

The Thai in TICA



A Brief History of the Thai Before TICA

Beginning in the 1980s, with the formation of the first breed clubs worldwide, years of controversy in North America and Europe over what the cats should look like.

Finally, in 1990, the World Cat Federation recognized the breed under the name “Thai.”

That was, however, not a solution for anyone. North American breeders still had nothing. There was no consistency in Europe in interpretation of the Thai standard across the hundreds of independent registries and shows.

Brief History of the Thai in TICA

- In 2006, breeders from Europe and North America worked together on a new breed standard as part of the Preliminary New Breed application to TICA.
- In November, 2006, the majority of members of the TICA Thai breed section, a very international group, voted to approve the new Thai breed standard.
- The Thai began Preliminary New Breed classes in TICA on May 1, 2007.
- The Thai began Advanced New Breed classes in TICA on May 1, 2009.
- On January 20, 2010, the TICA Board of Directors granted championship status to the Thai breed. Thais began showing in championship classes promptly on May 1, 2010.

The TICA Thai:

- is NOT the “applehead Siamese” because that colloquial term is strictly American and means different things to different people.
- is NOT the “Traditional Siamese” or “Classic Siamese.”
(Those terms were coined by a small group in the 1980s and describe cats that differ from the TICA Thai in many respects.)
- is NOT the show-style Siamese of the 1960s, 1970s, or 1980s.
- is NOT the show-style Siamese of the immediate post-WWII era. (Fan-T-Cee’s TeeCee was born in 1954.)
- Should NOT be what any one single person believes the Siamese used to be or should be.

The TICA Thai:

- USES a breed standard that was approved by the TICA Rules Committee, the Genetics Committee, and that took seriously the concerns of the Tonkinese and Siamese Breed Committees.
- USES the only standard for the breed that was developed by, and is supported by, many breeders on both sides of the Atlantic.
- RESEMBLES the “marten-faced” Siamese of the late 19th and early 20th century (before World War II).
- **IS the original pointed cat of Thailand.** Dr. Leslie Lyons & coworkers discovered in 2010 that the cats of Thailand today constitute a pristine race of cats unique from other cats in the world. Their DNA is so different that they are unlikely to have changed much in the last several hundred years. The Thai breed in TICA uses direct imports from Thailand, from the same native cat population that was studied by the geneticists in 2010.

The Thai breed standard in TICA was based on late 19th century sketches done by a professional technical illustrator (Mr. Weir) as well as on the look of pointed cats native to Thailand today.

Evaluation of DNA by geneticists in 2010 has shown the native cats in Thailand have probably not changed in centuries.

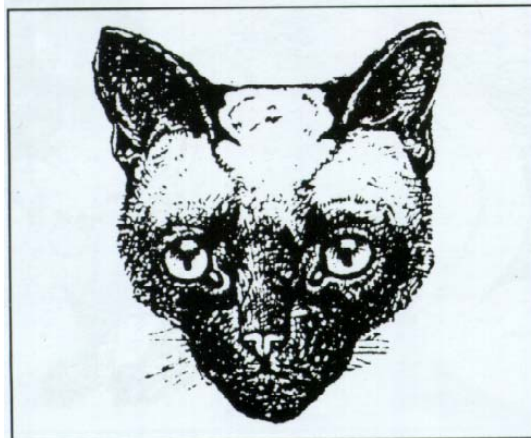
The Thai is supposed to look as described in the official breed standard.

The TICA standard.

A professional **technical** illustrator and avid cat fancier, Harrison Weir, sketched these Siamese in England in 1889 (left below). The photo shows an American-bred, CFA-registered Siamese female (dob 2000). She and her relatives are now TICA Thais.



Engraving of a Siamese from the book.



The "Royal Cat of Siam"



