

REX THE KING

By Helen Weiss

The Rex cats, so new to the fancy that many Fanciers who show, and even some of the judges have never seen one, are of the most outstanding breed. Most new breeds and colors are man made by hybridizing



between two or more breeds and working with them until the desired characteristics are obtained. This is not true with the Rex for it is a mutation from the Domestic Shorthair and can be obtained only when both parents carry the rex gene or by the original mutation created by God.

Many think that a Rex cat is just cat without guardhairs. This is not true for these cats, even in the first mutation, are as unlike their normal coated siblings as they can be. Almost without fail these cats show a definitely foreign type. The difference is best seen in the illustration of the Rex cat from Ohio and his litter brother.

The Rex are outstanding in appearance, their most distinguishing characteristic being their short, dense and usually curly coat that is so soft to the touch that one can never forget the feel of this luxurious fur. This fur is different from that of the normal cat, for it has no guard hairs, with the under coat or down hairs shorter and finer but more numerous than the hair on any other breed.¹

Rex cats have a delicate appearance which belies their heavy weight and muscular body. Most Rex cats are fine boned and slim in appearance, but part of this is an illusion created by the very short coat, so that one is able to see the muscle forms that are covered by a longer coat in other cats. This silky coat may be of any color allowed in Manx, including the white markings which add sparkle to many beautiful animals.

The Rex have a head which is longer than it is wide, with a Roman profile and a pinch at the muzzle when viewed from above. The eyes should be medium to fairly large, color should be standard for the color of the coat but secondary to the overall appearance of the eyes. The neck, while muscular, should have a long slender appearance. The ears should be large and open, with a modified point, set high on the head. Often the ears are naked in adults, the bareness running down well onto the neck below the ears. The legs should be long and slender with dainty feet, the tail should be long, tapering to a pointed tip that often sports a little curled "brush" on he end. The Rex tail usually curls under and almost seems to be prehensile.

The personality of the Rex is as intriguing as its appearance. Each is an individual, and there are never two that are just alike, but all are

¹The "Rex" Type of Coat in the Domestic Cat, A. G. Searle and A. C. Jude, from Journal of Genetics, Vol. 54, No. 3, p. 511.

full of energy, curiosity and enthusiasm; loving companions that like nothing better than to be a "lap cat."

Grooming the Rex is easy for all they need is to be kept clean. Petting and occasional combing with a fine "flea" comb will keep the loose hairs out of the coat. During the shedding period the hair will come out in little loose balls like cotton and can easily be brushed off of clothes or furniture.

Probably the Rex mutation has appeared many times through the ages, for we know that there have been six separate mutations recorded in the past 20 years and probably there have been many others that have not come to the attention of someone who cared enough to find out why these cats are "different."

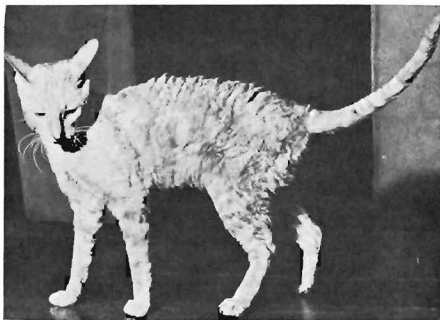
Rex coats are found on many different animals, mice, rats, rabbits and horses. The author knew a Rex mutant horse and though we all wondered at his soft, dense, curly coat none knew the full importance of this different type of "fur."

The first the author knew of the Rex cat was from an article in the April, 1957 issue of "All Pets" which told of the English Rex seen at the home of Mr. Bryan Stirling-Webb, outside of London. The article filled me with the desire to see one of these cats. There was no indication at the time that there had been any imports into the U.S. Later I had the big thrill of "meeting" my first Rex face to face at the home of Mrs. Fred Galvin in Anaheim, Calif. When the door was opened there stood "Diamond Lil."

To those who had the privilege of knowing Diamond Lil (or Lilly Bell as she was affectionately called), she will always be remembered for her beauty, charm and personality. She was blue and white with deep even waves over her whole body. Indeed she was so outstanding that when the first standard for the Rex was written by Ann Manley and Peggy Galvin, Diamond Lil was put on the table in front of them and the description of her became the standard used by U.C.F., the first association to recognize the Rex. The new standard was formed by a group consisting of the breeders of American, English and German strains of Rex. The most interesting thing about this is that even though the different strains have occurred in different regions of the world from completely unrelated Domestic Shorthair cats (all of unknown parentage) the same standard fits each strain.

