

A Little History of the Peruvian Inca Orchid

While this breed lives in Peru and some parts of Ecuador, it is thought to be descended from the hairless breed that the Coliman culture bred.

This culture flourished in western Mexico between 250 BC and 450 AD. Though they did not leave a written history, they left behind hundreds of pots in the shape of dogs.

It is suspected that the hairless dog made its way to Peru via trade. There is no pottery record of the breed in Peru until it shows up in Moche pottery around 750 AD. It was thought that the hairless dogs were brought on voyages as food.

Because of their original roles as guardians of the spirits of the dead, they may have been considered good luck for the travelers or even valuable items of trade as they went down the coast.



Colima Sleeping Dog, Protoclassic, ca. 100 B.C.-A.D. 250

In the Chimú culture, they were considered good luck. Because of the lack of hair and the warmth of its skin, it was considered a cure for certain fevers, arthritis, and asthma.

The Chancay, the culture before the rise of the Inca Empire, used black and cream pots to depict the spotted skin of the hairless dogs.

In one pottery figure, the dog appears to be wearing a coat. The Chancay also believed in the dogs as a health benefit. They thought the dog was related to fertility and there is speculation that the urine and feces were used in some drugs.



Coma culture dog

Today the dogs can still be found in the mountains with the Quechua people who are the descendants of the Incas. They have kept and protected these dogs. The Peruvian Inca Orchid has not fared as well in the cities along the coast. They were considered pariahs until recently. They ran in packs or as strays in the alleyways. Children were told by parents not to touch them because they were diseased.

In 1966, Jack Walklin, while visiting Peru, discovered these dogs. He brought eight of them back to the United States and began breeding them. He toured the South with his sideshow of oddities. The Peruvian Inca Orchids were touted as the “Killer Dogs of Peru, Monsters of the Past.” Jack Walklin bred some of his dogs and sold them to Jenny Tall, the owner of River Crest Kennels. She took some of these dogs to Europe where they were bred and sold.

Greg Miller and Leo Lightner saw the dogs and fell in love with their gentle natures and decided they deserved better than being “side show” freaks; they began breeding and showing these dogs in Texas.

In the beginning, the only place to register hairless dogs in the U.S. was the American Hairless Dog Club. The dogs were called Peruvian Inca Orchids because, until 1985, that was the official name given to them. They were registered under that name with FCI from 1980 to 1985.

In 1985, Peru changed the name to Perro sin Pelo del Peru. In Peru the dogs were commonly called Viringos. The Quechua people called them “Caa-Allepo,” meaning “dog without vestments.” In Ecuador, the Spanish and Quechua is combined and the dogs are called “Perro Llucho” meaning “dog turned inside out.”



Pre-Columbian, Peru, Moche, ca. 100 to 800 CE.

There is a wonderful story about these dogs that came to be accepted as “history.”

“When the Conquistadors came to Peru they found these dogs in rooms filled with orchids. Only the Inca noblemen were allowed to own them and that they only let the dogs out at night to run by the light of the moon.” From this story came the name Peruvian Inca Orchid Moon-Flower dog.”

It is a lovely legend, but there has been no historical validation of it. This tale likely originated in a letter from Jack Walkin to Jenny Tall.

Until 15 years ago, most of the dogs bred in the US came from the original 8 dogs. It was almost impossible to import dogs from Peru for many years.

In 2001, Peru declared the Perro sin Pelo del Peru a national patrimony. 2015 marked the Thirtieth anniversary of breed recognition by FCI.

AKC moved the breed into Misc Class in 2011.



Peruvian Inca Orchid Fast Facts

Names: Peruvian Inca Orchid (PIO), Perro sin Pelo del Peru (PSPP), Peruvian Hairless (PH), Viringo, Moon Flower Dog, Inca Hairless Dog, and Perros Flora.

General appearance: The Peruvian Inca Orchid is a Sight Hound. It is an elegant and slim dog, whose aspect expresses speed, strength, and harmony without ever appearing coarse. The fundamental characteristic of the breed is the absence of hair all over the body in hairless variety. The minority are the coated examples which are an important part of the breed's genetic makeup. Hairless and coated dogs are accepted by the breed standard.

Temperament: Noble and affectionate at home with those close to him, at the same time lively and alert, he is wary and a good guard dog in presence of strangers.

Three Sizes:

Small (pequeno) - 9.75-15.75" & 8.5-17.5 lbs

Medium (mediano) at 15.75-19.75" & 17.5-26.5 lbs

Large (grande) at 19.75-25.75" & 26.5-55 lbs

Jaws/Teeth: Scissor bite. Incomplete dentition in the hairless variety is normal. The lower jaw is only slightly developed



©Jp van Zanten, courtesy of S. Kolijn & C. Van Dingenen * Example of the 3 sizes

Peruvian Inca Orchid Rescue
WWW.peruvianincaorchidrescue.org



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