

SMITTEN WITH SMOKES

By Joan O'Hara



Mrs. Thomas O'Hara and "Munch"

Few can resist the beauty of a good Smoke. I have been breeding them for over five years, and still marvel at the beauty of this cat, which with the exception of silver ear tufts and ruff, appears to be black. However, upon parting the coat, the beautiful white undercoat is revealed.

Smokes have a marvelous disposition. They are extremely gentle and affectionate.

To my knowledge, no one knows the true origin of the Smokes. There are many theories

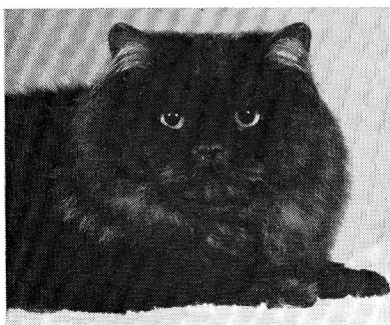
and the one with which I am inclined to agree is that they evolved from the Silver Tabby. At one time Smokes had green eyes. In the late 1800's breeders began to cross them with Blues and Blacks, and eventually bred in the copper eyes, which became the standard. For many years, eye color was a difficult problem for the breeders, the Smokes being very prone to the green eyes.

It has often been said that Smokes can only be shown two months of the year. However, generally I have not found this to be true, and have shown Smokes all year. I might add, I have found that males seem to hold their coat and color much longer than females.

Good health and nutrition are essential and must be maintained to keep the Smokes in top show condition.

Smokes reach their peak of beauty in the Winter months when in full coat, but, this is true of any longhair.

Routine grooming is very important. Above all, the coat should never be allowed to mat, even slightly, or the undercoat will darken wherever the mats have been combed out, because the new hair grows in black. For this same reason Smokes aren't at their best while coming into full coat, as the new growth darkens the undercoat.

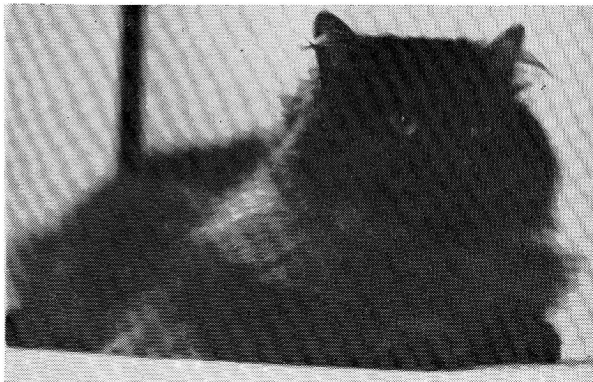


Award Winning Gr. Ch. Moonshine
Sire: Ch. Dixi-Land Envoy of Mi-Hart
Dam: Miss Prim Girl of Arah

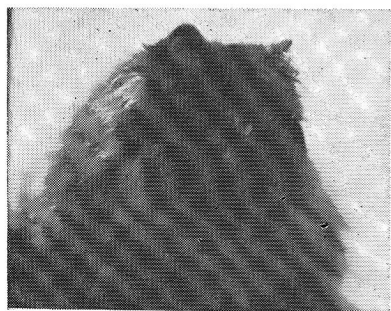
Precautions must be taken (as with Black Persians) to prevent the topcoat from becoming "rusty". Dampness and direct sunlight seem to be the major cause.

I have no doubt that many of the kittens registered each year as Smokes are really Black. I have seen Black kittens that could easily pass for Smokes, white undercoat and all, but they usually revert to their true black coloring when they attain their adult coat. When Smoke kittens are born their coats are like jet black satin. They don't

have their white undercoats at this time. They have gray-white (occasionally pure white) markings around each eye, and a splash of the same coloring above each eye. Some kittens have a little of this gray-white color on their muzzle. They look like little painted clowns. Their legs and paws are a charcoal color, as if they had stepped in soot. If these characteristic markings aren't present they are not Smokes. The white undercoat starts to come in when the kittens are ten days to two weeks old.



Gr. Ch. Araho's Monkeyshine
Sire: Gr. Ch. Moonshine, Dam: Miss Prim Girl of Araho



Gr. Ch. Araho's Moonmist
Sire: Gr. Ch. Moonshine, Dam: Ch. Silva
Wyte Super Suds of Araho

Smokes go through many changes in coat pattern and color before the true smoke coloring comes in, usually by the time the kitten is six to eight months old. Until that time they can be very mottled in appearance, at times almost losing the black topcoat entirely. However, the points (head and legs) always remain black.

I have had a few Smokes that did not undergo any change in coat pattern or color, and have the true smoke coloring since the

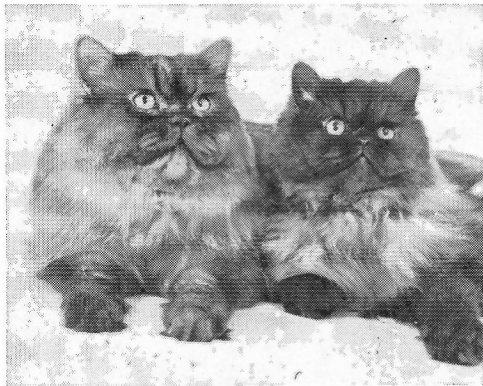
white undercoat came in at two weeks of age. However, this seems to be the exception rather than the rule.

Gr. Ch. Moonshine, (Munch, as he is affectionately called) the first Smoke of my breeding, has basically blue, smoke and black behind him. The Smokes in his pedigree go back to some of the first in the country. His Great Grand Dam, Clairedale's Smoke Pansee, (Black Smoke) had type comparable to that of our better solid colors of today.

Munch has proved invaluable as a stud, not only with the consistent quality of kittens he has produced, but lovely dispositions as well.

I'll never forget that first litter of kittens, and that one little black kitten with the clown face that stood out from all the rest. The name Moonshine seemed to fit him perfectly. It was love at first sight.

These have been five exciting and very rewarding years. Is it any wonder that I'm Smitten With Smokes?



Gr. Ch. Araho's Cheyenne and Ch. Araho's Heirloom