

# ***The American Shorthair***



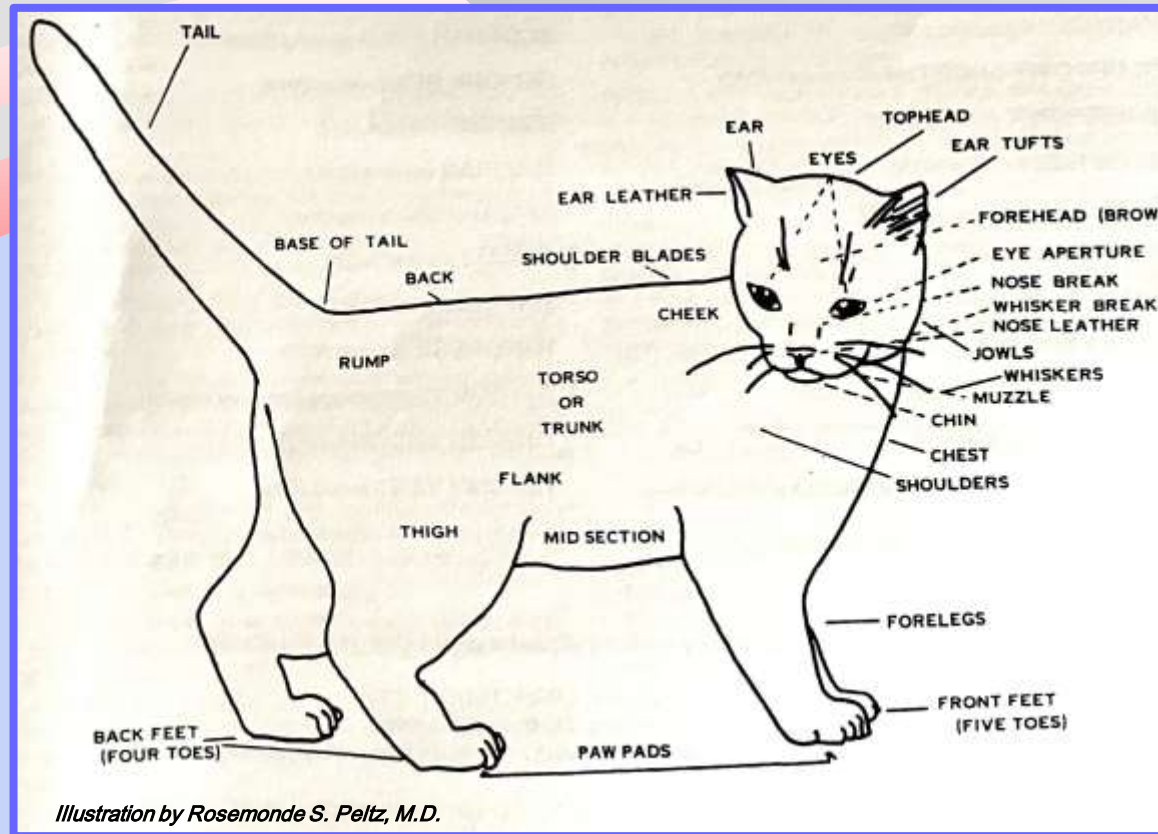
*Prepared and submitted by the American Shorthair Breed Council Secretary and the  
National American Shorthair Club, inc. October 2022*

# ***GENERAL***



- ❖ **The American Shorthair is categorized by CFA as a natural breed. It is a true breed of working cat, with no part of its anatomy so exaggerated as to foster weakness.**
- ❖ **The general effect should be that of a strongly built, well balanced, symmetrical cat with conformation indicating power, endurance and agility.**
- ❖ **The current CFA show standard for the American Shorthair was designed to preserve our breed as a working cat of unique beauty that nature presented to us in the founding years of this country.**
- ❖ **Though many have assumed that the American Shorthair is a modern breed, many of our contemporary lines can trace one or more branches of their pedigree to cats listed in CFA's first Stud Book – that's 1906.**

