
The breed of the month is...

The Exotic



Overview

According to the Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA), the Exotic is the second most popular breed of 2013. The Exotic offers the appearance and much of the temperament of the Persian with a few exceptions. The Exotic has traded in the long flowing coat of the Persian for a shorter and denser coat. And while the Exotic also maintains much of the Persian's quiet personality, it also has developed a curiosity and bubbly personality due to its shorthaired lineage.

History

The origins of the Exotic stem from enthusiastic American Shorthair breeders, who were looking to improve the coats of their cats. Breeders began to breed their American Shorthairs with Persians, particularly the Silver Persians in an attempt to get the elegant silver coat color and green eye color. Originally the proposed new breed was to be the "Sterling" and limited to the silver color only, however it was quickly determined that all colors would be accepted and the breed established as the Exotic Shorthair.



Even though the early outcross that established the breed was that of an American Shorthair crossed with a Persian, broad interpretation of standard rules allowed for any registered shorthair to be used as a cross. Early breeders were not only using the American Shorthair for cross breeding but also the Burmese for its body and head or the Russian Blue for its double coat. Once these outcrosses were made, the shorthaired progeny would later be bred back to the Persian and no other outcrosses were necessary. As the goal turned into producing a shorthaired Persian, the Exotic became closely tied to the Persian. Now, as the Persian standard changed so too did the Exotic to follow suit. The standards for both are now identical except for the coat. The coat has to be short, dense, and plush.

Personality

The Exotic has the same sweet, gentle, and easy going personality of the Persian. They enjoy the company of their human family members, following them around from room to room and then curling up in your lap when you sit down. However their shorthaired lineage has also given them a love of play, with simple things amusing them. They may jump and catch a toy, chase paper balls, watch water drip out of the tap, or just sit and study a toy. As with the Persian, the Exotic communicates through its large expressive eyes, their irresistible gaze, and the quiet pleasant sounding trill of their voice.

Traits

Again as with the Persian, the Exotic is a medium to large sized cat with a muscular body. This cat should be short, round and stocky. They have a short and stocky body on little legs. The Exotic has the same pansy-like head shape and facial features of the Persian. Their heads are round with large open sweet-eyed expressions. Those eyes should be round, with their snub nose fitting right between. The dome of their head and their round chin should be equally spaced from the break of their face. The break should be in the center of the face. The Exotic's ears should also be short and rounded, fitting low on the head into the rounded contour of the head and not distorting it. Their bodies should be square, balanced by a short thick tail.



As it has been described in the history of this breed, the coat of the Exotic is what sets it apart. The coat should be short, plush, and dense with a thick undercoat. The affect of this coat transforms this muscular cat into a plush toy that just needs to be cuddled. The Exotic's coat comes in a variety of colors and patterns from solids, bicolors, tabbies, and pointeds just to list a few. Grooming maintenance with these cats is relatively easily. Simple weekly combing to remove loose dead hairs and wiping the eyes with a warm damp cloth is all that is really necessary. So you get the overall look of the Persian but without all the grooming needs of its long coat.

Major Health Concerns

With the Exotic there are a few diseases and disorders to be aware of. Of particular concern are two genetic conditions that some Exotics may have inherited from their Persian lineage, Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM) and Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD). The additional conditions to be aware of include idiopathic facial dermatitis, entropion, blocked tear ducts, dental disorders, and wry mouth.

Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM) is a heart disease which causes the heart to progressively thicken. This thickening doesn't allow the heart to relax normally. As a result the heart cannot completely fill with blood, thus it doesn't circulate blood normally eventually leading to congestive heart failure. HCM is known as an "old age" disease, but the genetic form can occur in young cats typically between 6 months and 3 years of age. There is no cure for HCM. But with various heart medication options, proper management can ease the burden on the heart extending the quality of life.

Polycystic Kidney Disease is another progressive disease that has cysts developing in the kidneys. These cysts are present at birth and gradually grow, leading to decline of the kidney function and eventually kidney failure. Cats are usually young adults when symptoms start to appear, typically between 3 to 10 years old. There is no cure for PKD. But with various treatment options, proper management can ease the burden on the kidneys making the cat feel better and extending the quality of life. There is not direct "kidney" medication that helps decrease the work load of the kidneys. Treatments often include special formulated diets that do not put as much of a workload on the kidneys, fluid therapy to

help balance electrolytes and correct dehydration, appetite stimulants, phosphorus binders if phosphorus levels are too high, and hormone therapy to balance calcium and phosphorus levels.

Reputable breeders do breed to minimize the occurrence of many of these diseases and disorders. It may be unreasonable to genetically test every kitten for all of these issues. 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 genetics, a reputable breeder should be willing to discuss it with you.