

CAT SHOWS ARE FUN – BUT HOW DO I SHOW MY CAT

Way back in 1990 we purchased our first Siamese cat Comenarra Lancelot bred by the late Mary Sherwood a pedigree pure seal point neuter and he came with registered papers. In the past I had successfully shown horses, I thought we would place him in just the one show with his Breeders blessing. This cat came out as Cat of the Year many times over plus he won many Best in Show awards. I commenced cat breeding with his cousin, a blue point Comenarra Blue Pilar way back in the 1990's.

Be warned showing your cat or kitten can be very addiction and also great fun. The Breeder that you purchased your kitten/cat from will help you and also let you know if they are what we term '*show quality*'. You will also need registered pedigree papers with a Governing Cat Organisation such as Cats NSW or NSW CFA (*NSW Cat Fanciers Association*) transferred over into your name. A drawn up copy of the pedigree will not suffice. You can always approach a Breeder to purchase a show quality kitten and most will sell you what is termed '*pick of the litter*', the one that ticks all the boxes for a possible winner at Cat Shows.

Nowadays you can show your kitten at a few Cat Shows without joining a Cat Association such as Cats NSW or NSW CFA but if you wish to continue then you will need to become a member. It's like a '*try it out*' before you join.

The question now is: how do I show my cat/kitten?

You will need to enter your kitten in the Cat Show before the closing date of the competition. Details of any upcoming Cat Shows can be found at:

Cats NSW: <https://catsnsw.com.au/>

CFA: <http://www.nswcfa.asn.au/>

And complete the relevant paperwork.

The entry will explain the cut off time for having your kitten what is termed '*vetted in*'. This is where all cats/kittens are checked by a vet to ensure that they are healthy, have no fleas or any infectious conditions. You will be allocated a number where your cage will be. There will be on a slip of paper referred to as your '*Benching Slip*'. . You can bring your own cage or hire one for the day at a minimum charge of around \$5. Note: be on time as '*vetting in*' will have a cut off time and you could be denied entry if you arrive late.

Show cages are referred to as either a single or double with the approximate dimensions of: single: 460 wide x 460 deep x 460 high or double: 690 wide x 460 deep x 460 high.

Types of Shows:

There are 2 types of shows. Closed Judging or Open Judging. With regards to Closed Judging all the Exhibitors are required to leave the hall during judging, and return once judging has been completed, usually around 12.30 -1.00pm. Most of our shows now are Open Judging and this is where Exhibitors are permitted to sit on chairs and watch the cats being judged. Most Cat Show finish at around 4pm after they have awarded the Best in Show and Supreme exhibit prize.

What do I need to bring?

You will need a set of curtains and a base for the cage. First of all ask your Breeder whether you can borrow a set as many Breeders will have a spare set hanging around. If you then get '*hooked*' on Cat Shows you can purchase a set or make your own.

Show curtains can be in any colour or pattern, but they should complement your kitten. They can be plain or fancy but remember that the Judge must be able to see and have access to your kitten. They will bring your kitten out of the cage for judging but will often take a final look while they are back in their cage so a clear view is really imperative. The base also needs to be flat as you will need to place the litter tray on it.

You will need a couple of bowls for your kitten, one for water and one for food. The ones that hook over the cage bars are good as they can't be tipped over in the cage.

You will also need a small litter tray along with whatever litter your kitten is used to. Some extra items such as baby wipes for any spills, plastic bags for rubbish, kitten's favourite toy, some lunch for the kitten and a large bag to carry everything in will save quite a few trips back and forth from the car.

Some Exhibitors even bring along a spare set of curtains and base just in case your cat soils its cage.

Show Day has arrived?

The night before:

Get everything ready for the show and one of the show rules is that all cats/kittens have both front and back claws cut. This is to stop them scratching a Judge or Steward. I always do mine late afternoon, the day before the show and then I hide all the portable scratching posts so they can't resharpen them.

Make sure you also check and you might need to clean inside the kitten's ears and check for fleas. If your kitten has any cuts or scratches it would be best to check with your Vet as this could affect how your kitten is judged on the day.

The day of the show:

Your kitten will need to travel in a secure carrier to the show and allow yourself plenty of time so you don't arrive there feeling stressed and anxious. When you arrive there will be a desk manned by helpers where you will receive the *'Benching Slip'* that will show your cage number and you will also receive a copy of the Show Catalogue if you purchased one. These people are very helpful and will explain to you where to go and what to do. The first thing is to have your kitten vetted in and then find where your cage number is. These are placed within groups in a number order around the venue on tables.

If you brought your own cage then start by setting this up, if you are hiring one then you can place up your show curtains, base, feed and water bowls along with the litter tray. When this is set up you can place your kitten in the cage and make sure you lock the door. Don't worry if your kitten tries to hide as it's new to them. You can cover the front of the cage with a towel to allow them time to settle down.

Judging usually commences at around 9am and before this starts the Show Organiser will introduce the Judges to the Exhibitors. Our Shows are divided into four different groups which are:

- Group 1. These contain the longhairs breed such as Persians, Ragdolls, Exotics and Siberian.
- Group 2. These are shorthair breeds such as our own breed Siamese, Orientals and Peterbald.
- Group 3. These include Burmese, Cornish and Devon Rex, Sphynx, British Shorthair etc.
- Group 4: These are known as *'companion cats'* often referred to as moggies and include both shorthair and longhair varieties. All companion cats must be desexed.

You can sit in front of the Judging table and watch the cats being judged but make sure your mobile is on silent so as not to disturb anyone. The Judge will talk about each cat/kitten they are judging and examining and it's an excellent way to learn about any particular breed. The Judge will, between judging each cat, wash their hands using a spray bottle of disinfectant and wipe them with a paper towel so ensure that there is no cross contamination. The Judge will have a Steward assist them and their role is usually to open the cage doors and/or take the cats out of their cages and bring to the judging table

The Judge will then at the end award Best of Breed and usually the top 5 Exhibits or more in each category depending on what Cat Association is holding the show. Best in Show and Supreme are usually awarded after lunch.

The Show Manager usually will announce when the show over and you can then pack up, load up your car and go home after a wonderful day out.

A suggestion is to find yourself a Mentor, an experienced Breeder who will help you before the show and on the show day. Most Breeders would feel honoured if you approached them and asked.

Note: each Cat Association have what they term Cat of the Year (*COTY*) awards where you earn and accumulate points from every Cat Show you attend.

Cats NSW:

If you join and have membership with Cats NSW then the following points are awarded:

1st Place in Top 5: 5 points

2nd Place in Top 5: 4 points

3rd Place in Top 5: 3 points

4th Place in Top 5: 2 points

5th Place in Top 5: 1 point

Best In Group: extra 5 Points

Supreme Exhibit: extra 5 Points

There are the following categories for this point system:

Top 5 Kittens in Group 1, 2, 3 & 4

Top 5 Entire Cats in Group 1, 2, & 3

Top 5 Desexed Cats in Group 1, 2, 3 & 4

NSW CFA have a slightly different point system for their members:

1st Place in Top 5: 10 points

2nd Place in Top 5: 7 points

3rd Place in Top 5: 4 points

4th Place in Top 5: 2 points

5th Place in Top 5: 1 point

NSW CFA award the top 5 male and top 5 female kittens plus desexed: top 5 male and top 5 female cats plus top 5 neuter and top 5 spay cats.

Happy showing.

