

BENGAL

Standard of Excellence

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The goal of the Bengal breeding program is to create a domestic cat that has the physical features distinctive to the small forest-dwelling Asian Leopard Cat, with a loving, dependable temperament. With this goal in mind, judges shall give special merit to those characteristics in the appearance of the Bengal, which are distinct from those found in other domestic cat breeds.

The Bengal is a sleek medium to large cat with a long, heavily boned, solid body that is very muscular. The hindquarters are slightly higher than the shoulders with a thick tail that is carried low adding balance to the cat. The female is generally smaller than the male and exhibits proportionately similar qualities. Prominent whisker pads and large oval, almost round eyes in a slightly small head enhance the wild appearance and expressive nocturnal look. Its very slight concave profile and relatively short ears with wide base and rounded tips add to the Bengal's distinctive appearance.

The coat, which is one of the most distinguishing features of the Bengal cat, should be short and dense, displaying clarity and extreme contrast with either a spotted or marbled pattern that is often rosetted and has a distinctive silky soft feel. No other domestic breed of cat displays the unique "Leopard-like" rosetting, which is two distinct colours or shades sometimes giving the appearance of smudged spotting or a third colour within the marble pattern. Spots such as paw print, arrowhead, doughnut or half doughnut shaped, or clustered are preferable to single spots and should be random and aligned horizontally. Marbles with three or more shades in their pattern are preferable and should also be random, giving the impression of marble with a horizontal flow when the cat is stretched. The belly should be without exception, spotted. The coat may be glittered (also unique to the breed) or not glittered, with neither type to be given preference.

There are four colours recognised in the Bengal breed; Brown Tabby being the dominant colour that varies from warm beige to rich mahogany tones with gold, copper, green, bronze, brown or hazel eye colour. Seal Lynxpoint which should be ivory to cream with blue eye colour. Seal Mink Tabby (aqua, green or green-gold eye colour) and Seal Sepia Tabby (gold or gold-green eye colour) which should vary in colour from ivory, cream to light tan. Markings should be clearly visible.

Apart from its appearance, the Bengal is an athletic cat, which has agility, balance and grace. It is also strong, confident and is alert to its surroundings. As well as being curious, it has a very engaging and loving personality, with a dependable character, often preferring the company of humans to that of other cats.

Head	Shape	Broad modified wedge with rounded contours. Longer than is wide. Slightly small in proportion to body, but not to be taken to extreme. The skull behind the ears makes a gentle curve and flows into the neck. Allowance to be made for jowls in adult males. Overall look of the head should be as distinct from the domestic cat as possible.
	Ears	Medium to small, relatively short, with wide base and rounded tips. Set as much on side as top of head, following the contour of the face in the frontal view. Light horizontal furnishings acceptable; but lynx tipping undesirable.
	Eyes	Oval, almost round. Large, but not bugged. Set wide apart, back into face, and on slight bias toward base of ear. Eye colour independent of coat colour, except in Lynxpoints. The more richness and depth of colour the better.

Head contd.	Chin	Strong, aligns with tip of nose in profile.
	Muzzle	Full and broad, with large, prominent whisker pads and high, pronounced cheekbones. Slight muzzle break at the whisker pads.
	Nose	Large and wide, slightly puffed nose leather.
	Profile	Curve of the forehead should flow into the bridge of the Nose with no break. Bridge of nose extends above the eyes; the line of the bridge extends to the nose tip, making a very slight, to nearly straight, concave curve.

Body	Torso	Long and substantial, not oriental or foreign. Medium to large (but not quite as large as the largest domestic breed). Consideration should be given to allow for smaller size, in balanced proportion, of females.
	Legs	Medium length, slightly longer in the back than in the front.
	Feet	Large, round, with prominent knuckles.
	Tail	Thick, low-set, medium length, tapered at end with rounded tip.
	Boning	Sturdy, firm, never delicate.
	Musculature	Very muscular, especially in the males, one of the most distinguishing features. Allowance to be made for the generally slighter musculature of the females.

Coat	Length	Short to medium. Allowance for slightly longer coat in kittens.
	Texture	Dense and luxurious, close lying, unusually soft and silky to the touch.
	Patterns	Spotted or Marbled. Coat may be glittered or not glittered, with neither type to be given preference.

