

THE SILVER CONTROVERSY

By J. E. Hedrick

The controversy as to what constitutes a Silver (chinchilla) and a Shaded Silver has waxed long and loud. It is said that our Silvers are too light and our Shaded Silvers really Silvers.

The difference in opinion seems to stem from the disregard given to the nomenclature of the Standard. In one Standard the words "sufficiently tipped" are used, while in another "pale unshaded silver" are used. Either standard would infer that the cat should have just enough tipping to distinguish the Silver cat from a solid white. Isn't the Judge, on this basis, justified in giving the color points to the lightest Silver?

The word "chinchilla" is certainly a misnomer. Anyone who has ever seen the little South American animal which bears this name would be confused. This animal is more like our very dark Shaded Silvers.

The trick in breeding is to obtain unmarked Shaded Silvers and unshaded Silvers. This clue can be found on the face of the cat. A cat with face markings clearly defined will show up sooner or later as a Shaded Silver.

The camera shows differences more clearly than does the eye. The perfect Silver will appear almost white. The Shaded Silver will show shadings on the face, the tone being the same shade as the legs.

The brown or cream tinge is a fault of the exhibitor. The black tipping will discolor with age (old hair), from sunlight, or from the use of strong soap.

The breeder preparing a cat for the show season should start in the early

spring. Combing at this time is more important than hasty grooming in the fall. By mid-summer every black guard hair should be plucked out so that even the Shaded Silver looks like a white cat.

Bathing the Silver should be avoided, if at all possible, during the growth of new fur. Strong soaps have a bleaching action, and chlorine preparations will yellow the undercoat and turn the tipplings brown.

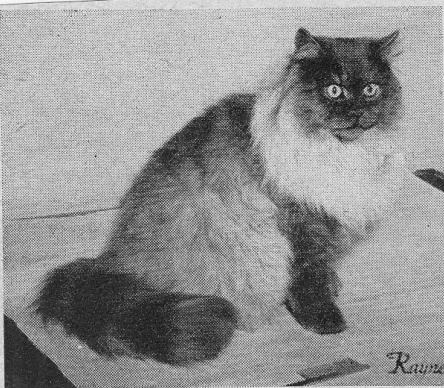
Detergents, of which there are many brands on the market, do not injure the coat if they do not contain alkali. Use the same care you would use with your own hair.

At the beginning of the season the most experienced breeder is apt to confuse a Silver with a Shaded Silver only to have the cat transferred later on with a loss of points. There seems to be some special honor in owning a Silver rather than a Shaded Silver. The breeder must be objective and not let hope rather than knowledge rule the day.

