

The Chartreux

by Debra Rexelle

Although the nicknames for the Chartreux have changed over the years – the Smiling Blue Cats of France, Monastery Cats, Hospital Cats, Rooftop Cats of Paris, Dog-Like Cats and even Potatoes on Toothpicks (referring to the contrast of a robust body on comparatively short, fine-boned legs) – the breed itself has remained unchanged for hundreds of years. Trace this breed's roots and you will find that the Chartreux is a very ancient, distinct breed that has been recognized since the beginning of the science of natural history, a past that can only be matched by that of the Angora cat.

M. Jean Simonnet of Paris, France, a noted historian on the Chartreux cat, traced their background in his book *Le Chat des Chartreux* (1980). This work, the only book on the breed, was translated into English in 1990 by Jerome Auerbach (Blaukatzen Cattery) of Livermore, CA.

The Chartreux has been written about in science and literature for hundreds of years. It is likely the Chartreux originated from *Felis syrica* (Cat of Syria), which was written about by natural historian Ulisse Androvandi in the late 1500s. In a treatise on quadrupeds this cat is described as a robust gray cat originating from Syria; or perhaps, they were originally "Maltese Cats," those blue-gray cats brought from Syria and kept on the island of Malta.

M. Simonnet writes that the first reference to the name Chartreux cat was in the 1723 edition of the *Universal Dictionary of Commerce, Natural History and Arts and Trades* by Savarry des Bruslon. Bruslon states that the Chartreux was the common name for a type of cat whose fur was blue in color, and that fur traders dealt in their pelts. He also suggested that they were called Chartreux because of the monks who owned the first of the breed.

In 1756, the French naturalist Buffon listed the Chartreux as one of the four common varieties of cats in his work, *Natural History*. Diderot mentioned the Chartreux cat in 1748, in *Les bijoux indiscret* (The Indiscrete Jewels). Linnaeus, in 1789, writes of the Chartreux cat having a woolly coat of ash blue.

The French author Colette, who herself owned Chartreux, often wrote about her cats. In *La Chatte* (1933), she wrote of her "little bear with fat cheeks and golden eyes" and her "blue pigeon, her pearl gray devil" in referring to Saha, her Chartreux.

One famous legend of the Chartreux, although it has no supporting evidence, is an all-time favorite of many Chartreux breeders. As the legend goes, the Chartreux got its name from the religious order of the Carthusian monks (famous for their green liqueur) who, in the 17th century, brought the cats to their monastery, "Le Grande chartreuse," high in the French Alps from the Cape of Good Hope.

Most of the references throughout history refer to the Chartreux's blue-gray color and its eyes of gold to copper. The Chartreux is described as a working breed and an excellent hunter. In addition to the romance attached to the breed's French history, people also seem to be attracted to the Chartreux by their appearance, that of a robust, woolly blue bear with a sweet, smiling expression.

Always treasured for their blue color in any shade from ash to slate, the Chartreux is perhaps the only "blue" breed where there is no preference given to the shade, only to the clarity of the coat.

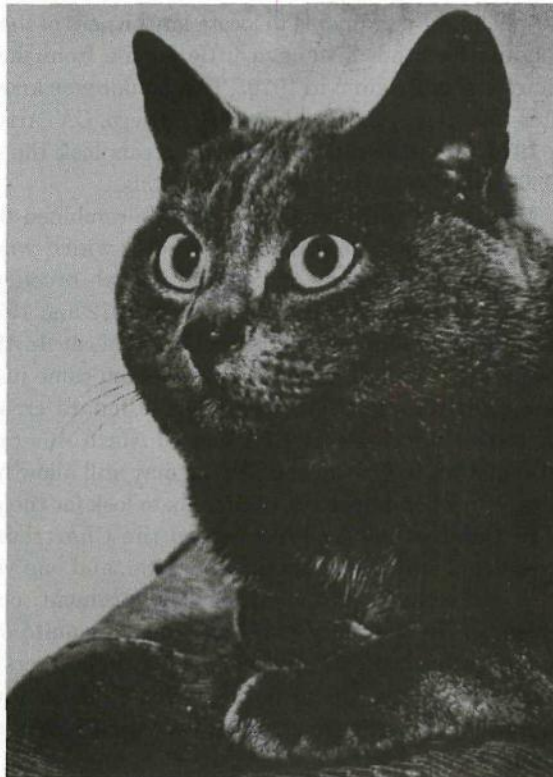
Their woolly coat is like no other. The texture is so dense that it "breaks" like the wool in a sheep's coat. As this can sometimes take several years to develop, Chartreux can often look their very best at four to five years of age; and because of their sweet nature, these mature specimens make great show material.

The first recorded breedings of the Chartreux began around 1928 by the Leger sisters, on the island of Belle-Ile-sur-Mer, an island off the northwest tip of France. The sisters (de Gerveur Cattery) started with a local colony of cats with distinct Chartreux type. The cats were known locally as the "Hospital Cats" as they were found residing around the island's church-run hospital in the town of Palais. Mlle. Leger wrote in 1935, that from first generation breedings they obtained remarkable results and that all the kittens were blue and typey.

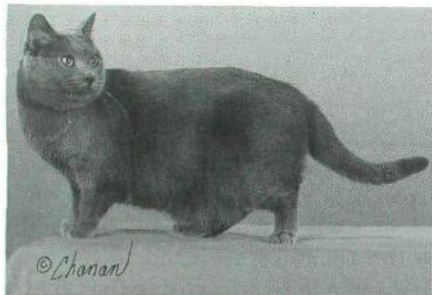
In the summer of 1970, Helen and John Gamon (Gamonal Cattery) of La Jolla, CA, traveled to France in hope of finding some Chartreux cats. The only knowledge Helen had of the breed at that time came from a short article in

Fernand Mery's book, *The Life, History and Magic of the Cat* (1966). Mery wrote of the breed's history, both in fact and legend, and compared the Chartreux to other blue shorthair breeds of cats. He also wrote of Colette's attraction to the breed. In his description of the Chartreux, he states, "The Chartreux is a cat of rural France. It has a stockier body line than the British Blue. It stands solidly on comparatively short, well-muscled legs. Its head is round but set on a thick-set neck and having really full cheeks. It has a very powerful jaw, temptingly reminiscent of that of the European wild cat. Its ears are of medium size and set high on the rounded skull. Its fur is woollier than that of any breed described so far."

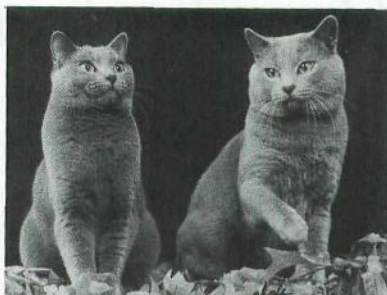
This description inspired Mrs. Gamon to search for the Chartreux breed, but it wasn't until three weeks after they arrived in France that any were to be found. Tornade de St. Pierre was the first one they saw. They bought her and a



Michou de Fernine



GP Blaukatzen L'Amiral of Jouvencebleu, neuter.
Br: Jerome M. Auerbach. Ow: Robin Phillips.



