

# TEMPLECAT



## THE TEMPLECAT

AN EXCERPT FROM  
**THE ALCHEMY OF  
CAT BREEDS**

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### FACT FILE

BREED NAME (CURRENT)	<b>TEMPLECAT</b>
BREED NAME (Archaic/Historical/Allegorical)	"Birman Shorthair" "Tsuncatz"
PERIOD (dates)	28 <sup>th</sup> January 1995.
FOUNDATION CAT/S	Delavar Tabitha (Birman) / Noblenook Hershey
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS	Short plush coat on a Birman type cat, with same markings.
GEOGRAPHIC (Genetic Origin-Country)	<b>BURMA</b>
GEOGRAPHIC (Genetic Origin-State/County)	Western Burma (Unidentified)
GEOGRAPHIC (Genetic Origin-Locale)	The Temple of Lao Tsun (Location Unidentified)
GEOGRAPHIC (Developmental Foundation)	New Zealand, North Island
GEOGRAPHIC (Developmental History)	Pakuranga, Auckland, New Zealand
ORIGIN CATEGORY (Historical)	<b>Domestic -Regional / Hybrid / Selected Semi-Shorthair</b>
ORIGIN MORPHOLOGY	Shorten coat on Established Breed/Introduce New Colours.
ORIGIN PREMISE	Created / Conforms to <b>Selection Criteria / Preservation</b>
MANIFESTATION 1.(Coat)	<b>White Gloves</b> (Front paws) and <b>Gauntlets</b> (Rear paws) on Semi-Shorthair Pointed coat pattern. Plush coated.
MANIFESTATION 2.(Physical Structure)	Introduction of Cinnamon & Fawn into point colours. Moderate physique, but with distinctive Roman profile to nose. Cheeks full with rounded muzzle.
GENETIC REFERENCE	Not applicable
INHERITANCE	<b>Recessive</b> pointed pattern. <b>Dominant</b> White Spotting.
FIRST RECOGNITION	CATZ Inc. August, 2001 as Provisional Breed with NBC status.
ACCEPTANCE / RECOGNITION	CATZ Inc.
BREED GROUPING (Show Grouping)	<b>SEMI-LONGHAIR BREED GROUP/LONGHAIR</b> Show Division
CHAMPIONSHIP (REGISTRY & DATE)	CATZ Inc. 2004.
PARENT BREED TO: (1st Degree)	Not Applicable
HISTORICAL HEALTH ISSUES	None known. Birman Blood Group Compatibility & PKD possible.

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ORIGIN      DOMESTIC/HYBRID/SELECTED SH

## HISTORY

The Templecat was the brain-child of June Mateer, a well-known Birman breeder of long standing who had also served on the Genetics Advisory Committee of the New Zealand Cat Fancy and who later served on the Genetics Advisory Board of CATZ Inc, and in due course became Director of Corporate Services and Registrar for CATZ Inc.

The main purpose was to create a shorthaired version of the Birman – (The Temple Cat of Burma), famous for its sparkling white gloves and gauntlets, pointed coat colour and deep blue eye colour. This action was seen as similar to what Persian Breeders had decided to do, by developing a new Breed known as the Exotic Shorthair, simply by mating full Persians to a raft of different Shorthair cats, and then taking the first shorthair progeny and mating only back to the parent breed, the Persian. The practical application of this process could equally be



Rakesha Nicodemus (L Hepple) Seal Tabbypoint Templecat  
DOB 04/01/2008 Son of Ch Rakesha Woven Threads &  
Rakesha Fawn Fantasia (Fawnpoint Templecat )



Photos: Opposite page: Rakesha Gingernut, a full register Cinnamon-point Templecat. Bottom left, a Seal Tabby-Point Templecat, and above, a Chocolate-point Templecat kitten.

applied then to the Birman breed to produce a Shorthaired Birman.

