

Breed Portrait of the TONKINESE Cat



The history of the Tonkinese, Burmese and Siamese cats is intricately woven and, although the Burmese and Siamese are generally considered to be the Tonkinese parent breed, it is unknown which was actually the original breed or which one came before the other. There are ancient manuscripts that currently exist in the Bangkok Museum that contain illustrations of Burmese cats, Siamese cats and a striking looking cat with a brown coat and darker points clearly indicative of what we now know as the Tonkinese cat, thus supporting the theory that these three distinctive breeds existed together.

In the early 1960s, Canadian cat fancier Margaret Conroy, of Ontario bred a seal-point Siamese with a sable Burmese. Initially her cats were called Golden Siamese and she wrote a standard for this breed. American breeders Edith Lux and Mrs. Robert Nelson co-operated in a Tonkinese breeding program, establishing that they were able to breed consistently and undoubtedly, three distinctive coat patterns (the solid or uniform Burmese pattern, the pointed Siamese pattern and the intermediate Tonkinese mink pattern). In order to reinforce the distinction of this breed from Siamese and Burmese, enthusiastic breeders of these cats renamed the breed Tonkinese because the Gulf of Tonkin in the South China Sea runs between Burma and Thailand (Siam). The breed was given champion status by the Cat Fancier's Federation in 1972.

Tonkinese are medium sized cats averaging 8-10 pounds for females and 10-12 pounds for males. They have short, shiny, very low maintenance coats that shed little to moderately and come in blue, champagne, honey, natural (brown) and platinum. They can be pointed or solid, but it is the mink pattern that is recognized by CFF.

Tonkinese are very intelligent, social, and communicative. They are outgoing and like to keep you company in whatever activity you are involved. They are fun and mischievous, but with a gentle disposition and have often been described as quite dog-like in their devotion. Many of these wonderful cats have been used as pet therapy animals because their temperament is nicely suited for being handled and fussed at by people. Tonkinese, however, do need company of their own kind. A single cat household is a very lonely home for any cat, but especially for a Tonkinese.

tonkinese are great at playing fetch, riding on your shoulders, climbing and leaping to great heights. If you can't find your Tonk, look up! Tonkinese should not be let outdoors as they are extremely trusting in nature and have no survival instinct. They are perfectly happy playing indoors with plenty of toys and cat trees to climb on, although many do enjoy a Sunday drive in the family car.

A Tonkinese cat should only be purchased from a reputable breeder, never a pet shop. It is advisable to get to know the breeder by visiting them in advance and by observing the cattery and living conditions of their cats. A cattery should be clean and relatively odorless.

The kittens and adult cats should be healthy and playful. Check for clear eyes, nose and ears and clean, shiny, healthy coats.

A good breeder will provide a health guarantee and registration papers (often after proof that you have had your kitten altered) and will include in the contract that you must not let your cat outdoors, must never declaw the cat and that you alter the kitten at the appropriate age.

Many breeders allow pickup of new kittens between 12 and 16 weeks of age, when they have had their basic inoculations and developed physically and socially.

If a breeder offers you an older kitten or adult, don't hesitate; they can be a great addition to a home where proper behavior and good manners are a welcome addition.



CFF Show Standard “Tonkinese”

The Tonkinese was originally the result of a Siamese to Burmese breeding. The ideal Tonkinese is intermediate in type, being neither cobby nor svelte. The Tonkinese should give the overall impression of an alert, active cat with good muscular development. The cat should be surprisingly heavy. While the breed is considered medium in size, balance and proportion are of greater importance.

Head - 15 pts - Modified wedge somewhat longer than wide, with high gently planed cheekbones. Muzzle is blunt, as long as it is wide. There is a slight whisker break, gently curved, following the lines of the wedge. There is a slight stop at eye level. In profile, the tip of the chin lines with the tip of the nose in a vertical plane. There is a gentle contour with a slight rise from the nose stop to the forehead. Forehead has a slight convex curve. *Objections: Round or sharply pointed head or muzzle. Withhold wins: Definite nose break.*

Ears - 5 pts - Alert, medium in size. Oval tips. Broad at base, pricked forward, set well apart. Hair on ears very short/close lying. Leather may show through.

