

# CAT FANCY®

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**LOYAL, LOVING FRIEND**  
**RUSSIAN BLUE**

# 5 WAYS TO ENRICH YOUR CAT'S LIFE

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**Affectionate Swimming Cat**  
**Turkish Van**



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## Breed Profile

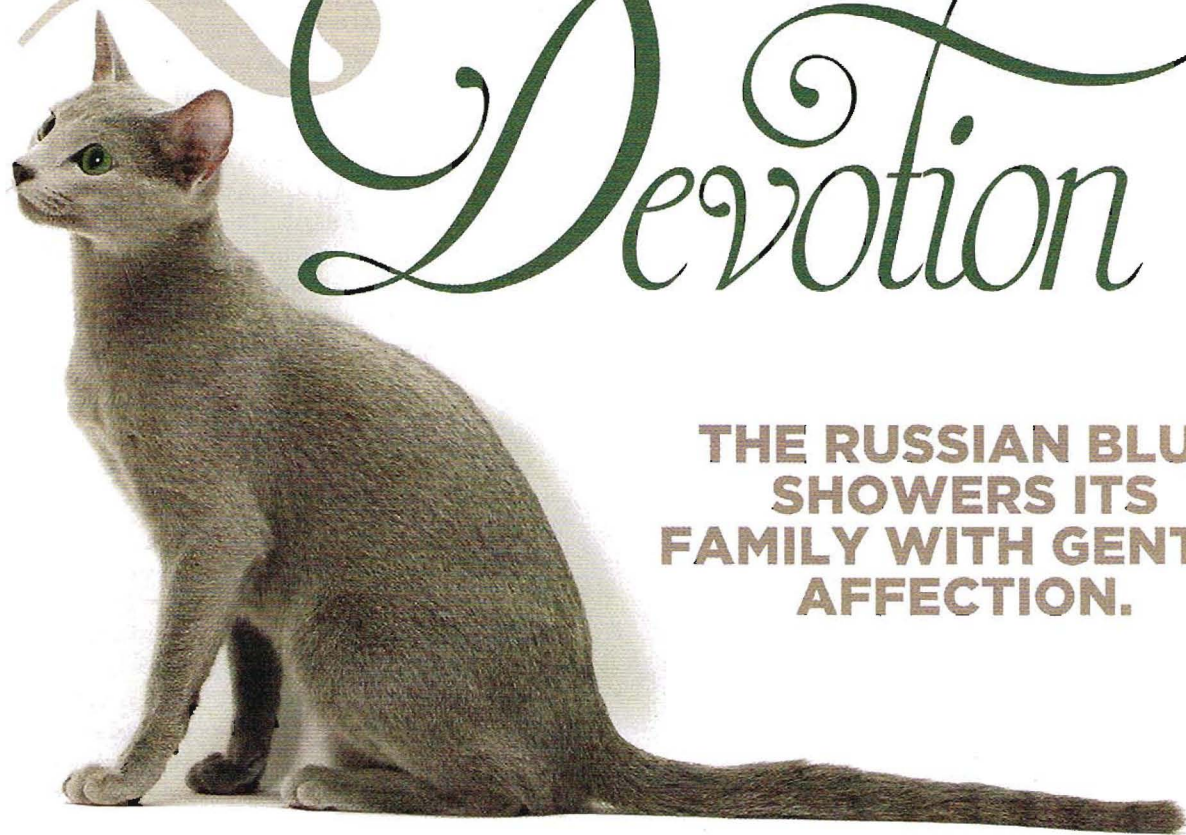


PHOTOS: TETSU YAMAZAKI

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RUSSIAN BLUE AT  
[CATCHANNEL.COM/BREEDS](http://CATCHANNEL.COM/BREEDS)

The Russian Blue's plush, silvery coat and vivid green eyes contribute to the breed's elegance.

