

Singapura History

The Singapura is the smallest registered breed in CFA and TICA and is known for its' huge eyes and ears. Their look is both beguiling and entrancing, much like the mystery that surrounds their beginnings.

Many stories have evolved over time about the beginnings of the "River Cats" or "Drain Cats" or "Sewer Cats" as they are called in Singapore. The name Singapura is the Malaysian word for Singapore. Their nicknames evolved from the fact that the people of Singapore found them by the Singapore River and in sewer drains emanating from this river. The theory is that a cat of this type has existed in Singapore for at least 300 years. Thereby, the Singapura could be considered an ancient breed.

However, many variations of this cat exist in Singapore and few resemble the Singapura as we have defined the Standard in either CFA or TICA. Cats of the Malay Peninsula are tabbies, torties and bicolours often with bobbed and/or knotted tails. The closest relationship to the present day Singapura is a picture from earlier times of an ivory cream cat with a bobbed tail and a purported recorded birth of a bobtailed Singapura kitten in a 2002 litter.

The apparent evolution of change for the Singapura as we know it today began with Tommy and Hal Meadows who introduced the breed to the United States. Since there was a discrepancy about the origination of the breed here in 1990, CFA investigated the breed evolution here at the request of the Singapura Breed Club. At the time, it was established that Hal Meadows sent back to the United States four local cats (1 male and 3 females) from Singapore during a business trip there in 1971. The "Ship Cats" had ticked coats with a silvery coloration. Purportedly, Hal Meadows sent them back on a ship to the United States without papers for proper importation. Due to the confidential nature of this trip, both Tommy and Hal Meadows had kept this initial part of their adventure with the Singapura secret. These cats were reported to be kept pure and bred for two generations in the United States. This explained their importation of 3 foundation cats into Singapore when they returned there in 1974 as well as the two cats they bred from them. At the time they registered them as Abyssinians to keep the earlier trip and cat acquisition secret. At the time, Tommy and Hal Meadows bred Abyssinians, Burmese, and Siamese and many accusations were made that they created the Singapura breed. However, those

accusations have never been proven and CFA found no evidence of wrong doing.

Tessa, a female, and Ticle, a male from the same litter, along with Puss'e were the foundation cats of Tommy and Hal Meadows. Ticle and Puss'e produced the first litter of two kittens named George and Gladys. The kittens resembled the sire and dam with brown ticking on a cream ivory base. When Saigon fell, the Meadows left Singapore with their five Singapura cats in 1975. Once back in the United States, they continued breeding and seeking recognition for the Singapura breed. CFA accepted the Singapura in 1981 for registration status and in 1988 for Championship competition status. TICA accepted the Singapura for Championship competition in 1979.

In 1980, a couple vacationing in Singapore, Brad and Sheila Bowers, found a female Singapura in the ASPCA in Singapore that met the Breed Standard and imported her back to the United States. They sent her to Barbara Gilbertson in Tacoma, Washington, who named her Chiko. The most important thing to note herein is that this Singapura came with full documentation from Singapore. Barbara became the second breed of Singapuras in the United States.

Gerry Mayes became the third Singapura breeder and in 1987 spent time in Singapore and acquired a few Singapuras during his stay. He imported these to the United States and further expanded the gene pool of the Singapura.

Within the original breedings of the Singapura there was a range in the intensity of the ticking and the depth of the creamy ivory coat base. Occasionally a solid brown kitten appeared. Test breedings singled out cats carrying the brown gene and they were subsequently altered. As of 1988 only 7 cats were altered and placed as pets as a result of this selective breeding. Breeders formed The International Singapura Alliance to maintain a commonality and consistency related to breeding and the Singapura cat.

In 1991, the government of Singapore declared the Singapura to be a "Living National Monument". The name Singapore means "Lion City" so it is ironic that they have chosen the smallest registered pedigreed cat as their mascot. The city created a statue for the Singapura called "Kucinta the Love Cat of Singapore. In honor of this Singapore River Cat, they placed three statues at the Canenaga Bridge on the Singapore River. This is where

purportedly the Singapura was originally found although Hal Meadows purportedly found his on the ships he was working on in Singapore

SINGAPURA BREED STANDARD

The Singapura is a cat that owners have often declared is the most intelligent cat they have ever owned. Spunky, playful, determined and inquisitive, the Singapura is a devoted loving family member. They are also a cat who will take over and assume the role of running the entire household. It doesn't matter if they are the newest, youngest or oldest member of your household, within a short period of time the household and everything in it is "theirs".

As a breed, they tend to mature at a slower rate often reaching full size as late as two years old. The female often cycles at a year old for the first time and the male usually doesn't breed until about 18 months of age. Females are usually wonderful mothers. Singapura kittens are amazing in their intelligence level at a young age and their agility and speed. It is not unusual for a kitten of 5 or 6 weeks old to be able to leap to a fireplace mantel or outrun an Egyptian Mau. Singapuras love to sit high up to observe and can be found in such unusual places as the top of a plasma TV or an oil painting sitting with perfect ease and observing their domain.

The smallest pedigreed registered cat in both CFA and TICA, it is known for its' huge eyes and ears. Eye color can be hazel, green or yellow/gold with large almond shape and striking appearance. Ears are wide open at the base with a deep cup and slightly pointed top. Elegance combines with a muscular appearance.

There is only one color and that is sepia agouti that exhibits ticking with a creamy ivory basecoat. The hind quarters are marked with a deeper color ranging from one spotted mark to a myriad rainbow of markings which is rarer in Singapuras of today. The tips of their tails are dark coloration and the color extends from the tip the entire length of the tail on top to the body itself. Coats are fine and have a texture of silk.

One of the most defining marks of a Singapura are their wonderful jewelry appearing at the inner aspect on the anterior part of their front upper legs. On a Abyssinian this would be considered "trash" but on a Singapura it is the crowning glory.

The body itself should be muscular and slightly too moderately stocky with legs and body presenting a firm square when standing. Feet are small, short and oval and at birth resemble human fingers. Preference is for the female to be 4 to 6 lbs and the male 5 to 7 lbs. at maturity.

This little cat is sometimes compared to a cheetah because of its wonderful dramatic facial markings and similar body structure. They have a rounded head which almost seems to drop an M in mid air to the most perfect point on their forehead to create a very dramatic look when coupled with its unique mascara lines.

A Singapura is the most unique Dresden china doll. They are full of incessant chatter, playful to a fault; love to ride on your shoulder, a constant "helper" all day and your bed partner at night. There is only one word that can adequately sum up this breed and that is LOVE.