

Let's Hear it for the Shorthairs!

The Shorthaired LaPerm is a little less well-known than the Longhaired variety, perhaps because they are outnumbered by the Longhairs and because the Longhairs are more often shown in pictures to illustrate the breed. However, the shorthairs are a delight to discover, with their own unique attributes. In fact, the original LaPerms were Shorthairs. Curly, the first LaPerm was a Shorthaired tabby LaPerm and her first litter comprised five sons, also all curly Shorthairs. It was not until Longhaired cats were brought into the colony that the long, curly coats were seen.

The Shorthaired LaPerms have exactly the same outgoing and loving personality as the rest of the breed and the only physical difference is the coat length. A shorter coat can give them a slightly sleeker appearance as there is less fuzz to blur out the lines of their bodies.

The Shorthaired coat itself is unique amongst cat breeds. It is different from the long coat in that it has a different shape to the curl with a more wavy appearance and no ringlets in the neck ruff or plume to the tail. The coat is fuzzy wuzzy and stands out from the body, growing in all directions to give a random wave. Instead of a plumed tail the fuzzy coat creates the special bottlebrush effect that the Shorthaired LaPerm is famous for. It is a strong contrast to the coats of other shorthaired rex cats, like the Devon Rex and Cornish Rex whose coats are not fuzzy but lie flatter to the body and have a more orderly wave, especially in the Cornish Rex with its undulating, Marcel-wave type coat.

The texture of the Shorthaired LaPerm coat is a marvellous feeling as it is springy and great to run your fingers through. It has a bit more texture to it than the Longhair coat so it has a bit more resilience to its springiness. However, it should not feel coarse and it is worth noting that the texture changes throughout the cat's life, softening as the cat matures.

The unique Shorthair coat is summed up in the LaPerm Standard of Points thus;

SHORTHAIR: Coat length short to medium. The tail is not plumed but hair may be wavy. Whiskers will be long and curly, ear furnishings and eyebrow hairs may also curl.

Texture: Curly or wavy. The feel to the touch is unique among Rex breeds. It is a textured feel. It should be neither silky nor excessively harsh, but may have a crisper texture than the longhaired variety. The texture is created by the shape of the curls and the mingling of thicker guard hairs in the coat. The degree of softness may vary among individual cats. The coat has a springy texture, standing away from the body with waves over most of the cat. There is no ruff or ringlets and the tail will be like a bottle-brush. At times the coat will part naturally down the middle of the back.

Note: The coat matures up to three years of age and younger cats may have a crisper coat texture.

LaPerms can come in all possible colours so a whole range is seen in the shorthairs. The fact that the coat length doesn't allow for the longer, more sculpted curls and has a comparatively more even length overall means that some solid coloured Shorthairs can appear less curly from afar and it is not until you get closer, or touch the coat that you see the surprises it has to offer. Patterned coats, such as tabbies, bicouours, torties or smokes, are more obviously different as the lines within the patterns have an intriguing, wiggly, fuzzed up look.

So let's celebrate our Shorthaired LaPerms. They are a great treat to discover. Their short, wavy coats barely shed and are often sought after by people with mild cat allergies who want a cat they can comfortably live with. They have been an important part of the breed from its outset and have a dedicated fan base of people who just love the short and curly!