

Showing your Savannah!!!!

by Brigitte Cowell

There is a lot of detail in this document, as we wished to tell you EVERYTHING you might need to know to show your Savannah.

When I went to my first show, I was so worried about getting it right I couldn't think straight. With this in mind, I thought that you might prefer having too much detail than not enough...

Preparations

Registration of Your Cat/Kitten

- The first thing that you must do is make sure that your cat/kitten is registered with TICA! Either the breeder will give you the kitten's "blue slip" (litter registration form) or will sign over the registration papers to you if he/she had already registered the cat/kitten.
 - It is easy to register from the blue slip, just fill out the form and send off with the small amount of fee. It typically takes TICA two weeks to process forms, but if you need the registration number earlier for the show you can call them earlier and ask if it has been processed yet. They can then give you the registration number over the phone.
 - It's also easy to transfer ownership, your breeder has only to sign the back of the Registration Papers for your cat/kitten and you fill out the rest, send it off to TICA with the small fee and it's done!
- Next, you need to decide on the show venue and date. www.tica.org has a show calendar with all the shows they are holding and where and when they are. Find a show near you (or near somewhere you'd like to visit!).

Entering Your Cat/Kitten in a Show

- Often on the show calendar page there is an online registration form. That is usually my preference, I can fill it out and send it off immediately and usually I can even paypal the entry fee!
- Otherwise, you will need to fill out a paper form and mail it with your payment. Either call or email the show entry clerk for an entry form, there is also a generic show entry form on the TICA website that can be used.
 - When you are at shows, you will be given lots of show flyers for subsequent shows. These include the entry forms a lot of the time, which makes it easier.
- This link takes you to a pdf file of a general show entry form on the TICA site. [\[link to entryform.pdf\]](#)
- This link takes you to a sample show entry form showing you how you MIGHT fill it out [\[link to filled_entryform.pdf\]](#)
 - If you want to take along a buddy for your show cat, it is possible. You can enter a cat for Exhibition Only, which means it sits in the cage with your show cat but doesn't go to the rings. This cat can be another Savannah (F3 onwards, or you can write for special permission to bring an F1 or F2 from the show manager), another breed, or even a household pet. [\[insert link to HHP page\]](#). Remember you could also show your household pet in a different class to your Savannah! Two cats are allowed in a double cage, and you will want a double cage anyway, as a single cage is kind of small. In my opinion, not enough room for litterbox, kitty bed and dishes. So either order the extra half cage or enter another cat.
 - You will probably see a note on the TICA Summary Sheet whether it is online or paper that asks for your "benching preferences" or says "benching request". If

you are not showing at a Savannah-Rama show, you should complete this. It tells the entry clerk who you want to sit by. If you have a friend you know is showing, you can put in that friend's last name. It is always fun to bench next to other Savannah owners. But, if you think that no one else is showing a Savannah at a given show, and a friend is showing a different breed, feel free to request benching near that friend. Especially at your first show, having a friend or someone with experience near you really helps. At Savannah-Rama shows, we are all benched together, so this is not a pressing concern.

- Once you have sent in the forms and payment, you should receive a receipt form in the mail, with all the details as they will be listed in the show catalogue. You need to check that your cat is listed correctly, and contact the show entry clerk if there is any mistake(s).

Shopping for Supplies

- Then you need to go shopping for show supplies! You will need:
 - Some fabric for your show curtains...5 yards should be sufficient.
 - You could also find show curtains already made by someone else. An online search will yield websites retailing show curtains in a variety of styles and designs. Ebay sometimes has really good deals – www.ebay.com
 - Some office binder clips (3/4" wide is good). These are great for clipping all sorts of things together ☺
 - Can't hurt to take some safety pins either, you just never know!
 - Scissors for on-site tailoring of show curtains...
 - A bathmat or dog blanket (I found a black faux fur one that I like) to line the floor of the show cage. You can contact the show clerk to find out the size of the cages if it is not anywhere on the online flyer.
 - A small litter tray
 - Litter scoop
 - Couple of bowls for food and water
 - Pictures for display on top of the cage
 - Toys &/or treats that your kitty prefers. I really love the freeze-dried chicken pieces you can get, as they love them and are so good for them.
 - Nail clippers, for if you forget to trim their nails the day before the show. Claws must be clipped very short for the show.
 - Baby wipes, cleaning wipes, paper towels, pet odor eliminator/cleaner for emergencies.
 - Couple of photos in frames for the top of the cage, &/or a photo album of your other furbabies
 - Hand sanitizer, in case you worry about strangers passing germs to your kitten/cat
 - Business cards to hand out
 - Big bag to put all of this in!

