

The Ones Who Came Before

Although I have been showing Abyssinians since 2006, when it comes to breeding I am very much the beginner. It all changed for me after I had ordered a girl from Michael and Sue Shawn in 2011 to show as a spay. After the kitten had been selected they told me that she really was too good to spay and had I considered breeding. Well, I had kind of, in a maybe one day kind of way. But I went away and thought about what it would mean and would I be able to sell the kittens. The answer came back as yes – I will give it a go and if I don't enjoy it she can still be desexed and shown.

Well, I had my first litter last November and it was one of the most exciting/scary things that I have ever done. My beautiful girl Osiris(V) Lucrezia Borgia gave me 3 precious baby girls with the very impressive birth weights of 113, 114 and 113 grams. As can happen with breeding, things didn't run too smoothly; while 2 girls grew and developed, the 3rd baby wouldn't feed and after 18 days moved on to the next world. It was very sad but at the same time my tiny little girl taught me so much.

Through all this, I was kept sane and on track by Sue Shawn, my breeding mentor. Without her help and support especially during the first few weeks I think I would have thrown in the towel and said that breeding is too tough; I will just keep to my wonderful neuters and spays. But she was there and I got through it, and as my girls (yes I kept them both) are growing up, I am planning for their future.

So I got to thinking about us newer breeders. We are so very lucky to have the breeders we have in the Aby world who are so willing to give of their time, knowledge and especially breeding lines. I was able to purchase as my foundation cat, a wonderful girl who at 9 months and 2 days old won a best in show at the ACF National show. When the time came, she was mated to a fabulous boy who had also been very successful on the show bench and who possesses the loveliest temperament. Talk about starting half way up the ladder.

So I want to say thank you. Thank you to Kerstin Jones who got me started showing. Thank you to Jenni McKernan for selling me my first tawny show neuter. Thank you to Michael and Sue; all you have done for me means more than I could ever say.

Thank you to all the breeders who came before. Without the years of hard work, the money spent importing cats to improve the breed, the generosity in sharing breeding lines, the willingness to mentor us we would not be where we are today.

I look at breeders in other breeds and very often they seem to be actively working to undermine each other. This is not true of the Abyssinian and Somali people, and it is never more apparent than when we all come together in Canberra each year where it often seems that results are secondary to catching up with all our friends from all over the country. So thank you George for making it happen.

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