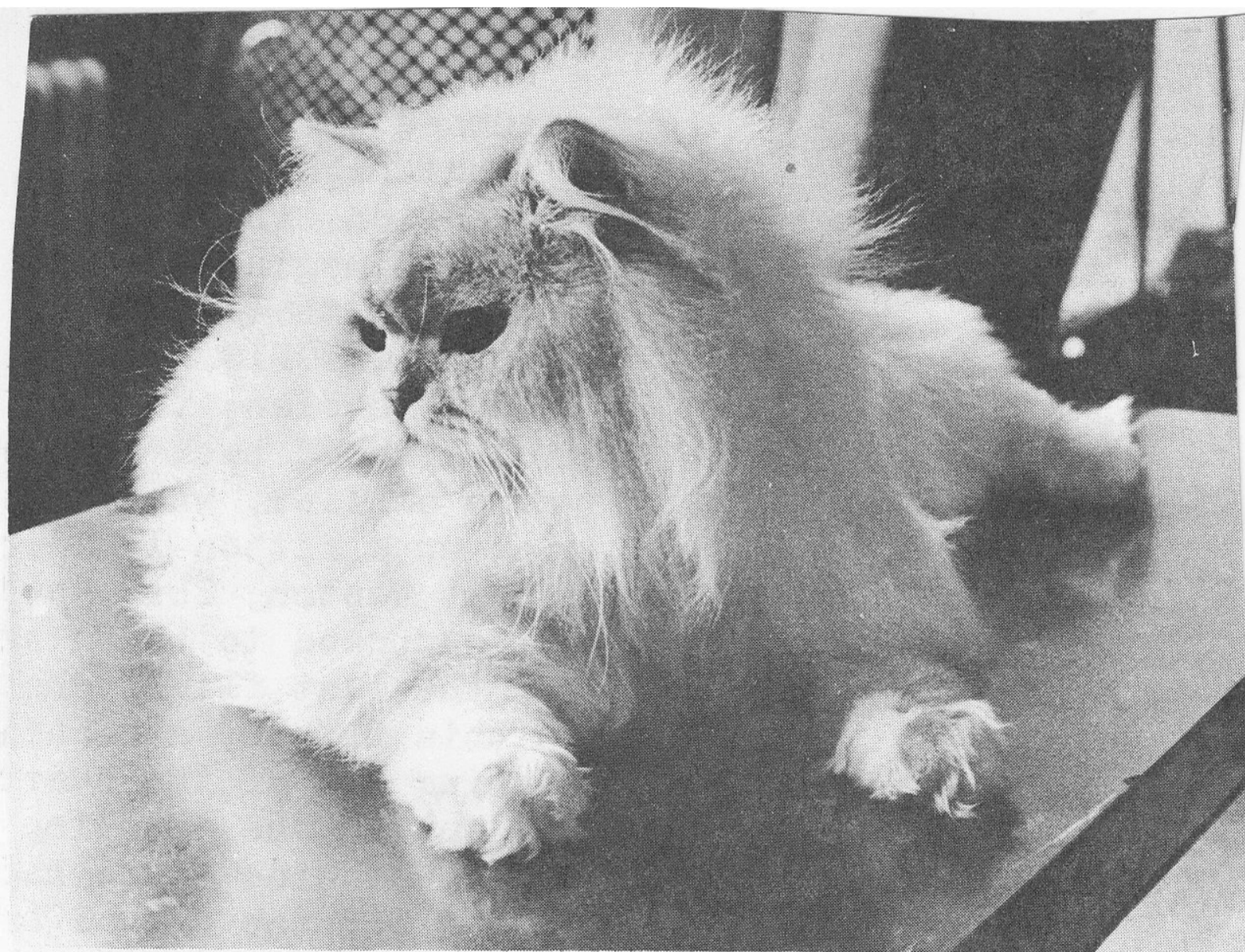
It seems to be better to have a light Shaded Silver than a dark Silver. A Silver can be penalized for being "too dark", but no one would penalize a Shaded Silver for being "pale unmarked silver."

As long as the Standard uses such words as "pale", "unshaded", "pure", "sufficiently tipped", "unmarked", "darker than Silver", the breeder should breed up to the standard and not down to the level of what is prevalent.

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Author with one of her Persians

Silvers- so delicately tipped black

Cutting from Joyce Hughes

BY BETTY O'BRIEN

It is difficult to discuss one variety of Silver Persian cat without discussing the other, since both have the same origin and general characteristics. The lighter of the two is called Chinchilla, and the darker is referred to as Shaded Silver. Both colors may appear in a litter of kittens and the question of which coloring is most desirable is a matter of personal preference. They are equally beautiful.

The silver white coat of the Chinchilla is delicately tipped with black over the cheeks, head, back, flanks, outside of legs and top side of tail; shaded gradually to clear white on the ruff, muzzle, chin, chest, belly, inside of legs and underside of tail. This tipping gives a lovely, sparkling, frosted effect to the coat.

The shaded silver coloring is quite different, with an overlay of platinum gray in the shaded areas, clearly demarked from the lighter underparts. The shading should be of the same intensity, free of streaks, blotches or bars, and the total effect much darker than the tipped coat of the Chinchilla. The sharp, clearly outlined contrast where the shading meets the clear white color of the unshaded coat is striking and most attractive.

In both silver colors, bars or tinges of cream or brown are serious faults and are penalized in show cats.