Preparing your Kitten

- Weeks before the date of the show, start practicing with your kitten/cat.
 - Keep picking him/her up and holding up in front of you, stretching the torso out and looking at the face etc.
 - Get other people (family, friends, postman) to do the same with your kitten/cat
 - Invite people over so that your kitten/cat gets used to different people and groups of people.
 - Take your kitten/cat with you to places like the pet store so that they get more accustomed to being in a strange place.

Travel plans

- If you are traveling by plane to the location of the show:

- The week leading up to the show you may need to take your kitten/cat to the vet for a health certificate. Some airlines require you to have this health certificate, so check with the airline that you book with.
- If you are flying there, then you need to book your kitten/cat at the same time as your fare. There is a limit to the number of cats allowed in the cabin. Usually it is two in coach class and one in first class, however, depending on the size of the aircraft and airline policy sometimes only one cat is allowed in the cabin on a plane, so you need to make sure there would be room. This means that you will have to call the airline to book, or reserve the flight online then call before you buy that fare... just to make sure you can take your cat/kitten on that particular flight.
- There is an extra charge for having a pet on the flight with you. As of April, 2004 the average charge was \$80.00 each way, in addition to your fare. Check with the airline you book with how much it will be, as this charge may change.
- You will need a carrier that will fit under the seat in front of you on the plane, the softer sided carriers are better for this than hard carriers. Your airline's website will often have the dimensions that will be appropriate.
- You will need to pack cleanup supplies in your carry-on bag: paper towels, plastic bags, pet shampoo wipes (or baby wipes), and possibly another rug for inside the carrier. You never know when there might be an "accident", especially if there is a flight delay.
- You will need a cat walking jacket that fits your kitten/cat. It is much safer and easier to take your cat through the bag search area if you have this on them... as the carrier must be x-rayed and you will want to take your kitten/cat with you through the metal detector. Usually the small metal ring of the jacket and metal clasp of the leash do not set off the metal detectors at airports. But a great alternative is to use a bootlace instead of the leash.
- You can also check your cat as baggage. The fee varies on the airline and your cat will not be with you in the cabin although it will be in the plane in a temperature controlled area. The airlines are generally quite good about this and give you a little piece of paper stating your cat is on board (it says something cute like "Don't Worry I Am Here Too" and has your cats name on it. If you choose to do this, be sure you have a hard sided carrier with food and water and that it is big enough for your cat to walk and stand in. The down side of this is that in the event of flight delays, your cat will be stuck in the baggage loading area of the airport which may not be temperature controlled and may be stressed and upset.
- Should you give your cat drugs to calm it? In general the answer is no, especially if it will not be in the cabin with you. Studies on the effect of common tranquilizers at altitude have not yielded any proof that the use of these tranquilizers is safe. If your vet gives you something, use it with caution and make sure your cat is with you in the cabin. If you use a tranquilizer and your cat is checked as baggage there will be no one attending your cat and no one there to help if something goes wrong.
- Some people have found that herbal remedies like Rescue Remedy or Calm Stress help with motion sickness and/or stress during travel or during shows. These remedies have an alcohol base, so whether it is the herbs or the alcohol that is working is up for debate. However, not all cats respond to these remedies.
- If you do decide to try a tranquilizer or herbal remedy, it is a good idea to try it well before the trip or show to determine how your cat will respond to it.
- Traveling by car:
 - Depending on the length of the drive and how your cats respond to traveling, you may or may not want a litter pan, food, and water in the carrier.
 - Make sure you have cleanup supplies and clean bedding on hand in case the carrier and/or bedding get soiled.