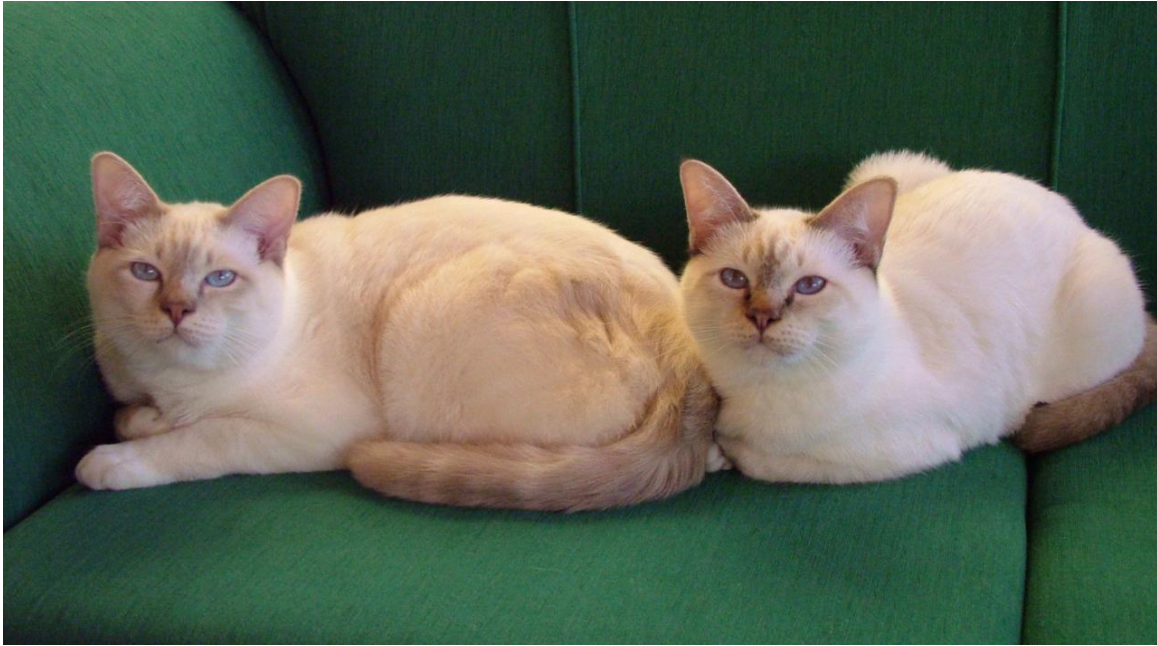
## AN ALTERNATIVE BEGINNING

However, the Templecat was not the original purpose of the first outcross and the program to develop the Templecat (or Birman Shorthair as it was originally known) was in fact the by-product of a different experimental breeding program designed originally and solely for the purpose of breeding Cinnamon and Fawn pointed Birmans. The program was approved and conducted under the registration rules of the Provisional Register of the New Zealand Cat Fancy.

The first and only outcross was therefore to a shorthaired cat, namely a Cinnamon Spotted Tabby Oriental Shorthair, by the name of Noblenook Hershey. This mating had been done with colour and the retention of the pointing in mind. The full Birman female he was mated to was Delavar Tabitha, a seal-point, who had

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Rakesha Whiskey (Lilac Tabbypoint) and Rakesha Willy Nilly (Chocolate Tabbypoint) Photo: Owner, J Wakefield.

herself been sired by a Rakesha Birman male bred by June Mateer, "Ch.Rakesha Zachari".

The resultant litter, born on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1995, included a Gen 1 Sealpoint Shorthaired male, "Rakesha A Touch of Spice" and a Chocolate Classic Tabby Shorthair female, "Rakesha A Touch of Class". So although, only one Birman Shorthair resulted as far as colour and pattern were concerned, the female being non-pointed, was still useful to the breeding program. But in "Rakesha A Touch of Spice" the breeding program for the Birman Shorthair had truly begun. However at this early stage, the fact that he was shorthair was not the controlling factor, but rather, that he was a Gen 1 Birman carrying Cinnamon.



Rakesha Golden Girl, a Fawn-point Templecat litter sister to Rakesha Gingernut. (Born 18/10/2000)

Over the years I have heard many Birman breeders complain about the use of an Oriental Shorthair to establish the line, but it is important to remember that what is important here is the introduction of the shorthair, (which could have been achieved with almost any type of shorthaired cat) but also the reintroduction and reinforcement of the pointing gene, which must be present on both sides of the pedigree to reappear. The Oriental of course, carried the Himalayan pointed pattern, a necessary ingredient. The question of type is also irrelevant, since the breeding program was established with the intention of always going back to the parent breed Birman in successive generations, just as Persian breeders had done with the Exotic shorthair, and thereby reintroducing and reinforcing the parent breed type in a very short time.

## THE FIRST HISTORICAL TEMPLECATS

And for the Birman purists who thought that it was sacrilegious to hybridise their "Sacred Temple Cat", the Birman had in fact already been extensively hybridised, since the original Birman female SITA had given birth to the only pure Birman litter in 1920, in Nice, France, and a





Rakesha Quasar Blue (Bluepoint Neuter) and Rakesha Queen Bee (Seal Tabbypoint Spay), Photo: Owners B & J Skinner

female kitten from that litter named “Poupee” was considered to be the perfect example of a Birman. But without a male for “Poupee” to be bred to, she herself had been outcrossed to a Siamese cat in order to re-create the breed.

