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## HISTORY

### COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Brazil is one of the largest countries in Latin America: 8.5 million square kilometres and about 160 million people. In contrast is the number of native dog breeds: only six. Two breeds are recognized by the F.C.I. – the Fila Brasileiro and the Terrier Brasileiro (Fox Paulistinha or Bazilian Terrier). The other four breeds are nationally recognized by the Brazilian Kennel Club,

and in many cases their early history can be found on the other side of the ocean, in Europe.

**BULDOQUE CAMPEIRO** (*Bulldogque Pampeano, Bulldoghe Brazil, Brazilian Bulldog*)

### OLD ENGLISH BULLDOG

The Bulldogque Campeiro is a descendant of the old English Bulldog, brought to Brazil by immigrants in the

# THE BRAZILIAN BREEDS

*Raças Brasileiras*

*text and illustrations by* RIA HÖRTER

de Conferência Brasileira de Cinofilia (CBKC; [www.cbkc.org](http://www.cbkc.org)). More information about the Brazilian dog scene can be found on [www.kennelclub.com.br](http://www.kennelclub.com.br) and [www.kcbrasil.org](http://www.kcbrasil.org).

For more than 500 years, the history of Brazil was determined by conquerors, colonists and immigrants and therefore strangers have always had a big influence on the development of dog breeds in this country. The history of most breeds is recent, often very recent,

18th and 19th century. These dogs mainly arrived in the Rio Grande do Sul, a federal state in the south, not far from the borders with Uruguay and Argentina.

From old times, the people in the south were livestock breeders. The job of the Bulldogque Campeiro (campeiro means 'cattle-herder') was keeping the bulls under control, and driving cattle and pigs from the pastures to the slaughterhouse. Usually five or more dogs

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# HISTORY

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*For more than 500 years, the history of Brazil was determined by conquerors, colonists and immigrants and therefore strangers have always had a big influence on the development of the country. Slave market in Pernambuco, 1821.*



*Painting of the Old English Bulldog by Arthur Wardle (1864-1949). (Encore Editions)*

National dog magazines regularly cover the Campeiro. Ralf Schein Bender is the leading person in the breed; his kennel 'Cãodomínio' is known nationwide... [www.bulldogcampeiro.com.br/](http://www.bulldogcampeiro.com.br/). Another important breeder is Fernando Sterling with his kennel 'Molosso di Jerivá'.

## ALMOST TERRIFYING BUT EXTREMELY FRIENDLY

A Buldogue Campeiro is sturdily built, but at the same time versatile and fast. The big, broad head with the powerful jaws is almost terrifying and the broad chest is an inheritance of his past as a working dog. The coat is

were used at the same time, because a bull weighing 400 kilograms was no exception. The photo of the gaucho shows an old-time working Buldogue Campeiro. The dog is undoubtedly a Bulldog type, but is higher than today's English Bulldog and consists of 40 kilograms of pure power.

### RALF SCHEIN BENDER

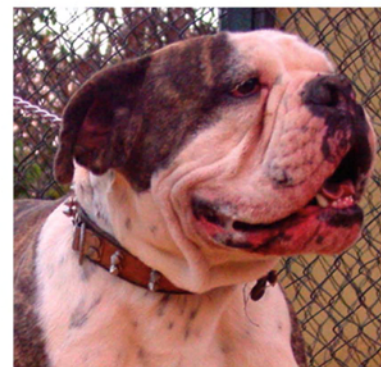
As a 16-year-old boy, Ralf Schein Bender became acquainted with the Buldogue Campeiro and decided to preserve this breed. Around 1978 he travelled in the area where the most typical specimens could be found: Rio Grande do Sul. He succeeded in finding them, but

there were too few to rebuild the breed properly. Between 1986 and 1996, Bender used 'modern' Bulldogs in his breeding program without losing the typical characteristics of the old Campeiro. In his opinion, the Campeiro should remain a sturdy working dog, able to control bulls by biting the animals in the heels. The results of his efforts and those of his fellow breeders is a Bulldog whose body is stronger and jaws more powerful than those of the English Bulldog. Now, 25 years later, the Buldogue Campeiro is nationally recognized by the CBCK and



*The Campeiro should remain a sturdy working dog, able to control bulls by biting the animals in the heels. (Photo: Angela Finnochiaro)*

attempts are being made for recognition with the F.C.I. It's quite a popular dog, with more than 300 clubs and societies involved with the breed.



