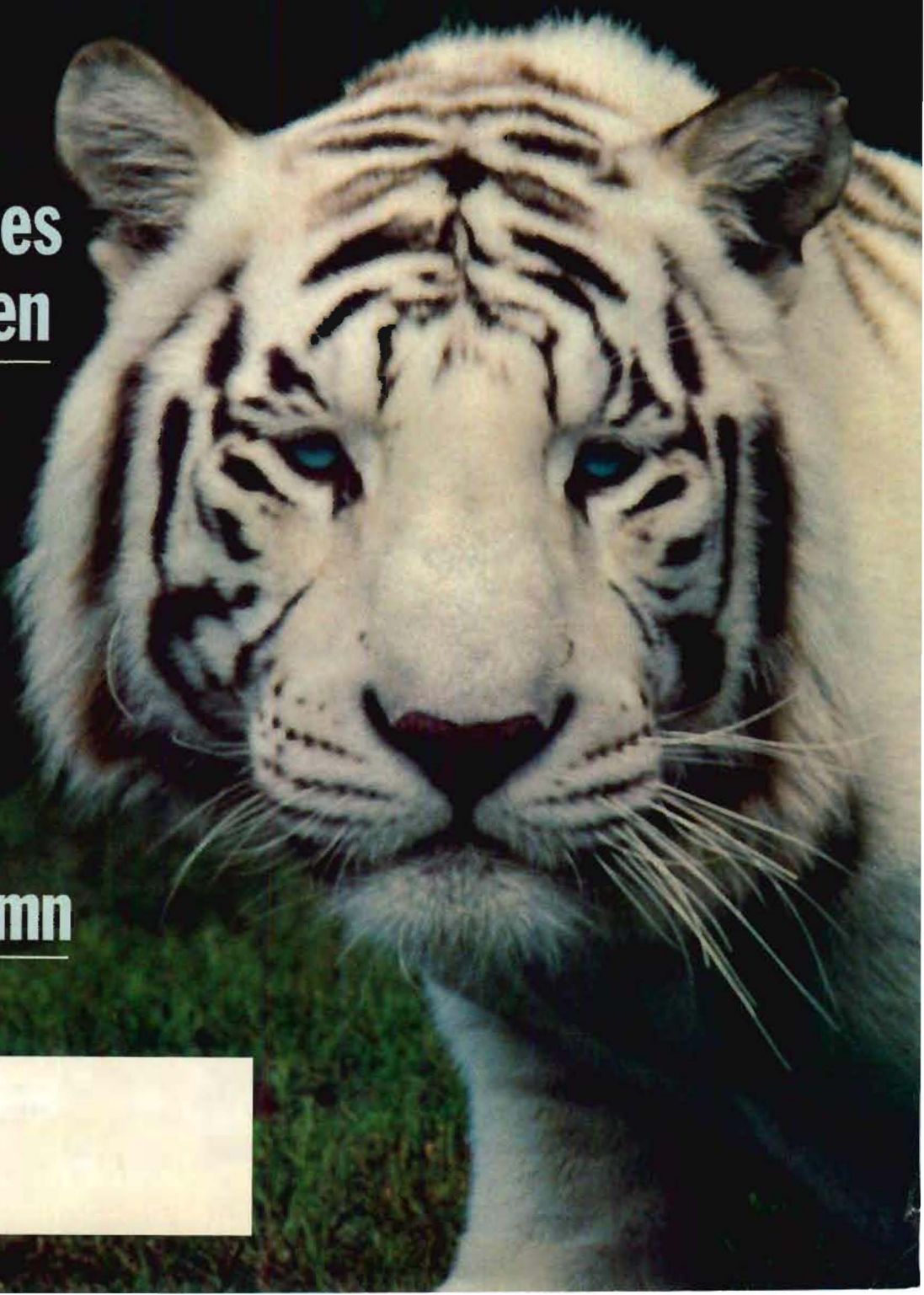
CATS

M A G A Z I N E

**Domestic
Feline Nurses
Exotic Kitten**

**Batman's
Catwoman
Fabulous Feline
or Conniving Cat?**

**Premiere Of
Dear Kitty
Advice Column**



BREED OF THE MONTH

BY J. ANNE HELGREN

Facts & Figures

- Recognized in all associations.
- New CFA registrations for 1991: 198
- Change from previous year: -29 percent
- Rank in popularity for 1991: 22nd among 23 shorthaired breeds 32nd out of 35 breeds overall

THE BOMBAY

When Judy Kovic, owner of the Fejuko Cattery, saw her first Bombay at a cat show, she thought it was the finest kitten she had ever seen. Jet black with sleek, compact fur, he seemed like a tiny panther with snapping gold eyes. Kovic was also impressed by the fact that the kitten's cage was covered with rosettes. "How neat," she thought, and moved on.

Three weeks later, the kitten turned up at another show, and this time he had a "for sale" sign on his cage. Kovic didn't hesitate; she pulled out her checkbook. That was 12 years ago, and she and her husband, Fenton, have been breeding Bombays ever since.

"Patent-Leather Kids With New-Penny Eyes"

Superstitions about witches and black cats notwithstanding, this hybrid breed would charm even the most cat phobic with its sleek exotic good looks and pleasing personality. Black to the roots, the Bombay's coat invites caressing with its fine, satin-like texture and shimmering "patent leather" sheen.

The ideal Bombay is medium in size, (6-8 pounds for females, 8-10 pounds for males), has good muscular development, and is deceptively heavy for its size. Its head is pleasingly rounded without flat planes. The face is full and blends gently into a broad, well-developed short muzzle.

