

More New Rats: A New Frosted, Spotted Tabby, Siamese Sable, Dapple, Harlequin, Long Hair

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D'Argent vs. Frosted

There have been several new colors showing up around the world in the last few years. In 2013 we reported on "Frosted" that appeared on the East Coast in feeder rats in 2012 that we are now



An 8-week-old Black D'Argent owned and bred by Nikki Kimura. Notice the darker nose and eye area "mask" which is the same as the rabbit breed. Photo ©2015 Karen Robbins.



... and the under color of the Black D'Argent owned and bred by Nikki Kimura. Photo ©2015 Karen Robbins.



An 8-week-old Agouti D'Argent owned and bred by Nikki Kimura. Photo ©2015 Karen Robbins.



A 14-week-old Black Berkshire Frosted Standard male owned by Emily Grammer. This is the first version found here in Southern California (from feeder stock). Photo ©2014 Karen Robbins.



A 9-week-old Agouti Berkshire Frosted Standard female owned and bred by Jeannine Porter. This is the second version found here in Southern California (popped up in one of Jeannine's line of rats). Photo ©2014 Karen Robbins.

calling D'Argent after the breed of rabbit as it develops and looks the same (babies start out solid black then get the "silvering" and end up with the darker under color with white tips on the hair and dark "mask" on the face (darker nose and eye area). The breeder on the East Coast was calling them "Silvermane" but that makes it sound like the "silvering" is only on the head/neck area when it is on the whole body.

In 2014 a similar mutation appeared here in Southern California from two different locations we thought could be the same as the one on the East



A D'Argent rabbit underfur on raising-rabbits.com www.raising-rabbits.com/champagne-dargent.html. The D'Argent rats are just like this.



D'Argent rabbits: 6-month-old adult and 5-week-old juvenile. The rats develop exactly like this from black to "silvered" with darker around nose and eyes as adults. Photo © Lois Fernyhough on https://mysmelly.com/content/small_animals/champagne-d-39-argent.htm.



A 2.5 month-old Spotted Tabby Berkshire Standard male rat owned by Dawndee Carver, bred by Nicole Housel. He shows the dorsal stripe with spots on the sides. He has a lot of spots on the shoulders that are all run together, same as what happens to other marked (look nicely marked as babies but then spots run together or the edges are ragged due to the hair)—as babies they have lots of spots in some areas, but when the coat fully develops then they run together. With selection you can get more defined/separated spots. Photo ©2015 Karen Robbins.

Coast. However, fanciers were able to get some of each of the local ones and work with them and found the two here locally were not the same with one diluting and silvering the coat and the dilution was visible when young where the other one does not dilute the coat and they don't show the effect until the 12-week-molt when they get silvered. Comparing all three, they are similar but develop different, so the new ones got the name "Frosted."

Further breedings of the "D'Argent" found it to be a coat mutation similar to satin with a hair shaft that is translucent-clear and the white tips disappear when wet. So far breeders have been getting them in other colors but the black shows the most striking coloring. Temperament issues have been reported all over the country in them and breeders are doing outcrossing to eliminate this problem. They also have type issues which is to be expected from most feeder stock.

Spotted Tabby

In March 2015 we heard from one of our members of a "Merle" that was on Russian Blue and Black rather than "mink" colors that had a telltale dorsal stripe and spots. These came from feeder rats, again on the East Coast, that the breeder had been working on since 2013 and calling them Merle (then "Marble" after the stone). With the dorsal stripe and spots they resemble a spotted



Spotted tabby cat. Photo ©Tom Bjornstad in Norway on www.felinet.com/spotted-tabby/.



Marble stone, not what the Spotted Tabby rats look like.

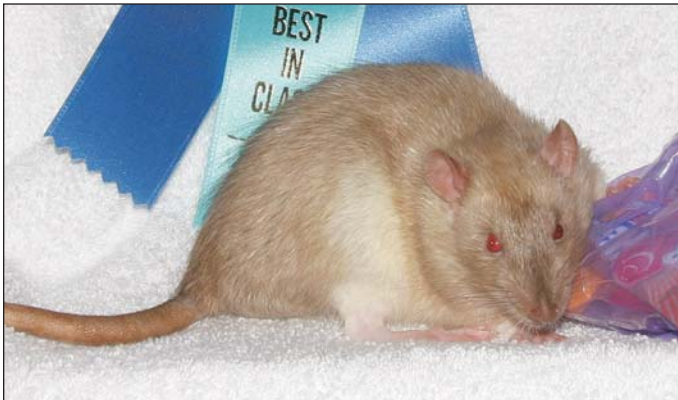
tabby cat as there are no mouse, rabbit, gerbil, or hamster colors or markings similar (hamsters have the dorsal stripe but not the spots). These have a definite pattern, unlike marble stone that is random.

These "Spotted Tabby" rats had some initial health issues that seem to have been in the line rather than linked with the color as breeders here in California were able to bring some in later in 2015 and start working with them. Health issues reported from breeders in other areas were white teeth (which seems to be like what Satin mice have), megacolon, failure to thrive, broken teeth, and malocclusion. The breeders here did not have the health issues, just the white teeth.

