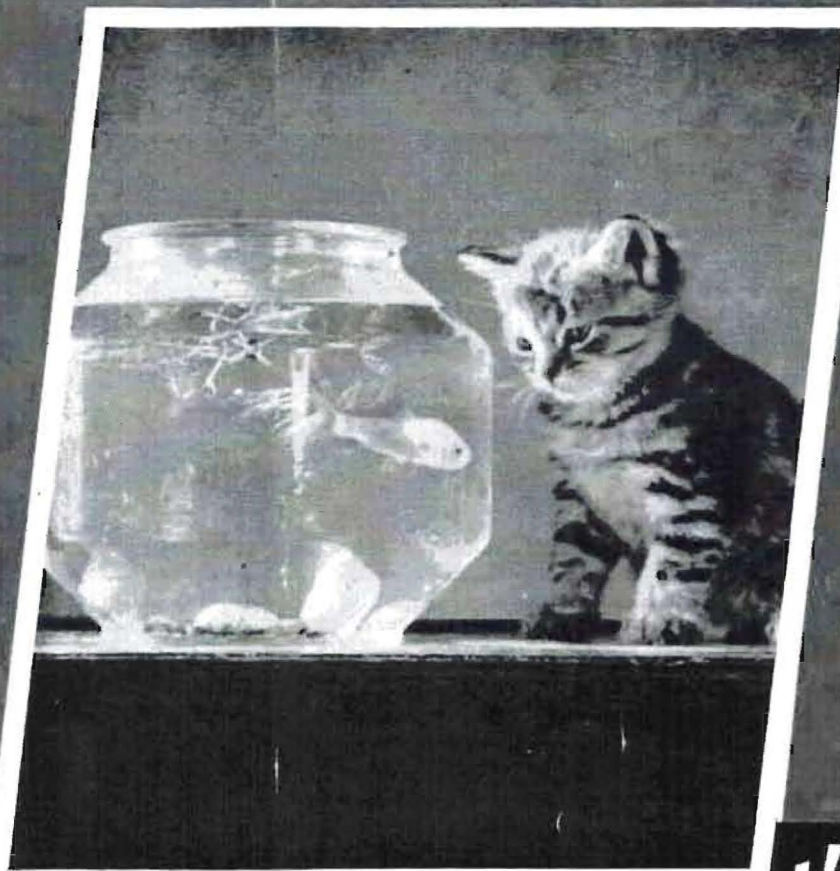


Our Cats

AUTHORITATIVE
INSTRUCTIVE



ENTERTAINING
COMPREHENSIVE



A PISCATORIAL PUSS
Photographed by Arthur Coot

JULY 1956

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Havanas Past & Present

By E. VON ULLMANN, F.Z.S.

"THE best and most definitely coloured A.O.C. cat I ever saw was Mrs. Davies' Sin Li, a deep self-coloured chocolate brown cat. He was supposed to be one of three Swiss Mountain Cats imported to this country, and he was a most handsome and interesting animal. Unfortunately he died young, leaving no progeny."

(*Frances Simpson,*

"*The Book of the Cat,*" p. 234)

"Colourbreeding is a most fascinating pursuit; but, unfortunately, the average cat fancier lacks the patience to follow it out to a satisfactory conclusion. There is no doubt that by judicious crossbreeding new colours could be produced and I think that they will be produced in time. I have

seen a chocolate brown cat and a yellow cat with black stripes, and no doubt they will appear again."

(*ibid., p. 344.*)

These two passages were written nearly 60 years ago. The cat described in the first quotation has presumably the honour of being the first Havana to be mentioned by name in the cat literature.

It is, however, surprising that self-brown cats have not been taken up by cat fanciers long ago, like their counterparts the Blues, of which we have to-day three established varieties, the Blue Longhair, the British Blue and the Russian Blue. Chocolate coloured cats, longhaired and shorthaired, must from time to time have appeared since the unfortunate "Swiss Mountain Cat" died and it is open to conjecture whether bad luck, insufficient knowledge of the laws of inheritance or the above quoted "lack



Keystone

The author with her home-bred Shorthaired Havana ROOFSPRINGER PERIWINKLE, a fascinating combination of rich brown coat and bright green eyes. Baroness Edit von Ullmann, a keen student of genetics, is a daughter of Baron von Ullmann, formerly an official at the Finance Ministry in the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She holds a law degree, works for a solicitor in London and lives on a converted coal barge moored in Paddington Basin, which is part of the Grand Union Canal. It is on the barge that she conducts her cat breeding experiments.

of patience" have been responsible for the absence of self-coloured brown cats from the show bench since the turn of the century.

Fifty odd years went by before Frances Simpson's prediction was put into practice by a few experimental breeders, who deliberately set out to breed Havana coloured cats, without ever having seen one, using for their raw material Siamese, Russian Blues and alley cats.

Longhair Next

At the Herts and Middx. Cat Club Ch. Show in 1953 a Havana male, Elmtower Bronze Idol, was shown by his breeder Mrs. J. Monro Smith, of Reading. Like his predecessor of many years ago, he was entered in the A.O.C. class and much admired. He fortunately survived to sire some excellent progeny and there are to-day few Havanas who lack his name in their pedigrees. The kitten shown in the photograph is his grand-daughter.

Shorthaired Havanas are now being bred by a number of fanciers and can be seen in many of the cat shows. A well-known and knowledgeable breeder is working to produce a longhaired strain of the same colour which will no doubt make its public appearance in due course.

Not a Sport

Havana cats, whether shorthaired or longhaired, breed true when mated to their own kind. They are not a "sport" but a colour variety like Blues or Creams. Having once been established they will eventually take their place amongst the recognized breeds which, but for the premature death of the "Swiss Mountain Cat," they would probably have held since the early days of the Fancy.

The present-day Havanas, having been bred from carefully selected, healthy stock, are easy breeders and good mothers and we have no fear that they might disappear again for half a century

or more. Having for their ancestors, besides Siamese, Russian Blues and genuine English alley cats, they are, in spite of their short silky coats, well able to stand our climate and are enjoying outdoor exercise as much in winter as in summer.

As we watch our brown kittens playing in the sun, we cannot help feeling elated at the thought of having that re-created lovely colour—"in time."

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SHOPPING IN SOHO

A young and observant letter writer to the London *Star* newspaper here describes her experiences whilst shopping to find "a nice middle piece of haddock" for her cat.

"I am 13 and here is my account of a shopping expedition in Soho's Berwick Market.

"I guess I was dead lucky to time my visit to the fishmonger at the precise moment the poor man reached the end of his tether and literally made the fish fly.

"To the wizened little woman he screamed: 'Look what you've done to my fish.' I looked. On the slab lay a cod, cut into three.

"The tail and the head he held aloft: 'You women, you drive a man mad. A fish has a head and a tail. Right? But you don't want heads and tails. You all want a piece out of the middle. Right?

"I give you the middle but then you're not satisfied. It's too dear. So you walk off and leave me with my fish ruined. Who wants the heads and tails when you've finished with them, eh? Go on, clear off the lot of you.'

"I had intended asking for a nice middle piece of haddock.

"I fled.

"As I go to the market every day to buy fish for our cat, Mick, I think it would be wise if my letter was signed —*Soho Observer*."