

Kitten History: Tonkinese

This jewel-eyed kitten marks the happy medium of the cat fancy.

Stacy Hackett

Neither too big nor too small, too tall nor too short, your Tonkinese kitten is just right. With her exquisite mink coat and stunningly aquamarine eyes, its no wonder she's captured the affection of cat lovers around the world.

Cat fanciers may know of a movement in the late 1800s of the chocolate Siamese. Breeders believe those cats may have been Tonkinese, heralding what was to come for these cats. Most of todays Tonkinese are the result of careful breeding programs started in the late 1960s by Jane Barletta, of the United States, and Margaret Conroy, of Canada. These women crossed Siamese with Burmese in separate breeding programs. When they learned of each others efforts, they joined forces to develop this moderate cat breed.

The Cat Fanciers Association accepted the breed for registration in 1978, with championship status granted in 1984. Today, the mink colors compete for championships, while the pointed and solid colors help strengthen and refine the breed.

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