SCALE OF POINTS

Total	100 points
Head, incl. Shape, Ears, Eyes, Chin, Muzzle, Nose, Profile and Neck	35 point
Body, incl. Torso, Legs, Feet, Tail, Boning & Musculature	30 points
Coat, incl. Texture, Pattern & Colour	35 points

PATTERNS

Spotted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spots shall be random, or aligned horizontally. • Rosettes showing two distinct colours or shades, such as paw print shaped, arrowhead shaped, doughnut or half-doughnut shaped or clustered are preferred to single spotting but not required. • Contrast with ground colour must be extreme, giving distinct pattern and sharp edges. • Strong, bold chinstrap and mascara markings desirable. • Virtually white undersides and belly desirable. • Blotchy horizontal shoulder streaks, spotted legs and spotted or rosetted tail are desirable. • Belly must be spotted.
Marbled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern shall be random, giving the impression of marble, with a horizontal flow when the cat is stretched. • Vertical striping undesirable. • Preference should be given to cats with three or more shades; i.e., ground colour, markings, and dark outlining of those markings. • Contrast must be extreme, with distinct shapes and sharp edges. • Virtually white undersides and belly desirable. • Belly must be spotted.
Penalise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spots on body running together vertically forming a mackerel tabby pattern on spotted cats. • Circular bulls-eye pattern on marbled cats. • Substantially darker point colour (as compared to colour of body markings) in Seal Sepia, Seal Mink, or Seal Lynx Point cats.
Withhold all Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belly not spotted. • Paw pads not consistent with their colour group description. • Paw pads not all of the same colour.

REFERENCE

	Eye Colour	Ground Colour	Markings
Seal Lynxpoint	Blue	Ivory to cream	Dark to light seal brown, tan or buff
Seal Mink Tabby	Aqua (blue-green)	Ivory, cream or light tan	Seal mink to dark seal mink.
Seal Sepia Tabby	Gold	Ivory, cream or light tan	Seal sepia to a dark seal sepia.

RECOGNISED COLOURS

Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown, Spotted or Marbled.
Snows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seal Lynxpoint, Spotted or Marbled. • Seal Mink Tabby, Spotted or Marbled. • Seal Sepia Tabby, Spotted or Marbled.

BROWN TABBY – Spotted or Marbled

Ground Colour	All variations are allowed; however a high degree of rufinism yielding a yellow, buff, tan, golden, or orange ground colour is preferred. Light spectacles encircling the eyes and a virtually white ground colour on the whisker pads, chin, chest, belly and inner legs (in contrast to the ground colour of the flanks and back) is desirable.
Markings	Virtually black, tan, or various shades of brown.
Eye Colour	Gold, copper, green, bronze, brown or hazel, the more richness and depth of colour the better.
Eye rims, Lips & Nose Leather	Outlined in black with centre of nose leather brick red.
Paw Pads and Tip of Tail	Black.

SNOWS

In all "Snows" the colour may be darker on the points than on the body. Clearly visible points are considered a fault.

SEAL LYNXPOINT

Ground Colour	Ivory to cream with pattern clearly visible.
Markings	Dark seal brown to light seal brown, tan or buff with light spectacles, whisker pads and chin. There should be little difference between colour of body markings and point colour.
Eye Colour	Blue, the more richness and depth of colour the better.
Eye rims, Lips & Nose Leather	Outlined in black with centre of nose leather brick red.
Paw Pads and Tip of Tail	Dark brown, with rosy undertones allowed.

SEAL MINK TABBY

Ground Colour	Ivory, cream or light tan with pattern clearly visible.
Markings	Various shades of seal mink to a dark seal mink. Ivory or cream spectacles encircling the eyes and ivory or cream whisker pads and chin are desirable. There should be very little or no difference between the colour of the body markings and point colour.
Eye Colour	Aqua (blue-green) but may also be green, or green-gold, the more richness and depth of colour the better.
Eye rims, Lips & Nose Leather	Outlined in black with centre of nose leather brick red.
Paw Pads	Dark brown, with rosy undertones allowed.
Tip of Tail	Dark seal brown.

SEAL SEPIA TABBY

Ground Colour	Ivory, cream or light tan with pattern clearly visible.
Markings	Various shades of seal sepia to dark seal sepia. Ivory or cream spectacles encircling the eyes and ivory or cream whisker pads and chin are desirable. There should be very little or no difference between the colour of the body markings and point colour.
Eye Colour	Gold, but may also be gold-green, the more richness and depth of colour the better.
Eye rims, Lips & Nose Leather	Outlined in black with centre of nose leather brick red.
Paw Pads	Dark brown, with rosy undertones allowed.
Tip of Tail	Dark seal brown.