

The forest beauty

The Norwegian forest cat is a living contradiction: a mystical, magical animal and a down-to-earth mouser, at once a bohemian evolved from the half-wild and a noble beauty queen. A fascinating mixture. Experts from the specialist retail chain Maxi Zoo present this enchanting creature in more detail.

SHROUDED IN LEGEND

Its name echoes the secretive, the wild and primal. Looking like the stuff of fairy-tales with its big, gleaming eyes the long bushy tail and wild, lynx-like ears. No wonder the Norwegian forest cat is constantly attributed with having its origins shrouded in legend. Exactly who its ancestors were is, however, unknown. But what is certain is that the Norwegian forest cat has evolved from the unions of long-haired roaming cats with domestic cats. So they were not the result of the targeted efforts of breeders but had evolved in the first place in a natural way. Over many generations, these cats adapted themselves perfectly to the climate and living environment of the Scandinavian forests – with their own raincoats, snow shoes and ear muffs. The Norwegian forest cat's "raincoat" consists of a double coat of fur with a thick undercoat which protects and warms. The covering hair is long and water-repellent as it contains fat. There are tufts of hair between the toes and apart from that, Norwegian forest cats have thicker skin there than other cats. These "floating feet" prevent

PET POINTERS



with Tony Cross

them from sinking into the snow. The long tufts of hair in the ears likewise protect them from the wind.

RECOGNISABLY WILD ORIGINS

Although Norwegian forest cats with their silky, half-long fur are in no way inferior to other cats where beauty is concerned, their outward appearance and movements betray their wild origins. For, just as their winter equipment is suited to the climate in their natural habitat, their physical abilities also match their survival strategy – that of hunting and escaping their enemies. Their powerful back legs

make them especially good jumpers, reaching spots which other cats can only gaze at from afar. On farms, they have proven themselves as extremely zealous rat-catchers – and even today the Norwegian is a lively and playful cat. The path to recognition as a breed began for the Norwegian forest cat in the 1930's when a group of Norwegian breeders started an agenda for preserving these half-longhair cats. That's because, as they were mating with shorthair cats, they were losing their original appearance more and more.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NORWEGIAN FOREST CAT

BODY: powerful, muscular (reaches full adulthood after 2–3 years)

COLOUR: almost any colouring possible but black tabby in its most original guise

CHARACTER: lively and playful; devoted and uncomplicated; a great family cat

KEEPING: really appreciates an outside run. Living in a flat, it needs richly varied surroundings with a scratching tree, a raised viewpoint and toys; this is no "armchair puss"!

CARE: the Norwegian is really uncomplicated and robust. Its coat looks like it would need a lot of work but that's deceptive - it has no tendency to mat. Only during the moulting season could it do with a few brushings.



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