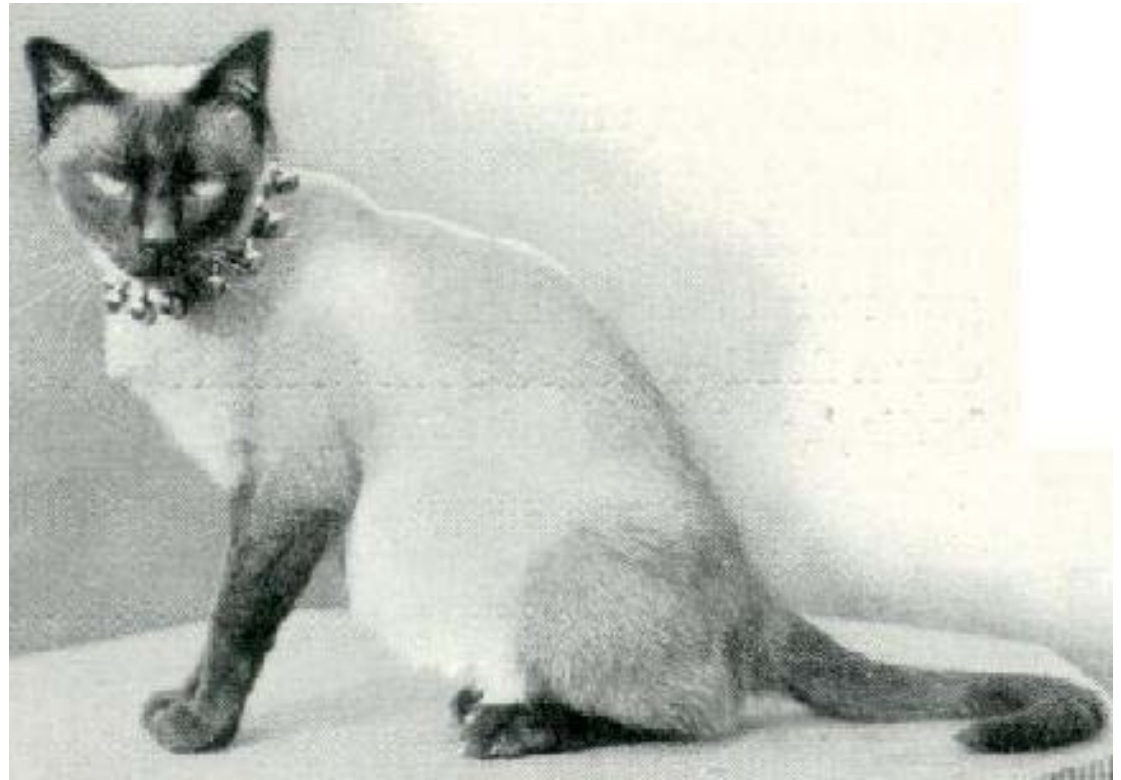
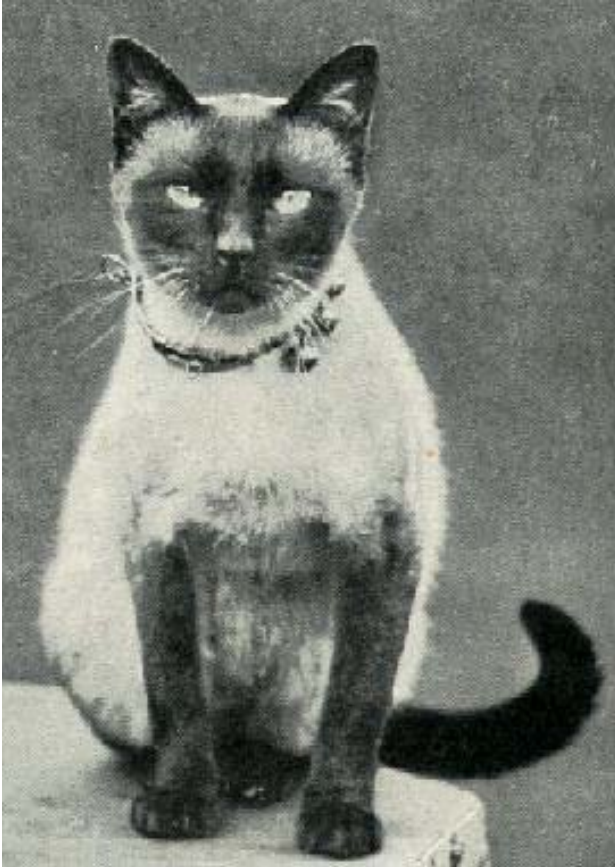
American Siamese of the Late 19th Century.

Mrs. Clinton Locke with some of the first American Siamese used for breeding. Notice the head width, muzzle shape, and ear set.



Cora, dob 1898.

Siamese female owned by British breeder Mrs. Armitage. Both photos show the same cat on the same table, but the photo on the left is a lower resolution view from front that was used in a newspaper article.



This is why it's important to have more than one historical photo of the same cat to study. The more accurate photo is the one on the right. The cat is medium-boned and foreign in type, which is what the 2010 Thai standard calls for.

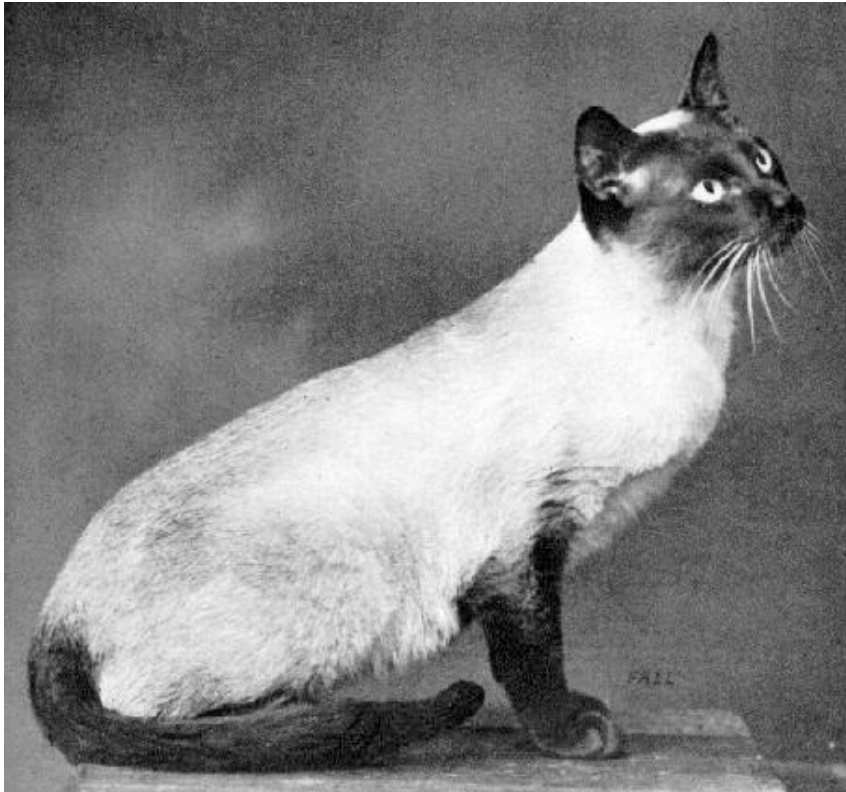
“The Perfect Marten Head,” dob 1924.

