

RED ABYSSINIANS

By EDNA FIELD

New breeders often ask "How will I know if I have a red Abyssinian in a new litter of kittens?" There can be no doubt—from the very moment of his arrival he will be quite different in coloring that of a new-born ruddy kitten, however, will be absolutely no black whatsoever—The tip of his tail, around the footpads brown. The foot-ther will be a bright to the darker tone mates.

ing starts to form the tips of the hair brown and so will kitten may have—etc. The C.F.A. standard for red Abyssinians states: "Color: warm, glowing red, distinctly ticked with chocolate-brown. Deeper shades of red preferred. However, good ticking not to be sacrificed merely for depth of color."

Some bloodlines produce red kittens that are quite pale at birth but within a few months they will darken to a good red, while others produce deep reds that do not show distinctive ticking, but resemble a solid colored cat. It is most important to have a well-ticked coat, as this is surely one of the distinctions of the Abyssinian breed.

When could a red kitten be expected in a litter from two ruddy parents? Simple—if BOTH parents carry the recessive red gene, there is a very good chance that one out of four kittens will be red. According to Shaw,¹ it is probable that on every five-generation pedigree of show Abbies, there is at least one cat which carries the recessive diluter which will produce the "sorrel" coloring when made homozygous.

This recessive gene can be likened to the blue gene in the Siamese. Just as two Seal-points can produce a Blue-point kitten, two ruddy Abbies can produce a red Aby kitten, provided the recessive gene is carried by both parents. However, to be sure of producing a litter of all red Abbies, both parents must be red.

According to Dyte,² the yellow (red) coat color of the Abyssinian breed is inherited autosomally. This is in contrast to the inheritance of the yellow color in other breeds of red cats, which is sex-



Mrs. Field with Chota-Li
Talisman

arrival he will be color from even the others and sisters. breeders know the new kitten so ruddy only the tip of the head show the black Aby kit. The red have absolutely no not one single hair! top of head and fur will be chocolate-pads and nose-lea-rosy-pink, compared of his ruddy litter-

When the tick-at about four weeks, will be chocolate-any markings the leg-bars, necklace,



Chota-Li Cayenne

linked. An autosomal recessive gene is not easily followed in pedigrees, because cats heterozygous for the factor appear normal (ruddy). Both parents and all four grandparents of a yellow (red) kitten may in this case be of normal (ruddy) color. Shaw³ points out that close examination of the ticked hairs shows that the normal black ticking is reduced to brown, (just as Seal Black is reduced to chocolate in the Siamese), with only a minor (if any) reduction of the color intensity in the ruddy or orangeish interbands. The particular recessive diluter reduces the intensity of the black-sepia pigment, allowing the already present orangeish color to predominate, hence the overall effect of a golden fawn color, deepening to a bronze or coppertone. The orangeish pigment is NOT the sex-linked yellow-orange-red phaeomelanin, but instead it is the extremely low concentration of eumelanins (black-sepia) under the maximal influence of the browning or shredding effect.

Red Abyssinian kittens have been appearing in litters from standard ruddy parents for many years and most of the early ones can be traced to the well-known British studs Bruerne Achilles and Nigella Contenti, or back even further to Croham Abeba. The late Mrs. Clare Basnett was one of England's earliest breeders of Abyssinians and owned the famous "Croham" cattery. Most of the American Abyssinians can be traced back to the Croham, Woodroffe and Kreeoro bloodlines. The June 1952 issue of the Abyssinian Cat News Letter reported that Mrs. Menezes' female Taishun Dawn had produced a red kitten when bred to Croham Abeba. However, it was not until 1959 that there is a record of a breeder using two red parents and then it was the Countess of Liverpool who bred Raby Honey to Coleswood Christopher, producing two red kittens.