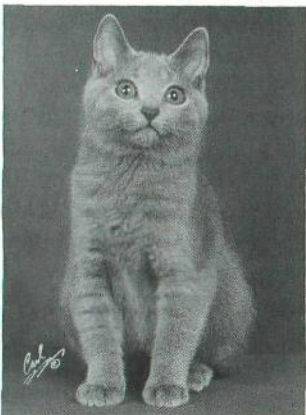
GP Belleisle Enchante Chat, neuter (left); and
GC, GP Belleisle's Cashmere Critter, DM,
neuter (right), Gulf Shore Region's 17th Best
Cat 1992. Br/Ow: Penny Rice.



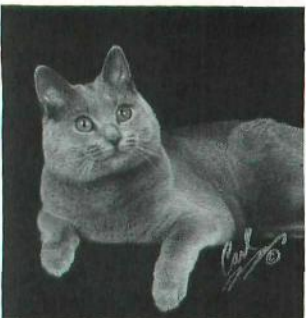
GC Tiarableu's Monique, female. Br/Ow:
Debra Jo Smith.



Amoureuse Limoges of Les Plushes,
female. Br: Don and Luci Koizumi.
Ow: Akiko Ishimura.



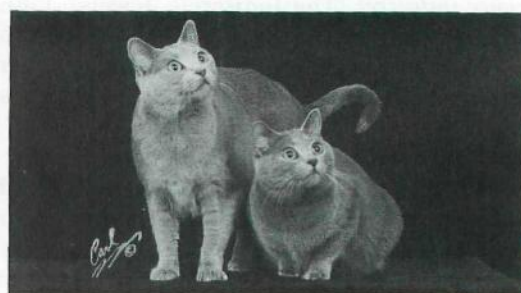
GC, RW Clervaux Notre Amitie of
Belleisle, female. Gulf Shore
Region's 15th Best Kitten 1998. Br:
C. Fuge, P. Rice, C. Bizzell and K.
Black, lessee. Ow: Penny Rice and
Christine Fuge.



GC, RW Aneise Lucien of Bellereve,
male. Northwest Region's 21st Best
Cat 1997. Br: J. Strike-McClelland.
Ow: Brennie Brackett.



GC Ashmanor Cendrette, female. Br/Ow: Debra
Rexelle.



GC Bleumime Fantasia of Luxueux, female (left). Br: Bob
Walden. Ow: Dawn Varney, MD. GC Bleumime Faith of
Luxueux, female (right). Br: Bob and Sally Walden. Ow:
Dawn Varney, MD.

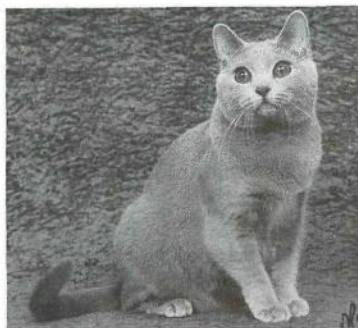
younger male, Taquin de St. Pierre, from the cattery of Madame Bastide. Both cats were sired by Michou de Fernine, who was Best Chartreux of France in 1967. These cats are probably found in the pedigrees of most Chartreux today.

After Helen Gamon imported the first Chartreux into the United States, she wrote, "It came as a great surprise to learn there were no other Chartreux registered in the U.S. or Canada and I was unable to locate any owners of the breed here. I sent back to France and to Belgium for other kittens, a little female from the latter being the daughter of the Best Chartreux of Belgium in 1970." This female was known as Thilda of Saint Marcoult. Not long after this, Genevieve Scudder of San Diego, CA (Arista Cattery), imported Ixion de Guerueur in 1974. In pictures these foundation cats look the same as the champion Chartreux of the 1930s as well as today's grand champions.

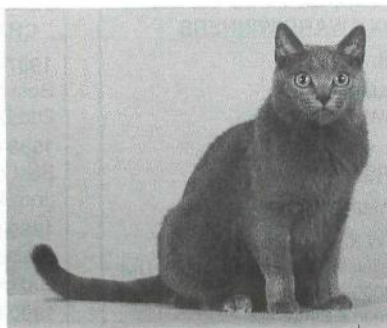
Meanwhile, in Europe in 1970, FIFe combined the Chartreux with the British Blue and adopted the British standard for both, which would have led to the elimination of the Chartreux as we know it. Several French breeders protested vehemently, and M. Jean Simonnet presented research papers in 1972 and 1974 providing documented historical proof that the Chartreux were a distinct breed of cat. In 1977, FIFe separated the two breeds with a separate standard for each. This decision came just in time, as there were only a few genuine Chartreux left. The Chartreux standard created at that time was the basis for the Chartreux standards for CFA and all North American cat associations. Other independent cat registries in France and Europe may still allow hybrid crosses as Chartreux, so one must be careful when importing Chartreux to look for the proper pedigrees.

In October 1979, CFA accepted the Chartreux for registration as a natural breed. Provisional status was obtained in 1986, and one year later in 1987, the breed, having fulfilled all of the requirements for advancement, obtained championship status in CFA. I remember the February 1987 board meeting quite well to this day. There was a fine celebration by enthusiastic Chartreux breeders and owners at Pike's Market in Seattle, WA, and we were joined by the Ocicat fanciers, who had also advanced to championship status that day. This was another journey forward for the Chartreux, a breed that has traveled so far over hundreds of years.

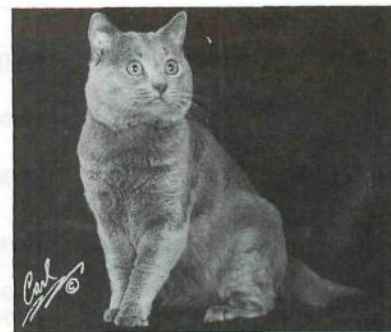
During the first year of championship status (1987-88), late in the season (March), the first Chartreux graded: GC Sheenahs' Chantal of Katoklix, bred by Shirley Rosenberg of Syracuse, NY and owned by Marcus and Gena Click of Concord, NC. Chantal was followed in April by the second grand champion, GC Velure Ballade, bred and owned by Catherine



GC Backcountry's Giselle of Sinaye, female. Gulf Shore Region's 11th Best Cat 1993. Br: Mary A. Rathbun. Ow: Denise and Jerry Williams.



GC, RW Janvier's L'Etoile of Charmeuse, female. Gulf Shore Region's 20th Best Kitten 1996. Br: Donald and Mary Ann Sweeters. Ow: Bill and Susan Lee and M. A. Sweeters.



CH Blaukatzen's Beaufort, male. Br/Ow: Jerry Auerbach.

Kisrow of Nashville, TN. These cats went on to become Best and Second Best of Breed that year. Now, 11 show seasons later, there are 204 grand champions and grand premiers in the Chartreux breed: 75 male grand champions, 65 female grand champions, and an even 32 male and 32 female grand premiers.