This is Ch Prestwick Perak, a seal point Siamese female. Perak was the daughter of a SE Asian import, Puteh, and of Ch Litabois (a descendant of Ch Wankee). The highly respected early 20th century Siamese breeder, Greta Hindley, said that Perak’s head was a perfect model for the breed.



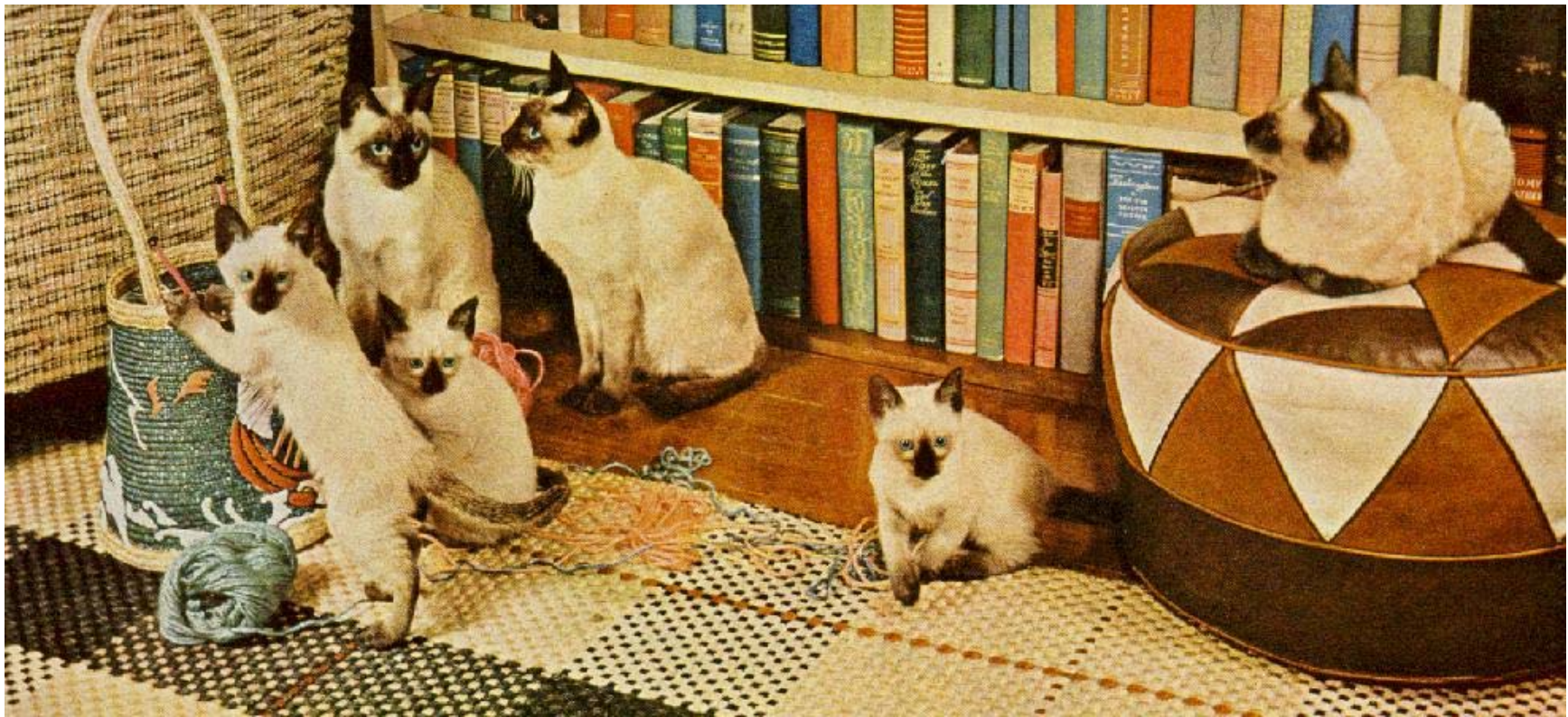
Hoveton Ruler, dob 1933.

Grandson of Prestwick Mata Biru and Ch Bonzo, descended from SE Asian imports both sides of pedigree. Note the body length visible on the left and the head shape visible on the right. Ruler was a mature, unneutered male.



National Geographic, 1936.

These were American Siamese from top catteries of that era. This is the look of the “marten-faced” Siamese that the TICA Thai breed tries to preserve.



21st Century Thailand.

Young seal tortie point female begging on the streets of Bangkok.



21st Century Thailand.

Breeding cats owned by Ed and Malee Rose in Chiang Mai (northern Thailand).



21st Century Thailand.

Adult seal point male **with stud jowls**, left, and Aree Yoobumrung, right, with a kitten.
Aree is a prominent breeder who lives in Bangkok.



21st Century Thailand.

Seal point sleeping on a busy sidewalk in Bangkok. Note the kinked tail. Pale point coloration is due to the tropical temperatures. It's seldom below 85 degrees Fahrenheit.



Queen, left, imported to the U.S. in 2001 from Thailand. At right is her adolescent son.



