

The Oriental

Shorthair and Longhair



Overview

The Oriental belongs to the Oriental Breed Group which includes the Balinese, and the Siamese. All members of this breed group abide by the same standard, except for the hair coat. What separates the Orientals from the rest of this group, is its vast array of coat colors. The Oriental is a striking mix of beauty and intelligence. For some, the Oriental's sleek body lines, color contrasts, strongly defined heads, almond shaped eyes, and their elegant coats make them a work of art. When combined with a sharp intelligence, a curious personality, along with their loving nature, that is the making of the Oriental.

History

The Oriental is a man-made breed that was developed in the 1950s in England. After WWII, breeders and breeding cats had been reduced and the remaining breeders experimented with rebuilding their programs. One breed that developed from this experimentation was the Oriental. Creation of the Oriental came from cross breeding the Siamese with a variety of other breeds such as the Russian Blue, British Shorthair, Abyssinian, and regular domestic cats. This resulted in non-pointed cats that were then cross bred back to the Siamese. After a few generations of cross breeding there were cats that were identical to the Siamese in every way aside from the color. These non-pointed cats are the ancestors to the Oriental. Originally each different color was on course to be its own breed. However due to the vast color array possible leading to the potential of hundreds of new breeds, all non-pointed Siamese cats were grouped together into one breed, the Oriental. Interesting, one color did manage to establish its own breed, the Havana Brown.



Personality

The Oriental is great for those who want a lot of interaction and activity from a cat. It is also good with children and other pets. Many that have owned an Oriental indicate that if you have one you should have two, to entertain themselves while the owners are away. Otherwise be prepared to hear all about your Oriental's day when you return home, they have a lot to say and like to have the last word. The Oriental is very playful and can entertain themselves for hours on end. They can be playful throughout their entire lives. One game they like to play is fetch. The Oriental are natural fetchers, and will play as long as someone will throw. They also love warm places. The Oriental will pile up in their favorite spot to soak up the warmth; be it in a lap, in front of the refrigerator, in a kitty kosy, on a warm sill, or even under the blankets.



Traits

The Oriental group is defined by extremes...from its long tubular body and long angled legs, to its long triangular head and ears to its long tapering tail. Nothing about the Oriental should be round. The Oriental Shorthair has a coat that should be short and sleek, with a very fine texture that lies close to the body. The coat pattern comes in all colors and patterns including traditional solid, tabby, tortie, tobie, silver, smoke, and particolor. With over 281 colors, that makes for over 600 color and pattern combinations available as Shorthairs or Longhairs. Belonging to the Oriental Breed Group, the eyes of the Oriental have the oriental slant which is not found in any other breed outside this breed group. The eyes should also be medium to large almond shaped with a preferred green color. Together with the large triangular ears, this gives the Oriental the unique oriental look of the breed.



Health

Due to the wedge shaped head of the Oriental, this makes it more prone to respiratory disease and dental problems. Eye problems such as crossed eyes, glaucoma, and progressive retinal atrophy are also reported with this breed. Vestibular disease of the inner ear can cause loss of balance, head tilting, dizziness, nausea, and eye drifting.



Other health issues that affect the Oriental include "hereditary liver amyloidosis, which can lead to liver failure; and dilated cardiomyopathy, a condition that reduces the heart's ability to contract. Bladder stones and mast cell cancer have also been reported in the breed."

Reputable breeders do breed to minimize the occurrence of many disorders. It may be unreasonable to genetically test every kitten. But most breeders know the genetic status of the breeding parents, helping to reduce the odds of subsequent litters developing a genetic disorder. Never be afraid to ask about the breeding parent's health history, a reputable breeder should be willing to discuss it with you.

References

<http://www.tica.org/cat-breeds/item/247>
<http://www.cfa.org/Breeds/BreedsKthruR/Oriental.aspx>
http://www.vetstreet.com/cats/oriental#1_9lpoinuf