In 1990, the first regional winning Chartreux in championship was GC Katoklix Devin, bred and owned by Marcus and Gena Click. The following show season "Devin" went on to be the first national winning Chartreux as CFA's 17th Best Cat. It appears that this show season there may be more national winners to celebrate. Up to the end of the 1997-98 show season there had been 17 regional-winning Chartreux in championship, of which ten were males and seven were females.

In 1994, the first Chartreux kitten to receive a regional win was GC, RW Clervaux Jete of Sinaye, bred by Christine Fuge and Mary Jane Sams and owned by C. Fuge, M.J. Sams, and D. and J. Williams. Jete is the highest-scoring regional-winning kitten to date. Since that time there have been six more regional-winning Chartreux kittens: two males and five females.

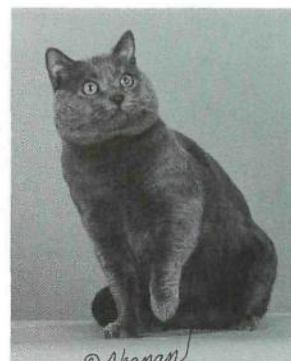
In premiership the first regional win came in 1992 with GP, RW Belleisle Estee', bred by Penny Rice and owned by Lisa Tanner. There have been a total of 12 Chartreux regional winners in premiership, five females and seven males.

The Chartreux breed is proud to have ten Distinguished Merit winners, eight females and two males. The breed's first DM was in 1990, Sheba Shariffe, DM, owned by Shirley Rosenberg. The first male Chartreux to achieve this honor, in 1994, was GC, GP Belleisle's Cashmere Critter, DM, bred and owned by Penny Rice of Frisco, CO.

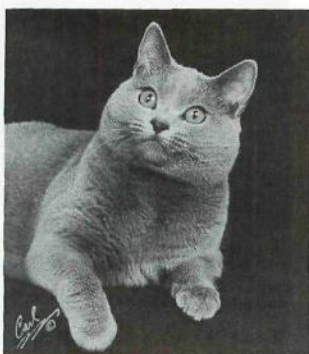
With the continued success of the Chartreux in CFA and with the promise of new national and regional winners to come, we are still reminded of a breed that has remained "unchanged" for hundreds of years. A constant effort by dedicated breeders is necessary for the preservation of the Chartreux as a distinct breed, both in North America and abroad. We thank them for their continuing efforts.*



GC Lutece Janis Joplin of Sinaye, female. Gulf Shore Region's 7th Best Cat 1996. Br: Emily Orca Starbuck. Ow: Denise and Jerry Williams.



GC LeBeauYeux's Jongleur of Bijou Bleu, male. Br: Katherine J. Kimble. Ow: Denis and Roxane Hettinger.



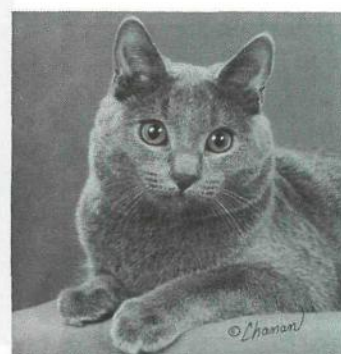
GP Aneise Nellie of Ajolie, spay. Br: Jessie Strike-McClelland. Ow: Dru Milligan and Jolie Stratton.



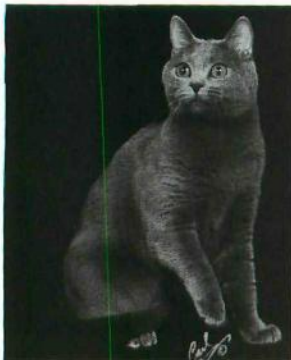
GC Columbeau's Justin Thyme, male. Br/Ow: Sherrie F. Zabriskie.



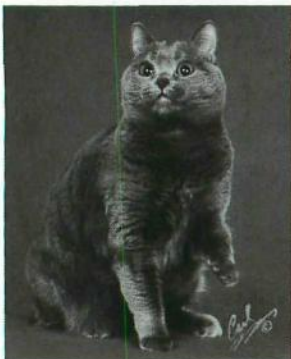
GC, RW Janvier Nicole, female. Gulf Shore Region's 10th Best Kitten 1998. Br/Ow: Donald and Mary Ann Sweeters.



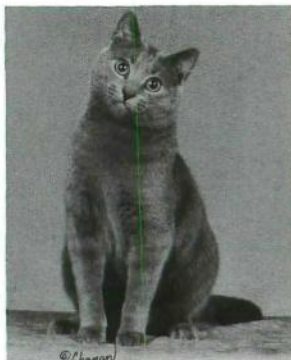
GC, RW Clervaux Milagro Alegre, male. Gulf Shore Region's 7th Best Kitten 1997. Br: Christine Fuge and Mary Rathbun. Ow: Christine Fuge.



GP Backcountry Nat In The Hat, neuter. Br: Mary A. Rathbun. Ow: Michelle Jockers.



CH, GP, RW Lutece Lux Perpetua of Chartres, spay. Gulf Shore Region's 16th Best Cat in Premiership 1998. Br: Emily Orca Starbuck and B. Renaud. Ow: Chuck and Marie Murphy.



GC Katoklix Halston of Janvier, DM, male. Br: Marcus and Gena Click. Ow: Donald and Mary Ann Sweeters.



GC Tellacats Volvo of Ashmanor, male. Br: Suzanne Tell. Ow: Debra Rexelle.

CHARTREUX AWARD WINNERS

NATIONAL WINNER

CHAMPIONSHIP

1990-91 GC, GP, NW Katoklix Devin

REGIONAL WINNERS

CHAMPIONSHIP

- 1989-90 GC, GP, NW Katoklix Devin
GC, GP Belleisle's Cashmere Critter, DM
- 1990-91 GC Frenchcon's Elmer F
- 1991-92 GC Frenchcon's Elmer F
GC, GP Belleisle's Cashmere Critter, DM
- 1992-93 GC Backcountry Giselle of Sinaye
GC, RW Ashmanor Delorean
GC Sandfire's Gizmo
GC, RW Rivierebleu Geronimo of Lebeauyeux
- 1994-95 GC, RW Backcountry Ivie Bleu of Clervaux
GC, RW Backcountry Ironique of Sinaye
- 1995-96 GC, RW Lutece Janis Joplin of Sinaye
GC, RW Janvier Jaclyn
GC, RW Clervaux Jete of Sinaye
GC, RW Backcountry Ironique of Sinaye
- 1996-97 GC, RW Janvier Larissa
GC, RW Aneise Lucien of Bellereve
- 1997-98 GC, RW Lutece Melisande

KITTENS

- 1994-95 GC, RW Clervaux Jete of Sinaye
- 1995-96 GC, RW Janvier's L'Etoile
- 1996-97 GC, RW Clervaux Milagro Alegre
- 1997-98 GC, RW Janvier Noelle
GC, RW Janvier Nicole
GC, RW Backcountry Neon Moon of Sourirbleu
GC, RW Clervaux Notre Amitie of Belleisle

