

BRADFORD'S BEST:

Congratulations to Terry Brannon's Ivory Satin (see picture by Neil Robertson) best of breed, best Fur and 4th best in show at the 2018 Bradford Premier Small Animal Show

This tribute to the Satin was adapted from an article by John Arnold, a Satin enthusiast who wrote regularly for Fur & Feather



Why the Satin is unique

The first Satins originated in America in Walter Huey's rabbitry during an inbreeding experiment to improve his normal Havanas; his Satin mutation was introduced to the American showing world in December 1934.

Soon breeders began to satinize many of the normal fur breeds and at the 1936 American Rabbit Breeders Convention the Satin breed was recognised and given a standard.

In 1938 the Satin Havana was exhibited as a separate variety to its normal Havana counterparts. Breeders began to satinise other breeds and varieties, the type and weight following those of the Havana.

The standard for the White Satin was accepted in America in 1947 and the following year the original Ivory (albino) Satins were being shown in England. A club was formed the following year.

The first Satin to win best in show at Bradford Ch Show was Melsun Stud with an Ivory in 1957, a win that the breed was to repeat in 1964, 1974 and 2009.

The Satin as an exhibition rabbit is first class and a joy to breed. It has everything a fancier could wish for and for those who like a challenge, the Satin is a must.

The Satin comes in a large range of colours and shades. If the self rabbit is preferred, one can take his pick from the Ivory, Havana, Black and Blue. The Agouti pattern has to offer the colours of Chinchilla, Castor, Cinnamon, Opal, Lynx and Squirrel, all of which are very beautiful. In the tan pattern there is the Marten and Siamese Sable, Fox in black, blue and chocolate, and Smoke Pearl. The shaded section included Orange, Red, Sooty Fawn and the very popular Himalayan with its black points on an Ivory background.

The unique characteristic of the Satin is its fur structure and sheen. The colour in the Satin rabbit has more richness and appears darker than its normal counterparts. A point many judges seem to forget when judging coloured Satins.

The basic difference in the Satin fur is:

- a smaller diameter and
- a more transparent hair shell.

The greater transparency of the outer hair shell makes the filament granules show through more clearly, so that Satins appear more intense in colour compared to the normal varieties. The sheen and lustre is due to the clarity of the glass-like hair shell, and its ability to reflect light.

The ideal Satin should be fine, very dense and thick to the touch, due to the soft, very thick under fur. If the hair shaft shows wooliness the hair will not be clear and distinct.

The fine soft, dense under fur should be interspersed thickly with lustrous slightly coarser guard hair visible to the skin. It should extend above the under fur evenly about one eighth of an inch, forming a protective surface for the under fur, giving body, density and brightness in texture, so that when the fingers are drawn through the coat, it will roll back to its natural position and lay smoothly over the entire body.

The coat should be well balanced with uniform length of one and one quarter of an inch. When in full coat it must have the appearance of a glossy, lustrous sheen. Remember, the coats of ALL

Satins must ROLL back; never on any account breed from stock with fly back coats as this will only lead to heartbreak.

Always buy the best stock available. There are always reputable breeders who will be pleased to give the newcomer a square deal.

NEVER breed from stock which is inclined to be woolly on the rump. If such rabbits are used in the breeding pen they will eventually lead to trouble by producing the unwanted Angora type Satin, then all your good work will have been wasted.

Many good strains of satin have litters of eight or more and on many occasions I have had litters of twelve and thirteen, but to give the youngsters and the mother a fair deal, I never keep more than six youngsters with any one doe. By doing this I give those special babies a really good start in life.

Adapted from The A-Z of Satin Rabbits by Stephanie Davies

