



GIC DELICJA ADSUM*PL DVM (5.9.20) – Blue Tortie Mackerel Tabby & White NFC.
Bred by Magdalena Chmielewska. Owners: Satu Hamalainen & Pamela DelaBar
Photo Marika Lahti. Article Backgrounds © www.gograph.com

Norwegian Forest Cats

From the Land of Ice and Snow

By **LORRAINE SHELTON**



Lorraine Shelton with
CFA GC NW Featherland Brennan

Michael Shelton of Featherland Cattery in California describes his beginnings in the Norwegian Forest Cat as follows: "Like many men, when I was first introduced to the pedigreed cat fancy, I thought I wanted a Maine Coon; big, imposing cat... until I saw Nancy Eckert's magnificent brown classic tabby and white male, GC, BW, RW Fig Toggle, CFA's 2000/2001 Best of Breed Norwegian Forest Cat. Still a big, muscular cat, but with a somewhat more refined, elegant look. And those eyes. A Forest Cat's eyes are just mesmerising, and they reflect their calm demeanor. They still make me just melt."

In October of 2004, I flew to Ohio and brought back Michael's birthday present; an adorable brown classic tabby and white, four month old neuter who would become GP, NW Fig Kolibri of Featherland. We were so taken with his loving demeanor, that we begged Nancy for a breeding female. She obliged, sending Fig Kattugle to

us with three kittens growing inside, following a dalliance with Fig Floppy Joe of Nordictale, owned by Brook Cole, another recent recruit she was mentoring to carry on with her breeding program. Our lives were changed forever. For our 25th wedding anniversary in 2008, at the CFA Annual in Louisville Kentucky where we accepted Kolibri's National Win, I presented Michael with a commissioned coloured pencil drawing of our wegie boy by Jamie Perry which captures Kolibri's mesmerising eyes as he perches on Michael's favorite baseball glove (clutching a ball from the Los Angeles Dodgers, of course) entitled "Hometown Hero." Kolibri obtained enough points for his National Win without counting a single ring outside the Southwest Region, a feat rare for a region known to have lower show counts.

The origins of this natural breed of Scandinavia is/are assumed to be the

accompaniment of cats from the Mediterranean area with the original migrants to this part of the world in pre-historic times. Migration into Norway from Russia also suggests a genealogical relationship between the Norwegian Forest Cat and Russian Longhairs (now known as Siberians) that were cherished from the very beginnings of the cat fancy and used in the development of the early Persian cat.

Ever since the development of agriculture, humans have brought cats with them, during both immigration and transitory travel, in order to protect valuable grain from rodents. The harsh climate would naturally favor the survival of a dense coated, large bodied cat that would be insulated against the cold. Since domestic cats were not originally native to the Americas, the longhaired cats of the eastern seaboard (now known as Maine Coons) are undoubtedly the descendants of cats brought by early American settlers from Europe, possibly even from the Norse explorations of Newfoundland, although there are no records of the domestication of cats in Norway, prior to the 13th century. Ancient legends and mythologies of Norway have been interpreted to refer to cats, including the role of two grey cats, gifted by the God Thor, in pulling the chariot of the fertility goddess Freya as she collected fallen warriors after battle.

More recently, folk tales refer to Troll Cats, Fairy Cats, and Huldrekats, cats with bushy tails. In 1912 children's

author Gabriel Scott immortalized a longhaired white cat named Solyfaks ("Snowflake"). In the 1930's breeders started work to preserve the Forest Cat as a purposefully reproduced breed, however their efforts were interrupted by the war. In 1957, King Olav V made an official pronouncement declaring the Skoggekatt the National Cat of Norway. The popularity of the breed slowly increased throughout the next decade or so.

In 1973, Pan's Truls was born, and he was the basis for the original breed standard. Trul's breeder Else Nylund, is revered among breeders as the "mother" of the breed. In 1984, Pan's Polaris was born, a black & white male with a distinct white tail tip. He is one of the most successful and prolific Forest Cats, having sired at least 50 litters, during his 12-year breeding career. His characteristic tail tip is still known as a "Polaris Tip".