PREMIERSHIP

- 1991-92 GP Belleisle's Estee of Katmanbleu
- 1992-93 GP Sandfire's Graymalkin of Isera
GP Steppenbleu Gervais
- 1993-94 GP, RW Katmanbleu's Haute Couture
CH, GP, RW Clervaux Holly Golightly
- 1995-96 GP, RW Clervaux Je Ronronne of Chartres
- 1996-97 GP, RW Fourth Paw All That Jazz of Chatton
GC, GP, RW Backcountry Mr. Irresistible
- 1997-98 GP, RW Webefrench Mon Ami of Belleisle
GP, RW Janvier Matthieu
CH, GP, RW Lutece Lux Perpetua of Chartres

CHARTREUX NATIONAL BREED AWARD WINNERS

1987-88

Best of Breed: GC Sheenah's Chantal of Katoklix
2nd Best of Breed: GC Velure Ballade

1988-89

Best of Breed: GC Frenchcon's Claude of Jacquelnjil
2nd Best of Breed: GC Velure Dauphine

1989-90

Best of Breed: GC, GP, NW Katoklix Devin
2nd Best of Breed: GC, GP Belleisle's Cashmere Critter, DM

1990-91

Best of Breed: GC, GP, NW Katoklix Devin
2nd Best of Breed: GC Frenchcon's Elmer F

1991-92

Best of Breed: GC, Frenchcon's Elmer F
2nd Best of Breed: GC, GP Belleisle's Cashmere Critter, DM

1992-93

Best of Breed: GC, RW Backcountry Giselle of Sinaye
2nd Best of Breed: GC, RW Ashmanor Delorean

1993-94

Best of Breed: GC Lutece Hymne A La Joie
2nd Best of Breed: GC Ashmanor Encore

1994-95

Best of Breed: GC, RW Backcountry Ivie Bleu of Clervaux
2nd Best of Breed: GC Katmanbleu Isis of Minetbleu

1995-96

Best of Breed: GC, RW Lutece Janis Joplin of Sinaye
2nd Best of Breed: GC, RW Janvier Jaclyn

1996-97

Best of Breed: GC, RW Janvier Larissa
2nd Best of Breed: GC, RW Aneise Lucien of Bellereve

1997-98

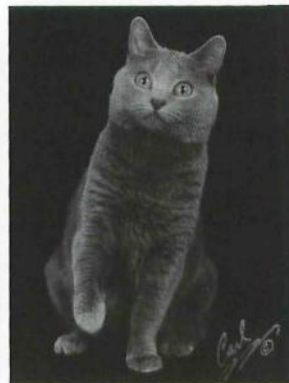
Best of Breed: GC, RW Lutece Melisande
2nd Best of Breed: GC Columbleu's Millenium Thyme
3rd Best of Breed: GC Tiarableu's Monique

CHARTREUX CATS DISTINGUISHED MERIT

- 1990 Sheba Shariffe, DM
- 1991 Velure Andrea, DM
- 1992 CH Sheenahs Ashley of Ashmanor, DM
- 1993 CH Backcountry Camille, DM
- 1994 GC, GP Belleisle's Cashmere Critter, DM
- 1996 GC Katoklix Isabella of Janvier, DM
- 1997 Lutece Insouciance, DM
- 1998 GC Aneise Iris Juin of Janvier, DM
GC Katoklix Halston of Janvier, DM
GC Lutece Galatee, DM



GC, RW Lutece Melisande, female. Northwest Region's 10th Best Cat 1998. Br: Emily Orca Starbuck and B. Renaud. Ow: Emily Orca Starbuck.



GC, GP Backcountry Minden of Sourirbleu, female. Br/Ow: Mary Rathbun and Gina Wiley.



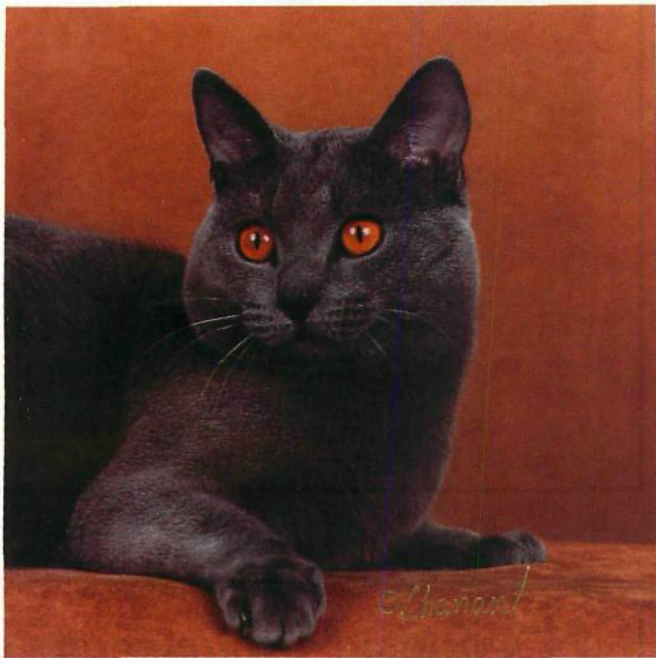
GC Luxueux Gabriel, male. Br/Ow: Dawn Varney, MD.