ENGLISH REX

The first Rex cat recognized as such was born July 21, 1950 in a litter of "farm cats" owned by Mrs. Ennismore and her cousin, Miss McAllister, in Cornwall, England. The mother, Serena, a tortie and white, was believed to have bred with her little brother a "ginger boy." There were five kittens in the litter and, having previously



Kallibunker, first English mutant

raised Rex rabbits, Mrs. Ennismore immediately recognized this one cream kitten with the short curly hair as a Rex. Kallibunker, as he was named, ran loose for two years, then on the advice of Mr. Stirling-Webb and Mr. Jude, he was mated to his mother. They produced a litter of three kittens on August 27, 1952, a blue-cream and white Rex male¹ named Poldhu, a Rex coated cream male who ceased growing after being immunized for enteritis and died in March, 1953, and a normal coated female who looked like her mother and was not kept.

Mrs. Ennismore, with the guidance and encouragement of Mr. Stirling-Webb and Mr. A. C. Jude, continued breeding Rex cats for six more years, trying to get the five generations of Rex that was required by the GCCF before they would grant recognition. By continued inbreeding the stamina of the cats seemed to fail, many kittens died for unknown reasons and some cats were found to be sterile. At one time Mrs. Ennismore was keeping more than forty cats, a large percentage of which were Rex, the others normal coated offspring of Rex and hybrid Rex matings. When she could no longer continue this expensive hobby Mrs. Ennismore found that few people would pay for an unrecognized breed of cats. She was asking 50 pounds (about \$140), for adults and 25 pounds (about \$70), for kittens.

Poldhu was the only sire retained and Dr. Searle and a veterinary friend were curious about a "blue-cream" male which sired kittens. They convinced Mrs. Ennismore that science would be advanced by a "slight operation which would in no way affect his ability to sire." The operation was performed but contrary to their assertions he never sired again. The irony of this is that the sample of tissue taken and sent to the laboratory for testing was lost so no records were obtained. Mr. Stirling-Webb had bought a tabby male kitten and two females, one a blue tabby and the other a blue tabby and white named Dozmary Pool described in detail in "All Pets" April, 1957. She was as fascinating to us when we visited Asgill House in 1961 as she was to the "All Pets" author. The blue tabby died while young and none of the three ever produced kittens.

A cream male kitten, born in 1955, was given to Mr. Rickeard, MRCVS, and was the only Rex male known in England in 1960. He was borrowed by Mr. Stirling-Webb for breeding purposes and a group of his friends bred their females to this cream male. Several Burmese queens were used and some Domestic Shorthairs. I believe that all of the more recent British bred Rex of this (Type I) strain are progeny of this cat. He was killed in a cat fight later that year. When visiting in 1961 we saw a handsome cream and white hybrid son of the Rickeard male at Mr. Stirling-Webbs. At the home of Mrs. Watts at Sunbury-on-Thames we saw two kittens, a black and a calico Rex. They were sired by the cream and white hybrid, and out of a tortie hybrid. These two kittens were full brother and sister of the little blue and white Rex "winking kitten," Du-Bu Lambtex, shown in a full page picture on the last page of "Life" (U.S. 1960).

1. Author's Note: May have been a blue tabby and white.

kittens were born but none lived more than 48 hours.) Neither Diamond Lil nor Lamorna Cove ever had another kitten.

Fan-T-Cee Blue Boy bred to his sister produced three Rex and three normal coated kittens in the first two litters (all were females). In the next three litters, all of the kittens had normal coats. Of these



Gr. Ch. Daz-Zling Great White Father, highest scoring Rex in 1963 and 1964

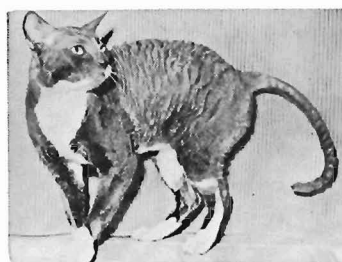
Rex kittens, Fan-T-Cee Toni and Fan-T-Cee Rexanne of Daz-Zling, both from the second litter, have produced many Rex kittens and they are still leading productive lives. Last year a son of Toni, Fan-T-Cee Fangio of Rodell, belonging to Bob and Dell Smith of Galeta, Calif., was All American Blue Rex male. A grandson of Rexanne, Daz-Zling Great White Father was All Southern Short Hair Male Kitten, All American Copper Eyed White Rex Male and All American Rex Cat in 1963.

