

Breeding LaPerms

*Grant Leih
22 January 2005*

The LaPerm was discovered in 1982 by Linda Koehl. She never attempted to begin a proper breeding program from the beginning and allowed her cats to interbreed freely. Because the LaPerm has a dominant gene, LaPerms spread rapidly on her farm. Only until she took a few cats to a CFA show, when she received such positive feedback did she confine them and attempt breeding them more formally.

Solveig Pflueger, head of Genetics at TICA certified that the LaPerm gene is unique. It differs from the Devon & Cornish Rex in that it is dominant, and from the Selkirk Rex and the American Wirehair by being a complete dominant gene. Homozygous Selkirk Rexes look different from their heterozygous counterparts. It also differs from the American Wirehair in that has complete penetrance, i.e. 50% of kittens from a heterozygous LaPerm crossed with a domestic will be curly.

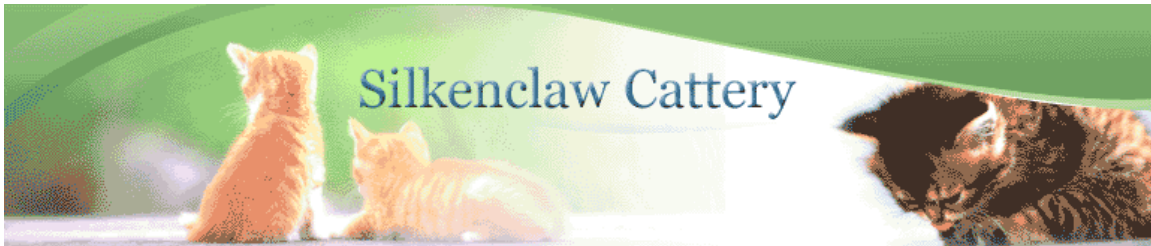
Outcrossing with domestics and a select list of approved outcross breeds have been used to further develop the breed and establish its foundations across the world. Selecting outcrosses focus on good type – in other words the outcrosses attributes complement one another and ensure a steady input of new blood that will safeguard the health and vitality of the breed, and to avoid an inbreeding depression that results in reduced fertility, small litters, reduced resistance to infection, small size, reduced life expectancy, etc.



USA LaPerm (domestic & Ocicat outcrossing used)

In the United States TICA granted the AOV (any other variety) Ocicat for a two year period, which has since expired, and the domestic until 2010. An application was going to be submitted for a few other breeds but that was changed a short while before the application was due. One of those breeds was the American Curl variant, which has very similar type. However the curl gene is





incomplete dominant gene and no one wanted curly eared LaPerms! In Russia though breeders have often used them as an outcross breed, as well as Munchkin variants.

Twink McCabe imported the first LaPerm, a long hair into New Zealand. The LaPerm's first application for acceptance at the New Zealand Cat Fancy Inc. was turned down immediately because they would not accept outcrossing. She was advised to apply for either the longhair or shorthair LaPerm, upon which she could receive more success.

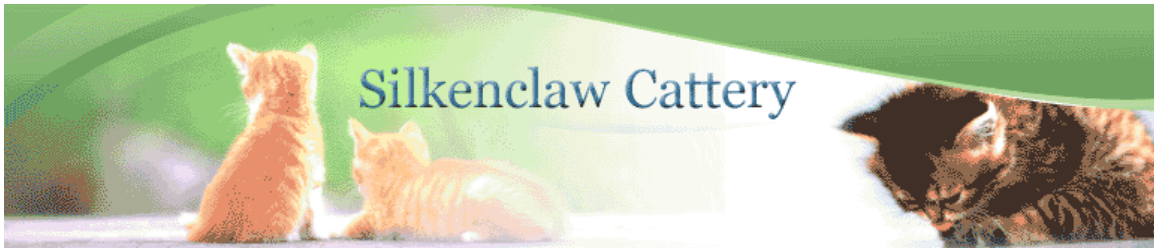


Another LaPerm had since been imported, also a longhair so naturally she applied for only the longhair. The breed was accepted and much to her surprise the LaPerm was placed in the Longhair division. Only domestics were allowed as acceptable outcrosses. During this time Twink and two judges set up a new registrar in 2001, which was called Catz

Inc. Catz Inc. were a lot less strict about the allowable outcrosses and Twink has outcrossed to Siamese, Tonkinese, Burmese, Tiffanie, domestics, and a Turkish Van that attempted to eat her entire cattery one by one until she finally settled down for a proper mating, amongst others. Since then Twink has again tried to get the LaPerm correctly recognised at NZCF Inc. In December of last year the LaPerm was moved to the shorthair division.

In the UK, GCCF approved outcrosses that represented breeds found in LaPerm pedigrees. Often dating back to decisions made by early breeders. A wide range of breeds have been permitted for outcrossing in order to establish a large gene pool, but the number will be reduced as the LaPerm progresses. The current allowable outcrosses include the Somali / Abyssinian, Ocicat, Asian Shorthair, Tiffanie, Burmese, European Burmese, Tonkinese, Oriental, both shorthair & longhair, Siamese, Balinese, and any variants of these breeds. The old fashioned type for Siamese and Orientals were recommended. The LaPerm breed has since progressed in the UK and the first cut of the outcross breeds is expected shortly. The Siamese / Oriental group is expected to be the first to be cut from the list.





In South Africa only domestics are allowable outcrosses. However Siamese, Balinese, Orientals amongst one or two other breeds have been used. In my first litter I used a domestic longhair. The resulting kittens have mostly had very soft, and very curly coats. Unfortunately I don't like their type very much and will not be keeping any for breeding purposes.