Beginning in the 1970's the foundation cats for the early breed were tightly controlled by the Breed club, Norskogkattring. Members of the breed committee were tasked with approving all foundation cats, with an examination as a kitten, and again upon maturity before being authorized for entrance into the studbook. The exportation of registered Norwegian Forest Cats was limited to Sweden and Finland. Only cats with three generations of registered ancestors were allowed to be exported for breeding purposes. By 1976, 100 Forest Cats were registered and FIFe accepted the breed in preliminary status. The following year the breed was accepted for full recognition. The first exports were to Sweden in 1977. Sheila Gira imported the first Norwegians into the US in 1979 and the first litter was



MICHAEL SHELTON WITH CFA GP, NW FIG KOLIBRI OF FEATHERLAND

Photo: GSN, Inc.



GIC S*MYSELISIA'S CAMPARI DVM – Brown Patched McTabby & White NFC Female
Photo: Marika Lahti.

born in the US in 1981. The breed was recognised for Championship status by TICA in 1984 and CFA in 1993.

In 1992, two unusually colored kittens were born in a litter bred by Wildwood cattery in Sweden, followed by a reappearance of the trait in Germany in Takeskog cattery in 1994 and many more catteries thereafter. A common ancestor was found, Klofterhagens Babuschka, a direct descendant of Truls. The cats were initially incorrectly theorised to be the result of the cinnamon/fawn gene, but test breedings to cinnamon and chocolate cats disproved this hypothesis. The trait was named 'Amber' and identified to be a mutation of the melanocortin receptor ("extension") gene by Dr. Marc Peterschmitt of Lyon, France, in 2009.

The most successful show cat of this color in the US is IW BW Bluedryad Jackpot of Bewitched, TICA's 11th highest scoring cat for the 2019-2020 season bred by Wonsun Jang of Korea and shown by the late Gloria Mahan of California.

The first Supreme Grand Champion in TICA was Nissekatt Biarki in 1985, followed shortly by Maineline Skadikatt of Norskau and Maineline Bjorn of Wegiekatt. Other early influential cats in the US were TGC Pans Targa of Nordmarka, SGC Kaus Fenris of Purr-N-Luv, SGC Nano Ur Skogi, SGC Maineline Tord, SGC Nosewood Kai, SGC Jedidiah Asaph, and SGC Norskau Tess of Naturskat.

The first grand champion in CFA was GC, BW, RW Walkuren's Oskar-Olaf. The first National Winner was GC, BW, NW

Norsestar's Loki. There have been only 17 other Championship National/Divisional Winners in CFA: GC, BW, NW Redzone Gwendolynne Roisin of Irlu; GC, BW, NW Kitzn's Archeopteryx; GC, BW, NW Diamond Dust's Odin of Moon Shadows; GC, DW Sakurasaku Amelia Mary Earhart; GC, BW, NW Russmania Apollo The Archer; GC, BWI, DW Russmania Waimea Canyon; GC, DW Diamond Dust's Silver Sunshine; GC, BWI, NW Russmania Destoroyah of Key Lime; GC, BW, NW Diamond Dust's Eye-Of-Nature; GC, BWI, DW Finience Bonnie; GC, DW Futurperfect Canaanite Khopesh; GC, DW Lynx Manual Katana of Delz; GC, DW Ohyes Prince; GC, BW, NW Featherland Kingfish; GC, NW Featherland Brennan; GC, BWI, DW Russmania John Coltrane of Key Lime (the only non-tabby); and GC, BWI, DW Russmania Emperor Emmanuel.

The first Outstanding Sire or Dam in TICA was Ch. Nissekatt's Verdandi of Maineline. The first DM in CFA was Ch. Koojekatt Tressa Skogpus of Koryn. The first male DM was GC, RW Fig Piper of Aqua Dolagon.

There have only been a total of seven male DM's, including:

GC, BW, RW Kitzn's Dagwood; Ch. Kashi Saga Harrigan Thatsme of Irlu; GC, RW Kwill's Brandy Alexander; GC, DW Sakurasaku Pepelintino of Russmania; Ch. Wegiekatt Cardinal of Diamond Dust; and GC, DW Russmania Dresden Green of Idaman.