Much later, after the Second World War, when only two examples of the Birman breed remained, the breed was re-established a second time with the addition of other longhaired breeds, mostly composed of early Colourpoint (Himalayan) bloodstock.

So in fact, by using an Oriental, itself a product of a Siamese, June was simply repeating an exercise that had already taken place with one of the foundation Birman cats, “Poupee”.

On consideration therefore, the very first Gen 1 Shorthair Birmans, would have actually come from “Poupee” herself as the entire litter from this mating between a Birman (Longhair) and a Siamese (Shorthair) would ALL have been shorthaired! (Shorthair is dominant over longhair). Furthermore, these first generation **hybrid** Birman Shorthairs **would be in the pedigrees of every Birman cat produced since that mating in the early 1920's.**

## THE QUEST FOR CINNAMON

So by using this particular Oriental shorthair, June Mateer had cunningly introduced a stunning new range of colours and patterns. In one step, she had introduced Cinnamon into a Birman type breeding program and also a new source of the Tabby Pattern. This now also included, even if unwittingly at this early juncture, the distinct possibility of a new breed, in the form of the Birman Shorthair.

Rakesha A Touch of Spice was subsequently retained as the new core of the breeding program and worked young as a stud. He was bred to a full register Chocolate Tabbypoint Birman, Rakesha Jazz Singer and on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1995 was born the second generation of Birman Shorthair kittens. This litter included two cats critical to the ongoing breeding program, “Rakesha Bruno Bear”, a Chocolatepoint Longhair and “Rakesha Bon Bon”, a Chocolatepoint shorthair.

June retained both for breeding, “Bruno” being a key cat in the existing program to eventually produce a Cinnamon or Fawn point Birman and “Bon Bon” for the same reason, not because she

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Chocolate Tabby-point Templecat "Rakesha Willy Nilly" and Lilac Tabby-point "Rakesha Whiskey" Photo: Owner J. Wakefield  
Note the plush coats, described by founder June Mateer, as "Birmans in polar fleece"

was shorthaired and could produce shorthairs, as that program had not yet really begun and was in reality, some years away.

Within 18 months these two were bred together in the hope of pulling through the recessive genes for Cinnamon, that were likely to be carried by both parents. The gamble paid off, and although by breeding brother to sister, June sacrificed advancement by one generation on the NZCF Provisional Register, she succeeded in producing the first Fawnpoint Birman Shorthair, (Gen 3 from the first outcross) but officially Gen 2. This was "Rakesha Chanterelle", born on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1997. This breeding was repeated, and on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1997, the first Cinnamonpoint Birman Shorthair was produced in "Rakesha Café Royale".

Like his grandfather "A Touch Of Spice" (The first Birman Shorthair), "Café Royale" worked relatively young as a stud and was bred to a full Birman female, a lilacpoint, Xamela Minkara. This produced a third generation Chocolatepoint Birman Shorthair female, "Rakesha Destiny" on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1998. June saw "Destiny" as a

potentially valuable cat, as she was a Gen 3 cat, carrying Longhair and Cinnamon and therefore possibly only one step away from producing a full register Cinnamon-point Birman (Longhair).

In the same month, "Café Royale's" older fawnpoint sister "Chanterelle", who had been bred to a full register Bluepoint Birman, Dhyana Shilavarga, produced a Bluepoint Birman Longhair, "Rakesha Double Delight" on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1998.

As it happens, both Gen 3 females, Chocolatepoint "Rakesha Destiny" and Bluepoint "Rakesha Double Delight" would play an important part in sealing the final stages of production, especially when their lines were worked together into a pedigree. When "Double Delight's" dam "Chantarelle" was outcrossed to a Sealpoint full register Birman "Westview El Morocco" this produced a Gen 3 Sealpoint Birman male, "Rakesha Dupontii" on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1999.

Double Delight (also known as Dee Dee) was subsequently bred to full Birman Chocolatepoint Ch.Larouge Christine's Bardot of Rakesha



Chocolate Tabby-point “Rakesha Willy Nilly” and Lilac Tabby-point “Rakesha Whiskey.” relaxing at home. These two are much loved pets owned by Juliette Wakefield of Auckland. Photo: J.Wakefield.

and this produced a chocolate-point full register Birman “Rakesha Emile” on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1999. A full register Birman which may carry Cinnamon....

