

Old Variety Canary: Fiorino

By Dr. Mac Saedi

HISTORY

The Fiorino is the youngest member of the frill family of canaries. It was created in Italy in the late 1970's. I first observed it during a visit with a friend, Dr. Umberto Zingoini. Dr. Zingoni has been one of Italy's champion breeders for over 50 years. He is the leading authority on F.O.I., frill and other old variety canaries in Italy.

On the second floor of his aviary, I observed two flights of second generation Fiorino. Dr. Zingoni explained how he began by breeding a small Northern Dutch Frill to a Gloster Corona. From these crosses and by the use of inbreeding the new frill variety was created. Eventually the breed was distributed to interested breeders and with more inbreeding the curving of feathers and size was improved

A controversy developed between breeders over the pattern of frill, type, and size. In the beginning the Fiorino was fairly large. Some thought of it as a miniature Padua. In reality, the Fiorino has characteristics which differ from the Padua. In 1982 a meeting between authorities was held and a temporary standard was established for the Fiorino. This temporary standard was accepted by C.O.M. and was to remain in place until the goal of a length of 5-5-1/4 inches could be obtained by breeders. Other breeds were used to reduce the size. Only then was the new or today's standard of 4 inches adopted by C.O.M.

Today's Fiorino is a 5 inch small frill family bird with specific type and curling of feather. It comes in a crested and plain head variety, all the usual variety of colors for type canaries are acceptable.

In the authors opinion the Fiorino seen at current shows are not yet up to standard. More work is needed to improve crests. Some fanciers confuse the characteristics of the Fiorino with the Padua. The Padua differs from the Fiorino by being larger in size with larger and more massive amounts of feathering. The Padua also has a distinctive neck feather pattern. The usual variety of type canary colors are acceptable for the Padua, but a clear bird with a grizzled or dark crest is preferred by some fanciers.

An overly simplified way to compare the two breeds would be to say, the Fiorino is like a small Northern Dutch Frill with a crest. The Padua is like a medium sized Parisian with a crest, but with distinctive differences in the neck and head.