

4/24/2021

To: Thomas Bolles

Subject: Testimonial for Bryce (Zander) & Denali (Zuzu)

Nila, Fort Collins, CO, Zuzu, blue point female & Zander, seal point male (Summer & Brody, 10/20)

My first sight of my new kittens after a l-o-n-g 8-month wait was at Denver International Airport on January 13, 2021, when I met Tom and Breannalyn in an almost empty entrance to the parking garage. Breannalyn was sitting on the edge holding the two kittens in her arms against her chest. They looked so cute I could hardly wait to hold them. I did stop to take a picture before going over to meet them. I renamed them Zuzu (Denali) and Zander (Bryce).

I have had Siamese since 1962 when my family got our first one, a female (I was in Junior High). The next year we got her half-brother, a male. The female (Scheherazade, Zodie for short) claimed me. I had her for 20 years. Since then, I have had 5 more (2 were 19, 1 only 9 (had only 1 kidney)). When I lost my second 19 ½-year old in 2015, I took some time to do some traveling then looked for some new Siamese kittens. My, how the world had changed! I had always been able to get the kittens locally.

When I searched online, the first one that came up was extreme and no fur (later turned out to be a Sphynx) and then pictures were of extreme “wedge heads”, not much like the cats that I had been used to. I wanted two seal point females from the same litter or a sister and brother. Late at night I found a picture of a sister and brother that I liked in Phoenix. The next day when I went to request them, the picture was gone. As I continued looking, the picture popped up again a few weeks later. I contacted the breeder right away. The male was taken but the female was still available. He suggested a Balinese (I had to look it up – a long-haired Siamese) he had, a female chocolate point who was 2 ½ weeks younger. Yes, wonderful blue eyes and the tail wasn’t as fluffy as some of the pictures. I drove down to pick them up and we arrived home just as Superbowl 50 kicked off (which the Denver Broncos won with Peyton Manning).

Having two kittens from the same cattery that close in age worked out very well. (My previous two were 6 months apart.) They were buddies and played well together. Thank goodness for them during the pandemic lockdown. I figured we were set for the next 19 years or so. Then, at 4 ½ I had a shock. I had to put down the Balinese on the day after Mother’s Day as she developed lymphoma and had a large abdominal mass. I really wanted to get some new companions for Sanura while she was still pretty young. The Phoenix cattery wasn’t breeding Siamese now.

As I checked around the internet for Breeders again in the western part of the US, I came across Black Thai Cattery. I cross checked with various sites to get a sense of the history and trustworthiness of the owner. I had a bad experience with a listing of a Siamese kitten for sale that was supposedly local in a Denver suburb, easy driving distance and I liked the picture of the kitten. The reply to my email was supposedly from an individual in Maryland who had a litter that he had to sell because his job would be having him travel. The English had misspellings and read like English was not his original language. Nope! I walked away from it (no deposit sent).

I liked the variety of information on the Black Thai Cattery website. The various pictures, testimonials and breed background felt “real” and changed over time. The references from some other sources (e.g., Breeders lists and ancestry) helped with the confirmation. I learned about the new Thai breed which was really the Siamese breed that I was familiar with.

I sent the initial interest email and Tom called me back within a short time that evening. We had a good conversation. He told me how long the wait list was and what the litters had been averaging plus the price and what it included. He sent me a contract with an expected litter due date of late September. I placed a deposit on two kittens. Tom did warn me not to expect any communication from him until mid-pregnancy.

I was just about ready to contact him because it was early October and he sent an email that Belle was pregnant and due mid to late October then the joyful news that 3 litters had been born within a few days of each other! He & daughter, Breannalyn, began sharing weekly pictures of the litters along with comments. I looked forward to this email each week. As the genders became clearer, there weren’t many females. As the requests by the people ahead of me sorted out, I adjusted my desires but still wanted at least one female. Tom called me to discuss the situation. He had another litter that was just one week younger that had a blue point female and a couple of seal point males. Would I like to move to that litter? Yes!

I enjoyed the pictures that Breannalyn provided. Denali (Zuzu) was inquisitive & the first one out of the kitten pen (Tom sent a picture). Bryce (Zander) looked interested in taking action in a couple of pictures. Tom set up a Zoom meeting so that I could watch the kittens and their mother playing (and saw the sparkler in action). Tom talked about them and answered questions. There were sometimes when I couldn’t understand him because he accommodated me by using a laptop and sometimes the microphone didn’t pick up when he was turned away but he made sure that I could watch the kittens. I was considering two of the males and finalized my choice of Bryce (Zander).

Another customer service option that I really liked was Tom offered to bring the kittens to my local airport for the cost of the plane ticket. I especially appreciated that because of the pandemic shutdown. It was a comforting feeling to know that the kittens were accompanied.

I'm so glad to have the kittens join us especially with still staying pretty much around home. I was hopeful that my 5-year-old cat, Sanura, would be welcoming since she had lost her buddy. However, I guess over the 8-months she got used to being the "only child". It took longer for her to be accepting. I believe she's glad that there are others of "her kind" around, but it's still not "buddy-buddy". She will let them sleep next to her for a while and groom them and then other times she will hiss and bat at them. Once in a while she'll play with them and initiate a chase. As Zander has gotten bigger, she interacts with him a bit more.