To Mrs. Dorothy Winsor must go most of the credit for establishing the reds in England. She worked constantly to supply accurate and



Adrah Saba owned by Mrs. D. Winsor

valuable information to other breeders and to geneticists working with the reds' pedigrees. Owning her first red Aby in 1954, a beautiful female, Adrah Saba, bred by Mrs. V. E. Major, from Kreeoro Sheba and Bruerne Achilles, her ambition was to breed red to red and then to get the color recognized for championship by the Governing

Council of the Cat Fancy. In 1959 Mrs. Winsor obtained two red females from the Countess of Liverpool—both Raby Honey and a four month old daughter Merkland Yilma, but it was not until the next year that she could find a red male available, when Taishun Khephra, bred by Mrs. Menezes, joined the Tranby Cattery as a stud. Finally, Mrs. Winsor was rewarded for her long wait and in 1961, both Honey and Yilma presented her with all-red litters, sired by Khephra.

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Denham had been providing invaluable publicity for the Red Abyssinians through the medium of the Abyssinian Cat News Letter — an excellent and widely circulated International publication (now in its seventeenth year), reporting news of red Abbies appearing in litters in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, U.S.A. and Southern Rhodesia. In 1963, the G.C.C.F. accepted the Abyssinian Cat Club's recommendation for the standard of points and officially recognized the red Abyssinian, granting them breed number 23A.

Following Mrs. Winsor's progress with great interest, I too, was trying at the same time for that elusive all-red litter and had run into many difficulties. My first red had appeared in a litter with three ruddies in 1957 from an English import Chatwyn Taha of Chota-Li and an American male Dalai Deta Tim of Selene—both parents being ruddy. I kept this lovely little female Chota-Li Cayenne and showed her in the A.O.C. class in 1959. Unable to find a red stud for her, she was bred to a ruddy male Chota-Li Grenadier, but as he did not carry red, there were no red kittens. I decided to keep a ruddy female from this litter, as she would be valuable for breeding,



Merkland Yilma (Sheba)
owned by Mrs. D. Winsor

and later, when I bred her to her half-brother, Chota-Li Ulysses, she presented me with three kittens on Christmas Day 1961 and as a special Yuletide gift two of them were red boys. The third, an exceptionally fine ruddy female Chota-Li Melody of Ro-Da-Cam, was later owned and shown by Dr. and Mrs. R. S. Terceira. Melody was not only a good show cat, but a fine mother of excellent red and ruddy kittens. Of the two precious boys, one—Chota-Li Omar Rai of Nelarie, went to Mrs. N. Guild in California, who was working with a different line of reds, the other, Chota-Li

Paprika, was kept as a much-needed stud. Now I was all set—I had a red pair, but tragedy struck and Cayenne died suddenly.

Once again the program was delayed, until Mrs. Winsor agreed to part with one of her red females and shortly after, Tranby Red Listra of Chota-Li arrived from England amid much anticipation! At about the same time, I also acquired another red female Siab's Ginger Oun of Chota-Li and both females were bred to Paprika within a few days of each other and the long days of waiting were counted impatiently.

Finally, on Easter Sunday, (my reds seem to favor special days!) both girls each had three kittens and at long last I had my all-red litters—believed to be the first in North America.

In 1964, C.F.A. accepted the red Abyssinian as a separate color class of the breed, using the numbers 380R and 381R. However, in preceding years, one of the first red⁴ males to be shown for exhibition in 1957 was

Rufus the Red. Mr. and Mrs. C. Cowell were two of the showing their red in A.O.C. classes, in be seen as much as Du-Ro-Al First La-Sorrel Sultan, from Yankee Sultan of Grass Tagetes of Du-Ro-Al Sorrel owned by Mrs. C.W. standing daughter, was the first red Grand Champion-Hydon-Goodwin All Abyssinian Female Burgh purchased



Gr. Ch. Pallady's Sun Song

Mrs. Schuler-Taft's and Mrs. C. Cowell earliest exhibitors, Abbies extensively order that they may possible. They were dy and Du-Ro-Al Gr. Ch. Sheramain's Du-Ro-Al and Blue Du-Ro-Al, as was Sue of Pallady, Pallady. Sue's out-Pallady's Sun Song, Aby to win a CFA ship and also the Star award for Best in 1966. Mr. R. de Blue Grass Stellar-male, from Mrs. L. male from Mrs.

