

Persian Breed Profile

by Sherry Kern



The Persian is probably the most popular breed of domestic cat. Persians are believed to have originated in central Asia (Persia). They were called Persians for their “Country of Origin,” but according to ancient hieroglyphics, the Persian may have been around as early as 1684 B.C. They were brought to Europe in the seventeenth century. Their popularity had increased steadily since then.



Persians are very elegant, with their long flowing coat, their big round expressive eyes, and their sweet expression. Most Persians have sweet, gentle personalities, and love to be the center of attention. They are very much creatures of habit, once they are set in a routine, they expect it. They are a medium to large cat, heavy boned, stocky, and have an aura of robust power. If the Persian were to be described in one word it would be “round.” They have a round head, round eyes, and a proportionate body. They are a very well-balanced cat.



The Persian comes in many different colors and patterns. These differences are called divisions. There are some differences in CFA and TICA as far as the divisions are concerned, but many of them are the same. In CFA there are the Solid, Silver & Golden, Tabby, Particolor, Bicolor, Smoke & Shaded, and Himalayan Divisions. In TICA, The Golden are part of the Tabby division, the Silvers & Smokes are in a division together, the Particolors are called Torties, the Bicolors are called Particolors, and the Himalayan is a separate Breed.



In the Solid Division, only the whites come in three different eye colors. Some have the brilliant copper eyes that most other Persians have, some have blue eyes, and others may have a combination of copper and blue. This combination is often called odd-eyed. All other solids have copper eyes. With the exception of the white, their nose and paw pads are similar to their color. The nose and paw pads on the whites are pink. The coat color on a solid should be sound to the root, free from markings or shadings. Some colors include: blue (pale gray); cream, which are called dilute colors; red (orange); black, which are called dominate colors; lilac (lavender); and, chocolate (brown). The Solid Division in CFA and TICA are both the same.



The Silver & Golden Division consists of chinchillas and shaded silvers and golden. These cats all have green or blue-green eye color. These cats have unique black eye liner and lip liner, their nose pad is either brick red or rose. The chinchilla is a sparkling white cat tipped evenly with black. Shaded shows a black mantle on the back and shading evenly down the sides. The golden have a warm, rich cream ground color (instead of white) tipped in black. In TICA, the Silvers are with the smokes, and the Golden are with the Tabbies.

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The Tabbies (my favorite), some call the extroverts of the breed, come in three main patterns: classic, mackerel, and patched (called torbie in TICA). The classic tabby is defined as having a “bull’s eye” marking on the sides of the body. The mackerel tabby has straight narrow lines going down the sides of the body. If the lines are broken, it would be more like a spotted tabby (not recognized in CFA). A patched tabby or torbie, which can be either classic or mackerel, has defined patches of cream if it is a dilute color or red patches if it is a dominate color. All tabbies have brilliant copper eyes. Some of the recognized colors for tabbies are silver, blue silver, cream, cameo, cream cameo, blue, and brown.



The Particolor Division consists of tortoiseshell, blue-cream, lilac cream, and chocolate tortie. In TICA, this is called the Tortoiseshell division. The blue-cream is called a blue tortoiseshell. The type of markings is the same. In both organizations, the tortie should be a black cat with clearly defined patches of red, a blaze on the face is desirable. The blue-cream is a dilute version of the same thing. A blue cat with clearly defined patches of cream. The lilac-cream or lilac tortie would be similar to the blue, but more lavender in color. A unique thing about this division is that they are all females. In recent years, I have heard of male torties being born, but this is not the norm. Male torties cannot be shown in CFA. These cats also will have brilliant copper eyes. These are the cats that some people refer to as having tortietude. They like things done on their terms.



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The Bicolor division is one of the newest to be recognized for show. Calicos were accepted for championship status in 1955. Bicolors were accepted in 1971. Tabby with white were accepted around the early 90's. Because all of these cats have some white, TICA calls this the particolor division. A calico is defined as being a white cat with unbrindled patches of black and red. In TICA, a calico is called a tortoiseshell and white. These cats come in all of the solid, particolor, and tabby colors, they will also have white on them. All cats in this division will have brilliant copper eyes, and white feet. Some people feel that the more white the better.



The Shaded and Smoke division includes the shell and shaded cameos. The cats in this division all have white undercoats and are tipped with their defining color. For example, a black smoke gives the appearance of a black cat until you fold the hair back-the undercoat will be white. Smoke Persians also have brilliant copper eye color, they are very striking to behold. When they are still, they look solid. When they are in motion, you can see their bright white undercoat. Smokes come in six colors: black, blue, cream, cameo (red), tortoiseshell, and blue-cream. In TICA, these cats would be in the Silver/Smoke division.



The Himalayan has become one of the most popular of all Persians. The body color can be various shades of white to fawn, depending on the point color. Color on the cat is restricted to the facial mask and extremities of the body. All Himalayans must have deep vivid blue eye color. Any eye color other than blue will be disqualified from competition. In CFA, Himalayans can be shown in the following colors: seal, chocolate, blue, lilac, cream, red, tortie, blue-cream, chocolate tortie, all the above colors in a lynx pattern. A lynx pattern is a tabby pattern in the mask and extremities. In TICA, these colors and cats with white can also be shown.

As you the see, Persians come in many colors. They have as many personalities as they do colors. A Persian is a very responsive animal, and a joy to have around. I have read other articles that said Persians like to have their feet firmly on the ground, and are not given to jumping and climbing. Well, I have about 17 adult Persians in my home. They can run, they can jump, and they can climb. They are very well behaved; though, they have been taught to only jump and climb on their furniture. If you are planning to get a Persian for a pet, they make good ones. They do require a little time in grooming. They need to be combed a minimum of once a week, their nails should be clipped at least every two weeks, and they look their best if they are bathed once a month. If you purchase your kitten from a reputable breeder, your new baby will be accustomed to this.