

## THE KHAO MANEE CAT

© Chrissy Russell – Ayshazen Cats

[www.khaomaneecat.co.uk](http://www.khaomaneecat.co.uk)



Its 6 am, on the TV the breakfast news is quietly mumbling in the background. As I sit here at my laptop, with my first cuppa of the day, I am contemplating a very special day, the 9th May 2009, when I welcome a precious new “white gem” cat into my home.

Odyssey ChaWee of Ayshazen is her name. An 11 month old Khao Manee girl, pure white, with odd coloured eyes, one a piercing blue, the other a deep yellow. ChaWee will be the first Khao Manee to set paw in the UK. She was bred by Janet Poulsen of Odyssey cats in Minnesota, USA.

By the end of 2009, at least another 2-3 cats will arrive into the UK from the US, and a male stud cat direct from Thailand.

“Not another new breed!” I may hear some of you say. Wrong! This is in fact a very old breed. Many of you will be surprised to hear that there is a fourth natural Thai breed of cat that is only now beginning to emerge from Thailand, over 100 years after the emergence of the Siamese cat to the Western world. The Khao Manee, pronounced “Kow Manee”, also known as the Khao Plort, has a revered history in its native country, bred by Royalty itself; it holds its status in Thailand as the fourth great Thai breed, alongside the Siamese, Burmese and Korat.

### **Khao Manee History**

The roots of the Khao Manee lie, as with all of the great Thai breeds, steeped in history. It is mentioned in the historic Tamra Maew (the Thai book of cat poems - circa 1350-1767) as the Khao Plort (meaning “all white”). The Khao Manee literally translated means “white gem”. The Tamra Maew says that “this cat if in any house, it will bring long life and title”. For hundreds of years the breed was rigorously protected and only Thai royalty were permitted to breed them. The most devoted royal was King Rama V. The history of the great breeds is still taught in Thai schools.



## **Khao Manee Type**

The Khao Manee is not a hybrid or a manufactured breed. It is natural and native to Thailand. The breed is distinctively different from its three Thai cousins. The Khao Manee is almost exclusively a pure white cat, although variants are occasionally born. Sometimes white kittens are born with a small darker mark on the top of the head, which has disappeared by around 1 year of age. This is normal.

The breed is not yet recognized in any Western registry, although an application has been put to the TICA Board of Directors for acceptance to registration only status (May 2009). Moves will soon be made to progress the breed in GCCF. In view of this fact, there is no “approved” written standard of points yet, although a rough draft version can be found on the Khao Manee breed info page at <http://www.vinlands.us>. I will attempt to abbreviate the main points below.

The Khao Manee type is foreign, muscular and lithe. The ears are medium to large, and sit proudly upright. The nose has a gentle curve, almost straight. Body is firm and muscular, with a tail as long as the body. The coat texture is close lying with little undercoat, short although a little longer than its Burmese cousin.

The eye colour is the most distinctive attribute of this beautiful cat, and can be anything from blue, to amber, yellow or green, or a mixture of blue and any of the other colours. In Thailand the odd-eyed Khao Manee is considered to be the best, and is often given as a good luck cat, although any of these colours is acceptable.

The personality of the Khao Manee is as the other Thai breeds, outgoing, friendly, extremely intelligent and people loving. They are very much “lap cats”.



## **A Breed to Preserve**

In the West, this breed is extremely rare. In Thailand the Khao Manee numbers are falling. Action is needed now before this breed is lost to history. As of April 2009, a tiny handful of breeders around the world are working together to promote the breed and to encourage other experienced breeders to work towards expanding the numbers of Khao Manee, in order to preserve these beautiful natural cats for generations to come.

There is now a cat club for admirers of the Khao Manee. Based in the UK, but also open to international members. The web address is [www.khaomaneecatclub.co.uk](http://www.khaomaneecatclub.co.uk)

## **Khao Manee Breeders in the UK.**

Mrs Chrissy Russell (Ayshazen Cats) [www.khaomaneecatclub.co.uk](http://www.khaomaneecatclub.co.uk) (Hampshire)

Mrs Tina Turner (Kinabalu Cats) [www.bombaycats.co.uk](http://www.bombaycats.co.uk) (Hampshire)

## **US Breeder**

Mrs Janet Poulsen (Odyssey Cats) [www.vinlands.us](http://www.vinlands.us) (Minnesota)