

# The Bengal Breed – a TICA perspective

**A Breed Seminar by Jeff and  
Heather Roberts**

**Moderated by Al Walbrun**

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Looking forward to the future

# Tonight's outline



A brief Bengal history  
Basic Bengal genetics  
The Bengal standard

# A Brief Bengal History

Not a great start to the breed!  
In 1961, a young lady (Jean Sugden) bred an imported Asian Leopard Cat (ALC) to a black domestic pound cat.

One surviving offspring resulted, and was bred back to her father.

In the end, through a series of unfortunate events, all progeny died – and Jean's fantasy died as well.



# A Brief Bengal History

In the early 1970s, Dr. William Centerwall (Loma Linda U) studied ALC immunity to FeLV. He hybridized domestic cats with ALCs to determine if immunity was genetically inherited – it was not.

Studies were abandoned with the advent of the FeLV vaccine. **HOWEVER**, 8 cats from this study were given to Jean Sugden in 1980.



# A Brief Bengal History

Jean also received 5 of Centerwall's cats from another breeder – 3 of which you recognize as Pennybank, Praline, and Rorschach.

Millwood Tory of Dehli began his contributions in 1984 (both in the E Mau breed and this new line of spotted cats)



# A Brief Bengal History

In 1986, F2 Penny Ante truly showed the breed off to the world. She attended almost 30 shows and astounded the public with her beauty of a little leopard look-a-like.

They are called “Bengals” from the ALC scientific name (*Felis bengalensis*).



# A Brief Bengal History – TICA!!

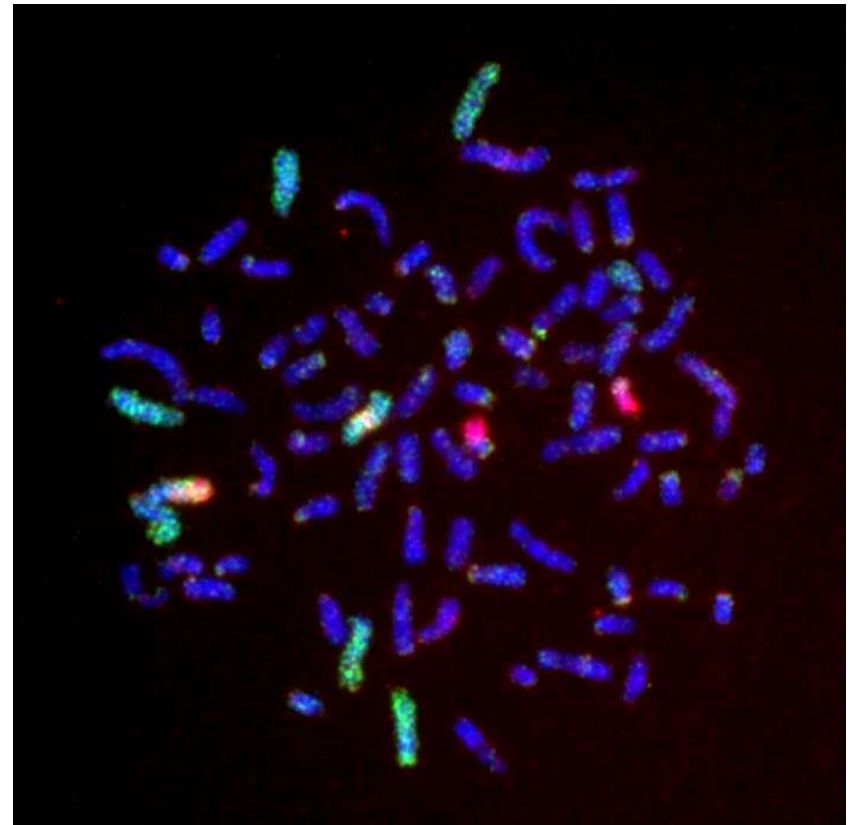
TICA recognized the Bengal breed in 1983, and they showed in New Breed or Color until 1991. They then moved up to Championship status and are a Category I breed (Established Breed) in TICA.



