

The Highlander:

The Decidedly Domestic Feline with the 'Big Cat' Look

By

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The big cat stands motionless; the almost imperceptible twitch of muscle over his impressive tawny shoulders is the only hint that he is not a statue. A whisker moves, its filament texture sweeping round like a fishing line enticing his unknowing victim closer . . . closer. A glint of sunlight leaps from the faintly visible wire connected to the dragonfly. The big cat pounces, his delighted owner lifting the dragonfly high in the air. Undaunted, the big cat follows, his vertical leap seeming to defy the forces of gravity! He closes his strong jaws around the toy, yanking it free from his protesting owner who must now wrestle it from the big cat if she wants to continue the game.

The Highlander owner laughs with delight as her big kitty rolls on his back, chewing determinedly on the dragonfly toy. His gentle demeanor lies in stark contrast to the image of the efficient hunter who just moments before captured his prize with the strength and grace of a "big cat." He pauses for a good belly rub from his owner, eyeing her with a quizzical expression. Is the game over? Has she given up so easily? As usual, the Highlander wins.

Highlander Personality:

The Highlander is often described as a "big cat" look in a decidedly domestic feline, an irresistible combination for virtually anyone who meets this delightful new breed of cat. This people-oriented breed gets along well with other cats, dogs, children, yet it expresses a strong preference for the company of its owner. The Highlander seems to connect with people in much the same way as a dog, looking directly into her owner's eyes and sensing her moods; she is the perfect feline companion. Highlanders adapt well to most situations as evidenced by their use as therapy cats in nursing homes. They love to go for walks,

car rides, even trips to the vets' office! And most of all they love to entertain any audience they can find.

One brief encounter with a Highlander is all that is needed to be forever enchanted and captivated by this imposing-looking cat with the clown-like personality. And indeed, that is the scenario that has played out over and over again for long-established breeders of other breeds as well as new breeders. After a first encounter with this delightful, fun-loving breed, who could do other than surrender to their charm? Little did the Highlander Breed Group realize just three short years ago that the Highlander obsession would become such an addiction for so many. They began with 4 breeders in 2004 and now have 24 breeders located throughout the United States and Canada.

Breed Origin:

The Highlander breed first began development in 2004 with its roots tracing back to the Highland Lynx. An east coast breeder devel-

oped the Highland Lynx in 1993, and although given a name that included "lynx," these domestic cats were not of any lynx ancestry. They immediately attracted interest, and a devoted following rapidly developed as a result of their unique looks, size, and playful, clown-like personalities. Upon welcoming the Highland Lynx into their homes and families, Highlander owners immediately realized that these cats were special, both in personality and looks. Uniting together, Highlander breeders worked to establish breeding programs and to develop a breed that reflects the "big cat look" in a purely domestic breed.

In late 2005 the group took the name *Highlander* to further identify the cats as a breed of its own merit. They worked diligently to educate the public; to bring about an awareness of how special these cats are, both in personality and looks; and mostly to earn respectability for this breed. They also wanted to work toward championship status as a member of the cat fancy in the largest cat regis-