*The big broad head of the Buldogue Campeiro, with the powerful jaws, is almost terrifying. (Photo: Fernando Starling)*

short and all colours are permitted, but the majority are gold, brindle or white. The temperament is extremely friendly, especially to children, but he can be suspicious of strangers and they have an inbred talent for guarding. The official description says: "Agressividade média" (medium aggression). Height is between 48 and 55 centimeters (18 and 21.5 inches) and the weight is between 35 and 45 kilograms (77 and 99 pounds).



*An old photograph of a Brazilian gaucho (cattle herder) and his Buldogue Campeiro*



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*The Dogue Brasileiro has to live as a member of the family.*

**DOGUE BRASILEIRO** (formerly Bull Boxer, Brazilian Dog)

## AT THE CRADLE OF A NEW BREED

The development of the Dogue Brasileiro is quite simple and easy to trace. Some authors try to make us believe that this dog is the result of a

long-cherished wish to breed a dog with special characteristics, but the truth is slightly different.

In October 1978, a litter was born out of a Boxer dam by a Bull Terrier sire. The owners of the dogs were neighbors. The Boxer 'Tina' gave birth to eight puppies; only three survived – two males and one female, called 'Tigresa of Tasgard'. In 1983, the enormous Bull Terrier 'Balder of Tasgard', from the same kennel, mated another Boxer, 'Duchesa'. Seeing this second

litter of a cross between a Bull Terrier and a Boxer, the breeder, Pedro Dantas, began to think he might be standing at the cradle of a new breed – a breed that now has thousands of fanciers all over Brazil. At that time, Dantas did not use the name Dogue Brasileiro, but named them Bull Boxers. He was enchanted by their temperament and appearance. Simply, they resembled a Boxer in body, but their heads had the characteristics of a Bull Terrier. In this breed there is the power, limberness and swiftness of both the Boxer and the Bull Terrier, but the height comes from the Boxer. Its temperament – a mixture of both breeds – combines the docility and cheerfulness of the Boxer with the courage of the Bull Terrier. They are suitable for guarding (Brazilians take them in their cars for protection), obedient and not very difficult to train. They are loyal to their owners and won't attack unexpectedly or without good reason.

## SPECIAL TEST ON BEHAVIOUR

Pedro Dantas has done his utmost to create a breed that can be used for guarding, but at the same time he tried



*Pedro Dantas and his dogs*

to get an absolutely balanced dog emotionally. Accidents must be avoided and this dog has to live as a member of the family. To underline this, a large section in the breed standard is dedicated to temperament. To become a champion, a dog must have passed a special behavior test. Dantas stated: Our main goal is a versatile and modern dog, being able to serve as a loyal and reliable guard dog for Brazilian families but at the same time as their biggest companion and friend.

The Dogue Brasileiro is nationally recognized by the CBKC. Curiously, in Brazil the breed is still named 'Bull Boxer'. (In Great Britain, a Bull Boxer is generally a cross between a Boxer and a Staffordshire Bull Terrier.) The breed club has two goals: to preserve the correct temperament and to have the breed officially recognized outside Brazil.

The Dogue Brasileiro's coat is short and rough and all colors are permitted. Males stand 54-59 centimeters (21.5 to 23.5 inches), females 50-57 centimeters (19.5 to 22.5 inches).

**FILA BRASILEIRO** (Brazilian



*The Dogue Brasileiro is nationally recognized by the Brazilian Kennel Club.  
(Photo: Canil Hawkaiuca)*



# HISTORY

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*The Fila Brasileiro is a typical representative of the molossers.*  
(Photo: Alice van Kempen)

*Mastiff, Brazilian Molosser, Cão de Fila)*

## CONQUISTADORES

The Fila Brasileiro is a typical representative of the molossers. Its early history goes back to before Christ, and to the Assyrians; small statues and

depictions of molossoid dogs exist from these times. In "Le Livre de la Chasse" (1388), the French Count Gaston de Foix (Gaston Phoebus) wrote about 'hunting Mastiffs' or 'dogs that hold fast': They have a big head, heavy lips and big ears. It's their nature to hold, they are heavy and ugly. When killed by a boar, it's no loss.

Obviously the author was not a fancier of this type of dog.

Along with their belongings, the conquistadors – conquerors from Portugal and Spain – took their dogs with them when moving to Brazil. That happened from the 16th century. In the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, immigrants from Italy, Spain, Poland and Germany arrived with their dogs. In the 16th century the 'Fila' and 'Presa' breeds came from the Iberian Peninsula; we now know them as the Cão de Castro Laboreiro, Cão da Serra da Estrela and the Rafeiro do Alentejo. In Brazil they mixed, not only among themselves, but with other dogs that were imported later: the Bloodhound, English Mastiff and old English Bulldog.