# FELINE STRUCTURE

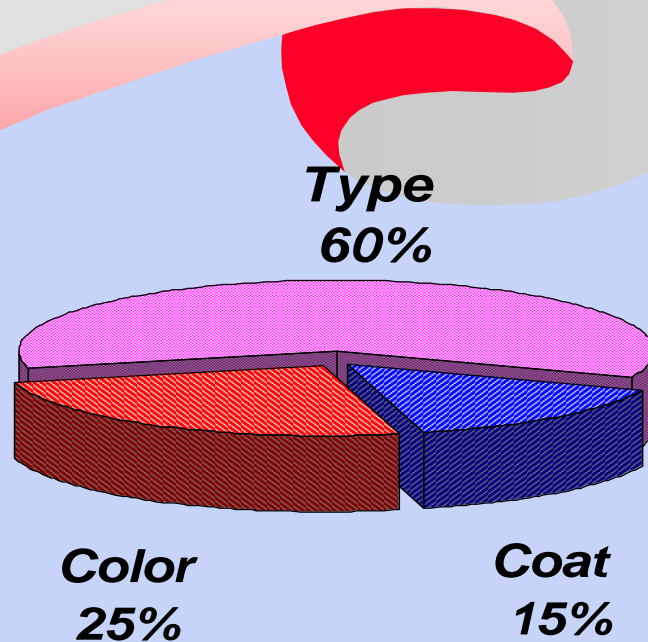


*Illustration by Rosemonde S. Peltz, M.D.*

**PROPORTIONS:** slightly longer than tall. (Height is profile measured from top of shoulder blades to ground. Length is profile measured from tip of breastbone to rear tip of buttocks.) Length of tail is equal to distance from shoulder blades to base of tail. A judge should trust his/her natural eye for symmetry and the feel of the cat when checking proportion and balance, keeping in mind however, that no feature should be so exaggerated as to foster weakness.

# American Shorthair

## Point Allotments



### TYPE (60%)

Head.....30

Body.....30

### COLOR (25%)

Eye color.....5

Coat color..20

*Tabby Patterns divided*

Pattern 10

Color 10

### COAT (15%)

- ❖ While total points for type account for 60% of our American Shorthair standard, the body shape, proportion, size, bone and length of tail contribute 30% of the total picture. This was increased from 25 points in 1996 when the Breed Council Membership voted to reduce eye color from 10 point to 5 points and move those 5 points to the body, making the point allotments for the head and body equal.
- ❖ The only other changes to the standard since 1996 have been the addition of more color classes and refinements of color descriptions.



# Head – 30 points

*Includes size, shape of eyes, ear shape, and set and structure of nose*



## LARGE

- ❖ The LARGE head of the American Shorthair must be in proportion to the well-developed body.
- ❖ Note how well these three fit into the overall picture of the cats

# Head

*Full cheeked face, slightly longer than wide*



- ❖ The full-cheeked face gives the impression of an oblong (rectangle) in shape, just slightly longer than it is wide.
- ❖ This can best be determined by looking down on the head and viewing the shape from the back of the skull to the end of the muzzle

# ***Head***

***Sweet, open expression***

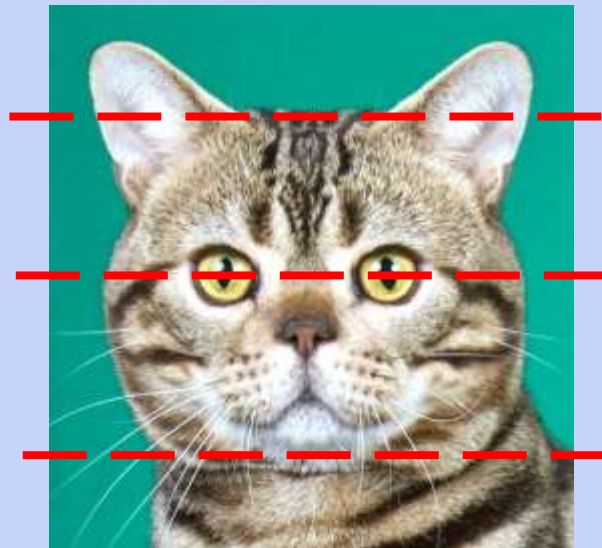


The sweet, open expression specified for the American Shorthair is best observed when the cat is alert and interested in either an individual object or in its overall surroundings.

# Head



- ❖ Large and in proportion to the body.
- ❖ Face is full-cheeked, oblong shaped & slightly longer than wide.
- ❖ As shown in the diagram, the head is divided into two equal parts.



- ❖ From the base of the ear to the middle of the eyes, and from the middle of the eyes to the chin tip.
- ❖ The underlying skull structure. Which includes wide, rounded cheek bones, creates the full-cheeked, rounded appearance to the sides of the face.



