

LET'S celebrate

Zoe Amarilli, of Amazolou Cats, looks at two decades of the wonderful, 'woolly ones' and celebrates their success



way kitten, now named 'Miss DePesto of NoFace' gave birth to six kittens. Three had a curly coat and three were straight coated.

Jeri knew this 50 per cent ratio was exactly what would have been expected from a dominant gene for curl. She was fascinated with this concept and decided to explore the development of a new breed based on the curly coat. She gave the breed the name 'Selkirk' Rex after the Selkirk mountains near to her house to keep the same theme as the Cornish and Devon regional names. After several years of showing the Selkirk's the breed was admitted to Championship status by TICA in 2004.

It's been six years since the first Selkirk Rex cats entered the UK and what an impact they've made! Their popularity has increased year on year with the number of Selkirk kittens registered with the GCCF raising from 41 in 2004 to 245 in 2007. The numbers of breeders has also increased year on year with the increasing popularity of the breed and their stunning WOW factor on the show bench.

background

The Selkirk Rex originated in the USA. In 1987, a breeder in Sheridan, Montana, was asked to look at an unusual kitten that was in a local shelter. It had slight curls and waves in the coat. The breeder, Jeri Newman, was interested in feline genetics, so she adopted the kitten and later bred it to one of her Persians, 'Photo Finish of Deekay'. On July 4, 1988, the stray,

Selkirks in the UK

February 8, 2002 was an exciting day! The first foundation Selkirk Rex imports arrived in the UK, accompanied by their breeder, Christiana Aichner of the Courtleycats prefix. The first breeders in the UK were Linda Davison (TORESKA); Angela Mann (KRESANT) and Lisa Peterson (TRUEBLU). Then, in 2003 Dee Marsland-Round (CATBALU) imported Dahozo Cody of Catbalu from the USA. A seminar presented the breed to the Cat Fancy and Selkirks began to be shown.

showing

The Selkirk Rex Cat Club was established in January 2006 with the main goals being to elevate the breed to championship

status with the UK based GCCF as well as establishing the breed throughout the UK. With the assistance of the Rex Breed Advisory Committee the Selkirk Rex was soon established on the Preliminary show circuit with cats obtaining merits against the set standard of points. From June 2004 until June 2006 15 cats achieved four merits each, to go towards the progression of the breed to Intermediate status. The GCCF accepted the progression document in the October council meeting that year and announced that the Selkirk Rex breed would start competing

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against themselves for Intermediate Certificates from June 1, 2007.

Fast forward to Summer 2008 and the curlies are proving a smash in full competition. Although the Intermediate status does not allow the Selkirk's to gain GCCF titles they can still win best of Variety and Best in show when deemed worthy enough and that's exactly what they're doing with several Best in Variety wins and two Best in Show wins too date! The breed needs to obtain 20 cats who have been awarded three Intermediate Certificates by three different judges before the Club can apply for full Championship status. Amazingly this is exactly what's been achieved! Twenty-three Selkirk Rexs had been awarded three ICs by the second weekend in August, exactly 12 months from the day we obtained our first qualifying Selkirk Rex. The weekend of the 9th August saw four Selkirk Rex with two Intermediate Certificates each competing for their final certificates with 19 already achieving the status, with nails surely bitten to the quick's with anticipation the news was heard that all four at the differing shows had been awarded.

To enable the breed to start competing for Championship titles in June 2009 the Progression Document needed to be with the GCCF by the middle of August, the timing of these final winners this gave us just 5 days leeway to enable it to be put forward for the October Executive meeting.

All that's needed now is for the Executive Committee to accept the application and we could be seeing titled Selkirk Rex by next Summer. Fingers crossed by everyone.

Alongside the GCCF, Selkirk's have also enjoyed wonderful success showing with TICA with several gaining multiple and Supreme titles as well as winning high International placings

– These curly cats can really captivate those judges!

The Selkirk Rex breed comes in various guises. The cats you will see on the show bench will be the curly variety, either shorthaired or longhaired. You will also be able to see variants of this breed who lack the curls but keep the same type and personality when visiting breeders and viewing kittens.

The most endearing part of the Selkirk Rex, other than its wonderful round eyes, is their temperament. This is inherited through the breeding programme from the allowed outcrosses that are used as the foundations of the Selkirk type; Persians', Exotic Shorthair, as well as the British Short and Longhaired.

