

## Chausies are Wild at Heart

**Meet the strong and exotic Chausie, from jungle cat to housecat.**

*by Elisa Jordan*

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The ancients chose to place a king's head on a lion's body, revealing just one component of their reverence for felines. More instances abound. Many royals requested that they embark on their eternal journeys with their feline companions, which received their own stone coffins. Countless paintings, reliefs, figurines and finely carved statues depict Felis in all its grace, poise and athleticism.

Now picture that elegant cat of yesteryear trotting mischievously across the floor and dragging a bag of flour tortillas behind it. You have just met the Chausie.

"They are a little bit of a thief, and they will steal things," says Bobbie Tullo, owner of the tortilla-toting thief. "Other people tell me that [the cats] will take things and hide them." Tullo, an Arizona-based Chausie breeder since 1997 and current chair of the Chausie breed committee for The International Cat Association (TICA), says these cats have a tremendous playful streak. "I have one kitten that would wait from someplace high until you walked by and leap onto your shoulders."

"A Chausie is the most fun-loving cat ever," says breeder Sandra Cassalia of Wildkatz Cattery in Florida. "They love to experiment, live life to its fullest. It is not at all unusual to see a Chausie kitten go zooming across the floor, hopping sideways with its tail all puffed out like a bottle-brush."

Chausies' high activity level and endless energy make them exciting cats to play with, says Meryl Peek, a California-based Chausie breeder since 1999. "They're busy but not in a nervous type of way," she says. "They're busy as far as being playful."

The Chausie's activity level, combined with exceptional intelligence, means that this breed needs owners who are committed to having a family pet, similar to the commitment of dog owners. These cats thrive on human interaction and enjoy active games, such as fetching, feather teasers and laser pointers. Chausies also need toys to keep them occupied when home alone; otherwise, they might seek out their own fun. Similarly, their innate curiosity means that they should live strictly indoors.

"This is a breed that, because they're very adventurous and intelligent, isn't just going to sit on the back steps if the door is left open," Peek says.

**\*\*For the full article, pick up the October issue of CAT FANCY\*\***

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