Like the Burmese, the Bombay has an indentation above the bridge of the nose. (CFA refers to this as a "break," TICA does not. But an extreme break is cause for disqualification in both associations.) The wide-set eyes are large and round, giving the face a sweet, open expression. Eye color varies from gold to the preferred copper. Ears are set well apart, alert, tilting slightly forward, medium in size and slightly rounded at the tips.

If an aloof, independent cat is what

you're craving, this breed is not for you. Bombays are enormously attached to their owners. They want constant attention, and they'll even follow you into the bathtub, asserts Nikki Horner, the breed's creator.

"Bombays are wonderful," says Kovic. "They're cuddly, intelligent and curious, just like little kids. One thing we love about them is that they only talk if they have something really important to say. After years of breeding Siamese cats, that's a welcome change!"

Bombays tend to develop slowly, gaining their eye color and gleaming coat well after they are 4 months old. Unlike Kovic's quick infatuation, some prospective buyers tend to think the kittens look rather ordinary. Bombays, like fine wine, seem to improve with age.

A Masterpiece In Fur

The Bombay's originator, Nikki Horner, found herself craving a greater challenge after a long and illustrious career breeding champion show cats. Looking at the Black American Shorthair and the Sable Burmese, two of the cats she was currently breeding, she imagined a Burmese with a sleek black coat and glowing copper eyes—sort of a pint-sized panther.

"Cat breeding to me is an artistic endeavor," Horner notes in her breed profile in the November 1991 *Cat Fanciers' Almanac*. "You could say all breeders are artists striving for a living masterpiece of fur."

She decided to name the breed after Bombay, India, land of the larger look-alike cousin, the black leopard. The name had an exotic ring to it. In 1958 she produced her first Bombay litter. The results were disappointing; they looked more like poor American Shorthairs than anything else.

For her second try she chose her breeders more carefully. She shopped around until she found a Black American male that had

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A Mother's Love

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immediately. She cleaned it and performed all the other maternal services. The two kittens adjusted well to each other and began playing together.

This happy domestic scene continued with wonderful results until the mother cat's milk dried up entirely. The breeder began supplementing the leopard with a bottle formula made from the powdered replacement used for dogs. (The breeder said it seemed to work better than replacement milk for cats.) The mother continued to take care of the kitten and to allow psychological nursing, providing the kitten with sucking satisfaction.

After a time the mother went into heat and lost most of her interest in the kittens. Fortunately, by this time, the two kittens were more interested in playing with each other.

The clouded leopard kitten was weaned to an all-formula diet at 5 weeks and to solid foods at 6½ weeks. At 7 weeks she was pulled and taken to another private facility.

At approximately 2½ years old, the clouded leopard is thriving. She has been paired with a mate. A pregnancy has not resulted so far, but the breeders are hopeful.

The domestic cat has turned out to be a natural as a foster mother. Although kittens brought to her have to be bottle-fed, she provides them with the crucial psychological nurturing they need to prosper. In addition to the clouded leopard and the African caracal in the story, she has cared for a number of serval and Siberian lynx kittens, five Canadian lynx kittens and a few more African caracal kittens. All of these breeds are on the endangered species list. One loving cat has truly made a difference! **C**

Breed of the Month

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the rich eye color she wanted and bred him to one of her best champion Burmese.

Using some impressive bloodlines, Horner finally produced the results she was looking for—a cat with the conformation and short polished coat of the Burmese, and the American's copper-colored eyes and black color. Proud of her accomplishment, she nicknamed her creation "the Patent-Leather Kids with the New-Penny Eyes."

The breed was prolific and, since black is dominant over the sable color, Horner had black kittens galore.

Creating a breed, even one as endearing as the Bombay, doesn't mean breed acceptance, however. Horner found that the Burmese breeders and the cat associations weren't overly willing to accept her new kid on the block.

But Horner was not one to quit

when the going got tough. She began showing her cats as a provisional breed, trying to get as much exposure for the breed as possible. Showing her cats without walking away to chalking up win after win.

It was not until 1970 that the breed was accepted for registration by CFA. Advancing from registration to provisional status meant Horner had to form at least one breed club and register 100 examples of the breed. Eighteen years after she began her cat crusade, Horner gained eligibility for the Bombay to compete in the championship classes on May 1, 1976.

"I never really realized how much work I'd have to do," says Horner. "Of course, once you get started you can hardly stop. But if I'd known I might not have done it."

Still, Horner is proud of her creation. "Even with all the cats and wins I've had through the years, when I'm gone nobody's going to remember. But the Bombay will still be here." **C**

Why?

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sprayer to make him stop and think for a second. Then throw out the enticing toy and drag it in front of him. In essence, you're saying "I'll play with you, but you can't attack my foot." For water-loving cats, an alternative punishment could be a loud noise such as a blast from a "canned foghorn." Wear long sturdy pants, padded gaiters, and gloves if you have to, so that you can avoid serious injury while you work on getting the point across to your cat that "only safe play is OK."

5. Create a play group that always meets at your house. Bringing in another cat may cause new problems if personalities clash, but some sources suggest that a playful companion can help take the heat off the humans in the household.

There are some situations where living with an aggressively playful cat can be very difficult, even while trying behavioral modification. One

lady that I talked to a few years back had a studio apartment, and worked at home as a designer. The only place she could get away from her cat was in the bathroom, and that had obvious drawbacks as a workplace. Though she tried to cope, her work suffered. Her veterinarian was eventually able to find her playful cat a more appropriate home. He also found her a new cat—one with a sedentary personality, and a greater appreciation for art. **C**

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Borchelt, P.L., Voith, V.L.; "Aggressive behavior in cats," *The Compendium on Continuing Education for the Practicing Veterinarian*, Vol. 9, No.1, January 1987.