# Basic Bengal Genetics 101

Due to male chromosomal mismatch (ALCs have 36 chromosomes, domestics have 38), usually only the females are fertile in the first few generations.

Only about 2% of the second generation males, and 30-50% of the third generation males, should be fertile.





# Basic Bengal Genetics 101

Some basic color inheritance patterns:

Silver > Brown

Brown > Albino series

Albino series:

- Lynx point = CsCs
- Mink = CsCb
- Sepia = CbCb

Blue, melanistic (black)  
are recessive

So what colors have YOU seen in your Bengals as a result of interbreeding these different colors?

# Basic Bengal Genetics 101

Some basic pattern inheritance patterns:

Spotted > Marbled  
That's it – or is it?

What about ticking in the coat?



# The Bengal Standard – General Description

The GOAL OF THE BENGAL BREEDING PROGRAM is to create a domestic cat which has the physical features distinctive to the small forest-dwelling wild cats, and with the loving, dependable temperament of the domestic cat.

Keeping this goal in mind, judges shall give special merit to those characteristics in the appearance of the Bengal which are distinct from those found in other domestic cat breeds. The Bengal should visibly appear different from other domestic cats.

# The Bengal Standard – HEAD (35)

SHAPE .....	6
EARS .....	6
EYES .....	5
CHIN .....	3
MUZZLE .....	4
NOSE .....	2
PROFILE .....	6
NECK .....	3

# Head Shape (6)

Broad modified wedge with rounded contours

Longer than it is wide

Slightly small in proportion to body, but not to be taken to extreme

The skull behind the ears (backskull) makes a gentle curve and flows into the neck

Allowance to be made for jowls in adult males

Overall look of the head should be as distinct from the domestic cat as possible





Excellent backskull



Head wider than long



Head with nice length, but too wedgy



Head too short? Look past the jowls.



Nice length, with rounded contours

## Ears (6)

Medium to small, relatively short

Wide base and rounded tips

Set as much on side as top of head, following the contour of the face in the frontal view