In the summer of 1958 my husband, Walter, and I decided to bring Marmaduke

home to Sugar Land, Texas. He was purchased from Mrs. Blancheri. For some time Domestic Shorthair females were sought in vain to be bred with Marmaduke. While waiting for Domestic Shorthair kittens to grow to breeding age, word was received that Marmaduke was possibly the only fertile Rex cat living. This was before the Rickeard male was known to be available in England.

It was decided to use Siamese queens rather than to take a chance that something might happen and he would leave no progeny. Pet type Siamese were used and of course all kittens looked like normal blue or black (many with white markings) short hair kittens. The coat was especially silky and thick and all grew to be beautiful cats. When the Domestic Shorthair kittens were grown, white and red tabbies were bred to Marmaduke. Since the background of the queens was not known there were many color surprises. From these outcrosses have come not only red tabbies, but creams, brown tabbies, torties, calico, whites, blacks and smokes.

In 1962 Dr. Cottington in Hawaii bought Daz-Zling Replica (of Som Chai) All American Parti-Color Rex Male (who looked very much like Marmaduke) and Daz-Zling Diamond (of Som Chai), a black and white hybrid. From these two and from several outcrosses to Domestic Shorthair females, she has had spectacular success. One litter born to Diamond was to my knowledge the largest litter of Rex kittens ever born, with seven Rex and two hybrid kittens. She is continuing her breeding program outcrossing to different colored shorthairs to increase the variety of colors.



Marmaduke of Daz-Zling

GERMAN REX

When the English Rex were being publicized in the early fifties, word came that a black curly female had been "found" wandering in East Berlin, by Dr. Scheuer-Karpin. According to the Doctor, "Lammchen, of uncertain age, (was) born before 1946, had many kittens of unknown fathers; from 1952 until 1956, with domestic cat Blackie I, (Lammchen had) many kittens of normal appearance. With one of these, Fridolin, in 1957 (she had her) first litter of homozygous kittens, of which one was Sputnik."

"In 1957 mating with a domestic ginger, of which Blackie II was the only kitten which remained; of normal appearance, he has sired all succeeding Rex kittens."

"In 1958 Curlee and Muse (females); in 1959 a Rex male; in 1960 Marco and sister (went to Paris), Christopher (went to U.S.)."¹

In 1960 Mrs. Muckenhaupt's son, while touring in East Berlin, went to see Dr. Scheuer-Karpin and was warmly received. Dr. Scheuer-Karpin had spent the war years in England and speaks and writes English fluently. At the time she was opposed to sending kittens to the U. S., as one she had sent to Mr. Jude died in quarantine and a pair she had sent to Prof. Letard in Paris had spent four days lost on a Polish airline and one was dead on arrival, the other barely alive.

Two kittens were available at the time, both were normal coated (hybrids) one from Lammchen, the other from her daughter, Curlee. These (thought to be a pair but later found to be two females) were taken to West Berlin by subway (this was before the border was sealed), and put on a plane, arriving in Mass. 16 hours later. They are still owned by Mrs. Muckenhaupt of Newton, Highlands, Mass. Marigold and Jet, as they were named, were born in June and July, 1960. Christopher, the first curley German Rex imported to the U. S., was born in November, 1960, and sent to Mrs. Joan O'Shea of Vernon, New York.

In the fall of 1961 Mrs. O'Shea received four kittens from Germany.



Ch. Christopher Columbus of Hi-Fi.
Owner Joan O'Shea, first breeder to
import German Rex.

Among them was a Rex female, Regina, who went to Mrs. Muckenhaupt, but died of enteritis at 15 months. This meant that Rex x Rex litters would have to wait until young kittens could grow up. Then Mrs. Muckenhaupt's first seven Rex kittens were all males! Now she reports that she has four young Rex females and is anxiously waiting for them to grow up and reproduce.

Mrs. O'Shea is working with several recent imports and has had several litters.