# *Head - eyes*

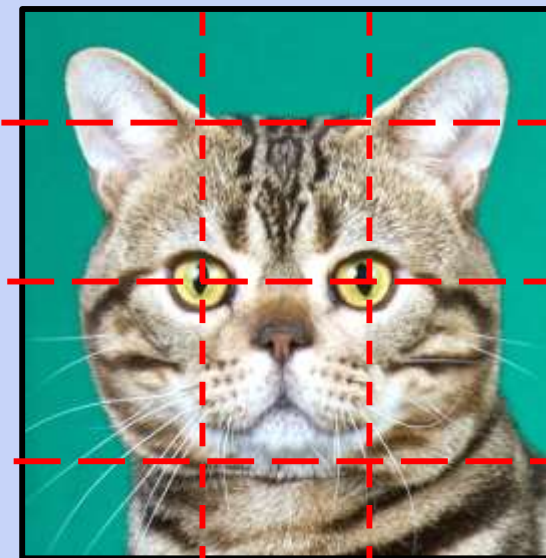
- ❖ Large and wide with upper lid shaped like half an almond and lower lid shaped in a fully rounded curve
- ❖ At least the width of one eye between eyes
- ❖ Outer corners set very slightly higher than inner corners
- ❖ These are good examples of properly shaped eyes that are bright, clear and alert.



# ***Head - ears & muzzle***

- ❖ **Ears medium size**
  - slightly rounded at tips
  - not unduly open at base
- ❖ **Distance between ears equals 2x distance between eyes**
- ❖ **Squared muzzle**
  - definite jowls in mature males
- ❖ **Jaws strong & long enough to grasp prey**
- ❖ **Notice that width of squared muzzle is bounded by the same line that runs from inside corner of the ears & center of the eyes**

