



# CHARTREUX



## General Description

The Chartreux is an old breed that is a balance of contrasts. With its sturdy, robust body and fine-boned legs, the Chartreux is often described as a “potato on toothpicks”. It is one of the few breeds to come in blue only and its medium length coat has a woolly texture to it. It has a hard top-coat which is water-repellent and a soft, dense undercoat to keep it warm. The rounded head tapers towards the muzzle creating a smile and the medium-sized ears are set high on the head. But the eyes are one of the first features to leap

out at you—the large orange eyes light up the whole face.



## History

Reputed to be great mousers, references to Chartreux cats are found in French literature as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There are 2 possible ways the Chartreux may have received its name. The first, as a companion to the Carthusian monks protecting the grain stores for the monastery and perhaps the ingredients for the famous Chartreuse liqueur. The second, as a cat with a coat similar to a well-known Spanish wool from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There are no records in the monastery that refer to the cats however the term Chartreux for these cats was being used as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century which predates the Spanish wool and appears to be more connected with the monastery. French literature has references to the Chartreux cat though the 1880s and it is known considered the national cat of France. As with many other breeds, the Chartreux suffered through WWII and after the war other breeds were introduced to help preserve a solid genetic base. In the case of the Chartreux, blue British Shorthairs and Persians were used but breeders stayed focused on preserving the overall look of the cat.

## Personality

These are cats that want their feet firmly on the ground. While playful and intelligent, these engaging cats are not one for hi-jinks flying through the air. They have quiet voices and sometimes seem to chirp to each other and to their owners. While they are somewhat reserved, these are calm placid cats that are devoted to their owners. They like to climb and have a reputation of being great hunters—these aspects of their personality may be directly connected to their earlier role of hunters.

## Traits

These cats have a solid robust body often referred to as “primitive”. They are a study of contrasts: heavy body supported by medium-fine legs; medium erect ears over very large orange eyes lighting up the face; a rounded top-head narrowing to a tapered muzzle with the corners pulled upward to give the cat a smiling expression; a thick, dense coat with a hard, water-repellent outer layer and a soft, warm undercoat. They are solid, muscular cats and mature adults weigh from 12-16 pounds.