The eyes of the Silvers are perhaps their most outstanding feature. Extremely large and round, set far apart in the face, and ranging in color from emerald greens to turquoise blues of great intensity and depth, they are rimmed in black and further accented by a smudge of black tipping immediately below the eyes. The cat appears to be wearing carefully applied eye makeup. With its brick red nose and its mouth both also edged in black, the features of the Silvers have an "embroidered" effect.

The smiling mouth, the lovely eyes, and the finely textured coat which can be groomed to stand away from the body in a cloud, the general sturdiness and affectionate disposition of these deceptively ethereal appearing cats have earned them their position as the most popular color variety in the United States.

In breeding, the Silver strain should be kept unmixed to maintain the characteristics which make this color variety distinctive. As a general rule, one or all are lost in mating with any other color Persian, spoiling the beauty of the offspring.

If improvement is needed in substance or type, the proper procedure is the selection of a silver mate which has the desired qualities. In recent years many Silver breeders have consistently produced cats which can match the solid colors in heavy bone and can equal their body

and head type.

While Silver Persians often reach sexual maturity at an earlier age than other colors of this breed, they are generally slower in reaching physical maturity. This tendency is also being improved upon by selective breeding. Coat color, eye color, and type can all improve to a marked degree after the age of two or even three years. The Silver, having finally attained its peak of beauty, usually maintains it for a longer time than do some of the other colors.

In order to evaluate the features which are most likely to develop in your Silvers, it is important to know family trends in your pedigrees. Although originally closely related, the various Silver families have each developed certain dominant individual tendencies both good and bad which are easily traced in the progeny. In some Silver lines, the permanent eye color comes in as soon as the baby blue starts to change at six or eight weeks of age. In others, it goes through many stages of color change and depth, finally being fixed when the cat is 18 months to two years of age.

In some kittens the center of the nose is black or nearly so, an improper color for the nose of an adult silver. However, this dark nose will lighten, eventually becoming the exact shade of brick red called for in the standard.

All Silver kittens are born speckled or patterned, some with complete tabby markings of black or gray on white, some with very dark backs and tails. This may come as a shock to the unwarned novice breeder whose Silver mother cat, bred to a Silver cat produces kittens which are not only very dark, but short haired and even striped! Usually, but not always, the ones with the least amount of markings on their faces, heads and legs will be the Chinchillas, and those with the most, the Shaded Silvers. The kittens will lighten day by day as the undercoat comes in and the top coat gets longer and diffuses the pattern.

The definite markings usually will disappear by the time the kittens are four to six weeks old, starting with the head — the rings on the tail being the last to go. By that time they are fluffy and delightful with their furry britches and tails like tiny Christmas trees.

While the Silver cat is as sturdy as any other color Persian and as unlikely to succumb to illness as any other well cared for cat, the skin of a Silver is more delicate and tender and it is important to guard against contact with any substance which would cause irritation and consequent loss of coat. Both external and internal medications should be used in the mildest possible form until the effect is known. If your veterinarian is

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Silver Persians

unfamiliar with Silver Persians, he should be warned that their skin is thinner than that of the average cat and should proceed accordingly when giving injections. Irritated and affected skin may turn black temporarily.

Since the fine undercoat tangles and mats easily, particular care must be taken to prevent this by daily combings. Be sure your comb has properly aligned teeth with rounded edges to prevent damage to the skin. A nylon bristled brush should not be used on any long haired cat, especially a Silver. Natural bristles do a better job without the risk of breaking delicate hair.

Diet for the Silvers differs in now way from that fed any other color Persian. They are served a standard well-balanced diet, served always at room temperature but will not drink milk once past the kitten stage. Vitamin supplements are added according to individual need.

Silver Persians originated in England (where the Shaded Silver color is not recognized for show cats) and the first Chinchillas were exhibited in 1894 at the Crystal Palace in London. Some of our finest families of Silvers combine the English and American bloodlines with happy results.