Note: This queen was bred
by Aree Yoobumrung

Queen Imported Into U.S. from Thailand in 2003



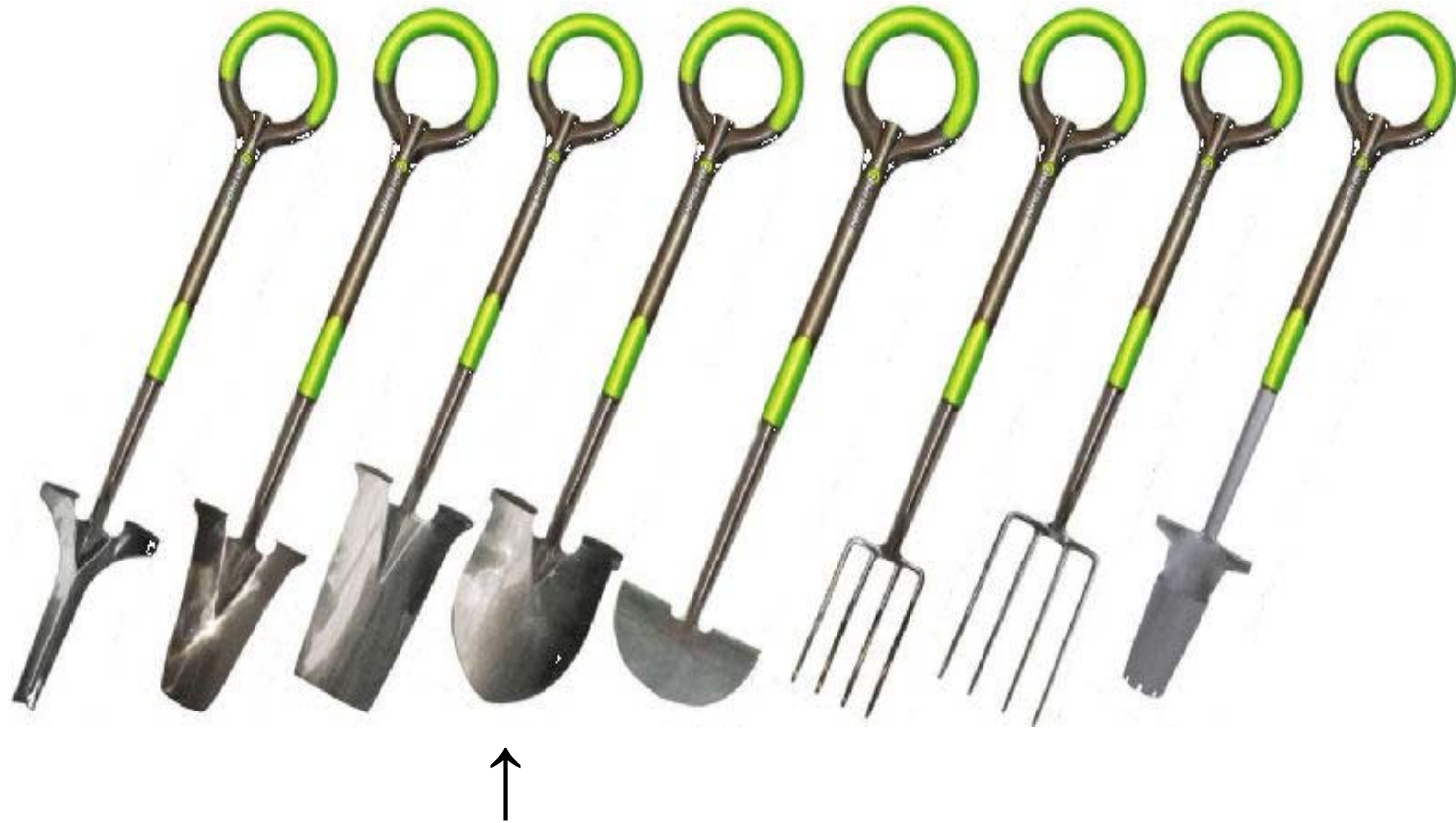
Approved 2010

Thai (TH) Breed Standard

HEAD	40	Points
Shape	15	
Profile and nose.	5	
Eyes	4	
Ears	7	
Muzzle and chin.	7	
Neck	2	
BODY	40	Points
Torso	15	
Legs and feet	8	
Tail	5	
Boning	8	
Musculature	4	
COAT/COLOR/PATTERN	20	Points
Texture and length.	15	
Body color	5	

Notice that head shape, body type, and coat texture are far more important than eye color or coat color. If the cat does not have a **foreign** body and **round cheeks** with **muzzle like tapering garden spade**, it cannot be a good Thai.

Tapering Garden Spade



Choose “A”



