

Celebrities Fuel Market for U.S.-Bred Chihuahuas

Celebrities like Paris Hilton and Madonna have helped increase the U.S.-bred Chihuahua's popularity in Mexico.

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Like it or not, Paris Hilton sets trends. But now the woman who made "That's hot" famous has shown her influence extends south of the border.

According to USA Today, Mexican pet stores have been increasing imports of U.S.-bred Chihuahuas to sell to clients drawn by an American pedigree – and unfazed by the \$1,500 price tag.

In the last decade, Chihuahua-loving celebrities like Hilton, Madonna, and Britney Spears have transformed the dog into a style and status icon, and helped the breed's popularity reach record levels.

U.S.-bred Chihuahuas apparently offer Mexican dog lovers even greater prestige.

"I think it's probably partly a matter of status, this desire for an American dog," says David Sanchez, assistant manager of the Mas-Kota shop in Mexico City's Perisur Mall.

Even in the breed's namesake state of Chihuahua, about a third of the Chihuahuas sold at one pet store came from U.S. breeders.

"A lot of the time these are the same bloodlines we sent over the border years ago," says Mayra Rodriguez, owner of the Mascota Pet Shop in Chihuahua.

The Chihuahua isn't the only traditionally Mexican symbol that's increasingly being imported as a result of Mexico's growing economy.

One-third of Mexico's chile peppers, long a staple of Mexican cuisine, now come from Asia, according to Mexico's National Council of Chile Producers.