**NO  
dome**



# ***HEAD - Ear Size & Set***



**Set too high**



**Too high & close together**



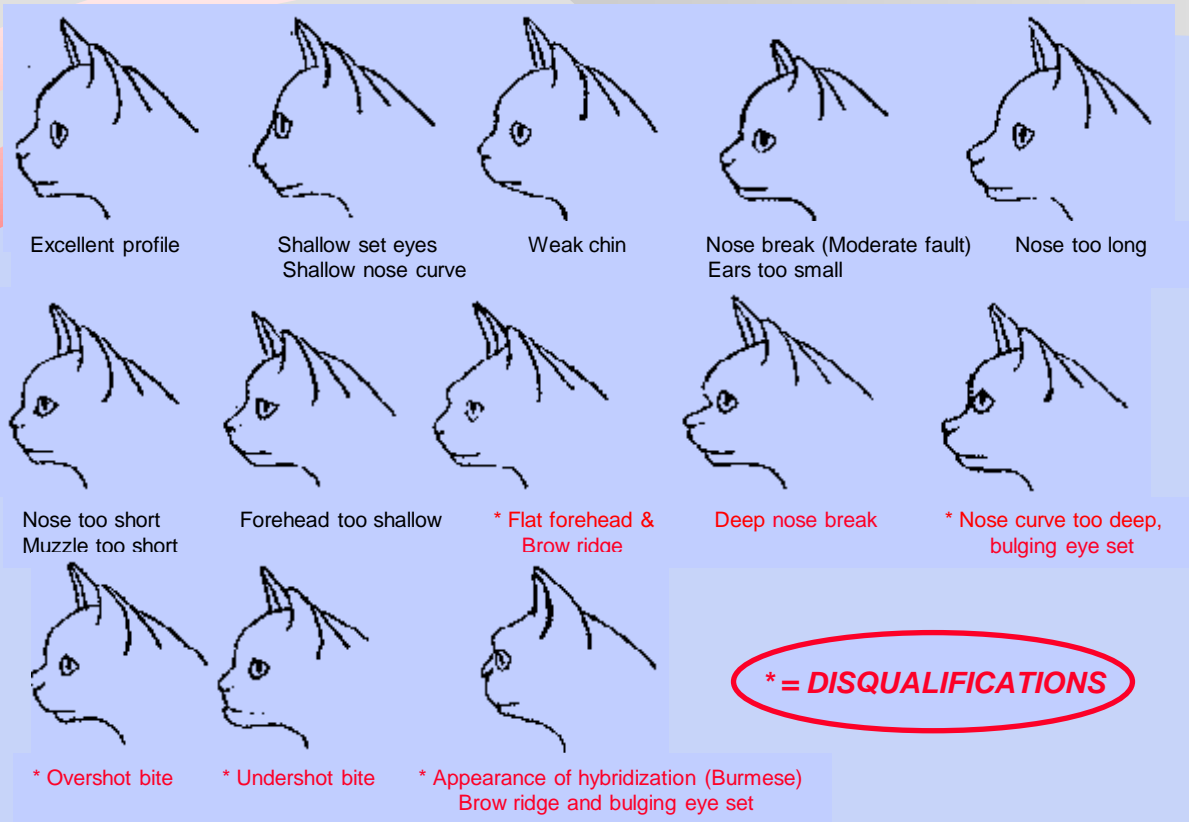
**Set too low & wide**

***Medium size, slightly rounded at tips***

***Set not well defined in standard -- symmetry is key***



# Head - profile



- ❖ When viewed in profile, the forehead forms a smooth, moderately convex continuous curve flowing over the top of the head into the neck.
- ❖ The nose is medium length, same width for entire length. When viewed in profile, there is a gentle, concavely curved rise from the bridge of the nose to the forehead.



# HEAD - Profile



Too Straight



Shallow & flat forehead



Exaggerated

***Exaggerated, abrupt change of direction is incorrect***

**Gentle, concavely curved rise from bridge of nose to forehead**



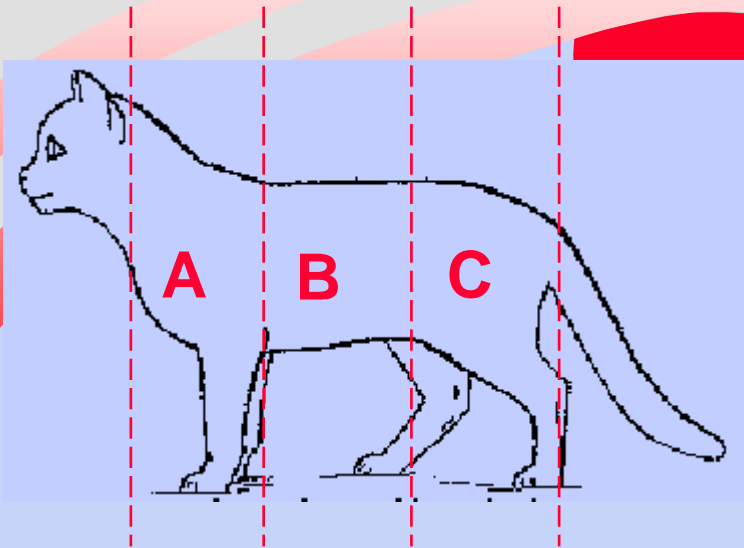
**Correct, moderate convex continuous curve flowing over top of head to the neck**

# ***BODY – 30 points***

***Includes shape, size, bone & length of tail***



***Viewed from the side, body is divided in three equal parts***



**A** -tip of breastbone to elbow

**B** -elbow to front of hindleg

**C** -front of hindleg to tip of buttocks



**Muscular, with well-developed shoulders, chest & hindquarters. Back is broad, straight & level. Viewed in profile, there is a slight slope down from hip bone to base of tail.**

# ***LEGS, PAWS & TAIL***



## ❖ ***LEGS***

- Medium in length & bone***
- Heavily muscled***
- Viewed from rear, all four legs straight and parallel with paws facing forward***

## ❖ ***PAWS***

- Firm, full & rounded with heavy pads***
- Toes: five in front, four behind***

## ❖ ***TAIL***

- Medium length***
- Heavy at base***
- Tapering to abrupt blunt end in appearance, but with normal tapering final vertebrae***

# ***COAT – 15 points***



- ❖ **Short**
- ❖ **Thick**
- ❖ **Even and hard in texture, but not coarse**
- ❖ **Regional and seasonal variation in thickness allowed**
- ❖ **Coat dense enough to protect from moisture, cold and superficial skin injuries**



# COLOR IS ALSO IMPORTANT



## 25% of total points

❖	Eye Color	5
❖	Coat Color	20
	-- <i>Tabby Patterns divided</i>	
	Pattern	10
	Color	10

- ❖ While the old adage saying you need to build the house before you paint it is certainly true in the case of our American Shorthairs with 60% of the points allotted to type, color is also important. We have included eye color as part of the 25 points because of its direct relationship to the color of each cat.
- ❖ The American Shorthair rainbow currently includes 44 color classes (including AOV) with many different colors within those classes. In addition to prescribing coat colors and patterns, our standard also defines specific requirements for the nose leather, paw pads and eye color for each recognized color.
- ❖ Although color classes within our American Shorthair are not broken into divisions, it is convenient to group them in that fashion for purposes of discussion.