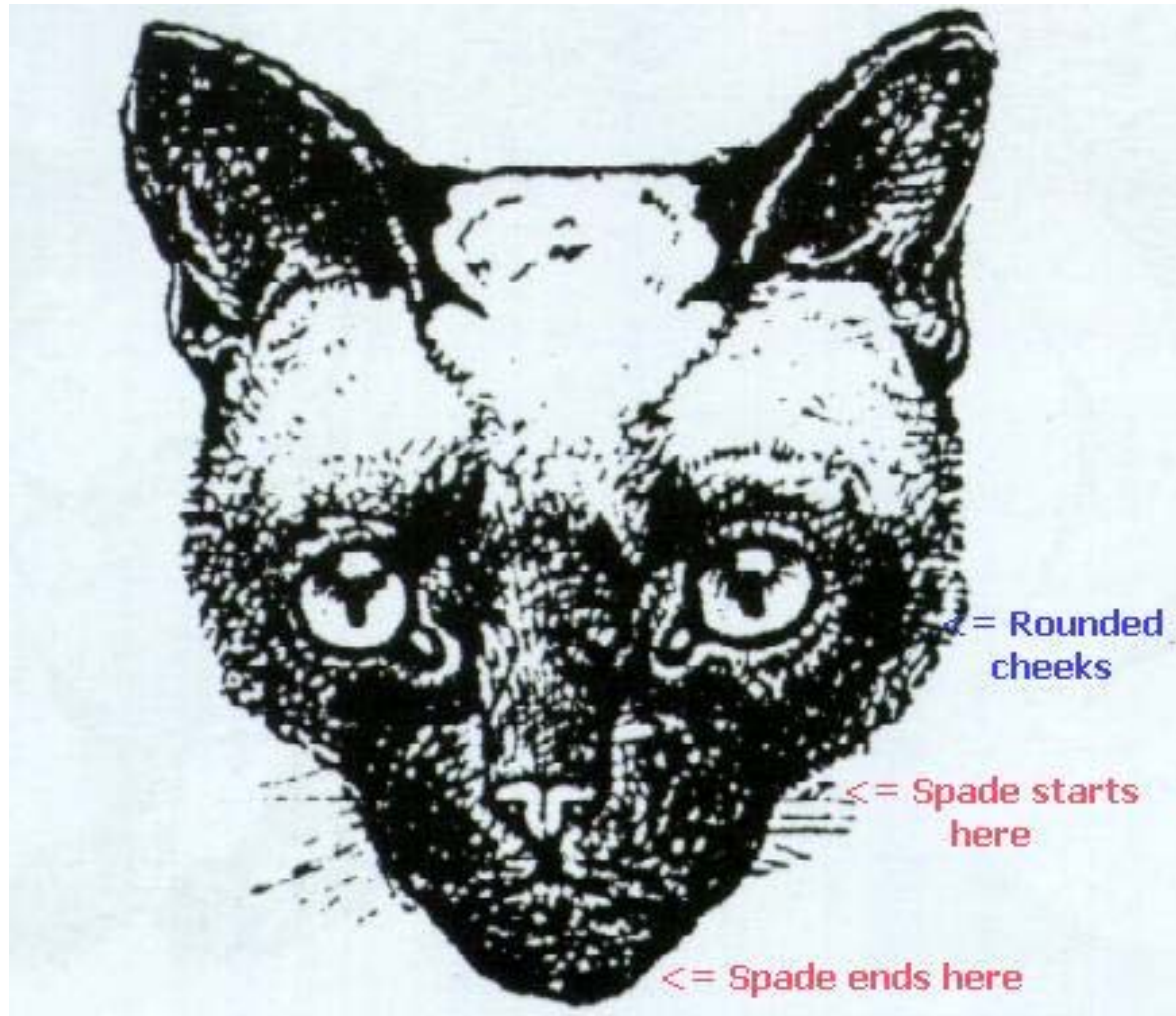
Remember:

Muzzle shaped like a
tapering garden spade



HEAD:

Shape: Modified wedge, medium width, with rounded cheeks and tapering muzzle. Head is longer than wide, but not extreme or narrow. Cheekbones curve inward to where the muzzle begins. Muzzle is wedge-shaped, but rounded on the end like a tapering garden spade. Forehead flat and long.



Head
sketch
by
Harrison
Weir,
1889

NOTE: Overall head shape is 15 points! Notice the muzzle is longer and more tapering than that of a Tonkinese.



Heads of adult female Thais

TICA Thai Studs. Head.

The standard has an allowance for stud jowls. Studs with well developed jowls often have much rounder looking heads from front view than females and neuters, and their ears tend to be pulled farther apart and lower. In general, males have proportionately longer heads than females.



Head of Thai stud #1, age 9 years

TICA Thai Studs. Head.

In this case, the stud's jowl development is not as great as the stud's in the previous slide. His ears are farther apart and lower than when he was a 10 months old, but the effect is relatively slight. This stud's head is slightly longer than desirable, but it's not bad. We'd rather have them slightly on the long side, all other things in proportion, than too short.



Head of Thai stud #2, age 1 ½ years

TICA Thai Breed Standard.

Forehead: Flat and long. [This means long and flat from the brow to between the ears.]

Profile/Nose: Nearly straight, but with a slight downhill slope starting just above the eyes and ending just below the eyes. **In profile, nose may be straight or slightly convex."**



Young adult neutered male at left has good forehead and chin, but could use slightly more dip from brow to nose. Mature female at right has excellent profile.

Thai Breed Standard.

Profile/Nose:

Mature queen. Shows the flat forehead from brow to between the ears, but needs just slightly more dip from brow to base of eyes. Forehead is too short.



Thai Breed Standard.

Profile/Nose:

Mature former stud. Excellent profile. Shows good length from brow to between the ears. Slope from brow to nose is good, not excessively steep.



This is "Sam"



Sam from the front. He's a stud, hence fuller in the jaws than a queen or alter would be.

Ear Set

The standard says the ears are 35 degrees from vertical.

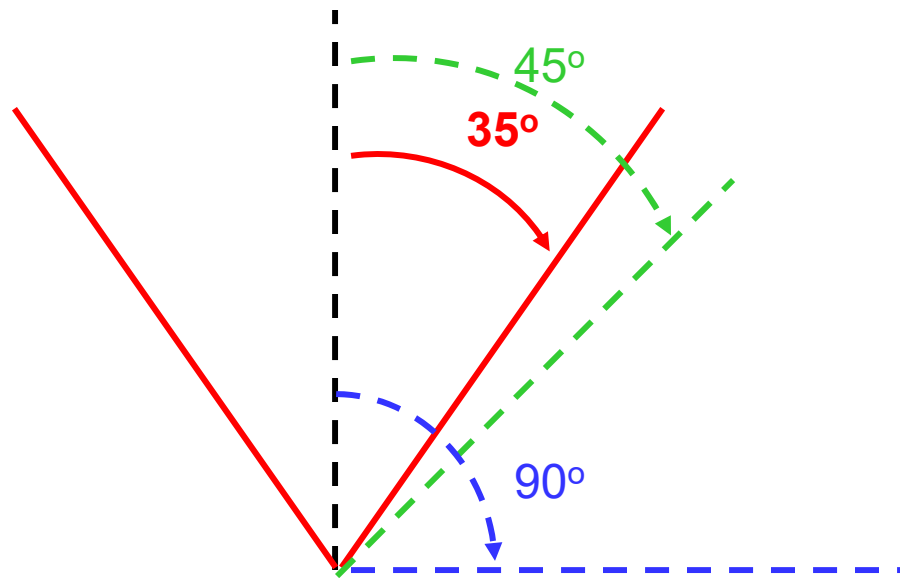
Contrary to rumor, this does not mean you need a protractor. 😊