Charmeuse Chartreux

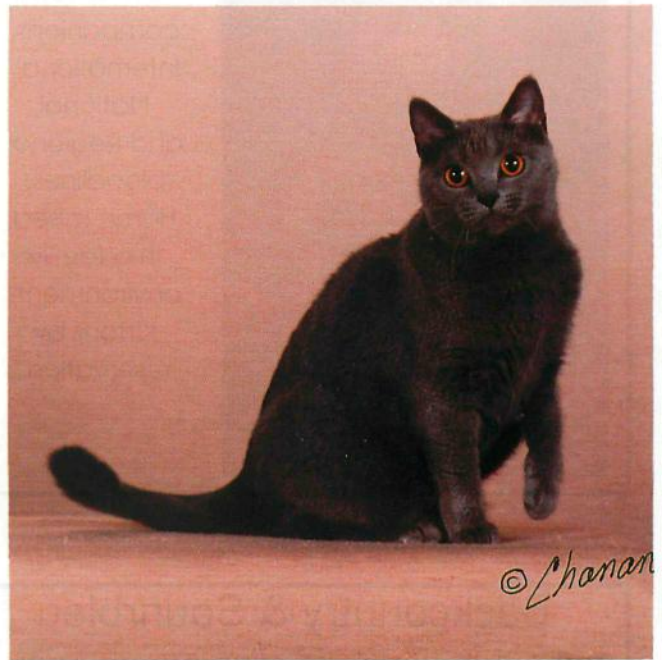
Bill and Susan Lee • (517) 332-2184

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wllee@aol.com



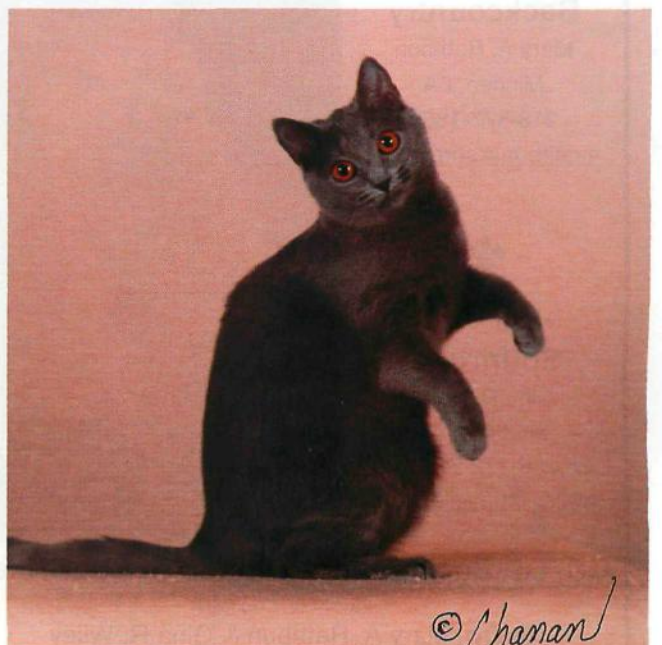
GC Janvier Normandy of Charmeuse
Co-owned with M.A. Sweeters



GC, RW Janvier's L'Etoile of Charmeuse
Co-owned with M.A. Sweeters



Charmeuse Odyssey of Saguargold
Owner: Megan Cisel

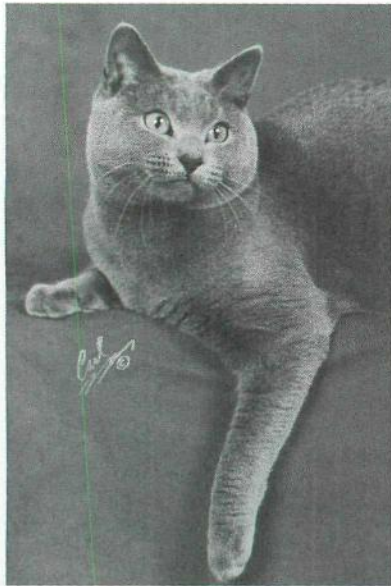


GC Janvier Nanette of Charmeuse
Co-owned with M.A. Sweeters

GWYNEDDMEWS CHARTREUX

"Cattery of Excellence"

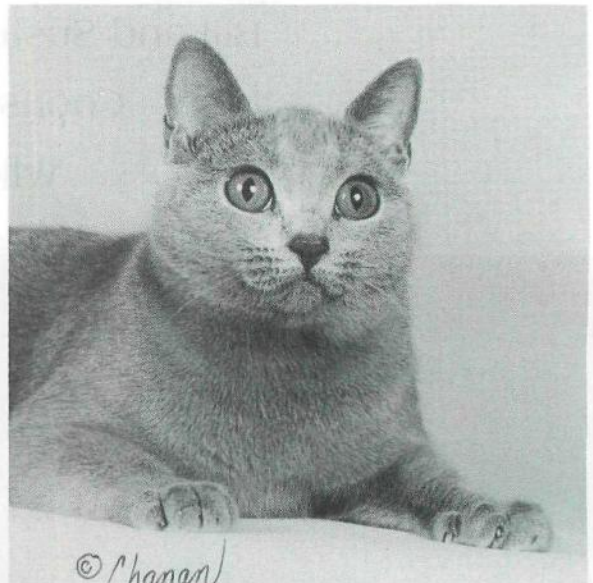
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JANVIER CHARTREUX

GC, RW Janvier Nicole



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Backcountry & Sourirbleu Chartreux

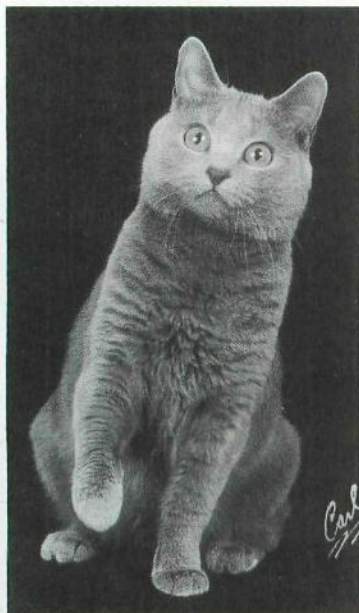
Backcountry

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Sourirbleu

Gina R. Wiley
Madison, AL
256-772-7189
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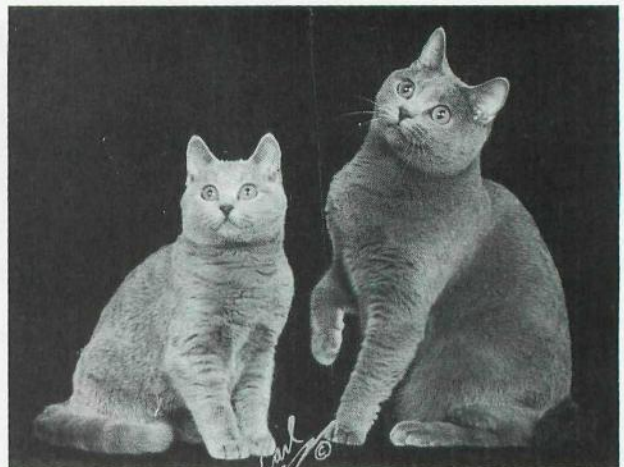
GC, GP Backcountry Minden of Sourirbleu

