

They say the Selkirk Rex is better than all the rest — ANGELA LOWE finds out why.

Simply the best

“They have a quality that I can’t quite put my finger on,” admits breeder Pam Beardsmith of Cheshire.

“These are the cats with the X Factor. They have everything — and that little bit extra that is hard to put into words.

“You have got to see these cats in the flesh to appreciate them. They have so many good qualities. Their temperaments are similar to dogs and are the next best thing for commitment and loyalty. They will also follow you around and are very human-orientated. They love affection and purr constantly, to the extent that they forget to take a breath!

“Every house should have a Selkirk Rex and if you haven’t got one, you don’t know what you are missing. They are the best cat you can get.”

Short or longhaired, these confident curly cats are renown for their charm, character and charisma. And, surprisingly, they are relatively low maintenance. A simple water

spritz and scrunch will have the curls in his coat bouncing back to form.

“They are easy to look after,” says Zoe Amarilli of Yardley, Birmingham. “I groom my longhairs every other day with a large wide toothed comb and just run my fingers through the shorthairs. In the past two years the longhaired has grown more popular as people realize they are not hard to look after.”

Zoe has been breeding Selkirks since 2004 and says from the first moment she saw them she was smitten. “If you like the British Shorthair, you’ll love the Selkirk Rex. They are stocky, placid housecats that are fantastic with children, other cats and dogs. Selkirks are not fazed by much. They are very chilled out and so pretty. They are happy to be asleep all day while you are out at work and to come alive when you come home.

“Their key feature is their lovely big owl eyes. They are so endearing, they are soul-searching.”

Zoe and Pam’s cats are pictured on these pages.

FIVE THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT THE SELKIRK REX

1 The Selkirk Rex’s curly coat is the result of a dominant gene that causes each hair to have a gentle wave or curl, giving the coat a soft feel.

2 The curliness of the coat is variable according to age, gender, climate, time of year and hormones, particularly in the female.

3 The first Selkirk Rex was named Miss DePesto after a bubbly character with curly hair in the 80s TV series ‘Moonlighting’.

4 From June 2009, Selkirks will have championship status with the GCCF.

5 Straight coated Selkirk Rex cats are available but cannot be shown. These kittens do not carry the curly gene.

Buying a kitten

Kittens are curly at birth but may lose their curls and develop a curly coat again at about eight to ten months. The coat continues to develop until about two years of age.

Expect to pay around £400 for a pet and around £600 for a show quality kitten.

Straight coated kittens sell for around £300.

Selkirks are available in any coat colour and pattern, so be prepared to be spoilt for choice.

To find a breeder in your area, take a look at our Feline File section on page 83.

For the next Selkirk Rex Cat Show keep an eye on our show dates column in the Feline File section. →



Photos: Neil Hepworth

» Living with



NAME: Sarah Walker.
HOME: Birmingham.
CATS: Black Quando, a three-year-old black Selkirk, red smoke Mr F, two, and red tipped silver Schmoos a year old.

Sarah Walker's cats are so people-orientated that one of them even tries to answer the phone!

"When the phone rings, Mr F will run and sit by it until I answer it," explains Sarah.

And that's not the only thing the cats like to get involved in. "I never do the housework on my own," laughs Sarah. "In fact they follow me around and help me do everything. They don't demand attention though; they are just very loving. Their wonderful natures make them so easy to have around. They are very laid-back and are like dogs in cats' clothing. They easily fit into your lifestyle."

However, one thing to watch is their love of food, warns Sarah.

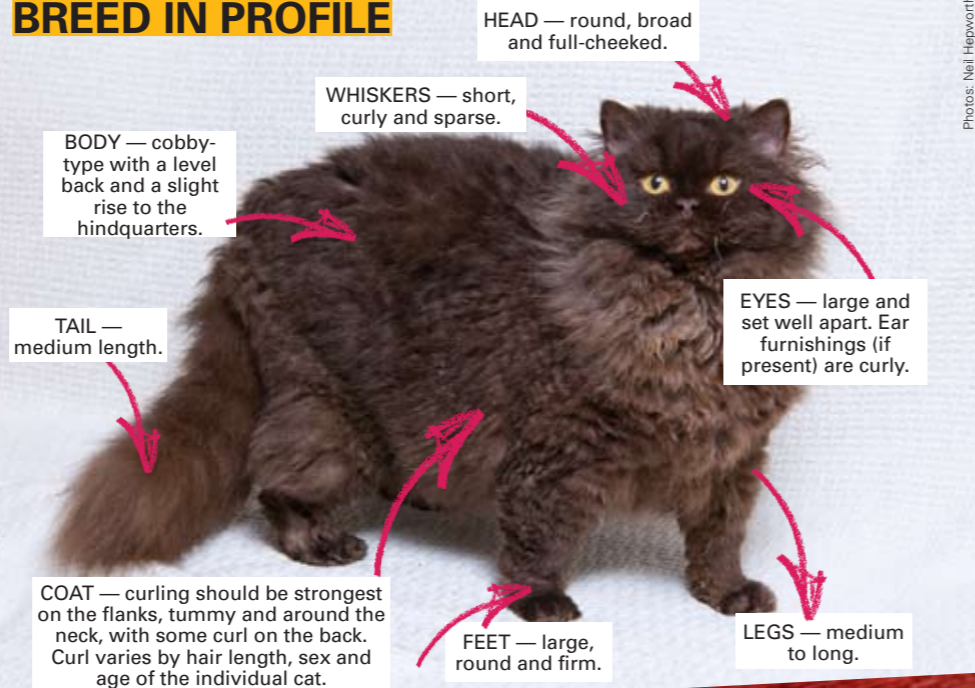
"They are non-regulators and will get fat! Mine go insane for tuna, fish and chicken treats. If I rattle the tub it's like a stampede."