- It is a good idea to have a harness on the cat while in the carrier and a leash on hand in case you need to clean the carrier or transfer the cat, or in case of an auto accident.
- See recommendations in the air travel section above on using tranquilizers or herbal remedies.
- If you will be traveling far enough to the show to have to stay at the show hotel rather than travel home every night, then you will need to take supplies with you for in the hotel room.
 - Litter is provided in the show hall, but the night before the show you will be in the hotel and need to bring your own litter for then.
 - Enough food and bottled water for your kitty
 - Toys to play with, so that your kitten/cat feels more settled and at home. Play is a great stress reliever!
 - Their favorite kitty bed. I usually take two...one for the hotel room and one for the showcage, so that I don't have to remember to carry it back and forth.
 - Make sure you put out the 'Do Not Disturb' sign on your hotel door to discourage hotel employees from entering the room when you have to leave your cat in the room and you are away.
 - Consider bringing a large sized carrier, or a wire crate or pen, to contain your cat while you are away from your room, or lock your cat in the bathroom, to prevent the cat from spraying or clawing furniture, and to guard against escape if hotel employees do enter the room.
 - Some hotels will charge a minimal pet deposit. It ranges from \$25.00 to \$50.00 and is refunded when you check out.

Show Preparation of Your Cat/Kitten

- Most cat shows require documentation that your cat is up to date on vaccinations; a copy of their rabies certificate and the vet statement from their most recent vaccinations are sufficient for this.
- Savannahs are easy to prepare for a show, as their coats do not require too much attention.
 - It is up to you if you bathe your cat/kitten the day before the show. Mine are very clean, but I like to get my cats used to bathing as kittens just in case.
 - Clip their nails short the day before the show, this is a show requirement.
 - Clean ear wax out, and clean any tear stains they might have. Wipes for both ears and eyes are easily purchased at pet stores and are gentle and appropriate for this use.

Show Day!!

Morning Preparations

- Rise early and try to make sure your cat/kitten eats a decent meal. Many cats/kittens find shows stressful (at least the first time) so may not eat for the rest of the day.
- Play with your cat/kitten to try and get rid of excess energy. Savannahs are high energy cats and they will be in a cage for the rest of the day!
- Check them over for dirt and clean up anything that requires it.

At the Show

- Get to the show in plenty of time to set up your show cage and get your cat/kitten settled. Better to give it time to get used to the environment before you cart him/her around to the show rings....
- When you enter, let them know your name and they will give you a show program and direct you to where your show cage is. Either they will have a list or there will be a

- schematic drawing there. At the cage location, your name is usually written there so that you know you are at the right place!
- **Remember:** Set up your cage with its rug and curtains, cat bed, litter box and food and water dishes BEFORE you put in your cat/kitten(s)!
 - Putting up the show cage looks daunting at first but is not as hard as it looks.
 - Take the wire cage off the table and place to the side for a moment.
 - Place a short piece of fabric from the table down to the floor at front...this gives you a barrier to store your bags during the show.
 - Put the bathmat/rug/piece of fabric that forms the floor of your show cage on the table and replace the wire cage.
 - When they place the cage on the table the lid is folded down. This allows you to place a piece of fabric around the sides of the cage, covering first one side, around the back of the cage and then the other side of the cage. So three sides are now covered with the front of the cage open.
 - Then fold back the lid of the cage. Many cages are different, but you can work out how the lid hooks onto the sides to be stable.
 - Then put your final piece of fabric over the top of the cage and hanging down the two sides to finish the cage setup.
 - Litter will be provided at the show hall, ask at the entry desk for its location.
 - Fill the litter tray and place in the cage. Fill dishes with food and water and also place in the cage.
 - Place your cat bed in the cage and it is ready for your cat/kitten.
 - Settle in your cat/kitten and take a look at your show catalogue.
 - You will find Savannahs listed in the Advanced New Breed section, usually towards the end of the program.
 - Your cat/kitten will be listed with a number. Either write it on your hand or commit it to memory for the day! This is the number you will have to listen for.
 - This link will take you to a sample Judging Schedule. The schedule is usually on the back cover, inside either the front or back covers, or on a separate sheet given to you when you enter.
 - Savannahs are in Advanced New Breed classes as of May 1st, 2004
 - This will be written on the schedule as NB, ANB, ADV...or some other shortened version.
 - Circle ANB on the schedule whenever it occurs.
 - Each judge in each ring will see all the classes once throughout the day. They stagger the divisions so that all judges aren't asking to see the same class at once!
 - Unfortunately, not all rings run at the same pace, some judges are snappy, some take their time, so during the day it is possible that your class will be called in more than one ring at once.
 - Take your cat to the first ring called, then let the next one know that you will be there as soon as the first judge is finished.

