



Opal Mini Satins

By Dereck Tuntland

Let me start by congratulating Randy and the ASRBA in the inclusion of the Opal Mini Satins to the ARBA. I was asked to write a short note about the Opal Mini Satins and how I developed them.

When I had heard that Randy had planned to take a COD out on Opal Mini Satins I was thrilled as this has long been one of my favorite colors in any breed of rabbit. I had been messing around with a White line of Mini Satins and had some pretty decent animals by that time. I sought after some Opal Mini Rex and did end up with a very nice pair from an exceptional breeder, and started to breed them into the Whites. I ended up with quite a bit of junk normal furred rabbits that either had poor color, type or both. In time, I did end up with two or three does in Opal color and a buck I was happy with. I then obtained a couple standard Opals out of Nick and Brittany Ignatowski's Coppers that had mediocre undercolor for Opals, but the surface and intermediate band was nice. I did keep the doe and used her to make a cross one time to the normal buck. I ended up with some mid-sized rabbits with sheen and decent color but had to breed the size down.

The last few years I have been breeding back to Coppers to ensure my toenails stay dark and my undercolor stays slate blue. I also use Whites for fur quality and size. Early this spring I ended up with Wade Burkhalter's buck that has outstanding intermediate band color and great depth of color.

The undercolor on the Opals is the most difficult to obtain and maintain. The undercolor must be slate blue. Faded undercolor was listed as a fault in the working standard, and may still be that way as I haven't seen the finalized standard. However, I do not keep rabbits that do not have the dark slate blue undercolor by about three months. Very young Opals may not have the slate undercolor until that three month time, but I have found that if they are not dark in undercolor by that time they will never get it. The surface color needs to be a blending of blue and golden fawn which is a blending of the band colors. Intermediate band color is to be a band of bright golden fawn. The belly undercolor is to be either white or slate blue, but I have found if the undercolor on the belly isn't slate blue then the undercolor on the body will be extremely weak.

The Opal color is both beautiful and challenging to work on. Combining color, fur and type is difficult, but the reward in a good Opal with all the above is well worth the work. I encourage anyone who would like to try one of the new varieties to give the Opals a spot in your rabbitry.