The 35 degrees merely gives us a specific angle in case of argument. To determine, all you need to do is think about a clock.

- Fifteen minutes after the hour is 90 degrees from vertical.
- Ten minutes after is 60 degrees from vertical.
- Five minutes after is 30 degrees from vertical.

About six minutes after the hour is 35 degrees from vertical (one ear). For the other ear, it's six minutes before the hour.

Ears: Medium in size to slightly large, wide at the base, oval tips. **Tips of ears** point outward at an angle slightly closer to the top than side of the head (35 degrees from vertical).



The tip of each ear points to **about** 6 minutes before and 6 minutes after the hour. The ears of an adult cat at the inner base are separated from each other by about 2 fingers.

NOTE: Ear set is one of the ways that the Thai differs sharply from the Siamese and the Tonkinese.

Thai Breed Standard.

Ears:



Mature seal point female has excellent ear set.
Young seal point male has excellent ear set.

Thai Breed Standard.

Body:

Torso (15 points!)

Moderately long, lithe and graceful like a small panther. Well toned, but neither tubular nor compact. High enough on legs for desired FOREIGN type.

NOTE:

The 3 year old neutered male at right has good boning and body.



Compare

Thai (left), foreign type versus Tonkinese (right), semi-foreign type

- Both cats at right are Tonkinese. Top is 5 year old female, bottom is whole male. Cat at left is a 3 year old Thai neutered male.



foreign1.jpg



Thai Breed Standard.

Body:

One year old whole male.

Body is long and lithe, pantherish. It has just the right depth and musculature, not tubular and not compact or bulky.

Flaws: the Thai boy's tail is too short. It does not balance the body. The body is just a touch too long. The standard says "moderately long."



Thai Breed Standard.

Body:

Three year old queen. Her whisker pads are not actually that prominent. The whiskers were snapped sharply forward “on the hunt.” The tail length balances the body nicely. The tail also has the correct boning and shape. Leg length is correct. The Thai breed has foreign type, not oriental (Siamese) and not semi-foreign (Tonkinese).



Coat/Color/Pattern:

Texture: Silky, very little undercoat. Not a “painted on” coat, but definitely close-lying.

Length: Very short to short.

This does NOT mean the coat is on the long side. The standard says “very short to short.”

The coat should be flat, but just loose enough that you can feel the silkiness. It’s not the lacquered on coat of the Siamese. It’s a flatter coat than the Tonkinese has.

NOTE: We have 15 points on texture, but only 5 points on color. While we do feel that texture is important, we would have put 10 points on texture and put even more points on the body or head if it had been permitted. However, TICA format guidelines require at least 20 points in the coat/color section. We only wanted 5 points on color, which meant the other 15 had to go to texture.

Just remember that overall head shape and body type (foreign) are most important. Color is least important.

Withhold Wins and Penalize

With the “withhold wins” and “penalize” sections, the main concern is simple. Thais should not look or feel like Himalayan mixes, pointed British Shorthairs, Tonkinese, or show-style Siamese. Also, parti-color Thais are **not** allowed.

For example:

- Withhold wins if coat is fluffy with dense undercoat.
- Withhold wins if pronounced stop or pronounced convex forehead present.
- Withhold wins if white lockets or other white markings are present.
- Penalize blunt or pointy muzzle, whippy tail, narrow head, extreme oriental eyes, small ears, ears set way too low, etc.

Withhold Win Because of Coat



Note: This cat's boning is much too heavy, also.

Allowance

We've already talked about stud jowls.

A new addition to this section is the allowance for female Thais. The standard now says,

