

Rat Coat Mystery: Velveteen?

Lexi Darienzo, e-mail

Q I have a buck, Stewie, who I believe is Velveteen (his coat is a nice Velveteen quality), however, his whiskers are completely crazy. Velveteens whiskers should curve down-

wards, but his go all over the place. I originally thought that he may have the Satin gene in his genetics somewhere, but kind of dismissed that though (I don't know his lineage pedigree). He has had three litters currently and has produced some beautiful Velveteens and double Velveteens, but passes on his crazy whiskers to most of the offspring. When bred to a Standard doe he produced 8 offspring, 3 of which were not Standard coated and had his 'crazy' whiskers. One



Buck's coat in question at 4 months and molting. Photo from Lexi Darienzo.



This offspring has whiskers that are straight and curl on the end. Photo from Lexi Darienzo.



This offspring has a wild long coat. Photo from Lexi Darienzo.



... at 7 months. Photo from Lexi Darienzo.



One of the kids with some curly and a lot of more straight whiskers. Photo from Lexi Darienzo.

developed with a really plush coat (like Stewie) and the other two developed with a plush, but more wiry coat. Paired with two Velveteen does he produced Standard, Velveteen, double Velveteen, and replicas of his coat/whiskers. I noticed that about half of his offspring (especially in the Velveteen variety) develop a sleek, glossy coat. I'm starting to think that he is both Satin and Velveteen, but I'm unsure of the Satin genetics and if that would be possible, or if you have other thoughts on what he could be? I've been told by others that he may be a Bristle because of the looks of his whiskers, but he is soft and plush—his coat isn't exactly bristly. His whiskers have been getting 'less crazy' and more like a Velveteen with age, but are still considered crazy for Velveteen.



...and at 1 year. Photo from Lexi Darienzo.



One of the kids with some straight and several crimped whiskers. Photo from Lexi Darienzo.



Daughter of Stewie with "crazy whiskers" to be bred back to him. Photo from Lexi Darienzo.

I've been told many different opinions from many different breeders (many that contradict each other) so I've just been calling him a 'Stewie coat,' that way I don't mislabel him, as I was originally calling him a Velvet. I'm unsure if he's a complete mongrel of the rat world, but it'd be nice to get some kind of idea. I have him paired with his daughter currently to test—and hopefully clarify—a few coat types they may or may not be.

A Thanks for sending photos of your rats. By your photos the whiskers and coat are too straight for Rex. Three of the photos of Stewie look more like Bristle Coat whiskers (straight with some curled ends) and more straight messy-looking coat. In the 7-month-old picture it kind of reminds me of the New Zealand Long Haired rats that have thick plush long curly coats but straight whiskers. In the picture at 1 year old



A New Zealand Long Haired rat with straight whiskers and curly long coat. They were found in 2009 by Bianca Balducci in Auckland, New Zealand, and you can read more on the Goosemoose Pet Portal forum www.goosemoose.com/rfc/index.php?topic=4064470.0. These are an incompletely dominant gene and are called "fluffies" there.

the coat looks more curly/wavy than in the other photos. I don't see a shiny Satin coat (white colors are normally more yellow in Satin). Photos of "Velveteen" shows a shorter coat than what it looks like your rat has and on Debbi Needham's "Fancy Rat Genetics: Curly Coated Rats" page <http://web.archive.org/web/20071022125053/skyclide.com/GeneticsCurlyCoats.html> she says regarding Velveteen whiskers, "The whiskers are softly curled, especially at the tips."

We have several articles and photos of the following:

- **Rex** www.afрма.org/rexrat.htm and www.afрма.org/c-c_rex_doublerex.htm, with photos of whiskers www.afрма.org/rexratpics.htm
- **Satin** www.afрма.org/satinrats.htm and www.afрма.org/c-c_satinratq.htm with photos of whiskers www.afрма.org/satinratpics.htm
- **Bristle Coat** www.afрма.org/c-c_bristlecoat.htm with photos of whiskers on the Standards page www.afрма.org/ratvar.htm#BristleRat. We have seen some Bristle Coat rats with softer coats which is a fault.
- **Standard, Satin, and Rex whiskers** www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.321629991199591.94951.224215094274415&type=3
- **Various coat types:** www.afрма.org/c-c_ratcoats.htm
- There is also info on the Rat Behavior and Biology page of

various coat types: www.ratbehavior.org/CoatTypes.htm

- And on **Velveteen** which are supposed to have a very soft, slightly wavy coat: <http://web.archive.org/web/20071022125053/skyclide.com/GeneticsCurlyCoats.html>

Satin Rex have tighter curl to their whiskers and a thicker plusher coat than normal Rex. It should be possible to combine Satin with other coat types.

With so many possible coat types out there in the fancy plus each one can have good and bad versions that resemble other types, it is hard to say what exactly he is. Combining several coat types also affects type of whiskers, thickness of coat, length of coat, whether it is harsh, soft, bristly, etc.

Regarding the litters, sounds like he could be something totally different if you got distinctly different coat types when bred with other coats or he is a combination of coats so that is why he throws different ones. One thing is the thickness of your rats' coats—the Bristles have minimal undercoat so even though whiskers on some of your rats are similar, they wouldn't be Bristle with the soft coat you describe and being that plush. Another thing I noticed is the really long coats some of your rats have, almost like a plush Harley, but the Harley's I've seen here have a shiny coat like Satin and I don't see that in your rats. Harley can also have a curly coat. One of our members here is planning on doing test breedings of Harley to Satin in the future to see what is produced since it is unknown if Harleys are some kind of Satin or if the Satin is in addition to the Harley wispy coat.

Keep us updated on your results.

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

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