

THE BALINESE

By Sylvia Holland, from Handbook for Cat People by Celia Heriot, 1971*

Well, here we are at the cat show. I sit beside my 4 drowsing Balinese beauties. Visitors stop, seeing the long, soft, silky fur & noble look.

Visitor: What is a Balinese?

Exhibitor: It is a long-haired Siamese.

Visitor: Oh, I didn't know they had long-haired Siamese.

Exhibitor: Well, they are rather rare. The breed is about 15 years old.

Visitor: Do they really come from Bali?

Exhibitor: No, not really. But they do have the Siamese background, which is Oriental. And they do have the delicate, exotic look of Balinese dancers. So the pioneers of the breed felt that the name Balinese would be right for them.

Visitor: What is their temperament like? Is it like the other Siamese?

Exhibitor: You will not find a sweeter-tempered or more intelligent cat than these.

Visitor: Are the coats hard to care for?

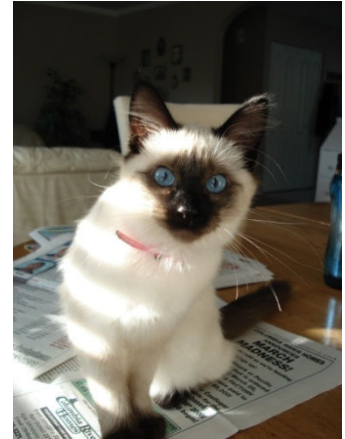
Exhibitor: No. The coat lies naturally and does not have to be fluffed up like the Persian coat. A little daily stroking and ruffling with the hand, and a little brushing and combing is enough to keep the coat in top condition.

Visitor: What's the difference between a Balinese & a Himalayan?

Exhibitor: The Himalayan came originally from a cross between a Persian and a Siamese. But a Balinese is a true Siamese cat. It must have nothing but Balinese or Siamese in its pedigree.

Visitor: Where did the long hair come from?

Exhibitor: It just popped up. A fluffy little changeling shows up occasionally among its shorthaired brothers and sisters in a normal Siamese litter. If these little ones are bred to longhairs from other Siamese litters, they will produce long-haired kittens. [End of conversation].



5-mo. Balinese female

Sylvia continued: The ideal Balinese is a sleek, dainty cat with long, tapering lines, lithe but muscular. The general impression should be aristocratic, with a long, fine head held alert, ears pricked forward, general conformation that of a Siamese. Long and abundant whiskers are characteristic. The temperament should be happy, lively and affectionate, easy to handle and care for.

Sylvia added in 1973: These lovely cats are now shown and judged among their peers in the longhair championship classes - as they deserve to be.

Note from Theo: See Contact on this website for links to breeders of Balinese.

In contrast to the typical modern show Balinese, which has a long narrow face and short hair and appears almost a reversion to pure Siamese, our favored group of breeders aim to re-establish the original Dorsey-Holland type. Since the dominant Siamese genes have re-emerged in the modern pedigreed bloodlines, some breeders are prepared to more or less start the breed over. Of these, some feel the colors should be restricted to the 4 permitted in Sylvia Holland's BBFA [Balinese Breeders and Fanciers Association], namely seal point, blue point, chocolate point and lilac point. Others introduce additional colors such as lynx point, and feel these should be accepted.

Those faithful to the original Balinese have been willing to put up with the accusation that outcrosses have been introduced. They say that if some outcrossing is necessary to produce again the magnificent combination of long flowing coat, rounder face, sweet disposition, grace and intelligence of the original Balinese, so be it.

After any outcross these breeders are prepared to show the required number of unmixed pure-blooded progeny matching the original type, in order to qualify for championship show classes & the selling of pedigreed stock. Their goal is to return to the beautiful and lovable Holland's Farm Balinese of the past, which in turn owed their existence to the even earlier recognition by Marion Dorsey of San Diego that in these cats she had something special. We agree.