

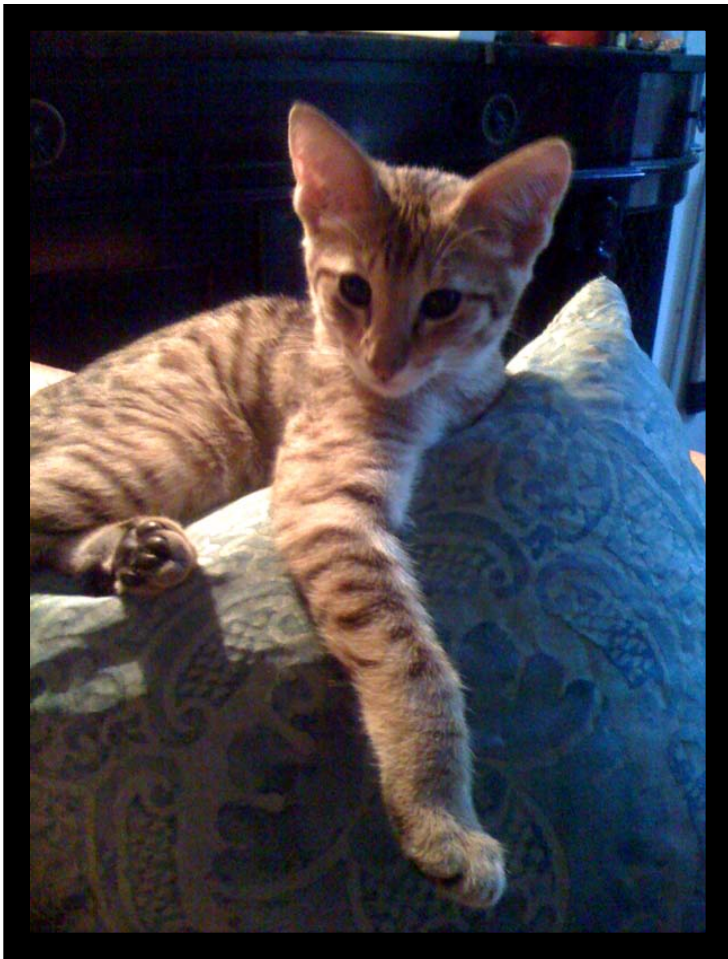


Finding a Good Savannah Breeder

by Jennifer Miller

How does one go about finding a good, ethical Savannah breeder? Where does one look? What areas are best avoided? Here are my observations, which come from my own experience and the many experiences of others I've had shared with me.

1. Check your Breed Association Club -- The Savannah Cat Club has a list of members, email addresses, and website addresses.
2. Contact the various breeders and if they have nothing available, ask them to recommend a breeder to you. Good Breeders are happy to recommend another breeder they feel has quality, healthy cats. If you are considering a kitten purchase from a particular breeder, ask other breeders about this breeder. A good breeder will not badmouth another breeder, but you can easily learn who is spoken highly of.
3. Search the Internet for web pages specifically put up by a breeder of one or two breeds of cat. Not Yahoo ads, classified ads, or breeders who always have a large number of kittens available.
4. Check with a breeder referral such as FBRL - you can search by breed and state.



Remember TICA is just a breed registry, not a guarantee of a good breeder, so don't assume that a TICA registered breeder is always a good breeder. Do not assume that any TICA registered cat or kitten carries any kind of guarantee that the cat is healthy and without genetic defect, either. TICA's primary job is to keep records on which cats bore litters and how many kittens were in that litter, NOT whether the kittens are healthy and free of disease or genetic defect.

5. Attend CAT SHOWS if at all possible; talk to the various breeders. Ask them if they recommend anyone in your area.
6. Check with cat rescue organizations.
7. Typically, newspaper ads are an area to avoid. This does not mean that good, ethical breeders don't occasionally place ads here, but that the majority of ads are from backyard breeders and kitten mills.
8. Once you've found a breeder, ask many questions. A good, reputable breeder will be happy to answer any and all questions, and will be impressed that you are that concerned / interested, too.

9. VISIT the cattery, if at all possible. Fancy websites, show champions, etc. do not necessarily make for a good breeder. Visit and take care to note the health and care given to the cats and kittens, their personalities, and the cleanliness of the cattery including food and water bowls and litter boxes, etc.

Know what you are looking for:

1. Good breeders NEVER sell their kittens to brokers, pet stores, flea markets, etc.
2. Good breeders stand behind their cats and kittens for the life-time of the Savannah, meaning that they will take back any cat or kitten for ANY reason that a buyer can no longer keep it, just like a good rescue does.
3. Good breeders don't ALWAYS have kittens on hand and you often have to be put on a waiting list.
4. Good breeders require a spay / neuter contract with proof the cat was altered before you'll get the papers if you are not buying the cat for breed/show purposes. OR, they practice early spay and neuter.
5. Good breeders will give you references of other good breeders or proud pet owners who have Savannahs bred by them and actually WANT you to talk to them.
6. Good breeders will almost never breed more than two breeds, and usually only one.
7. Good breeders often show their Savannahs, but not always.
8. Good breeders do not let their kittens go to new homes before ten weeks of age.
9. Good breeders socialize their kittens.
10. Good breeders are proud to show you the parents of the kittens, if both are owned by the breeder, and are also happy to show off the cattery and its cats -- excluding of course young kits. They will also produce pedigrees and health information.
11. Good breeders breed only to improve their line or their breed, not for the sole purpose of making money.
12. Good breeders will speak honestly with you about the positive and negative aspects of the Savannah breed. They will not tell you the Savannah is the perfect cat for everyone.
13. Good breeders will speak frankly about health / genetic concerns in the breed or line.
14. Good breeders truly love their cats, and treat them as pets first, taking the very best care of them that they can.

Good luck on your search for that special Savannah Kitten!

Jennifer Miller