



**The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc.**  
*World's Largest Registry of Pedigreed Cats*

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Chartreux kittens may reflect the expense involved in working with a rare breed. Breeders in the United States strive to preserve genetic diversity, exchanging cats with other breeders worldwide.

Chartreux breeders in North America follow the French naming tradition, in which all kittens born in a given year are named beginning with a specific letter for that particular year. Breeders use only 20 letters, omitting K, Q, W, X, Y and Z.

Kittens are usually ready to go to their new homes around 16 weeks of age, after they have been properly socialized and have completed their kitten immunizations. Most Chartreux breeders in the United States also neuter or spay pet kittens before placement. Chartreux kittens are eager to play and interact with their human companions, and quickly become attached to their family.

The Chartreux is generally a healthy breed. Be sure to keep this rare treasure safely indoors, spay or neuter, and provide acceptable surfaces (such as cat trees and scratching posts) for the natural behavior of scratching (CFA disapproves of declawing or tendonectomy surgery). With proper care, your Chartreux can look forward to a long and joyful life.

For more information, please contact the Breed Council Secretary for this breed.

**Front Top:** GC, BW, RW BlueBijou's Franchesca (*Female*)

**Front Bottom:** GC, RW Foxykats Fiona of Idlemaine (*Spay*)

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# CHARTREUX



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The Chartreux is the natural, historic breed of France, known for centuries for its unique coat texture and blue color. References to the blue cats of France appear in literature as early as the 16th century, and the great 18th century naturalists, Linnaeus and Buffon, identified the Chartreux as one of the four known cat breeds of their time.

The origins of the breed are shrouded in legend. There is a lovely old story that Chartreux cats lived as companions of the Carthusian monks of France; according to legend, these cats are quiet because they took the vow of silence with the monks! Some have speculated that blue cats originated in Syria, and were brought to French monasteries by knights returning from the Crusades.

However, there are no records showing that the monks ever kept cats. Recent research suggests a more prosaic explanation; because of the woolly character of their fur, the blue cats may have acquired the name Chartreux from a type of Spanish wool that was well-known to traders at the time. Whatever their origin, the Chartreux adopted France with all their native vitality and intelligence, and the country adopted the breed.

Pedigree breeding began in the 1920s, with the foundation drawn from natural colonies of blue cats that demonstrated consistent type. Early breeders praised these cats for their mild temperament and robust health, despite harsh natural conditions. Due to the rarity of the Chartreux, occasional outcrosses to other breeds were necessary, particularly after World War II when many breeds were close to extinction. During the 1970s, some European registries added to the confusion by briefly combining the Chartreux with the blue British Shorthair. After Chartreux breeders protested, the two breeds were separated again under their own respective standards.

Chartreux were first imported to North America in 1970 through the efforts of John and Helen Gamon. The original imports came from the French countryside, representing the most respected French bloodlines available at the time. North American breeders through the years have continued to exchange cats with European breeders, being careful to avoid lines that had been confused with British Shorthair, in order to preserve the natural status and unique characteristics of this breed.

In appearance, the Chartreux is a study in contrasts, at once robust and elegant.

The broad head with its softly contoured forehead tapers to a narrowed muzzle, making the cat appear to smile. Ears are medium in size, set high and erect on the head, giving the cat an alert appearance. The nose is straight and medium in length. The expressive eyes of the Chartreux are one of its most endearing features; they are rounded and open, but not as round as the Persian's, with outer corners that curve slightly upward. Eye color ranges from gold to copper, with brilliant orange being most preferred by breeders.

The Chartreux is a powerful cat, with broad shoulders and a deep chest. The robust, medium-long body, sometimes described as "primitive," contrasts with relatively fine-boned legs and feet that appear almost dainty compared to body mass. Muscular, supple and agile, with very fast reflexes, the Chartreux is well prepared to easily meet its obligation as the fine mouser it is reputed to be in French literature.

Last but certainly not least, the Chartreux is known for its blue coat, which may be any shade of blue-gray from lightest ash to deepest slate. The coat is medium-short in length and slightly woolly in texture; when fully mature, the coat "breaks" at the neck, chest, and flanks. A dense undercoat gives it resistance to the elements and a feeling of sheep's wool. This double coat tends to shed seasonally; during shedding season, a wide-spaced metal comb can be helpful to remove dead hair.

This slow-maturing breed can take three to four years to reach physical maturity, often with a scraggly stage between kitten and adulthood that puts one in mind of a gawky, adolescent youngster. Then, almost overnight, they put it all together, with stunning results.

Chartreux cats are quiet, calm and friendly, and are affectionate without being demanding. Known for their dog-like behavior, many Chartreux enjoy fetching toys, and may respond to their names. They tend to develop rituals and routines with their owners, often following their owners from room to room. These gentle cats appreciate being treated kindly, and reward your kindness with loyal affection.

Chartreux kittens are generally available by reservation only, as demand for these endearing cats outstrips availability. Pricing of