Eyes - 5 pts - **Shape:** Almond-shaped, slightly rounded on the bottom. Slanted along cheekbone towards outer corner of ear. Eyes proportionate in size to the face. *Objections: Round eyes*

- **5 pts** - **Color:** Aquamarine through turquoise, the entire blue-green spectrum is allowed. Depth brilliance and clarity are preferred. *Objections: Blue or green eye color. Withhold wins: Yellow, gold or copper eyes.*

Body - 15 pts - Medium in length and well muscled. Males are proportionately larger than females. *Objections: Cobby body or too finely boned.*

Legs - 10 pts - Fairly slim, proportionate in length and bone structure to body. Hind legs slightly higher than front. Feet & **Feet** to be more oval than round. *Objections: Short, stocky legs, or round feet.*

Tail - 5 pts - Proportionate in length to body, tapering. *Objections: Narrow at base, whippy, short, thick or blunt.*

Coat - 10 pts - Short, fine, glossy and close lying to the body.

Color - 15 pts - Mature specimen should be a rich, sound color with shading to a slightly lighter hue on the under parts. Allowance to be made for kittens and cats up to 12 months of age and for darker body color in older cats, but there must be a definite contrast between body color and points. Allowance of slight barring on kittens and cats up to 12 months. *Objections: Irregular body shading, body barring.*

Point - 15 pts - Mask, ears, legs and tail should be clearly defined in a darker

Color shade but merging gently into body color. Except in kittens, the mask and ears should be connected by tracings. *Objections: Mask extending over top of head. Ticking in points. Barring on legs in cats over 12 months. Withhold wins: Lack of definite leg points.*

COLOR DESCRIPTIONS: BLUE MINK - Body a soft, blue-gray to medium blue with warm overtones. Points to be darker than body and medium-blue to slate. Nose leather and paw pads: Blue-gray. Paw pads may have rosy undertones. CHAMPAGNE MINK - Body a buff cream darkening to buff in older cats. Points to be a warm, light brown. Nose leather & paw pads: Cinnamon pink to cinnamon brown. HONEY MINK - Body a golden amber with an apricot cast. Points a medium ruddy brown. Nose leather & paw pads: Flesh to point color. NATURAL MINK - Body a warm, medium-brown. Points a dark brown. Nose leather & paw pads: Dark brown. Paw pads may have rosy undertones. PLATINUM MINK - Body a pale, silvery gray with warm overtones. Points a frosty gray distinctly darker than body color. Nose leather & paw pads: Lavender pink to lavender gray.

CAT FANCIERS' FEDERATION, INC.

...originated in 1919, with the objective of:

- Registering of pedigreed cats, household pets and catteries.
- Informing the general public, breeders and exhibitors regarding the various breeds of cats and the health and welfare of all cats.
- Licensing of CFF-sanctioned cat shows.
- Maintenance/updating of standards of perfection for each feline breed.
- Maintenance/updating of show rules, Constitution and By-Laws that govern the Federation.
- Celebrating the achievement of the highest award winning cats in the Federation and their owners through the annual Awards Banquet each September.

CFF publishes a quarterly newsletter detailing activities and general interest items. The CFF Yearbook is published annually, which highlights the Top 20 National/Regional Winners for Cats, Kittens, Alters and Household Pets, as well as National/Regional Breed/Color wins and Title achievements.

One of the avenues that CFF chooses to obtain funds needed to support educational efforts and our ability to continue our commitment to promote the health and well-being of all cats as companion animals is by having shows. By entering a CFF-sponsored cat show, you are supporting that effort. Both pedigreed cats and household pets are welcome at CFF shows. Pedigreed cats are registered to document their parentage. Household Pets are registered so that they can win National or Regional titles and awards from CFF.

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