You are Showing!!

- So then you wait.... Until your class is called. They will announce this but some places do not have great audio systems so you will have to listen very carefully, or else scan the rings throughout the day.
 - You can work out if your ring is next by looking at which class of cats is in the ring... for example if household pets (HHPs) are in the ring and your class follows that, then you know to watch for your number when they have handed out the rosettes in that ring..
 - They will call the ring as class and/or the numbers that are up... so you will hear your number or the range of numbers. For example, if your number is 602, then you will either hear "601, 602, 605 to ring 5" or else something like "numbers 601 through 605 to ring 5". So then you take your cat to ring 5.

- When you get to the ring, there will be a cage with your cat's number placed above the cage. Put your cat into the cage, close the door and leave the ring. Sit in front of the ring and wait for the judge to proceed.
- The judge will take the cats out sequentially, hold them up to look at length of body, spotting pattern, turn it to look at the face. The judge may put it on the table then and play with your cat/kitten with a toy to give them a good look at the cat. Then they will put your cat/kitten back, clean the table and go on to the next cat/kitten. Once the judge has looked at all the cats/kittens, he/she will mark his/her placings on the official form, then put placings on the cage.
 - It will depend on the individual judge how much interaction there is in the ring. As we are still in "evaluation" (i.e., not in Championship class) the judge may ask who the owner of the cat/kitten is and ask you to discuss the cat/kitten's features as compared to the standard. Be prepared to critique your cat, and be able to describe what features you really like and what things you would like to be better or different. This link will take you to the Savannah Standard so that you can make sure you have studied it! Take a print out with you in case the judge does not have one with them.
 - Some judges will tell you what they thought of the cats as they put out the placings. Others will not, if you want to know what they thought, it is not impolite to wait and ask the judge after the ring is over.
- Once the ring is over, or the ring clerk places the cage number on its side or face, then you take your cat/kitten back to its cage. If your cat/kitten won the class, you can take the rosette back too. Some shows give little plaques for placings which you can stick to the rosette already hanging on the show cage.
- Throughout the day, your cat/kitten's number will be called in all rings, after the last one is over you can take your cat home for the night.
 - You can leave stuff in the cage overnight, although some people prefer not to leave food and water for the next day, but to refresh it the second day.
- Then you go through the same thing the next day.... But once the last ring for Sunday is over, then you get to pack up the cage and take EVERYTHING home.
- **Congratulate yourself and your cat/kitten on a job well done... you are good ambassadors for the Savannah breed ☺**

So What Is Different if I am Showing an Earlier Generation (F1 or F2) Kitten/Cat at a Savannah-Rama Fun ring?

- The Fun ring usually costs an extra \$10 per ring, this is in addition to the standard entry and cage fees
- You don't need to wait for rings to be called all day.
 - There will be only one ring for you, the Fun Ring and it is what it is called.... FUN!
- You will be the only one that has to handle your cat/kitten, so if they are nervous they will be more secure in your hands.
- If you are worried about them struggling out of your hands, you can bring them to the Fun Ring in a walking jacket with leash, so you always have them safe.
- You get to tell the Judge and the audience all about your cat.
- The judge is specifically chosen for their love of Savannahs ☺
- During the show days, while other people are running their cats to rings, you can stay at your show cage and talk to people
 - Savannahs create a lot of excitement, so there will be lots of people wanting to know more about your cat/kitten and Savannahs in general.
- And then of course, you get to meet other Savannah Owners and Enthusiasts!

You are also a wonderful Ambassador for the Savannah Breed ☺