

Introducing the Fancy Rat



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You breed WHAT? I'm used to that response now, and I can't really blame people. Most have never even heard of Fancy Rats. When you say RAT, most people picture either wild rats or the pink-eyed domestic rats sold for years as snake food in pet shops. I'll admit this vision of rats is not particularly appealing, and I can almost understand their dislike of such creatures. They have never met a fancy rat.

What Is A Fancy Rat?

But what is a fancy rat? A fancy rat is a rat who has been bred to conform to a written standard. Its coat, color, conformation, size, and personality all were taken into account by its breeder in an attempt to create an ideal show animal. In other words, the term "fancy rat" is the equivalent of saying "pure-bred dog." Today's fancy rats are as far distanced from wild rats as poodles are from wolves.

The rat actually has a rather long history as a domestic animal. The first documented domesticated rats were bred in England in 1800, but it is most likely that they had been around for hundreds of years before that. Whatever the date, by 1901 enough unusual colors and patterns had turned up that there was interest in them as desirable exhibition animals, and thus the rat fancy was born.

Popularity Skyrockets

Over the last 100 years, interest in the fancy rat has waxed and waned; however, in the last 20 years the popularity of fancy rats has skyrocketed. People have discovered that they are bright, intelligent, affectionate, gentle, and make wonderful pets. They don't bite, don't bark, never leave fur all over the

house, and are easy and inexpensive to care for. Many people today don't have the time, energy, or money to own a dog. A rat is the next best thing.

Variety Of Colors

Probably one of the best features of fancy rats is the variety of colors that they come in. According to the Official A.F.R.M.A. Standard there are 40 colors recognized for rats. Some of the more interesting are: Blue, Champagne, Lilac, Mink, Amber, Cinnamon, Siamese, and Lynx. These colors come in 12 different types of markings ranging from the familiar Hooded pattern to Dalmatian, Variegated, Masked, and Berkshire. There are four coat types recognized for rats: the Standard (straight), the Rex (curly), the Satin (shiny), and the Bristle Coat (stiff and coarse). For those people who like something a bit more unusual there are Tailless rats, Hairless rats, Dumbo rats, and even Odd-Eyed rats who have one pink eye and one dark eye. New variations are being found every year. Who knows, maybe it will be next year that we will discover the illusive long haired rat.

As the fancy rat's popularity has grown so has its availability. Most colors and coat types are available anywhere in the U.S.

**For more information contact the
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**by Nichole
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