The only non-tabby DM's are a black smoke and white Naturskat Mimi of Kitzn



MICHAEL SHELTON WITH GC, NW FEATHERLAND KINGFISH - ON 'TAKE YOUR CAT TO WORK DAY'

And a black and white female, GC, DW Purple Rain Blue Tanis of Russmania.

However, it must be emphasized that the Norwegian Forest Cat is a minority Breed in CFA and TICA with less than 500 cats registered each year in each association. More than ten times that number are registered in FIFe each year. In contrast to the two or three wegies seen at most shows in the United States, huge classes of dozens of these beautiful cats are often

seen in Europe, something I was delighted to personally experience in Sweden. Recent world winners include:

Ch. Wario Tingoskattens, JW; SP Louis Z Krainy Asgardu, JW, DSM; SP BR* Miadore Mingus DSM; Ch. SW Rockringen's Underdog, JW; SC S*Pysida's Zim-Zalabim JW; N*Migoto's Albert; GIC S* Just Catnap's Charles Fifty Nine, JW; SW NW SP Ingrid Vendellek*PL; and BW IT*Nimue Diamonds, JW.

The style of the breed has diverged between continental Europe and the United States. An examination of the standards of the three major associations reflects some of the differences.

When the breed was presented for acceptance in the United States, the Maine Coon breeders wanted to ensure that distinct characteristics of the Maine Coon were not incorporated into the new breed, in particular a long, rectangular body. An overall sweeter expression is also prevalent in the American and Japanese cats; more extreme head length, ear size, and feral expression are often seen in European cats.

On a personal note, I bred Persians for almost twenty years. It is easy to develop

tunnel vision about your primary breed, but I always knew that I wanted to experience other types of cats, long before I ever dreamed of becoming a judge. We have shared our lives with many wonderful breeds: Selkirks, Turkish Angoras, Somalis, Bengals, a Japanese Bobtail and an Oriental Shorthair.

But in the words of my husband, “It took a while, but we finally found the right breed for us.”

I’m so thankful that our paths crossed so that we could fall in love with this majestic breed, and grateful to the late Nancy Eckert, for being a wonderful, patient mentor.

Lorraine Shelton

Feature	CFA	TICA	FIFe
Head shape	Equilateral triangle: sides equal length as measured from the outside of the base of each ear to the point of the chin.	8 pts. Triangular, where all sides are equally long when measured from the outer base of the ears to the chin and between the outer base of the ears. Males may have broader heads.	Triangular, where all sides are equally long. Mature males may have broader heads than females.
Ears	10 pts. Medium to large, rounded tips, broad base, set as much on the side of the head as on top of the head. Alert, Cup of the ear pointing a bit sideways. Outsides of the ears follow the lines from the side of the head down to the chin. Heavily furnished. Lynx tips desirable, not required.	8 pts. Large, wide at the base, arched forward as if listening, slightly rounded tips that appear pointed when lynx tips are present. Lynx tips and long furnishings desirable. The outer edge of the ear should follow the line of the head down to the chin.	10 pts. Large, with good width at the base; pointed tips; with lynx-like tufts and long hair out of the ears. Placed high and open, so that the outer lines of the ears follow the line of the head down to the chin.
Eyes	10 pts. Large, almond shaped, well-opened, expressive. Set at a slight angle with the outer corner higher than the inner corner.	8 pts. Large, expressive, wide almond shaped, set obliquely. Alert expression.	5 pts. Large and oval, well opened, set slightly oblique. Alert expression.
Muzzle/chin/	25 pts.	16 pts.	20 pts.

