

Breed Snapshot: A Pleasant Surprise

The piebald gene makes each litter of bi-color Persians worth anticipating.

By Stacy N. Hackett

Darlene Feger first fell in love with the Persian at a cat show in the early 1970s, when she was a teenager. In fact, her entire family was enamored, and her parents soon began breeding the cats.

“My first cat was a solid white male, but later that year I bought a red and white bi-color male,” Feger recalls. And so began her love affair with the bi-color Persian.

Bi-color Persians commonly display white on their feet, legs, undersides, chests and muzzles, with the rest of their fur exhibiting either a solid, smoke or tabby color. The white on the coat is the result of the piebald gene, which Persian breeders Anna Sadler and Pamela Bassett described in a Cat Fanciers’ Association breed article as “among the most common of all natural mutations” manifesting “in many different forms dealing with the restriction of color pigment in a specific pattern.”

Within CFA, the bi-color division consists of calicos (white cats with vivid patches of red and black or dilute versions of these colors), bi-colors and cats with smoke and white or tabby and white patterns. Van patterns (white, with color confined to the head and extremities) also fall into this category.

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