# Quiet Devotion



**THE RUSSIAN BLUE  
SHOWERS ITS  
FAMILY WITH GENTLE  
AFFECTION.**

**I**F THE CAT WORLD PUBLISHED A YEARBOOK, THE RUSSIAN BLUE MOST LIKELY would be dubbed “Most Shy.” In fact, Dayle Marsh initially acquired the breed because of its slightly timid, quiet reputation. “The Russian Blue was known as the cat without a voice,” says the Chicago-based breeder, noting that the cat may speak up when it hears the can opener, but not much more often. “Their voices are soft, and they only ‘talk’ when they have something to say.”

Marsh has grown to love the breed not only for its discreet, gentle nature but also for its attentive, adoring personality. “They are sweet, loving cats,” she explains. “A Russian Blue that has bonded with its owners will know their moods and respond accordingly. Once you earn a Russian Blue’s trust, you have it for life.”

#### **Family Time**

While the breed enjoys time with its family members, the cat also does well on its own, often choosing a sunny window sill over an open lap for a resting place. “They are good at occupying themselves,” says Annette Wilson, an allbreed judge for the Cat

Fanciers' Association and a breeder from South Haven, Mich. "They do fine if home by themselves during the day and are good company for a single person."

That doesn't mean the Russian Blue wants to be ignored. To the contrary — this cat loves to spend time with the trusted members of its family. "They are a breed that one really can interact with," says Teresa Keiger, a breeder from Greensboro, N.C. "Once they decide that you are 'theirs,' they are absolutely devoted to you."

While it showers its family members with affection, the Russian Blue typically takes its time warming up to strangers. "They are smart enough to know to wait and check out a new person to ensure that he is not a danger," Keiger explains.

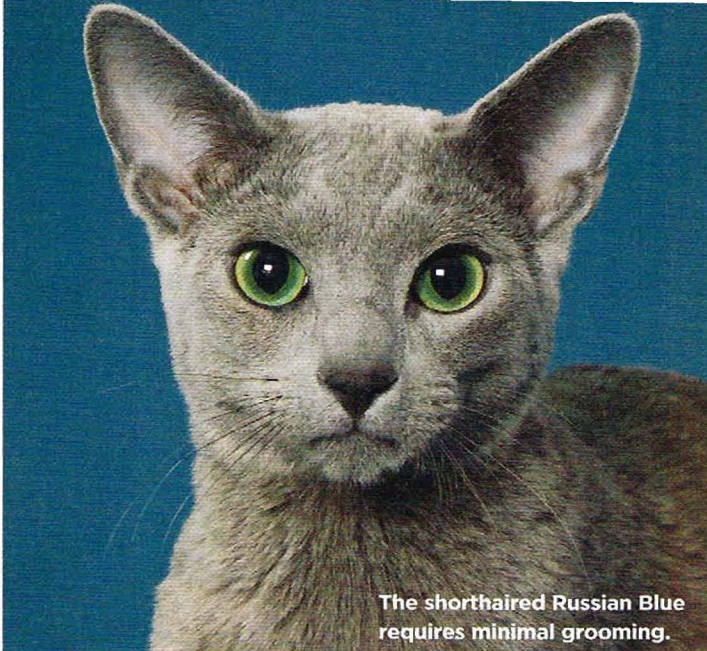
If a guest passes the inspection, the cat might entice the person to play. "They really enjoy interactive play with their humans," Wilson adds. "Russian Blues love to fetch and have been known to wear their human out by fetching over and over and over."

Marsh agrees, adding that the intelligent breed can learn to play many types of games — often adding their own twist. She describes how her daughter taught a female Russian Blue, Genie, to jump over a series of obstacles set up in the hallway. "When she [Genie] had had enough, she would walk down the hall knocking each jump down and go upstairs to bed," Marsh explains. "That drove my daughter nuts! She ultimately taught Genie to shake hands, sit up and beg with both paws, lie down, roll over and jump through a hoop."

### Winter Warmth

Another activity the breed typically enjoys with its owner is grooming time, though the cat does not need much attention to its coat to maintain its good looks. The breed's coat is short and dense, and does not tend to shed much year-round. Wilson explains. "A fine-toothed comb works well during the short shedding season," she says. "Otherwise, petting is all that is needed. The best way to limit the need for frequent grooming is feeding a top quality food — always the key to good hair coat and good health."