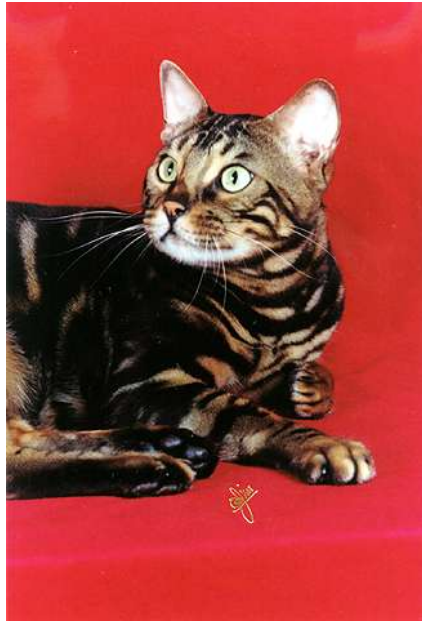
Pointing forward in the profile view

Light horizontal furnishings acceptable; but

Lynx tipping undesirable







Ears set as much on side as top of head

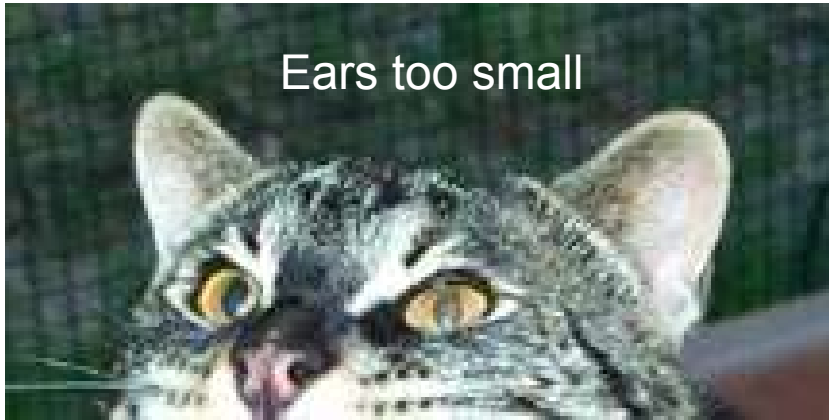


Rounded tips

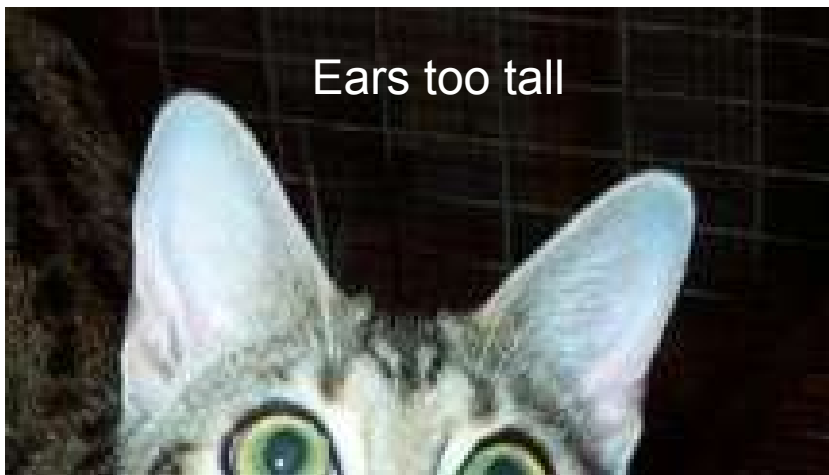


Pointed tips

Ears too small



Ears too tall



Ears well balanced

# Eyes (5)

Oval, almost round

Large, but not bugged

Set wide apart, back into face,

On slight bias toward base of ear

Eye color independent of coat color except in the lynx points

The more richness and depth of color the better





Excellent eye shapes



Eyes too almond in shape

# Chin (3)

Strong chin

Aligns with tip of nose in profile



Beautiful depth and alignment of chin







Very weak chins

## Muzzle (4)

Full and Broad

Large, prominent  
whisker pads

High, pronounced  
cheekbones

Slight muzzle break at  
the whisker pads





Full muzzles in these kittens

## Nose (2)

Large and wide  
Slightly puffed nose  
leather



## Profile (6)

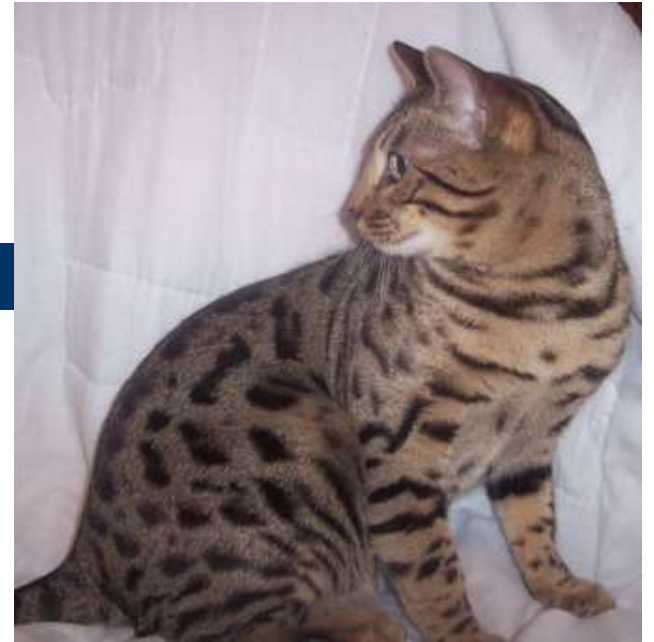
Curve of the forehead should flow into the bridge of the nose with no break