¹ From a letter written by Dr. Scheuer-Karpin to Mrs. Muckenhaupt. *Year Book*, 1965



**Birchwoods Martin Probisher
All Eastern Smoke Rex, owned by
Mrs. Muckenaupt.**

The German Rex conforms to the standard. As far as the author knows the only colors at this time are black and black smoke.

In his article on Rex Coats¹ Dr. Searle states that the German Rex are curly as kittens but straight haired as adults. This is certainly not true of those in this country for all of the adults are very curly. The only one the author has been privileged to meet is Hi-Fi's Schultz of Karnes, belonging to Mrs. Nettie Carowe of Knoxville, Tenn. He was a very curly and affectionate little black fellow.

AMERICAN REX OHIO REX

The first recorded Rex mutation in America was in 1953, when Miss Mary Hedderman then of Plainsville, Ohio, had a normal coated domestic cat who had the curly kitten, Toni, pictured here. (This picture illustrates the great difference in conformation between Rex kittens and their normal coated litter mates. Notice the large ears, the long narrow head and slender legs of Rex.) Unfortunately Toni died of enteritis at ten months.



Toni and his normal coated brother

his playing. He never seemed to rest or sleep, constantly trying to rouse some of the others to romp with him."²

No more is known of the Ohio strain unless a cat, reported to live near Columbus, Ohio, described to a neighbor of ours in Sugar Land who was visiting in Ohio, as "a different kind of cat with curls all over him" might be one of the kittens referred to in the letter. The author tried to contact the owners of this cat for information but was unable to do so.

OREGON REX

In May, 1959 Mrs. Selby (Mildred) Stringham of Warrenton, Oregon, found a little black and white female with extremely short wavy fur, in a litter of otherwise normal kittens, born to her calico

1. The "Rex" Type of Coat in the Domestic Cat, A. G. Searle and A. C. Jude, from the *Journal of Genetics*, Vol. 54, No. 3, p. 511.
2. From a letter written by Miss Hedderman to Mrs. Ennismore in October, 1956.

domestic cat. This kitten, named Kinky Marcella, was the original mutant of a new strain.

Mrs. Stringham wrote to Mr. Jude, sending pictures and a description of her cat, who identifies her as "Rex" and advised that she be bred to a Rex male. Since Marmaduke was the only



Kinky Marcella
Original American
Mutant. Breeder-
Owner: Mrs.
Mildred Stringham

fertile Rex male in the country and he was in Texas, Kinky was bred to Mrs. Galvin's blue hybrid Rex, the result was five normal coated (blues and blacks) kittens, all males! Probably the Rex genes of the two strains were not compatible but this of course could not be proven until such time as the Rex coated individuals could be bred together. Bred to one of the kittens from this litter, Kinky had a litter of four, two of which were Rex. We were entranced with these lovely kittens when we visited the Stringhams in 1962. Subsequent breedings have produced some very beautiful cats. Her work and the results of this work is fully described in February, 1964, issue of "All Pets."

CALIFORNIA (LONG HAired WITHOUT GUARDHAIRS)

As Rex cats are short hairs, this will only be included as a matter of interest.

In 1960 a curly longhaired calico cat and her long haired red son, both completely lacking guard hairs, were reported to Mrs. Blancheri. Although she was not raising cats at the time, she obtained this pair and working with Bob and Dell Smith they carried on this new strain to find out how they were related to the English Rex. Because they were not shorthaired as Rex cats are, they were called "Marcel's."

The calico queen was bred to Peggy Galvin's hybrid, Blue Boy, the resulting litter, a male and a female, both had normal shorthair coats. This brother and sister were bred together and the result was three blue cream and white shorthaired Rex kittens. It is not known if these kittens were bred back to cats of either side of their pedigree, but it would be interesting to know if they carried the Rex or lack of guard hairs from both sides and would therefore have 100% Rex litters bred to either side.

The Smiths did not carry on with the Marcel's, because of the long-haired background, and no other information is known about them.

The long hair hid the type on these cats and the lack of guardhair made the coat limp and rather lacking in texture. The hair was curly and with greater length tended to spiral and separate rather than to give the appearance of waves as in the shorthairs.