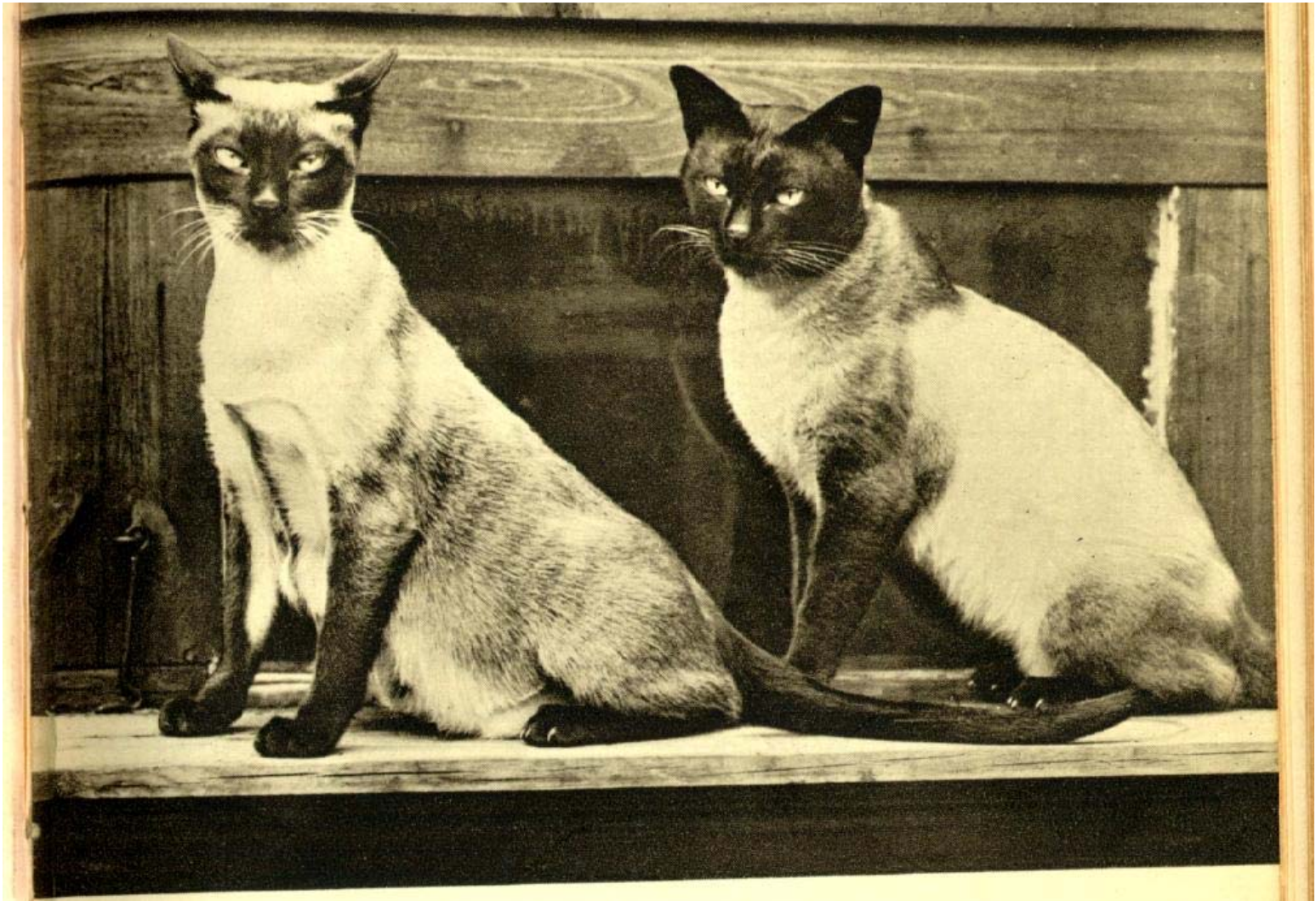
Females tend to be smaller, slightly finer boned, and less muscular than males.

We added this because we noticed judges sometimes penalize Thai females for being “Siamesey” when they are only just smaller and a little finer-boned than the males. As long as females have the correct body type and head shape, being smaller and finer than males should not be a problem.

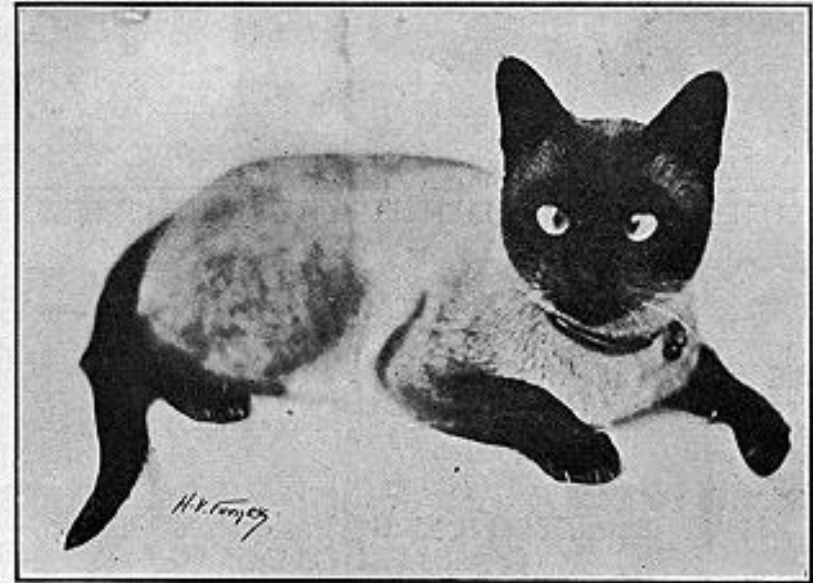
Imports from SE Asia, circa 1930.

Adult Siamese queen (pregnant) at left and adult unneutered male (Oriental Nai Tabhi) at right. They became part of Oriental Cattery's breeding program. Cats from Oriental Cattery are in the pedigrees of all Western Thais and Siamese.

Note that the female is narrower and less round of head than the male.



Honorable Disqualifications.