Health is of great importance when choosing an outcross. It is of prime importance that a breeder make themselves aware of any health issue in the particular breed. Action must be taken to prevent the introduction of any of the associated health problems related to the outcross breeds. Good examples are the PKD in the Tiffanie and Asian, and PK (Pyruvate Kinase Deficiency) in the Abyssinian and Somali.

Blood type testing of LaPerms has so far only revealed blood type A and all cats with blood type B should be avoided. For example concern has been expressed over the declining numbers of Abyssinian and Ocicat registrations over the last few years in the United Kingdom.

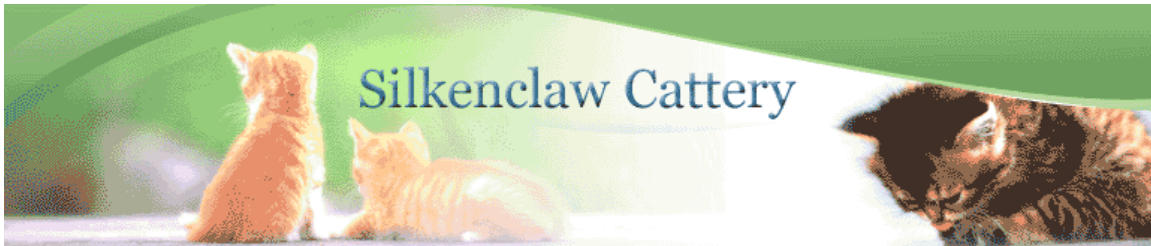
Caution must be taken with the dominant white gene as it is associated with increased risk of deafness in all breeds. Two self white cats should not be bred if evidence suggests that a cat is homozygous for the white gene. Cats with blue eyes, with the exception of Turner blue eyes have a higher incidence of deafness than those with coloured eyes.



Abyssinian / Somali outcross

The Somali and Ocicat are considered one of the most suitable outcrosses, one of the reasons being that the high occurrence of Abyssinians in their pedigrees and their complementary type to the LaPerm. The majority of Somali and Abyssinian x LaPerms





have soft coats without thick undercoats. The ticking and curls have been a popular combination as the curls open the coat to show the bands of ticking. Some differences between the breeds:

- The Somali / Abyssinian profile is based on an equilateral triangle from the front with a shallow indentation forming the muzzle whilst the LaPerm has a longer and broader muzzle with a pronounced whisker break. The profile is also somewhat different.
- Eye shape is also slightly different. The Somali / Abyssinian should have large almond shaped eyes whilst the LaPerm must be slightly slanted to the bottom of the outside ear base.
- The Somali / Abyssinian must have a level topline whilst the LaPerm's hindlegs must be longer than the forelegs.



**Tiffanie
outcross**

The Tiffanie remains quite rare in numerous countries but has been used quite often, particularly in New Zealand with excellent results. The Asians and Burmese are only on the GCCF list as a logical extension of the Tiffanie and because they appear on Tiffanie pedigrees. The Tiffanie contributes greatly to a softer coat texture, as well as coat length and density. New colours and patterns are an extra plus. Tiffanies and Asians often differ quite drastically in type and an outcross must be chosen that fits the closest to the LaPerm. Particular attention must be paid to the length of muzzle and not too deep a nose break or stop.

Ocicats have very similar type to LaPerms and have been a valuable outcross breed. However they are quite a large breed so efforts to choose smaller cats of the breed have been used only.

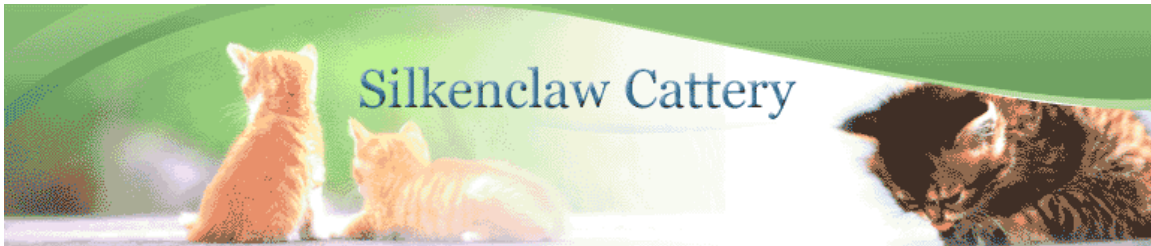
The Siamese group has been used mostly to add length to the body, face and reduce coat density. This group has become increasingly unpopular amongst LaPerm breeders worldwide. The coats are often very wiry and have too much texture, making them very coarse.



**Siamese /
Balinese outcross**

Currently the longhair LaPerm has a far greater following than the shorthair. The difference being a 4:1 ratio. Many breeders as a result worldwide have completely ignored the shorthair. Breeders have claimed that certain colours and patterns have





proved to be more popular, often because of the difference it allegedly makes on the coat. The tabbies it is claimed have more bounce and volume to their coats according to some breeders, in particular the brown tabby. Others have claimed that they've achieved much softer coats with dilute colours.



**Silkenclaw Pacific Gem BC
Ice Spirit**

The Skookum is a breed exhibiting both the LaPerm and Munchkin genes simultaneously. The practise of breeding these cats remains very controversial and is often frowned upon by many LaPerm breeders. The Skookum has been submitted to TICA for recognition a few times, but each time they've been turned down. Applications for the Napoleon and Minskin were submitted at the same time, also not achieving success. Currently the

Skookum is only recognised by Catz Inc.

My stud from New Zealand has domestic in his fourth generation and Tiffanie in his third and fourth generation. My queen from the United States is an outcross to a domestic and has Ocicat in her fourth generation.



**Sup Ch Silkenclaw Ekimeus BC
Embe Kichwa Moto**