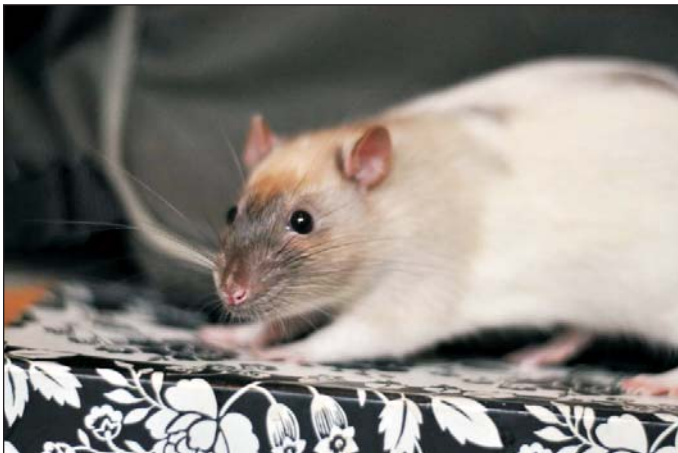
Siamese Sable

In April 2015 we were asked to ID some “dark Siamese” rats in Texas that came out of feeder stock. They looked like really dark Siamese or Burmese with ruby eyes. We were able to see them in person then at the May 2015 AFRMA South Central show in Texas. They were marked but with the color we could see these are definitely different, either having modifiers to cause such a dark color or were something new. After talking with Nichole Royer, our genetics expert, she said “It can’t be modifiers. If modifiers were able to do that, we’d have been able to create darker Siamese through intentional breeding (and the white markings sure suggest that’s not what was done here). I think its got to be something new.” So they are a different dark Siamese similar to the Siamese Sable rabbits.

South Africa has similar ones that are indigenous there that they call Sable Siamese but so far it appears to be different. They were seen in pet shops there in the 1990s and they were calling them “Siamese” but when they got the rats imported from the U.S.A. in January 2006, they realized they had something different. These show more contrast with the very dark points to the body color whereas the Siamese Sable we have here have a darker body color with points just a little darker than the body, more like Burmese but with the ruby eyes. You can read more in the article “The colourful C-locus” by Annalie Prinsloo (April 2015) http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/93ab82_879058cbf7d74679892f1dfe101c9c97.pdf. Recent reports are that similar ones to the South Africa rats have popped up in the Netherlands.



Siamese Sable Berkshire Standard male rat owned by Olyvia Buchanan in Texas. Photo ©2015 Robin Brown-Tim.



Sable Siamese Hooded rat by LuvRats in Western Cape, South Africa, on <http://forums.ratanooqa.co.za/index.php?/topic/7291-pics-of-sable-siamese-please/>.



Sable Siamese Hooded male rat owned by Ashlee Murphy, Salem Ridge Rattery, Cape Town, South Africa. Photo ©Ashlee Murphy. <http://salemridgerattery.wixsite.com/salemridgerats>.



Siamese Sable Mini Lop rabbit from Becki Moorcroft on <http://s13.invisionfree.com/RabbitHabbitForums/ar/5628.htm>.

Real Merle a.k.a. Dapple

Then in November 2015 we were informed of yet another new color, this time in Columbia South America. These looked like the Merle dogs having the solid color patches with silvered/roaned background, but since the name Merle is being used by our mink-based color, then Dapple, the term used for Merle Dachshunds, is the one most fitting and matching what they are. This was one color that was so striking that my mom commented she would get back into rats if she could get those.

These photos were posted on the Facebook group “Rats And Mice Are Awesome” www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1002298206498864&set=gm.1087683118012551&type=3&theater by Carlos Col.



“Dapple” rat in Columbia, South America. Photo from Carlos Col. Red by nose was a scratch.



Dapple rats. Photo from Carlos Col, Columbia, South America.



Harlequin rat in Argentina, South America.



Belly pattern of one of the Dapple rats. Photo from Carlos Col, Columbia, South America.



Harlequin rabbit from Blue Moon Ranches & Rabbitry
<http://bluemoonrr.weebly.com/rabbits.html>.

Harlequin

In December the Dapple were quickly followed by the “spotted/Dalmatian/brindle/splashed” looking rats in Argentina, South America. These have a set pattern of bars/bands of black on a lighter background with most extending from the dorsal midline. With it being a more set pattern with the bars/bands, rather than random spots like Dalmatian, Splashed, or spotted, or thin stripes like Brindled, then Harlequin rabbits were the ones we found it most resembles.

Real Long Haired Rats

I first came across Long Haired rats on the Australian Rat and Mouse Forum in September 2012. Unfortunately, this forum has been shut down and the replacement forum doesn't have these threads and the Internet Archive can't show the pages. These were found in New Zealand and was posted December 24, 2009, on the Goosemoose Pet Portal forum <http://www.goosemoose.com/rfc/index.php?topic=4064470.0> which is still there to read more about them. I did find out they were found and bred by Bianca Balducci in Auckland, New Zealand, it is an incompletely dominant gene, and they are calling them “fluffies” there.



New Zealand Long Haired rat.



Merle Dachshund known as Dapple in this breed. Photo from www.dachshunds-unlimited.com/ourfemales.htm.

Send in your questions, comments, articles, etc., related to colors, markings, or coats to the Editor or e-mail editor@afirma.org.