# ***Some Solid Colors***



**Odd-Eyed White**



**Gold-Eyed White**



**Blue-Eyed White**



**Cream**



**Black**

***Very small percentage of current registrations***

# ***Parti-colors***



**Tortoiseshell**



**Blue Cream**

***Extremely small percentage of current registrations***

# ***Some Shaded & Smokes***



**Shaded Silver**



**Black Smoke**



**Shaded Tortie**



**Shell Cameo**

***ALL REQUIRE WHITE UNDERCOAT***



# ***Some Tabby Patterns***



**Red Tabby**



**Brown Tabby**



**Brown Patched Tabby**



**Silver Tabby**



**Silver Mackerel Tabby**



**Cameo Tabby**

***Markings dense & clearly defined***

# More Tabby Patterns



Blue Tabby



Classic Tabby pattern



Red Mackerel Tabby



Brown Tabby



Blue Mackerel Tabby



Silver Ticked Tabby



Cream Tabby

**Points are divided: 10 for color & 10 for pattern**



# Some of the “And Whites”

(Any recognized color & white)



Blue Tabby & White



Blue & White



Silver Mackerel Tabby & White



Calico



Brown Patched Tabby & White



Blue Ticked Tabby & White



Black & White

The “and whites” are the 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular class of American Shorthairs being registered

# ***PENALIZE***

- ❖ *Excessive cobbiness or ranginess*
- ❖ *Very short tail*

# ***DISQUALIFY***

- ❖ ***Any appearance of hybridization***
  - ~ *Long or fluffy fur*
  - ~ *Deep nose break*
  - ~ *Bulging eye set*
  - ~ *Brow ridge*
  - ~ *Hybridized colors*
    - *chocolate, sable, lavender, lilac or point restricted*
- ❖ **It is not necessary for the judge to consider ancestry when evaluating exhibits. If any of the listed characteristics are present, there is no need to know the pedigree. An American Shorthair possessing one or more of the undesired features must be disqualified, whether or not obtained from hybrid ancestry.**





# ***DISQUALIFICATIONS***

## ***(continued)***



- ❖ ***Undershot or overshot bite***
- ❖ ***Kinked or abnormal tail***
- ❖ ***Locket or button***
- ❖ ***Incorrect number of toes***
- ❖ ***Tongue persistently protruding***
- ❖ ***Obesity or emaciation***

***AND***

***Any feature so exaggerated as to foster weakness***

And finally, the general disqualification for any feature so exaggerated as to foster weakness was written by Jane Martinke in the late 1960s as a forward to the standard she developed for the American Shorthair. It has been retained in the the modern standard because it embodies the overall intent to preserve the American Shorthair as presented to us by nature.



# ***HANDLING***

## **BODY IS POWERFUL AND WELL-DEVELOPED**

- ❖ **Support firmly on way to & from judging cage**
- ❖ **Place all four feet on the table**
- ❖ **Use teaser to evaluate natural features, but don't over stimulate**
- ❖ **Allow controlled movement to observe overall balance & structure**
- ❖ **Feel the coat for proper density & check for correct undercoat color**

# ***DISTINCTIVE FEATURES***

*Each breed has special characteristics of appearance that immediately set it apart from others. The American Shorthair is no exception. In review, please note the following distinctive features:*



## **❖ BODY**

- ❖ - Balance & proportion of hunting, working animal**

## **❖ HEAD**

- Large**
- Oblong face, with squared muzzle**
- Medium length nose, same width for entire length**
- Gentle concave curve from bridge of nose to forehead**
- Moderate convexly curved forehead**

## **❖ EARS**

- Medium size, slightly rounded at the tips**
- Inner corner in line with middle of the eye**