“Dupontii” was subsequently retained and bred to “Destiny” to produce a Gen 3 Cinnamon-point Birman (Longhair) “Rakesha Fudge Frosting” on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2000. June’s quest for a full register Cinnamon-point Birman, was now very close to fruition.

## A CHANGE OF PLAN

However it was during the period between mid 1999 and 2000 that June’s veterinarian sowed the seeds of suggestion as to the development of the Birman Shorthair as a new breed. Over the years that June had been seeking the illusive Cinnamon and Fawn-pointed Birmans, there had been produced, a good number of shorthairs, some retained for the furtherance of the aim of achieving this singular goal of Cinnamon and Fawn-pointed Longhairs. But any shorthairs which were considered as not necessary to the furtherance of that aim, were sold as pets.

These “shorthaired Birmans” had become popular with pet owners and over those early years, the vet had seen many fine examples of the shorthaired variety and was enamoured with them. He suggested to June, that perhaps there was indeed a place for a short-haired Birman breeding programme in the world of pedigreed cats and as an alternative option for lovers of Birman breed who perhaps did not want to own a long-haired cat.

One only has to look at the history of the Birman Cat in New Zealand to note that the Birman had grown from relative obscurity in the mid 1970’s to amazing heights of popularity by the mid 90’s.

A catalogue from the first All Birman Show, hosted by the Birman Cat Club of New Zealand held in Papatoetoe on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1985, shows no less than 85 exhibits in competition and 4 on exhibition. This was a phenomenal effort, even on a world scale. And this amazing achievement would be soon super-ceded, with even bigger shows into the 1990’s, several with well over 100 Birman exhibits. With this incredible growth, at one point in the history of the



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Photo: Courtesy of J Wakefield

Birman Cat Club of New Zealand, the membership of the club exceeded 300 individuals! It was by far the largest breed specialty club in New Zealand and the quality of New Zealand Birmans was beginning to be recognised worldwide.

## THE BIRMAN SHORTHAIR

So by this time, June had now considered the options and had come to the same conclusion as her vet, that perhaps as well as continuing her quest for a full register Cinnamon-point Birman, why not also benefit from the 5 generations of pedigree building and acknowledge that the option of a Birman Shorthair (perhaps under a new breed name) was a good option, which could possibly also win favour with a Birman-friendly public.

The Year 2000 was a critical one for both sides of the breeding programme. A breeding between the Gen 3 Chocolate-point Birman “Rakesha Dupontii” and Gen 3 Birman Shorthair “Rakesha

Destiny” (who was very appropriately named), produced a Gen 3 Cinnamon-point Birman “Rakesha Fudge Frosting”, who has since left a lasting legacy in the subsequent development of the Templecat. Then toward the end of the year, when “Emile”(a full Register Birman), was also bred to the same “Rakesha Destiny”, this produced the first full register Birman Shorthair, who just also happened to be a Cinnamon-point!

This was “Rakesha Gingernut” who is featured in the lead photograph of this chapter. “Gingernut” was a superbly built cat, and in the six generations it took from the original outcross to produce him, you can see from the photograph that he is a comparably typed Birman of substance. No faults can be hidden behind long hair, this is essentially a Birman cat of excellent type and for those of us who have had the privilege of handling him and judging him he had a better Roman profile, as described in the Birman standard than many a full Birman longhair, and his colour was both unique and superb. This cat, whose overall excellent



Photo: Courtesy of J Wakefield

type and rich colour won me over to the cause of the Templecat, also had the excellent temperament of the “Rakesha” Birmans.

And amazingly, in this same litter (born 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2000) was produced the first full register Fawn-point Birman Shorthair, “Rakesha Golden Girl”. Truly a golden result from an amazing breeding queen.

## A NEW MAJOR DEVELOPMENT

Then in March 2001, CATZ Inc, a new New Zealand National Registry was formed. June Mateer was one of its early supporters and she saw this as an opportunity to seek recognition for the new Birman Shorthair breed, under its own breed name. The hard yards had already been done, and she could produce a full six generations of New Zealand Cat Fancy registrations, with “Gingernut” and “Golden Girl” already registered as 4<sup>th</sup> generation full register Birman Shorthairs with the NZCF. So she registered her breeding stock with CATZ Inc, and

in fact the first cat to be registered on the CATZ Inc Experimental Register was her Gen 3 female “Rakesha Destiny”, the dam of both “Gingernut” and “Golden Girl”.

In due course, application was made to CATZ Inc. for breed recognition, along with full pedigrees showing the entire process of breed development from the initial outcross to full register status with the NZCF. For several months there had been discussion on possible breed names, one of which was “Tsuncatz”, taken from the name of the legendary temple from where the Birman history is said to have begun. But June settled on the name “Templecat” and this was included in her submission to the Board of Directors.

