

The Siamese



Overview

The Siamese is a striking mix of beauty and intelligence. For some, the Siamese's sleek body lines, color contrasts, strongly defined heads, deep blue almond shaped eyes, and their silky short hair 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 Siamese. The Siamese belongs to the Oriental Breed Group which includes the Balinese, the Oriental Shorthair, and the Oriental Longhair.

History



The origin of the Siamese seems to have been lost, but it appears the cat does have an Eastern origination. Manuscripts dating back to the 1350s, that came out of the ancient capital of Siam (now Thailand), recorded a native cat there having a pale coat with a black mask, tail, feet, and ears.

The Siamese made its appearance in 1871 at the Crystal Palace Cat Show in London. And by 1879 the Siamese first appeared in the United States, as a gift to President Rutherford Hayes' wife. When the Siamese first started showing, they were only seal points. As other colors, patterns, and coats developed, these others coats to be accepted in the show ring as well.

Personality

The Siamese 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 a Siamese 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 Siamese's day when you return



home, they have a lot to say and like to have the last word. The Siamese 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 Siamese are natural fetchers, and will play as long as someone will throw. They also love warm places. The Siamese 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 Siamese 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 Siamese should be round. Its coat however should be short and sleek, with a very fine texture that lies close to the body. The Siamese coat pattern has to be pointed, meaning that color is only seen on the face, feet, and tail. These color points can come in any variety of colors. All Siamese cats start out white when they are born and as they get older their points start to darken. Their points will continue to darken throughout their lives. Consistent with all cats in the Oriental Breed group, the Siamese eyes appear slanted. The eyes should also be medium to large almond shaped with a rich blue color. Together with the large triangular ears, this gives the Siamese the unique oriental look of the group.

Health

Due to the wedge shaped head of the Siamese, 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.

The Siamese is also prone to central nervous system disorders that can be a result of stress. Psychogenic Alopecia and Feline Hyperesthesia Syndrome are two of these disorders. Psychogenic Alopecia is a compulsive disorder in which the cat will excessively groom itself causing hair loss. Feline Hyperesthesia Syndrome is oversensitivity of the skin which could lead to strange and possibly aggressive behaviors. Cardiomyopathy or heart disease is also known to be present in the Siamese breed but it is not common.



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

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