It is interesting that the only breed of cat ever bred commercially by the British Royal Family is the Chinchilla. Her Royal Highness, Princess Victoria, had a cattery at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, where her male Chinchilla was at public stud. ★

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Notes On Chinchillas

(Continued from Page 46)

Barker's "Sylvandine Statesman" and bred by Mrs. Warren. I was most interested to read in Ella Conroy's notes that "Statesman" is in America and owned by Miss Thoma. I am sure she will be pleased to hear of this well-deserved win of Statesman's lovely son. It was good to read of the success of her Chinchilla female, also a Sarisbury Imported — "Sarisbury Belle of Silver Quest" winning Best Chinchilla and Best Opposite Sex. I am so pleased Miss Thoma has found such a lovely home for "Beau"; it will give great pleasure to his breeder, who adores all her cats, they are always so gentle and have adorable natures, quite a pleasure to judge them.

Mrs. Warren brought out a lovely male kitten last show season. He excelled in palest even coloring and has enormous beautiful green eyes. He should go a long way at shows. His name is "Sarisbury Lycidas."

"Sarisbury Simba's" lovely chinchilla kitten "Snow White", best opposite sex kitten at The Hague Show, is to go to America, is probably there now. She will be greatly admired as she is very lovely and has a coat with the beautiful sparkling effect so characteristic of that breed.

To my mind Chinchillas are the most beautiful of all cats. The ethereal look is so fascinating, the large round expressive eyes of emerald or sea green cannot be equalled by any other. The purity of color, softest texture and flowing coat give them a most elegant air. Even when shedding coat they are lovely and never look undressed, at least mine don't. I have a daughter of Champion Matthew of Greengables and a son of hers by Champion Rodney of Allington; neither ever look so ragged as my blues or creams at this time of the year. I think the softer texture fur does not mat up so much.

A Chinchilla must have good type,

quite as good as the blues and creams. A broad head, small neat ears, set low down, short nose and a good firm chin. Most important, the eyes must be large and set wide apart and have that dark circle which gives such an attractive look.

A great fault in Chinchillas is dark patches. Sometimes on the back or tail; this completely spoils the whole effect. The coat must be quite white with a sprinkling of delicate black tipping, on back, flanks, tail and head. The chest and stomach must be pure white and no bars on legs. These are very difficult to breed out and spoil an otherwise lovely specimen.

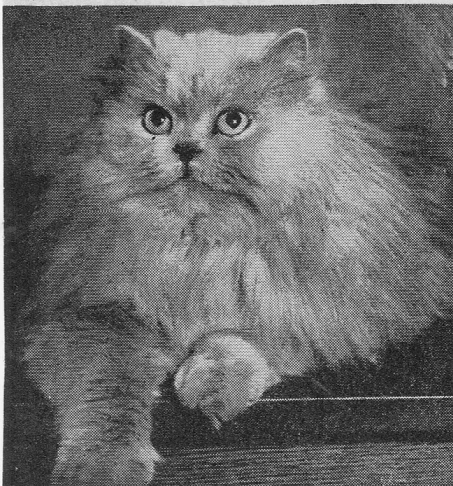
You do not want a Chinchilla to be over large, especially the females. Any trace of coarseness is detrimental to the ethereal look and quality which is one of the greatest charms of this breed. The males must be well boned and look masculine; they are naturally built more heavily than the females and generally grow to this when about two years old.

Some breeders in the past have put a Chinchilla female to a blue male to get more stamina. This was done many years ago by Mrs. Aubrey when the Chinchillas appeared on the frail side. From a crossing like this on the third generation Champion Langhorne Taurus was born. He was a big winner here and in France. Miss Langston has done this in recent years and her third generation has produced some lovely kittens for color of coat and eyes and good bone. The blue Chinchilla from the first cross is very useful to breed smokes. This is how the Dutch have been able to produce all the lovely Smokes they now have. You have so many lovely Smokes in America that this information is not needed.

I should be grateful for some news of your Smoke breeding to help English people who want to get this lovely cat back on our show bench. Dr. Doeksen, a Dutch Genetist, has written some notes for us and with some from America we should indeed be lucky.

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