If you are able to visit a cat show in your area, then keep your eye out for the show stopping Selkirk Rex. As long as the owner is present I am sure with a genial request you will be given the opportunity to feel how lush and soft their coats are and experience what the cat fancy have fallen in love with.

coat

The Selkirk Rex is produced by a dominant gene affecting the guard, awn and down hairs. The curls are more prominent around the neck, underside and rear in both coat lengths. Guard hairs tend to have a coarser texture, especially over the back, but the coat is very dense and the overall texture is soft and plush. The whiskers and eyebrows are curly.

Kittens are curly from birth, especially the whiskers. They may lose the curl as they develop but the adult curly coat

should be there again from 8-10 months. The curliness of the coat is variable according to age, gender, climate, time of year and hormones, particularly in the female. The coat continues to develop until about two years of age. Selkirks are both longhaired and shorthaired varieties and in different colours and patterns.



build

The Selkirk Rex is similar in type to the British shorthair. It is a medium to large cat with solid muscle tone and substantial boning. This gives surprising weight and an impression of power.

temperament

The breed has an alert and active personality coupled with a sweet, endearing disposition that is very appealing. They are friendly and affectionate, mix well with other breeds and make wonderful family pets.

kitten availability

The Selkirk Rex are still fairly rare, however most GCCF or TICA shows will have at least one or two exhibiting them.

Pet quality curly kittens are sold from £400 with their straight haired siblings available from £300. This amount does vary depending on where you are in the country, with the Southern counties been more pricey. Responsible breeders will make sure the kitten with have completed its kitten vaccinations, come registered with either the GCCF or TICA, insured for the first six weeks of

ownership and some send the kitten away with food samples and further breed information on how to care for your special addition in its first few months. Kittens are available on the Active Register and start from £600 upwards, again depending on sex, rarity of the colour and UK location.

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standard of points

head

Round, broad and full-cheeked with round underlying bone structure. The head should be set on a short thick neck. Forehead rounded, with a slightly curved top of head. The muzzle is of medium width with well-padded whisker pads giving a rectangular impression, and is clearly visible beyond the cheeks when viewed in profile. The whiskers are curly or broken.

nose

The nose should be short, broad and straight with a downward slant. In profile the nose can appear to have a convex curve. The nose break is neither too pronounced nor too shallow.

chin

Firm and well developed. The bite must be level, the tip of the chin should line up with the tip of the nose in the same vertical plane.

ears

Medium sized, broad at the base and may be tufted at the tips, set well apart on the broad head. Should fit into (without

distorting) the rounded contour of the head. Internal furnishings, if present, are curly.

eyes

Large, round and well-opened. Set wide apart with no tendency to Oriental shape nor squint. All eye colours allowed.

body

Cobby type with a level back and may have a slight rise to the heavy hindquarters. The muscular torso is more rectangular than square, but not long. The body is equally broad across the shoulders and the rump, medium to large but not rangy.

legs and paws

Legs are of medium length and substantially boned. Paws are round and firm.

tail

Thick, medium length, thicker at the base with a rounded tip.

coat

The coat is thick and dense, with no bare or sparsely covered areas on the body. The coat stands out from the body and should not appear flat or close-lying.

It is a random, unstructured coat arranged in loose individual curls giving an overall soft and plush feel. Ideally the entire coat should show the effect of the rex gene, but curliness may be most evident on the neck, belly and tail. Allowance may be made for less curl on kittens and younger adults especially females.

longhair

The coat is semi-long, the tail curls are plummy and stand out away from the tail. The ruff hairs are longer and frame the face.

shorthair

The coat is a fairly uniform length over the entire body. The ruff and tail fur being a similar length to the rest of the coat, with tail curls that are plush and lie compactly round the tail.

colour

All coat colours, patterns and colour combinations are acceptable, including any white markings on any coat pattern.

withholds

No evidence of curl. Flat face, snub nose or sleek Oriental appearance. Lack of substantial boning. Lack of curls on either the neck, belly or tail (allowance may be made for less curl on kittens and young adults, especially females.) Uneven bite.

faults

Lack of rectangular muzzle. Excessively weak chin. Tendency to Oriental eye shape.

scale of points

HEAD (35)

Skull	15
Muzzle	5
Ears	5
Eyes	5
Nose	5

BODY (30)

Torso	10
Legs/feet	10
Tail	10

COAT (35)

Density	15
Curl	10
Texture	10
TOTAL	100

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