profile/nose	Profile straight from the brow ridge to the tip of the nose without a break in the line. Flat forehead, gentle curved skull and neck. Chin firm, in line with the front of the nose, gently rounded in profile. Muzzle forms a straight line extending toward the base of the ear, no pronounced whisker pads or pinch.	Muzzle follows the line of the triangular head, with no evidence of pinch or snippiness. Long, straight profile from tip of nose to brow without break in line, no stop. Forehead sloped back. Strong chin. Head has good height when seen in profile.	Long, straight profile without break in line (no stop). Head has good height when seen in profile. Forehead slightly rounded. Firm chin.
Torso/neck	15 pts. Solidly muscled, well-balanced, moderate in length. Powerful appearance. Broad chest, considerable girth without being fat. Flank has great depth. Males should be large and imposing; females may be more refined and may be smaller. Neck short and heavily muscled.	7 pts. Medium long, rectangular, and substantial. Neck muscular and medium in length.	25 pts. (includes legs) Torso long and strongly built.
Legs/feet/boning	15 pts. Medium; hind legs longer than front legs, rump higher than the shoulders. Thighs heavily muscled; lower legs substantial. Back legs straight. Front paws appear to "toe out." Large, round, firm paws with heavy tufting between toes. Substantial bone structure.	14 pts. Legs in proportion to body length, with hind legs higher than fore legs. Feet large, round, well-tufted. Substantial boning.	Strong, high on legs, hind legs higher than the front legs. Paws large, round, in proportion to the legs. Solid bone structure.
Tail	5 pts. Long and bushy. Broader at the base. Length equal to the body from the base of tail to the base of neck. Guard hairs desirable.	7 pts. Long, flowing, bushy and carried high. Should be at least as long as the body.	10 pts. Long and bushy, should reach at least to the shoulder blades, but preferably to the neck.
Coat length/texture	10 pts. Double coat: a dense undercoat covered by long, glossy and smooth water-resistant guard hairs hanging down the sides. Bib consists of three separate sections: short collar at neck, side mutton chops, and frontal ruff. Britches full. Coat may be fuller in the winter than the summer because the dense undercoat has its full development in the winter. Softer coats are permitted in shaded, solid and bicolor cats. Type and quality of coat is of primary importance; color and pattern secondary.	25 pts. Semi-Long. Dense, woolly undercoat covered by a smooth, water repellant upper coat of long, coarse, and glossy guard hairs covering the back and the sides. A fully coated cat has a full ruff and britches. Coat feels dense, especially on tabbies. Solid and bicolor cats often have a softer coat. Length of coat and density of undercoat vary with the seasons. Under no circumstances should a cat be penalized for having a semi-long coat.	20 pts. Semi long. The woolly undercoat is covered by a smooth, water repellant uppercoat which consists of long, coarse and glossy hair covering the back and the sides. A fully coated cat has a shirtfront, a full frill, and knickerbockers. Coat is evaluated only on texture and quality. Length of coat and density of undercoat vary with the seasons. Kittens can take up to six months of age to develop guard hairs

Color/pattern	5 pts. Color and pattern should be clear and distinct. Pattern in tabbies should be well-marked and even.	0 pts.	5 pts.
Musculature/ Balance/ Condition	5 pts.	7 pts. Strongly built and sturdy. Muscular and well proportioned.	5 pts.
Breed Specific Disqualify/ Penalize	DQ: Severe nose break, square muzzle, whisker pinch, long rectangular body, cobby body, kinked or abnormal tail, delicate bone structure, malocclusion.	Penalize: Too small and finely built cats. Round or square head; profile with a break (stop). Round eyes. Ears too small or narrow at the base. Legs that are short, thin, not in proportion to the body, or cow-hocked. Short tail. Cobby or extremely long body. Dry or silky texture on coat.	Faults: Too small or finely built. Round or square head. Profile with a break (stop). Ears small or set too widely apart or too close together. Short or thin legs. Short tail. Coat dry, knotted with lumps, or too silky.
Miscellaneous	Slow maturing breed, attaining full growth at ~ 5 years of age.	Not fully developed until 5 years of age. Large to medium large size. and imposing, The males often weigh 12-15 lbs or more. Females can be considerably smaller. Intelligent and independent.	Large size. Very slow maturing of this breed should be taken into account.

Sigmund Freud's cat