Pictured at 1.5 years

Br/Ow: Mary A. Rathbun & Gina R. Wiley

Beanerie Chartreux

e-mail: michellej@compassnet.com
Michelle Jockers (713) 729-5556
Houston, Texas



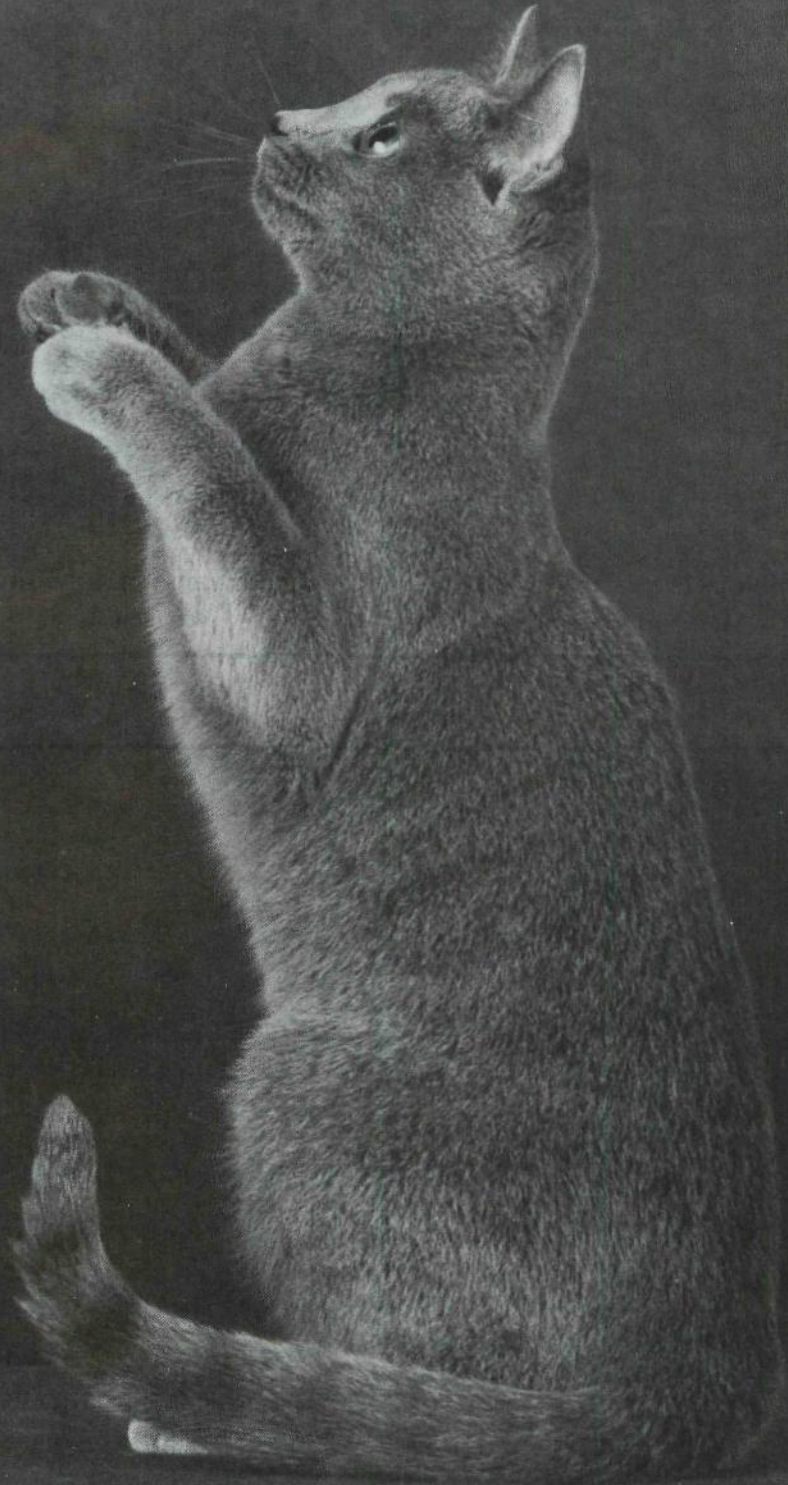
GP Backcountry Nat In The Hat (r), 1.7 years
Backcountry Oiseleur of Beanerie (l), 5 months

Breeder: Mary A. Rathbun
Owner: Michelle Jockers

JOUVENCEBLEU CHARTREUX

Presenting:

**GC Janvier's Oriana
of Jouvencebleu**



(from left to right)

**CH Janvier's Ondine of Jouvencebleu
CH Jouvencebleu's Ooh-La-La!
GC Janvier's Oriana of Jouvencebleu**

Breeding for:

1. Exquisite Type
2. Soundness
3. Temperament

*Unending thanks to our
forever friends:
Donald and Mary Ann
Sweeters and
Dr. and Mrs. Warren
Joubert of Louisiana.
God Bless Us All!!!!*

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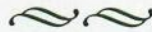
Robin C. Phillips
1879 N. Neltnor Blvd., #184 • West Chicago, IL 60185
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CHARLEVAL CHARTREUX

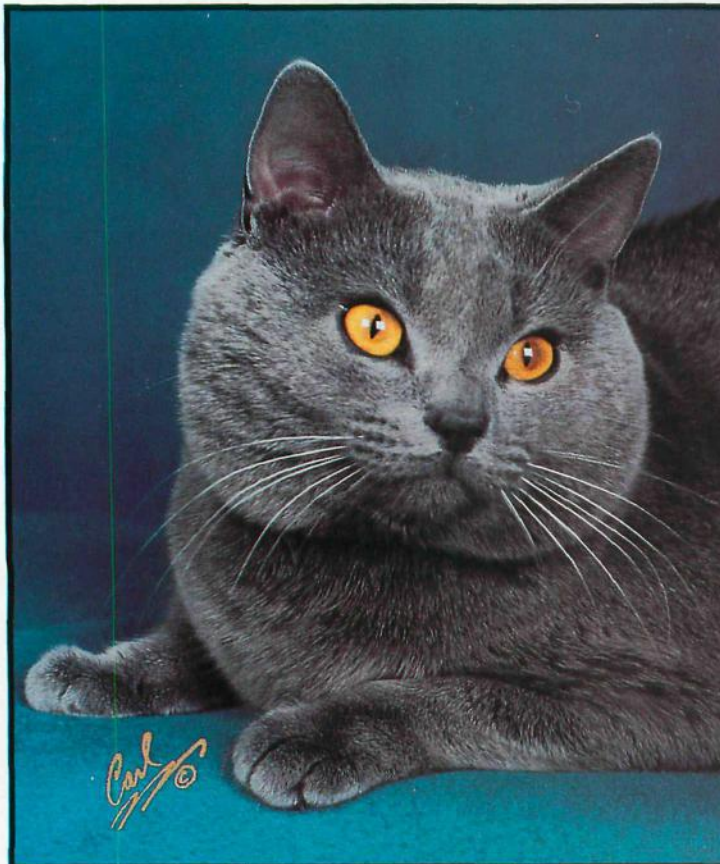


GC Columbleau's Michelle of Charleval
@ 2 years

Sandi & Harlee Patrick
722 Casper Lane
Newport News, VA 23602
(757) 872-9903
Sandi-Harlee@webtv.net



CH Charleval's Nilena
@ 6 months



Aneise Chartreux

Presents GC Aneise Nelson, latest in a continuous progression of large, well-balanced Chartreux with wonderful temperaments.

Aneise carefully combines American and European bloodlines and the results are in the Show Ring.

National and Regional Award winning Chartreux. All enquiries welcomed and answered.