**The affectionate Russian Blue loves attention.**



PRESTON SMITH

**The shorthaired Russian Blue requires minimal grooming.**

The Russian Blue came about its short, dense coat naturally as it evolved in the arctic tundra. "The long northern winters caused the Russian Blue's coat to develop into a unique protective mechanism," Marsh says. "It is a true fur, a plush double coat. The inner coat is composed of short, dense, coiled hair ... The outer coat provides a protective shell for the inner coat."

The two coats create a texture unique to the breed. "No other cat feels like a Rus-

sian Blue," says Keiger, who points out that the unique coat comes in just one color: blue. The guard hairs are longer and blue, with clear tips that refract light. "That tipping is what gives the breed its unique shimmer. I liken it to the way that velvet catches the light."

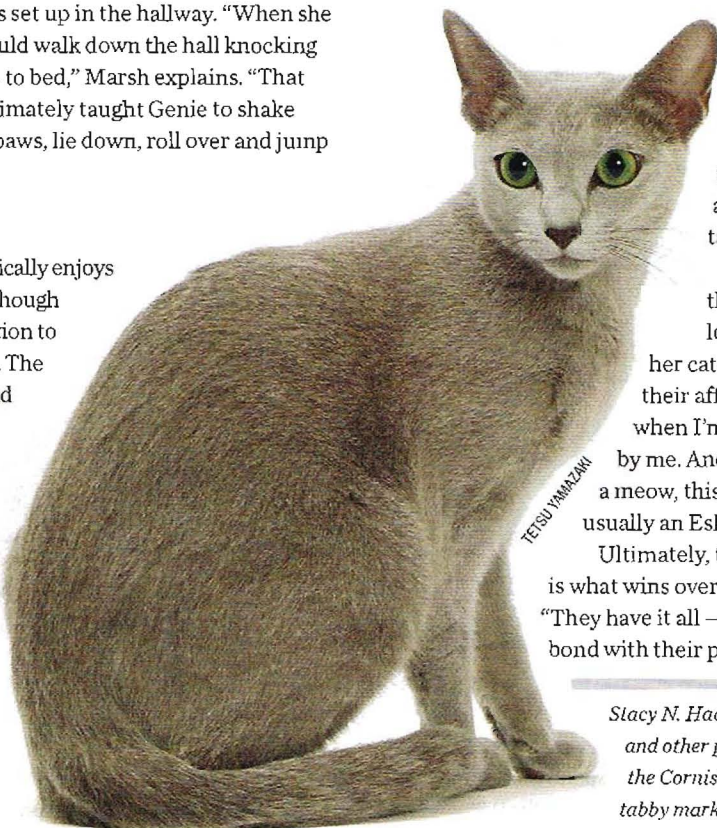
And while other blue cats exist in the cat world, including the Korat and Chartreux, the Russian Blue's traits set it apart. The shimmery coat covers a small- to medium-sized body supported by fine-boned limbs. A wedge-shaped head with high, wide cheekbones gives the Russian Blue a pleasing expression, almost as if the cat is smiling. Bright green eyes complete the cat's distinctive looks.

### Strong, Silent Type

As breeders have noted, the Russian Blue tends to let its beauty do the talking, preferring to remain quiet for the most part. This trait adds to the breed's distinctive personality, setting it apart from more talkative breeds.

"They are not needy cats but they really need someone to love," Keiger says, noting that her cats find unique ways to express their affection. "One girl seems to know when I'm sick, and she always sits right by me. Another boy always greets me with a meow, this look that says 'I love you' and usually an Eskimo kiss or two."

Ultimately, the Russian Blue's sweet nature is what wins over lifelong fans. As Marsh says, "They have it all — beauty, intelligence and a total bond with their people." 🐾



TEISU YAMAZAKI

*Stacy N. Hackett writes frequently about cats and other pets. She has a special affection for the Cornish Rex breed and any cat with red tabby markings.*



UTEKHINA ANNA/SHUTTERSTOCK