## **❖ TAIL**

- Medium length, tapering to abrupt end in appearance**

## **❖ EYES**

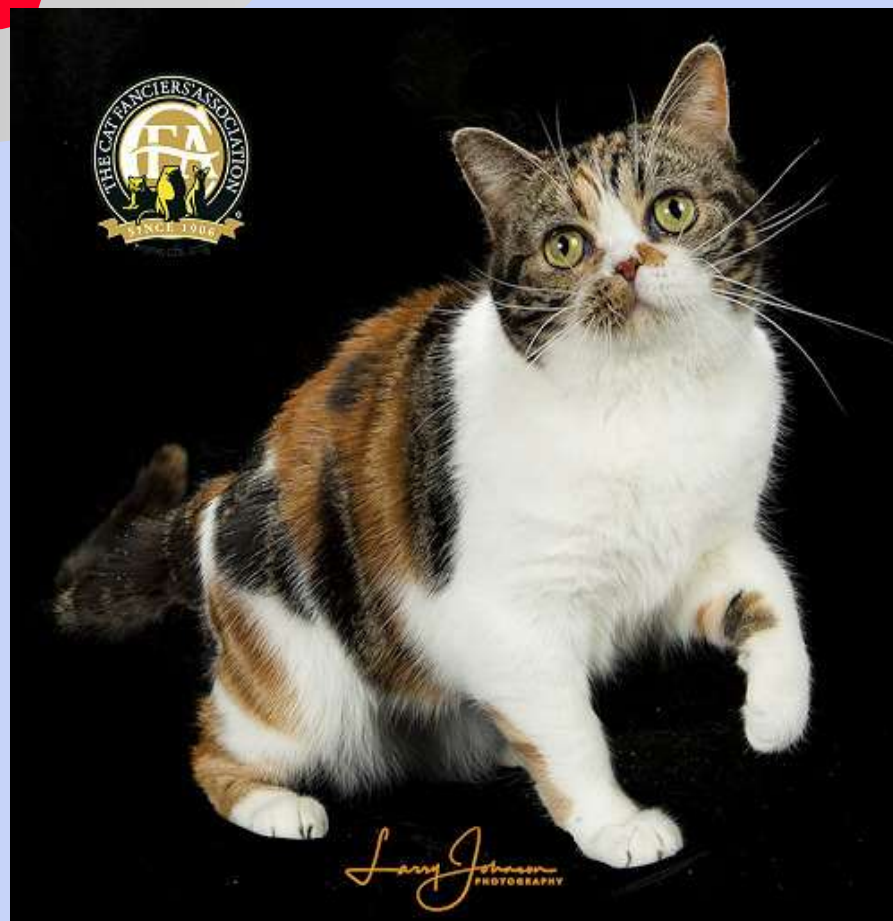
- Large, wide set with unique shape**

*Put the whole together and no matter what color you paint it, it would still be identifiable next to any other breed. Even a novice will recognize and appreciate its unique style.*