Bridge of nose extends above the eyes;

The line of the bridge extends to the nose tip, making a very slight, to nearly straight, concave curve



More nice profiles





Too much angle at forehead



Profile too dippy

## Neck (3)

Long  
Substantial  
Muscular

In proportion to the  
head and body





# The Bengal Standard – BODY (30)

Torso .....	5
Legs .....	4
Feet .....	4
Tail .....	5
Boning .....	6
Musculature .....	6

## Torso (5)

Long and substantial, not oriental or foreign

Medium to large (but not quite as large as the largest domestic breed)

Consideration should be given to allow for smaller size, in balanced proportion, of females



# Legs (4) and Feet (4)

Legs medium in length  
Slightly longer in the back than in the front  
Feet large, round, with prominent knuckles



## Tail (5)

Medium Length  
Thick  
Tapered at end  
Rounded tip





Tails of nice thickness and carried low

# Boning (6) and Musculature (6)

Boning is sturdy, firm, and never delicate

Very muscular, especially males, one of the most distinguishing features

Allowance to be made for the generally slighter musculature of the females



# The Bengal Standard – COAT, COLOR AND PATTERN (35)

TEXTURE ..... 10

PATTERN ..... 15

COLOR ..... 10



## Texture (10)

TEXTURE: Dense and luxurious, close-lying, unusually soft and silky to the touch



## Pattern (15)

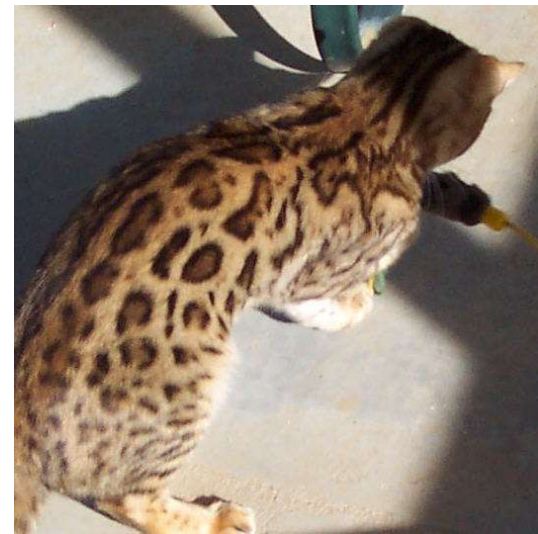
PATTERNS: Spotted or marbled. This can be a seminar all on its own!



# Spotteds

Spots shall be random, or aligned horizontally

Rosettes showing two distinct colors or shades, such as paw print shaped, arrowhead shaped, doughnut or half-doughnut shaped or clustered are preferred to single spotting but not required



# Spotteds

Contrast with ground color must be extreme, giving distinct pattern and sharp edges

Strong, bold chin strap and mascara markings desirable

Virtually white undersides and belly desirable

Blotchy horizontal shoulder streaks, spotted legs and spotted or rosetted tail are desirable

Belly must be spotted



# Marbleds

Should have as little “bullseye” similarity as possible. Pattern should be random, giving the impression of marble, preferable with a horizontal flow when the cat is stretched

Mackerel influence is undesirable

Preference should be given to cats with three or more shades; i.e., ground color, markings, and dark outlining of those markings

# Marbleds



Both excellent marbled patterns

# Marbleds



A bullseye pattern



Bullseye stretched out

## Color (10)

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Brown tabby

Seal sepia, mink, and lynx point tabby

Black silver tabby

Seal silver sepia, mink, and lynx point tabby



# Brown Tabby

ALL VARIATIONS are allowed; however, a high degree of rufinism is preferred

Markings various shades of brown or black

Light spectacles encircling the eyes and a virtually white ground color on the whisker pads, chin, chest, belly, and inner legs is desirable



# Brown Tabby

Skin pigment around eyes, lips, and nose should be black

Nose leather brick or solid black

Paw pads and tail tip must be black

Eyes to be brown, copper, gold, green, or hazel.  
Preference to deeper, vibrant tones



# Seal Sepia Tabby

Body ranging from ivory to tan. Pattern rich sable brown

Tail tip brownish black

Paw pads dark brown w/  
rosy undertones allowed

Nose leather brick outlined  
in dark brown, or solid dark  
brown.