*Member Club de Chat des Chartreux
(Paris, France)*

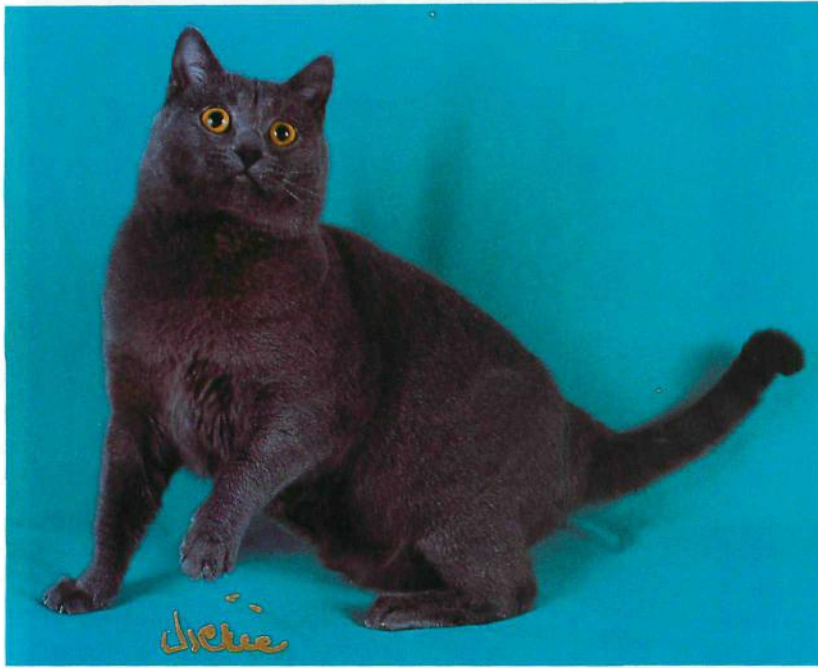
Member C.F.A Breed Council

*Aneise Chartreux
Jessie Mike-McClelland*

512-836-2565

E-mail: Jessies@ecfi.com

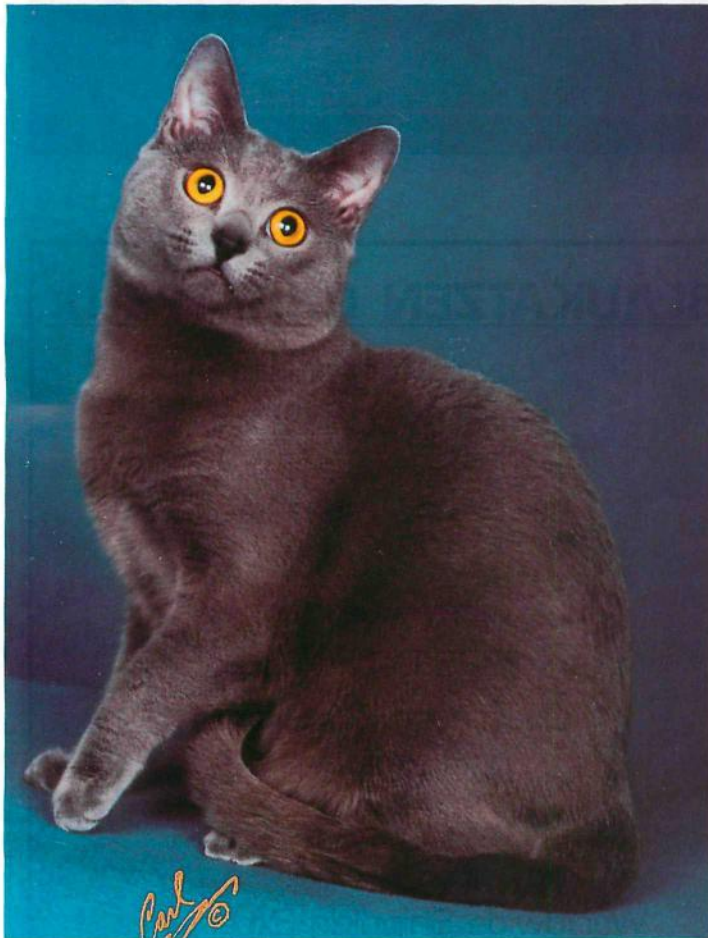
Excellence in Thyme



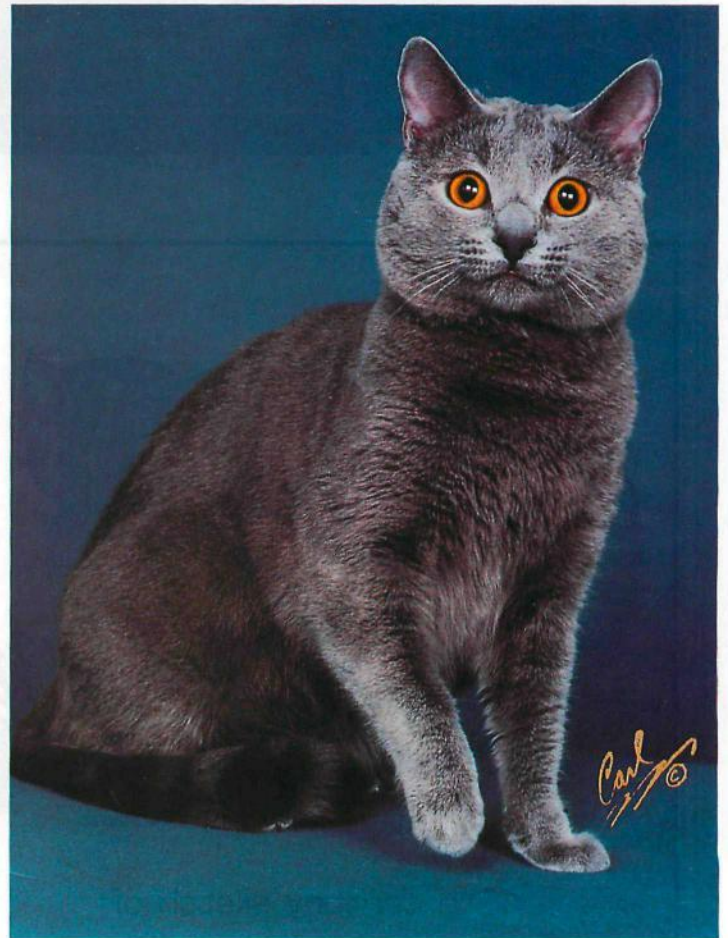
featuring

GC Columbleau's Justin Thyme
2nd Best of Breed – Southern Region 1995-96
Best of Breed – Southern Region 1996-97

and his sons...



GC Columbleau's Millenium Thyme
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2nd Best of Breed Nationally
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Columbleau's Nick-Of-Thyme

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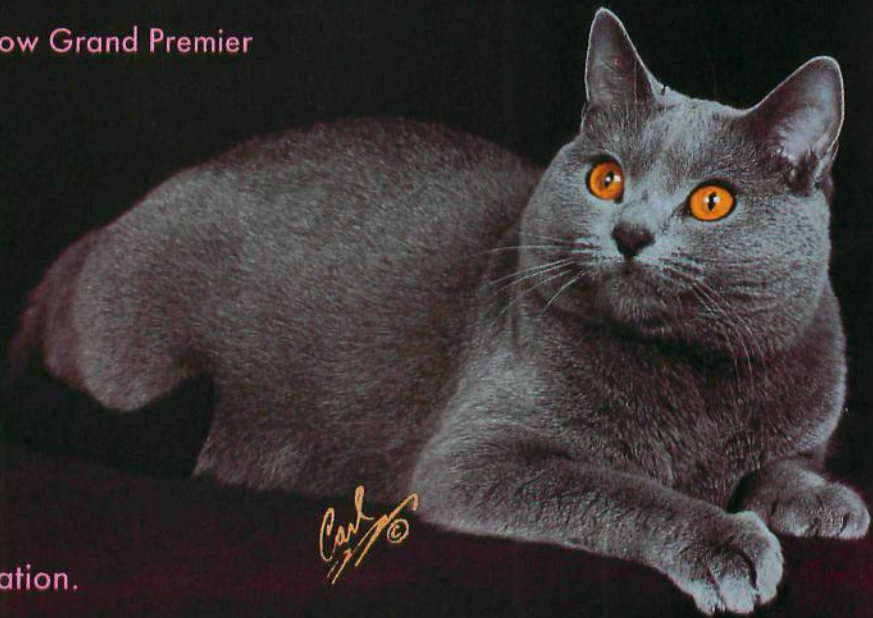
❖ fax ❖

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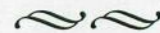
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Kittens available by reservation.



