



General Description

The LaPerm is a distinctive cat that charms everyone it meets with its soft coat of shaggy curls and ringlets sometimes called a gypsy shag. These are intelligent, active cats who carefully think through just how to get that toy placed just out of reach. The name reflects their Native American connection with the Chinook tribe who traditionally used the French definite article when creating new words. Breed founder Linda Koehl thought the cats' coat looked like a loose perm and thus named the new breed LaPerm. It is a lean muscular cat with no exaggerated features as is befitting its farm background as a working cat. In addition to the distinctive curly coat with its mohair texture, the LaPerm has enchanting large, expressive almond-shaped eyes.

History

On March 1st, 1982 Linda Koehl watched a brown tabby cat named Speedy have a litter of 6 kittens in a barn in her cherry orchard and witnessed the birth of a new rex mutation: a long, skinny, hairless kitten with large wide-spaced ears, and a tabby pattern apparent in the skin like a tattoo. At 6 weeks the kitten developed a sparse curly shorthaired coat with a brown classic tabby pattern and Linda named her Curly. As she matured, Curly developed a soft wavy coat. Over time, more curly coated cats appeared and fascinated visitors to the farm who told Linda she had something special. She entered six cats in a cat show to see what people thought. The judges echoed the visitors to the farm-Linda had something unique that needed conserving. She decided to start a breeding program to establish her unique cats as the LaPerm breed.

Personality

The LaPerm is a clever inquisitive cat that thinks about how to get what it wants and now how use their paws to reach out and get exactly what they want whether it is a favorite toy or your attention. These mischievous clown-like cats with their curls and ringlets and innocent eyes make you laugh at their engaging antics. These active, outgoing cats like to be with you and to join in everything you are doing. They want to be close to you and will follow you around like a dog, ride on your shoulders, play games with you, or sprawl out next to you on the couch as you watch television. They are gentle affectionate cats who want human contact and will reach a paw out to pat your face. Their affectionate, loving nature means they get on well with children and other family pets, making them an ideal family companion.



Traits

The LaPerm coat consists of loose, light, airy curls and bouncy ringlets. It has a textured feel to it with a slight drag and feels like mohair. All three hair types (guard, awn, and down) are present and the texture comes from the shape of the curls and the mixture of the hair types. It is an invitingly soft coat standing away from the body and feels springy when patted. The longest curls are found in the ruff and on the neck where they are like ringlets. They also have curly hair inside the ears, tufts on the ear tips and longer fur on the backs of the ears referred to as earmuffs. Curly plumed tails adorn the longhair while the shorthairs have tails more like a bottlebrush. Both coat lengths have long curled whiskers and kinked eyebrows. The length and fullness of the coat for both coat lengths varies with the season and maturity of the cat. They come in a wide array colors, coat patterns and eye colors.

The LaPerm has a medium to long, or semi-foreign, body with medium boning and long legs. It is an active well-muscled cat that weighs in at 8 to 10 pounds for males and 6 to 8 pounds for females. They are a cat without extremes and their modified wedge-shaped head has gently rounded contours. Their eyes and ears stand out. The large-cupped ears have curly furnishings and ringlets around the base while their large, almond-shaped eyes look at you adoringly with an innocent look no matter what mischief they might have been up to.

Their curly coats are low shedding which makes maintenance a breeze-just like their airy coats! The coat does not mat easily as there is little undercoat and the curl holds much of the loose coat to the body rather than dropping to the floor and furniture. Light combing using a metal comb with rolling teeth removes any dead coat and keeps the coat in excellent condition in a matter of minutes. Bathing and towel drying will also keep the coat pristine-blowdrying is unnecessary as it makes the coat frizz. Once the coat is totally dry, emphasize the curl by spritzing the coat with a fine mist of plain water.