BREEDING EXPERIENCES

When Marmaduke was purchased the problem was where to go for Rex females. Our first attempt was a letter to Mrs. Ennismore in England requesting information on what females would be available. The answer was heart breaking, for shortly before our letter arrived three of the last four Rex females had been put to sleep (after they had failed to conceive when bred to Poldhu, the vet had decided that

they were sterile.) The fourth female had been kept for a pet and when she bred to a neighborhood tom had conceived. She and her female kitten had just been promised to Mr. Stirling-Webb.

This meant that we would have to breed our own half Rex stock from Marmaduke. All half Rex kittens, which we call hybrids, have normal coats but carry Rex genes. Any cat that has a Rex coat is pure Rex for this is a recessive gene, therefore a Rex that comes from two hybrids is just as pure genetically as one that has several generations of pure Rex in the ancestry.

At first in the interest of the future of the breed, we used only half brothers bred to their half sisters. Later we used the Rex offspring from these hybrid matings to breed to distantly related hybrids and finally with a number of distantly related cats we are now breeding all Rex to Rex which produces 100% Rex kittens.

Keeping records of all of our kittens we get the following figures; when hybrids were bred to hybrids, in 28 litters there were 128 kittens, 110 were normal coated and 18 were Rex. This is considerably below the 25% Rex which was expected. As yet there is no scientific explanation for this discrepancy. Rex were bred to hybrids, in 33 litters, there were 126 kittens, 64 were normal and 62 Rex. This is almost exactly the 50% expected from this cross. The records show that Mrs. Ennismore, by breeding Rex males to hybrid (normal coated) females, out of 64 kittens, 35 were Rex and 28 normal coated hybrids, slightly more than the 50% which is expected from this cross.¹ Mrs. Ennismore did not breed any normal coated cats (hybrids) to other hybrids, so there are no figures to compare with ours on this cross.



Fan-T-Cee's Rex-anne of Daz-Zling with her 4 day old kits.

We have had ten litters of Rex to Rex, producing 37 kittens, all Rex of course, the largest litter was 6 kittens. The usual Rex litter (in English Strain I cats) is from 2 to 4 kittens. When they are born they have short, deep marcel, many looking like miniature Karakul lambs. Only two of the 117 Rex kittens born in our cattery were straight haired or "plush at birth, and both of these

turned curly when young and have always had an abundant curly coat as adults. Most kittens will lose much or all of the curl when they are between one week and one month old. The curl returns on these which have straightened, usually by 6 or 7 months and keeps getting curlier each succeeding season. A few cats, Lamorna Cove was one, will remain plush (without curl but definitely Rex). When Lamorna Cove was seven years old she was still plush but the next year, when she was eight she had a definite marcel!

One strange characteristic of the Rex, which I have never seen on other cats is that they have an odd number of mammary glands, the usual number in other cats is eight, while it is not unusual for a Rex (or Rex hybrid) to have eleven, and they may be unbalanced, some having 4 on one side and 7 on the other, not all are functional, however.

1. The "Rex" Type of Coat in the Domestic Cat, A. G. Searle and A. C. Jude, from Journal of Genetics, Vol. 54, No. 3, p. 509.

THE REX SOCIETY, INTERNATIONAL

In the spring of 1962 the breeders of Rex cats decided that a society was needed to bring them all together and promote the breed. There were twelve charter members, with no recruiting we now have 15 members and many actively interested in joining.

Anyone interested in getting a list of Rex breeders who are members of the Rex Society should contact Mrs. B. E. Drane (Secy.-Treas.) of The Rex Society, International, 944 Clayton Rd., Ballwin, Mo. 63011.

RR = Rex coated cat.

NN = Normal coated cat.

RN = Normal coated cat carrying Rex gene,
called Rex Hybrid.

THEORETICAL BREEDING CHART — MENDEL'S LAW

RR		X		NN
RN	RN	RN	RN	RN

(All normal coated Rex Hybrids)

	RR	X	RN	
RR	RN	RR	RR	RN

(2 Rex, 2 Rex Hybrids)

	RN	X	RN	
RR	RN	RN	RN	NN

(1 Rex, 2 Rex Hybrids, 1 normal)

	RR	X	RR	
RR	RR	RR	RR	RR

(All Rex)

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR: Mrs. Walter J. Weiss (Helen) has bred Siamese for many years, having brought much fame and glory to her well known Daz-Zling Cattery. More recently she has bred many prize winning Rex cats. More data on Mrs. Weiss will be found in the Judges Section.