Eyes to be gold or gold-  
green with preference to  
deeper, vibrant tones.



# Seal Mink Tabby

Body ranging from ivory to tan. Pattern bitter chocolate to sable brown

Tail tip brownish black

Paw pads dark brown w/  
rosy undertones allowed

Nose leather brick outlined  
in dark brown, or solid dark  
brown.

Eyes to be blue-green to  
green-blue with preference  
to deeper, vibrant tones.



# Seal Lynx Point Tabby

Body ranging from ivory to light tan. Pattern warm brown to brownish black  
Tail tip brownish black  
Paw pads dark brown w/ rosy undertones allowed  
Nose leather brick outlined in dark brown, or solid dark brown.  
Eyes to be blue with preference to deeper, vibrant tones.



# Black Silver Tabby

Dense black pattern markings on a clear silver white ground, with white undercoat.

Skin pigment around eyes, lips, and nose black.

Paw pads black.

Nose leather outlined in black.

Eyes to be brown, copper, gold, green, or hazel with preference to deeper, vibrant tones.



# Seal Silver “Snow” Tabbies

Basically the same standard color description as for the seal sepia, seal mink, and seal lynx point – however, the base coat color will be silver white, underside of tail is silver white, and seal coloring will be colder and duller than in non-silver snows.



Seal silver mink

# Others!

As everyone knows, many colors exist in the genepool of the Bengal – basically EVERYTHING!



Blue spotted tabby Bengals





Melanistic Bengals



Cinnamon Bengal and a Longhair Bengal

# What color are they???



3 brown potteds and a mink? Watch the 2 on the left!

# What color are they???

The same 2 kittens  
on the left in the  
previous picture  
(except reversed  
now), but a bit older.



# What color are they???



The “finished”  
products as  
adults

# Allowances

Smaller size, in balanced proportion, of females

Slightly longer coat in kittens

Jowls in adult males

Eyes slightly almond shaped

Mousy undercoat

# Penalize

Spots on body running together vertically forming a mackerel tabby pattern on spotted cats

Circular bulls-eye pattern on marbled cats

Substantially darker point color (as compared to color of body markings) in Seal Sepia, Seal Mink, or Seal Lynx Point

Any distinct locket on the neck, chest, abdomen or any other area

# Withhold All Awards

Belly not spotted  
Paw pads not  
consistent with their  
color group  
description or  
Paw pads not all of  
the same color





# Thanks for the Pictures!

Allison Adams  
Jay Bangle  
Beth Beary  
Holly Borchard  
Mel Branco  
Canie Brooks  
Alan Brown  
Mark Coleman  
Jean Danforth  
Louise Dickinson  
Carol Effinger  
Melissa Ford  
Mary Fyffe  
Sharon/Tom Goller  
Kelly Green  
Collete Griffith  
Candace Grissom  
Les Hall  
Pat Harbert  
PJ Hoff  
Leah Johnson  
Sharon/Taty Kalani  
Libbie Kerr  
Mike Laweryson

Jane Lee  
Stefanie LeGrande  
Brigitte McMinn  
Judy Miers  
Judy Pence  
Mark Pennington  
Bobbi Jean Pratt  
Hugh/Peggy Price  
Pam Rohan  
Julie Samuelson  
Susan Sehn  
Lori Simes  
Tracy Smith  
Susan Speegle  
Diana Starr  
Natalie Sullivan  
Janna Szarek  
Wayne Trnka  
Janice Tyler  
Robyn Wanner  
Michelle Warner  
Linda Woods  
Lydia Wright