

# Purebred vs Native Egyptian Maus

*By Sabine Harding*

**The Egyptian Mau** is certainly one of the most stunning cat breeds in the world. A purebred Mau displays their unique appearance and features. Actual Egyptian street cats are certainly far from being purebred; nonetheless thousands of native Egyptian Maus live among them. So how can EMRO state a rescued cat as “pure” (original) Egyptian Mau, especially when these cats come in colors other than the favored bronze, silver or smoke, or even without any spots at all?

The following paragraphs will point out what features a Mau has, and what separates the original (native) Egyptian Maus from the pure bred ones. Unless otherwise stated, the items below apply for both original and native Mau.

## **Body:**

Middle-sized, muscular yet elegant. A loose skin fold protracts from the belly to the back knee, which provides an enormous springiness. The Maus unique body features make these cats the world fastest breed, with a speed up to 30 mph

## **Tail:**

Medium-sized, wide on the onset and slightly tapered, with definite rings and a black tail tip.

## **Legs and Paws:**

Compared to the body proportion the legs are medium-sized, whereas the back legs are slightly longer than the front legs. The paws are small, delicate and lightly oval. The color is usually that of the cat’s pattern (generally dark brown, dark grey, black or dark red) and the legs are mostly randomly banded.

## **Coat:**

The fur is very smooth and silky, yet thick and soft at contact. It is quite short, yet long enough to hold various rows of ticking. The purest coat feels almost like velvet or very soft silk, i.e. it appears as if the “cloth” is tightly wrapped around the body, but either consists of hairs in different (silk) or even length (velvet). This is necessary to keep the cat warm at night and cool during the day. This protects it from dirt, dust and sand, as well as from soaking with water during rain (or fishing).

## **Coat Color:**

The recognized purebred colors are silver (*white coat with black/dark grey patterns*), bronze (*brown coat in various shades with dark brown/black patterns*) and smoke (*black coat with white/light grey patterns*). Black can also be registered as a Mau but cannot be bred or shown.

Native Maus, however, have a bigger variety in fur colors. Bronze is the most natural, hence most occurring color. Black also occurs from time to time. Silver and smoke, on

the other hand, are artificial fur colors which emerged due to occasional mutations, followed by selective breeding. In addition to those colors, already known with pure bred Maus, there are also golden (red) Maus, as well as a variety of dilute colors, such as blue Maus (black dilution) or crème Maus (red dilution)

### **Pattern:**

While purebred Maus are only recognized and registered if they are randomly but clearly and well-defined spotted, there are three patterns in native Maus. Spotted tabbies are still the most frequent, but in addition Maus can also be marbled (blotched, or the “Classic” style) or also completely free of markings (especially black Maus or the blue “self” Maus). The latter is called “non-agouti” and can be found with other African wild cats, especially with leopards.

Broken necklaces on the chest, buttons on the stomach and the banded legs and tail complete the unique patterns of most Maus. However, Maus can never occur as ticked (origin: central Africa/ Asia; example: Abyssinian cats ) or mackerel/striped tabbies (origin: Europe/Asia; example: European wild cat ).

### **Head:**

Slightly rounded and wedge-shaped. The nose is neither short nor sharp. A clear Scarab-marking (or “M”) can be found on the cat’s forehead, and so-called mascara lines run from the eyes over the cheeks.

### **Ears:**

Middle-sized to large, completing the lines of the head, with moderate distance in between the single ears.

### **Eyes:**

Almond-shaped, large and expressive eyes, usually surrounded by black lines and frown marks, which provides the cat with a worried, yet ancient and wise expression. Native Maus either have green or amber eyes (all shades), although any Mau may start out with amber eyes which usually turn to shades of gooseberry green by age one and a half.

### **Traits:**

Egyptian Maus are extremely intelligent, very loving and playful. They expect to be a full (if not the most important) part of “their” family. Maus love company; however, they decide themselves if they prefer humans or cats. On selecting their human, Maus are devoted and extremely loyal; some even tend to try to protect their human from danger and strangers. Many are shoulder riders, lap cats and faithful alarm clocks, when waking you up by licking, kneading and soft meowing. A very active cat by nature, the Egyptian Mau loves to play and learn. It seems to be quite easy to teach a (tame) Mau tricks and even get it to accept if not love a harness and leash for a daily walk. The Egyptian Mau wants and loves to communicate in a soft, melodious, sometimes chirping or singing voice, and can be sometimes very chatty.

Egyptian Maus are true treasures, once tamed and focused on their personal tin opener. They are very bright, even-tempered and truly amazing creatures.