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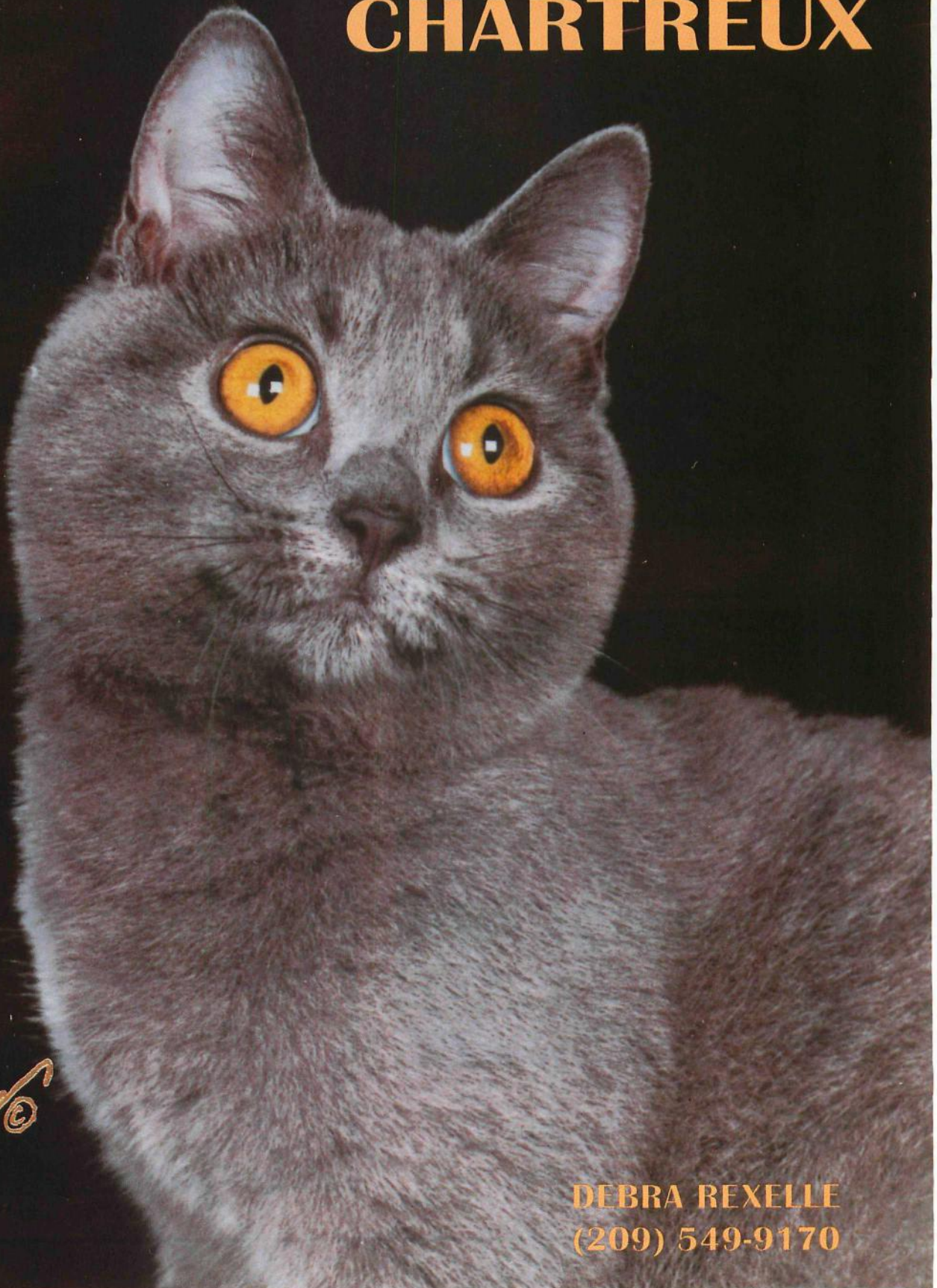
Worldwide Shipping Experience



16th-century sketch of
a female Chartreux cat
by Ulisse Aldrovandi
(1522-1607)

smiling at you...

ASHMANOR CHARTREUX



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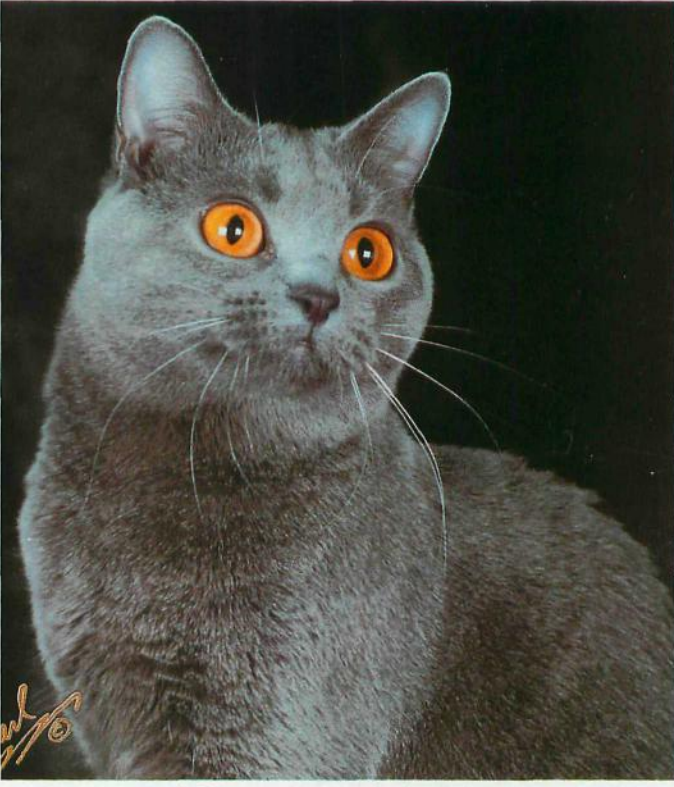


GP, RW Clervaux Je Ronronne of Chartres

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