Winsor with plans to start a good line of red in the Seattle area. Mr. and Mrs. J. Kalapich showed Chota-Li Flame Mist of Kala and Fredna's Flame Beau of Kala, Mrs. B. Nuttal competed with her red male Chota-Li Petit Rouge Matou, and Mrs. A. Peckham with Du-Ro-Al Cinderella of Peck. These cats, along with First Lady, Sorrel Sultan and Sorrel Sue, all won high awards in All Breed competition the first year that the color was officially accepted.

Red Abyssinians are now being raised in many parts of the world, and the popularity has spread to Holland, Denmark, Sweden, France, Germany, Southern Rhodesia, Australia and New Zealand. It was from the latter that Mrs. Z. Curran reported in 1959 that a female of her breeding, Finesterre Shendi, owned by Mr. H. Arthur, had produced a litter of five kittens, four of them red. The sire, Taishun Fernando, like Shendi, was ruddy — which is

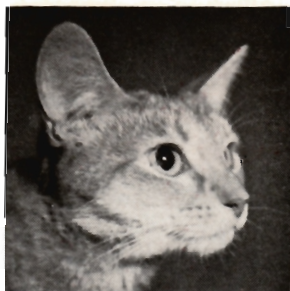


Du-Ro-Al Sorrel Sultan
owner, Mrs. Alma Cowell

especially interesting, considering the expected ratio from this breeding would be one red in four. (See diagram.) In a letter to the Canadian Aby Purr-View publication in 1962, Lieutenant-Colonel N. B. Scott wrote that working with Mrs. Davies (who by this time owned



Du-Ro-Al First Lady
owner, Mrs. Alma Cowell



Chota-Li Flame Mist
of Kala



Sheramain Teeka of Chota-Li
owner, Mrs. Edna Field

Finesterre Shendi) in New Zealand, they had produced three generations of red Abyssinians.

Greatly in demand as very attractive pets, one little red Aby boy had the distinction two years ago, of going to a new home with Dr. and Mrs. D. Burford. Mrs. Sheila Burford is the author of the famous book "The incredible Journey" (later made into a movie). The kitten—Chota-Li Pia of Ethiopia—went as a companion for Simon, the aging Siamese hero of the story. Whether they are pets or show cats, the reds are delighting people around the world with affection and brilliant, glowing color.

ORIGIN OF THE RED ABYSSINIAN — A FANTASY

Time past,

Amongst the sacred cats of Egypt's day
A little cat was born albino-white,
Through some mischance of genes that went astray.
Her tawny kindred shrank from her on sight;
Ghostly she seemed to them, a thing of dread,
Doomed by the angry gods, and so designed
By dark Anubis, Keeper of the Dead.

At last they drove her out—her own cat-kind.
They hunted her in fear and bitter hate
Across the desert sand where parched bones lie—
Frightened and panting, through the temple gate,
Into the temple, seeking sanctuary.
("Hear me, O Pasht—save and pity me!")

And Pasht,
 Pasht the cat-headed, Pasht the golden-eyed.
 Stepped from her pedestal, and laid her hand
 Over the little cat's quick-breathing side,
 Till all its whiteness was with magic spanned
 And turned to gold.

"This is my seal, my sign:
 No longer outcast, walk in conscious pride,
 Clad in my royal gold—for you are mine.
 Bright beauty lives in you, and will abide—
 For all your line
 Shall carry it, in memory of me."

—Dorothy Winsor.

	R	r	
R	RR (Ruddy)	Rr (Ruddy carries Red)	
			Zygotes
r	Rr (Ruddy carries Red)	rr (Red)	

"Checkerboard" diagram of gene combinations (Zygotes) formed when ruddy Abyssinians are mated, both of which are heterozygous (Rr).

References.

- ¹Shaw, D., Dilution Systems and the Sorrel Abyssinian.
- ²Dyte, C. E., The Origin and Genetic Significance of the Red Abyssinian Cat.
- ³Shaw, D., Dilution Systems and the Sorrel Abyssinian.
- ⁴Denham, S. & H., Abyssinian Cat News Letter, March 1959.
- ⁵Winsor, D., Canadian Aby Purr-View, Vol. 2 No. 2.

