

Why retire breeding cats?

This was always some thing I have struggled with... parting with my beloved pets but as a breeder one has to look on constantly improving the breed.

Breeding is simply put very much a weighing up of pro's and con's. Trying to make the best decisions for the cat's involved, and health of the breed, whilst still breeding toward a goal of improvement in type and genetic diversity. I try very hard to avoid "popular stud syndrome" where the same stud is used for many litters or too many kittens are kept from one stud or queen.

For health reasons (and those listed above) we are required to put new blood lines into our breeding, often these "outcrosses" as we call them are not quite to our Standard of Points here in South Africa. Perhaps we are breeding for a specific "look" or to change the slightest of qualities. Perhaps a kitten kept for breeding does not quite turn out to be all we are looking for or un-able to be bred from.

Our situation is different to other countries, as the Russian until recently only had two breeders working together (we are now 4) this means that every time I wanted to try a different combination of lines or improve the gene pool diversity I had to import (and have been responsible for importing 13 Russians into South Africa thus far).

Besides the thought that currently I would have well over 25 Russians and counting, if I had kept every one. One of the biggest reasons for me is having a stud boy that is just such a love bug I cannot bare to have him live in a stud run, although I spend a huge amount of time with my boys, stud runs are just simply a fact of breeding. I have also set a limit to the amount of cats I am willing to have in my house hold for health and happiness of the cats. I can simply only give love to so many cats and I know that a Russian has so much love to give that rather than ending up with more and more cats myself they would in fact be happier in a home with a smaller cat population.

Unlike some breeders I also choose to have my girls live in our home as pets, where they receive love and undivided attention year round rather than just when they are brought in to have kittens from a cattery. Entire girls can be hormonal at times and I try to ensure a peaceful and stress free environment, this means having a group of girls that get along well.

What ever the reason for the need to re-home it does happen from time to time and one of the hardest parts to me of being a breeder.

Why take on an adult?

Russian adults are a wonderful addition to a house hold with their very laid back easy going temperament they fit in rather easy. A re-homed adult can be taken on with a kitten especially to a home for first kitten owners. Not only does the adult offer security and comfort in a new environment but would also offer companionship where two kittens cannot be taken together.

Perhaps you are retired or do not have the time available to raise a young kitten, raising a kitten takes patience and a lot of energy. An adult is already all grown up.

The cost of a re-homed adult is simply the cost of covering the spay or neuter and up to date inoculations. Most retired breeding cats come out of a breeding program fairly young and still have many years ahead to give Russian love.

What kind of home do retired Russians go to?

I tend to be exceedingly picky as to the home that a retired Russian will go to. I do like the boy or girl to go to a nice relaxed peaceful home with minimal other cat's/dogs, and preferably as an only cat or with a kitten. I want their retirement to be happy and stress free with lots of love and attention. I need them to be kept incredibly safe (as I do with my kittens) as these precious kids have given so much to this beautiful breed, I like to know that the home they go to will be a special place that they can live out the remainder of their lives (10-15 more years) in true happiness, more happiness than even I could give them. I especially do also like to keep in touch with the owners of my retired cats to keep tabs on their health and happiness.