Fortunately, they also love to play, which helps to keep them active. "Feathers and ping-pong balls are a favourite," says Sarah. "They are also very curious. I can't leave anything sparkly lying around or it ends up under the sofa."

Sarah admits Selkirks are addictive and plans to show Quando in the near future.

"They are gorgeous as kittens and are lovely as older cats too. I have absolutely fallen in love with them."

BREED IN PROFILE



TIMELINE 1980s

1987 — The first Selkirk Rex is discovered in America.

2000s

2002 — The first Selkirk Rex cats arrive in the UK.
2003 — The Selkirk is recognized by the GCCF.
2006 — The Selkirk Rex Cat Club is formed.

“Short or longhaired, these confident curly cats are renown for their charm, character and charisma”

» On the spot — what the experts say:

Pamela Anderson, on behalf of the Selkirk Rex Cat Club committee:

What I love about the breed is... "their loving, laid-back personality and ability to win everyone over."

The most interesting thing about the breed is... "that they come in so many varieties and colours. Longhaired, shorthaired, straight or curly coated."

I keep my cats entertained... "with catnip, anything with feathers and TV!"

My top tip to a potential owner is... "visit a Selkirk household. See the cats in a familiar environment and witness just how friendly and happy they are to be part of a

multi-cat household — and if you want a cat that is stunning to look at and a pleasure to own, buy yourself a Selkirk!"

The most challenging aspect about keeping this breed is... "having just one or two. They are addictive and highly collectable."

If you have this breed you must have... "exquisite taste, a good sense of humour and a good vacuum cleaner!"

Other breeds that are compatible with Selkirks are... "any cats and dogs."

Lisa Buck, member of the Scottish Rex Cat Club:

What I love about the breed is... "their completely laid-back attitude and sweet nature, how non-confrontational they are with other cats, and their love of human company and fuss."

The most interesting thing about the breed is... "their beautiful curly coats. They come in all different colours and two different coat lengths."

I keep my cats entertained... "by playing with them all together with loads of interactive toys. Selkirks are a very playful breed and just love you to play with them."

My top tip to a potential owner is... "go to a good reputable breeder, do your research about the breed and meet some Selkirks before you get one."

The most challenging aspect about keeping this breed is... "deciding which colour to have!"

If you have this breed you must have... "enough time to give lots of cuddles and playtimes, and you must be prepared to laugh at their silly antics and be able to sleep through the loudest purring!"

Other breeds that are compatible with Selkirks are... "any other breed. They are so laid-back they tend to get on with most breeds. I have Selkirk Rex, Sphynx and Devon Rex and they all get on really well."



At a glance»

- VERY MUCH ✓✓✓ REASONABLY ✓✓
- NOT ESPECIALLY ✓
- Home loving ✓✓✓
- Friendly & affectionate ✓✓✓
- Quiet ✓
- Intelligent ✓✓✓
- Non-destructive ✓✓
- Loyal & devoted ✓✓✓
- Love of the outdoors ✓✓✓
- Lively; playful into adulthood ✓✓✓
- Good with other animals including dogs ✓✓✓
- Good with family, including small children ✓✓✓
- Coat type: short or long
- Availability: quite rare
- Lifespan:
- Weight:

USEFUL CONTACTS

<p>Selkirk Rex Cat Club Pamela Anderson Tel. 01444 239850 Email: curlu@sky.com www.selkirkrexcatclub.co.uk</p>	<p>Tel. 01334 850783 www.scottishrexcatclub.co.uk</p>	<p>gmail.com Tel. 01843 846032 www.rexcatassociation.co.uk</p>
<p>Scottish Rex Cat Club Elizabeth Brown Email: secretary@scottishrexcatclub.co.uk Or Kate Ekanger</p>	<p>The Rex Cat Club Ann Wrighton Tel. 01953 887751 www.rexcatclub.com</p>	<p>Colourpoint, Rex-coated and AOV Cat Club Gaynor Thompson Email: gaynort@blueyonder.co.uk Tel. 01702 588239 www.craov.co.uk</p>
<p>Rex Cat Association Hilary Dean Email: rexcatassociation@</p>		