CHAMPION LADY SONIA

Ch. 1909

Died, April 25, 1917

F. V. Marsh in 1910.



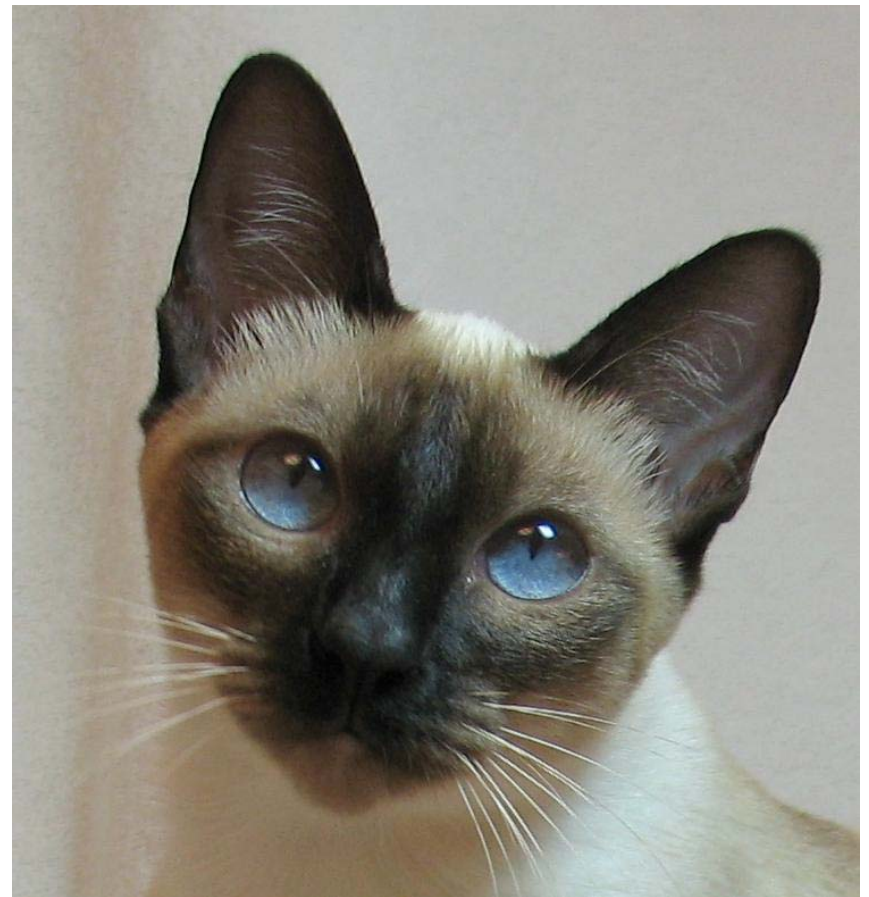
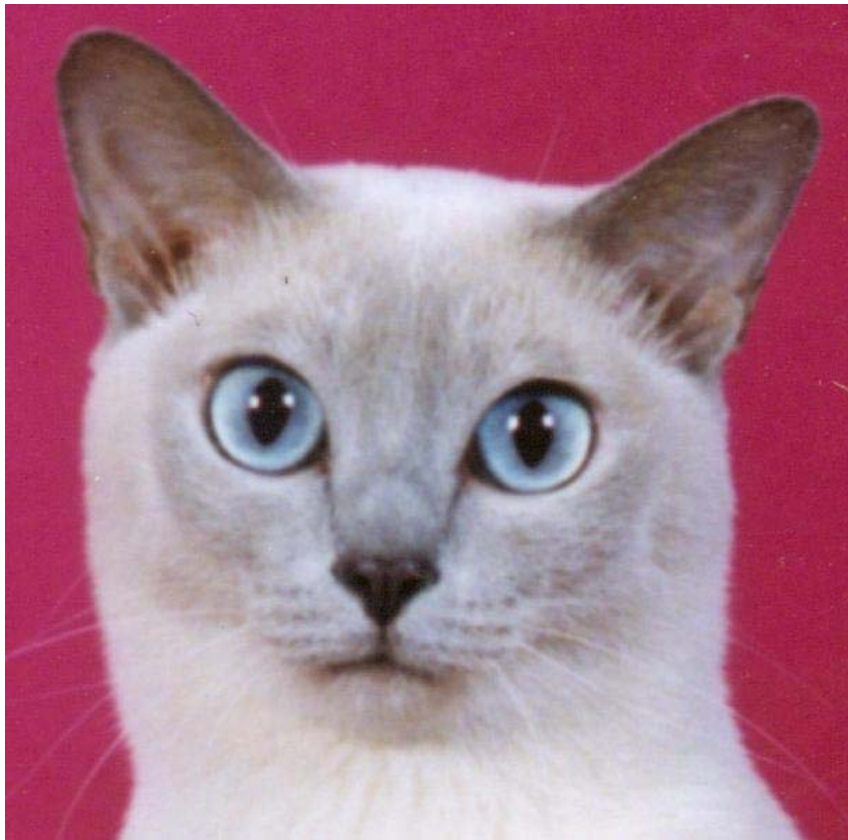
How to Evaluate a Thai

First, ask yourself:

1. Is the overall head shape right?

Spade-shaped muzzle with rounded cheeks. Ears set high: 6 minutes before and after the hour.

Which Has the Best Head?



How to Evaluate a Thai

Next ask:

2. Is the body style right?

Body high enough on legs to be clearly foreign, but not oriental. Body moderately long, lithe and supple, not densely muscled like the Tonkinese. Deeper chest and flatter sides than the Siamese, not rock hard and tubular.

Which Has the Best Body?



How to Evaluate a Thai

Third, ask yourself:

3. Is the coat texture flat and soft/silky? Is it shorter and flatter than the Tonkinese coat, but a touch looser than the Siamese coat?

Which Has the Best Coat Texture?



How to Evaluate a Thai

Finally, remember:

Color is the least important trait for a Thai.
It's only the finishing touch. Everything
else must be right before you consider
color.

What Breed Are These Kittens?



What Breed Are These Kittens?

Hint: Look at the bodies. They are 4 months old.



What Breed?

Hint: Look at the bodies. They are also 4 months old.



The End