# Here's a look at a few American Shorthair Breed Winners and National Winners



**2019-2020 GC,NW - Blue Tabby male**



**2019-2020 GC,GP,NW - Brown Patched Tabby spay**





**2016-2017 GC,BWC,NW - Silver Tabby & White male**



**2012-2013 GC,BW,NW - Brown Tabby male**



**2004-2005 GC,BW,NW - Blue Tabby female**



**2009-2010 GC,BW,NW - Brown Tabby male**



**2013-2014 GC,BW,NW - Shaded Silver male**



**2016-2017 GC.BWI,NW - Brown Tabby Male**



**2019-2020 GC,NW - Silver Tabby male**



**2019-2020 GC,BWC,NW - Blue Tabby male**

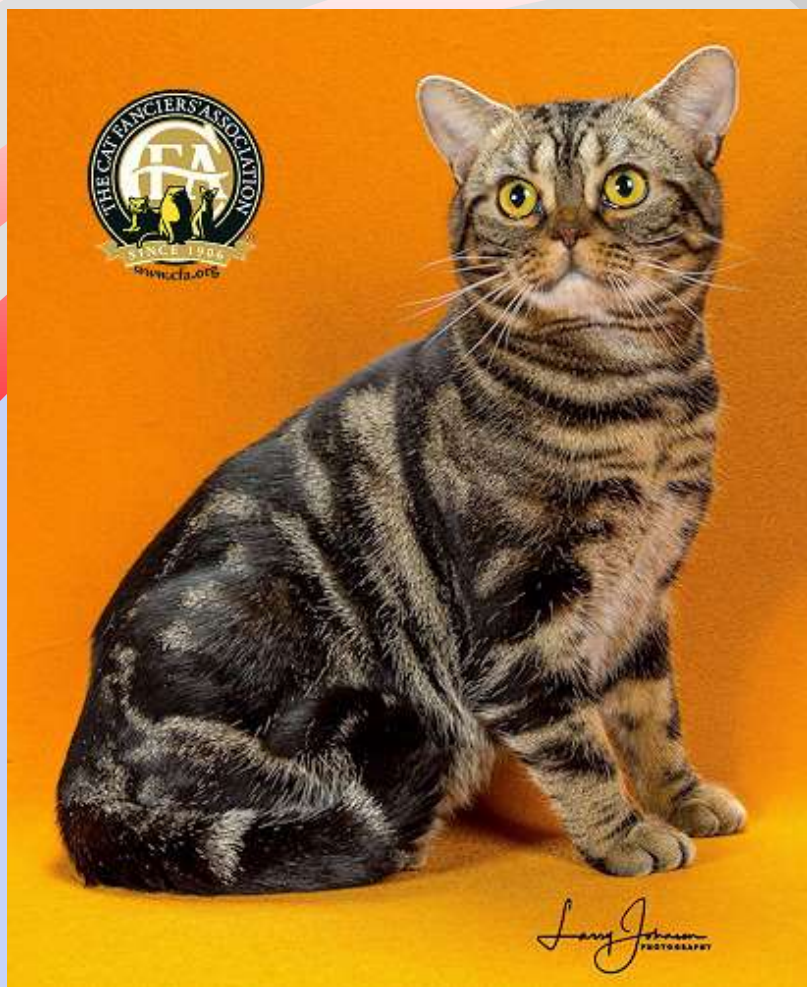


**2011-2012 GC,BW,NW - Red Tabby male**

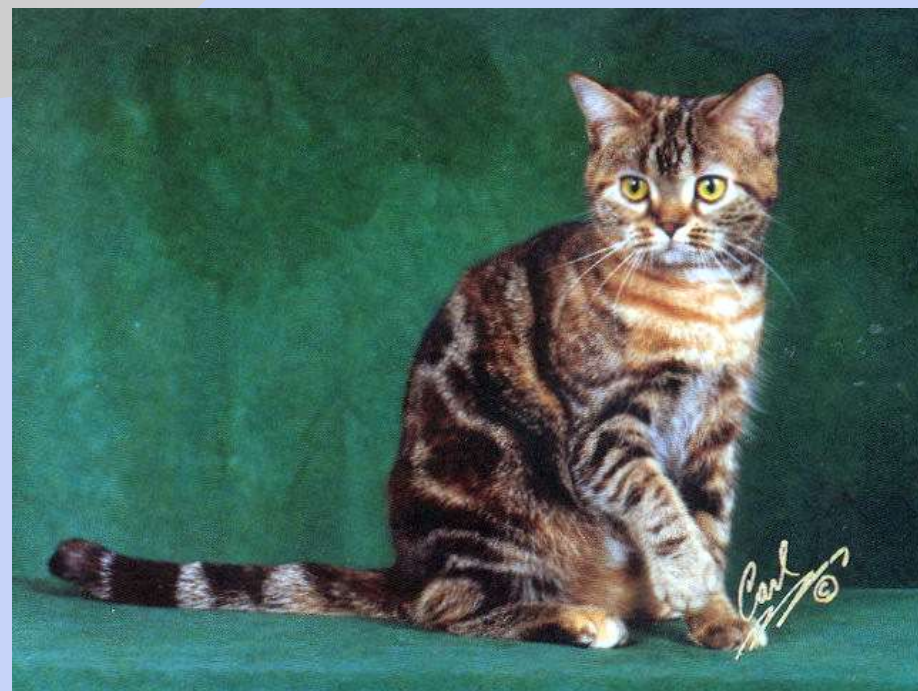


**2007-2008 GC,BW,NW - Silver Tabby male**





**2019-2020 GC,BW,NW - BrownTabby male**



**1992-1993 GC,BW,NW - Brown Patched Tabby female**





**2017-2018 GC,NW - Silver Tabby male**



**2015-2016 GC,BW,NW Silver Tabby & White male**



**2001-2002 GC,BW,NW - Red Tabby male**



**2005-2006 GC,BW,NW - Brown Tabby male**



**2016-2017 GC,GP,NW - Silver Tabby & White spay**



**1976-77, 78 GC,BW,NW - Cameo Tabby male**



**1990-1991 GC,BW,NW - Brown Tabby male**

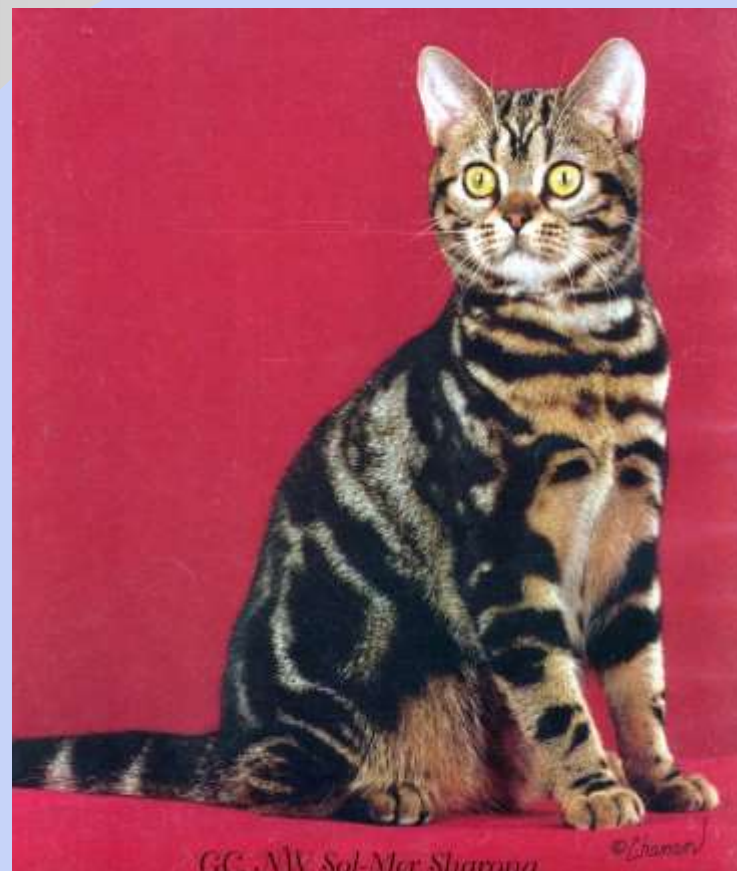


**2008-2009 GC,BW,NW - Brown Tabby male**





**2002-2003 GC,BW,NW - Silver Tabby male**



**1994-1995 GC,BW,NW - Brown Tabby female**

# ***American Shorthairs across time***

**While the “look” (& photographic techniques) may have changed over the years, the cats shown below both meet the current written standard**



***1972-73, 75 GC,BW,NW - Silver Tabby male***



***2021-2022 GC,BWR,NW - Silver Tabby & White male***



# AMERICA'S CAT

***“whose roots go back to the Mayflower”***



**“Derabie,” Silver Tabby female  
born 1902**



**CH Miss Toodles, Silver Tabby female  
born 1903**



**Ch. Jimmy, born 1890**

## **Judges Responsibilities**

**We have a very definite responsibility in all breeds to reward breeders whose efforts result in cats bred to the accepted standard, especially those breeders who consistently do so.**

**Judges must be able to justify their decisions by relating to the standard. If the type is not the type in the standard; it is incorrect.**

**Judges must be aware of fads that creep into breeds. A few years ago, many Persians with the “ pig” look were being shown. Some judges felt that look had to be right because it was being shown in greater and greater numbers. But numbers never made this look right. We must be careful that we do not promote a style that may be “in” because cats aren’t clothes, and standards don’t come in seasons. As judges you give endorsements, and you should be endorsing only those cats that meet the CFA standard.**

***Excerpted from Fall 1995 American Connection - The American Shorthair: An Endangered Breed by Richard Gebhardt***

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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**We are also grateful to the photographers whose magnificent images have been integrated throughout this presentation. Copyrights for those images is retained by the photographers.**

**Carol W. Johnson**  
**American Shorthair**  
**Breed Council Secretary**

**Bob Zenda**  
**President,**  
**National American Shorthair Club, Inc.**