

Chocolate and Lilac Abyssinians

Abyssinian Coat Colours: Chocolate and Lilac – *Wendy Newton*

For many years, Jody Robinson-Wildey (prefix Abyrose) has been a breeder of Abyssinian cats in New Zealand, as was her mother, Jeanna Robinson under the prefix Habakat. She breeds the four eumelanistic colours, specialising in the Blue coat colour. Also, Jody has bred the more unusual Abyssinian coat colours of Lilac and Chocolate, which are recognised by the New Zealand Cat Fancy Inc. and the Co-ordinating Cat Council of Australia (CCCA). Her Chocolate and Lilac Abyssinians have done very well on the show bench. They have been shown under New Zealand and International judges. Usually, the origins of the Chocolate and Lilac colours in the Abyssinian breed have come from using Burmese or Siamese cats in an Abyssinian breeding program. The Tawny coat colour is dominant over Chocolate, while Chocolate is dominant over the Cinnamon coat colour gene. The dilute of Chocolate is Lilac. Genetic testing is available for the identification of coat colours with Chocolate being known as Brown in genetic tests.

Chocolate & Lilac Abyssinian Cats in New Zealand – Jody Robinson-Wildey

In March 1996, my first entire Abyssinian cat was a Blue female; her name was Wibblestatz Skye. Janice Schöne from Wellington bred her. Skye had the potential to carry the Chocolate and/or Cinnamon coat colour genes. When her first litter was born there were Blue kittens and one kitten who was either Fawn or Lilac. At the time, there were no DNA tests for the Chocolate and Cinnamon coat colour genes and with no comparison available it was hard to identify the colour. So, at 10 weeks of age, it was arranged to present the kitten, Abyrose Shari, to a panel of judges and for them to decide upon the coat colour.

The judges decided that Abyrose Shari's coat colour was Fawn and she was registered as such. She was shown as a Fawn Abyssinian in the neuter/spay class by my niece. At her first show, Shari did well and won a Breeder's Award of Merit, which is awarded by a judge to a cat showing good progress in a breed. What a proud moment for me!



Skye went on to have many litters containing kittens that had Tawny (Tawny), Blue and Fawn coloured coats. Skye had her last litter under my Mum's prefix Habakat and to our surprise she produced a female kitten that definitely had a Chocolate coat. There was our real answer, the whole time, Skye had in fact, carried Chocolate and our Fawns had been Lilacs. She was registered as a Chocolate Abyssinian and called Habakat Liberty Rose. I kept Liberty Rose and she became the foundation for my Chocolate line of Abyssinians. I still have that line today, with Liberty Rose being many generations behind some of my current Chocolate line.

***Image 1:** Chocolate female nursing two Chocolate kittens at either end and two Cinnamon kittens in the middle. Note the slightly darker spine and tail colouring on the Chocolates.*

To date, the Chocolate and Lilac Abyssinians that I have bred have excellent ticking with warm undercoat colour. It is distinctive and two to three bands of ticking can be seen. Visually, I am able to identify Lilac kittens when they are born, however; I do get a DNA test done for any Lilac kitten I keep for my breeding program. The ticking in Lilac Abyssinians seems to take longer to develop than in the Tawny and Chocolate coats and usually comes in around 10 weeks of age. The texture of the Chocolate coat tends to be similar to a Tawny coat, while the Lilac coat can sometimes feel a little softer what is sometimes found with the coat of a dilute. Just like with any of the other colours, different lines are able to produce different types of coats.

Image 2: Lilac male showing ticking and warmth of undercoat.

Image 3: Lilac kitten



I have been working towards breeding out the necklacing retained by some of the Chocolates. I aim to continue to work on clarity to get them to the level of the more common Abyssinian colours. The type of my current Chocolate Abyssinian queen from my



original Chocolate line is very good.

Abyrose Mochaccino is a Chocolate Abyssinian whom I bred. His owner showed him and Mochaccino achieved the title of Gold Double Grand Premier in just one year. He won many Breeder's Award of Merit too.

In New Zealand, Chocolate and Lilac are still fairly rare, although they have more than twenty years. I have noticed an interest for them since The International (TICA) recognised these colours and popular as pets.

Image 4: Chocolate Abyssinians - Abyrose with baby Abyrose Mochaccino



Abyssinian cats been around for increase in Cat Association they are very

Time For Chocolate

For those of you interested, my records Gen 1 (F1) chocolate ticked cat to be program for Chocolate Abyssinians in born in 1989 and was the result of a mating between a Sorrel (Cinnamon) Abyssinian and a Lilac Point Siamese (F2).

show that the first used in the New Zealand was

Jody Robinson-Willey

Abyrose Cattery, Marton nr Wanganui

Chocolate and Lilac Coat Colours – George Kennedy

Many thanks for Jody Robinson-Willey's most excellent article on this subject, as well as Wendy Newton's initial clarifying introduction indicating the acceptability of the Chocolate and Lilac colours among Abyssinians in some associations. I want to add that the world's biggest association, CFA, which has well and truly expanded beyond North America, does not accept them and will not register them. Moreover, it and a number of other associations do not accept eumelanistic Abys descended from Chocolates and Lilacs. This means that, if you want to export an Abyssinian descended from Chocolates and Lilacs, the hybridisation that introduced the colours must be off-pedigree. Most associations require a 5- or 6-generation certified pedigree to re-register a cat from another association. However, CFA requires a 9-generation certified pedigree for Abyssinians, and that covers a very long period, typically up to 35 years behind the cat.