The Board of CATZ Inc. ultimately granted recognition to the breed under the breed name “Templecat” in August 2001, granting the Templecat **Provisional Breed Status** with the ability to be shown in the **New Breed and Colour** Show Category.



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## THE TEMPLECAT AT SHOWS

In 2002, Gingernut (above) was shown in this non-championship show category and was the first Templecat ever be exhibited. At one show, he was subsequently placed Best NBC exhibit by Australian Judge Bambi Joy Edwards.

Now the quest for continued improvement and consistency in type of the Templecat took on new meaning. June Mateer also began producing good quality Seal Tabby-point Templecats with breedings between Templecat females and her excellent Tabby-point "Ch. Rakesha Woven Threads" an impressive Seal Tabby-point male, carrying chocolate and dilute.

By late 2003, a lilacpoint Birman Grand-daughter of "Rakesha Fudge Frosting", "Rakesha Tudor Rose", was bred to "Gingernut" and this produced another Cinnamon-point male Templecat, "Rakesha Zenith of Trelliams" on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2004.

Also in 2004, three years after the breed had been granted Provisional Breed Status, the Templecat was upgraded to Championship with CATZ Inc. and the first Templecats could now compete on a level playing field with other qualifying Championship breeds.

Rakesha Zenith went on to become a CATZ Inc. Templecat Champion. A repeat breeding then subsequently produced Rakesha Fawn Fantasia, a Fawn-point Templecat female on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2005. In the same litter was produced Chocolate-point Birman "Rakesha Fine N Dandy" who went on to win many Best in Shows and the title of CATZ Inc. Supreme Double Grand Champion. Among his many BIS wins were Best in Shows under TICA Judges, Karen McInchak in 2007, Pascal Remi in 2008 and Pascale Portelas in 2009.



**TICA Judge Pascale Portelas explaining to exhibitors what she looks for in a Birman. at this CATZ Inc. show, held in June 2009. The above Chocolate-point Birman "Rakesha Fine N Dandy" was her Best All-Breed Championship Cat. Dandy's Sire, is the Templecat "Rakesha Gingernut"**

By now, June had passed "Zenith", to long-time friend, Birman breeder, CATZ Inc. Chairwoman and Longhair Specialty Judge, Lee Williams, so that she too could further the Templecat breeding program. Lee bred Zenith to her own "Iddibiddi Tuscany Sky", a full register Blue Tortiepoint Birman and this produced both a Sealpoint Templecat "Trelliams Practically Perfect" and a Blue-point "Trelliams Shorter N Sweeter".

"Trelliams Practically Perfect" was an extremely well marked example of the Birman Shorthair,



Ch.Trelliams Practically Perfect, a Seal-point Templecat, shown as a kitten. The first entire Templecat to win a Best In Show since "Gingernut" in 2002. This Best in Show was won under TICA All-Breeds Judge, Yuki Hattori.

and as a Templecat was awarded a Best In Show Kitten award from TICA Judge Yuki Hattori.

## HEALTH ISSUES

June and Lee have reported no health issues of any significance, however, it should be noted that although the foundation stock has shown no propensity for any major health issues, and this is supported by the vets promotion of the breed, the fact that this breed is a child of the Birman and will continue to be bred back to its parent breed, which has historically had breeding issues surrounding blood compatibility (with breeding stock), this needs to be recognised and tested for in possible introductions of new Birman lines into any future Templecat breeding programme.

## COAT STANDARD, & THE FUTURE

The only difference between the Standard of Excellence (Standard of Points) for the Templecat and the Birman, is in the description of the coat. In all other respects it is exactly the same. The description for the coat is as follows:

Short and thick, although slightly longer than most other shorthair breeds, with no undercoat. All Traditional Himalayan pointed colours are accepted, including Cinnamon & Fawn. ***The only allowable outcross for a Templecat is a Birman.***

At the time of writing, it is now more than 16 years and 7, 8 and 9 generations to the current breeding lines. Although the Templecat is still in its infancy as a breed on the world stage, the hard groundwork has clearly been done and the standard set, has been very high. It's now only a matter of time before the breed is taken up by open-minded Birman breeders who truly love the Birman and are willing to share in this dream of the Templecat and the unique colours and warmth of this wonderful breed, which truly had its **first genesis** with one of the best and earliest Birman cats, "Poupee".

Having seen more Templecats than most, I firmly believe that they have the potential to become extremely popular as ***a breed for the new millennium*** and very worthy ambassadors of the "Temple of Lao Tsun".

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