Zander is about 50% bigger than Zuzu. Tom had informed me that she was going to be a petite cat because she had some problems eating the first couple of weeks so they had to supplement her feedings. She has been eating well since she arrived but had the heft of a bird. I could hardly tell when she jumped or walked on me while Zander was solid. She finally put some heft on a few weeks before being spayed. However, Zuzu is the family mediator. She was the first one that got Sanura to accept having her curl up with her. If she was hissed and batted at, she would try again fairly soon. The kittens just want to be by her.

I really like the socialization that Tom and daughters have done. They aren't afraid of the vacuum cleaner or the garage door openers. Unfortunately, the grandkids haven't had a chance to pet them yet but they really want to. The time is getting closer.

When I brought them home, I followed Tom's instructions. I closed Sanura up in the master bedroom. Zuzu and Zander did some exploring, used the litter box and ate and drank. They were very quiet. About 90 minutes later, I went and let Sanura out (ranch-style house). We were talking to each other as we started walking to the kitchen. The kittens heard her and started meowing like "Oh, there you are! We are here!" As we entered the kitchen, the kittens came galloping out of the bathroom where the food, water, litter box, cat tree & carrier are towards her, "We are so glad to find you!". Then, they put the brakes on about 3 feet away. "You aren't a cat we know!" Then arched backs & hissing. Zuzu pretty well stood her ground while Zander worked his way back to the bathroom, their "safe place".

After Sanura and I went to bed, I heard a plaintive meow in the hallway, "Where's my family?". I meowed back but that wasn't calming. I heard it again about 4 hours later. In the morning, they ate but then spent the rest of the day in the carrier. I even moved the carrier to the sunspace with the sun but they didn't come out. The next day they hid someplace in the house all day but showed up to eat in the evening. They did come out to the living room later while Sanura and I were in the recliner watching TV. They climbed the cat tree between the recliners and set back behind the table and lamp. They stayed in the middle box where they were a bit higher than us and could watch the TV and keep on the lookout for what Sanura was going to do. She did a bit of hissing but stayed between my legs.

I have been on the computer a lot because of Zoom meetings, playing virtual Bridge games and teaching an online Bridge class. They have done well after some initial "walking on keyboard" interruptions. I had a heated cat bed set on the credenza behind me for the other two cats. All three tried to use it at once but it was too crowded. I moved the second larger heated bed from the living room since they weren't using it much and also put it on the credenza. They will mix & match as needed between the two. When they get too hot, they will move over to the cat tree by the printer to cool off. They try to have all 3 together in the top box but that doesn't last long, too cramped. I just really like being able to look over and see what they are doing. It's comforting to have them close by. Sanura doesn't like sharing with them on the bed. So, sometimes I'll wake up with Sanura and sometimes the kittens. I hope we can get to the point that everyone is there. To me, cats make a house a home!

One of the things I'm working on is getting the kittens to "talk" more. I am used to Siamese being talkative. They are too quiet. I mentioned that to Tom and he said they have to train them to be quiet because there are too many around at once to have them all talk. At feeding time, they do talk quietly but I have unintentionally stepped on a tail but no sound. I have to get them to talk when I unintentionally shut one of them out in the garage or a closet (Sanura or her buddy would inform me when that happened by being very insistent with their talking and going to the door where the other was shut out). It's happened a couple of times and I didn't realize until I noticed that I haven't seen one of them in a while. They have some new places they bed down so I don't always find them when I check on them before I leave.

For the first few weeks they were fearless climbing and jumping and have had a few ugly falls when they misjudged. I remember Tom's comment that after he clipped their nails, he had to tell them that they can't climb like Velcro right away. That was exactly the visual when they were younger. They now are a bit more cautious. Zander loves to climb and jump. He's getting to the top of the computer stand but Zuzu is hesitant to follow even though she really wants to because there is an unsteady open door to negotiate. Zander just leaps over it.

Zuzu is really intrigued with the toilet flushing. She likes to jump up on the ring and watch the water swirl. I was expecting that she and Zander would jump into the water once each since my other cats did that, but they haven't – impressive! They might be candidates to train to go in the toilet so no litter needed! I'm not sure that I'm ready for that. 😊

They have a unique, subtle physical characteristic visible when you are close to them – slight rings on their tails like a racoon which give them character. Zander's are barely visible on his seal point tail. The rings are just a bit darker, like shadows. Zuzu's are a bit more visible because of the higher contrast on her blue point tail.

You can tell that Tom and daughter, Breannalyn, are very loving and caring of their cats and kittens. Tom explained what to expect and was very willing to answer questions. He spent a lot of time interacting with customers to match the kittens in the litters with the customers' desires. Adjustments had to be made. He wants to make sure that the kittens are going to a good home and that the customers like their choices because these kittens are family members for life. Tom's requirement that if that can't be lifetime to contact him to rehome the kittens is another demonstration of his love and care for the kittens. His only miss was that the expected date of birth turned out to be one month later. Not bad for everything that was going on with the pandemic's impact on things! The initial quote on the price was significantly higher than I was expecting but was well worth it based upon the quality of the kittens and everything that was covered including all shots needed for the first year plus being microchipped, being fed high quality food and receiving a "kitten care" starter package.

I highly recommend that if you are looking for a Siamese kitten like one you grew up with (now called Thai), you can't go wrong working with Tom at Black Thai Cattery. His responsive customer service has been awesome from initial contact to weekly kitten pictures ending with delivering the kittens in person to Denver. The kittens are healthy, inquisitive, playful, loving and a joy to have – just as promised!

I would buy another kitten from Black Thai Cattery but I hope that is not needed for another 18 or so years!