## AFRICAN SLAVES

A Brazilian document from 1613 indicates the existence of 'powerful' and 'able-bodied' dogs, owned by immigrants. They were used to guard natives (Indians), preventing escape. When gold was found at the Central Plateau, these dogs were also used to protect the gold and to guard the African slaves in the

mines - a useful dog, fearless and, because of its excellent nose, a super tracker, bringing back thieves and run-aways.

After the abolition of slavery, the Fila Brasileiro got a new job guarding herds and remote farmhouses, and hunting big game, like jaguar. It is assumed that in this period there was crossbreeding with Foxhounds, Greyhounds and



*Old photo of a Fila Brasileiro, dating from around 1911*

Pointers, with the aim of improving hunting ability.

The Fila Brasileiro is not a 'hand-made' breed. Over the years a strong, brave, suspicious, rather sharp but also loyal, working dog was developed. "As loyal as a Fila" is a Brazilian proverb. Today one can still see the inheritance of its ancestors in external features and temperament. The rather sharp temperament, high hind legs, dark brindle coat



*Painting by Diego Velasquez (1599-1660). A Spanish dwarf at the court of King Felipe IV of Spain (1605-1665). The dog resembles a fila or presa type.*  
(Musea del Prado, Madrid)



*The influence of the Bloodhound on the Fila Brasileiro can be seen in the sad look, loose skin, excellent nose and typical bark.*  
(Photo: Angela Finnochiaro)



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*Paolo Santos-Cruz, a lawyer, became known worldwide as a breeder and the compiler of the first breed standard. He is photographed in 1979 (left) with 'Orixá do Kirongozi'*



*In repose the expression of the Fila is calm, noble and full of self-assurance. (Photo: Wikimedia)*

25.5 to 29.5 inches) for males and 60 to 70 centimeters (23.5 to 27.5 inches) for females. The weight is between 40 and 50 kilograms (88 and 110 pounds).



and (sometimes) rose ear are from the old Bulldogs. The substance, black mask, heavy head, short neck, round croup and brave performance point to the Mastiffs. The influence of the Bloodhound can be seen in the sad look, loose skin, excellent nose and typical bark. The Brazilian KC describes the Fila's temperament as "Agressividade alta". "Alta" means high. It's certainly not a dog for beginners.

## THE FATHER OF THE BREED': PAOLO SANTOS-CRUZ

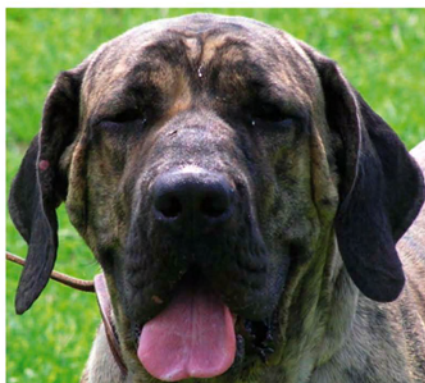
Around 1900, people started breeding more selectively and Paolo Santos-

Cruz, a lawyer, became known worldwide as a breeder and the compiler of the first breed standard. At the beginning of the 20th century, he travelled in the 'Minas Gerais', the old gold-diggers' area, looking for good specimens of the breed. He is called 'the Father of the Breed' and died in 1990.

In 1946, the first Fila was registered at the 'Kennel Clube Paulista' in Sao Paulo. In 1947, the first one appeared at a dog show; and in 1968, the breed was officially recognized by the FCI. The '70s and '80s were a difficult period for the pure Fila, because the breed was almost extinct then. Some people were using Great Danes, Mastiffs and Neapolitan Mastiffs to 'improve' the breed and in reaction the Kennel Club closed the stud book. A special committee was formed to preserve the real type and the right temperament. As a result, the Fila Brasileiro today is not only the oldest but also the best-known Brazilian breed outside its homeland.

The Fila Brasileiro is a typical Molosser; an important feature is the loose skin, which has a short coat. All solid colors are permitted, except white, mouse-grey, spotted or mottled. Height at the withers is 65 to 75 centimeters

*A breeder/exhibitor/judge and retired bookseller and publisher, Ria Hörter is a contributing editor of "Onze Hond", leading dog magazine in The Netherlands. She also writes for "The Canine Chronicle", "Dogs in Canada", for the Dutch Kennel Club and the Dutch hunting magazine "De Nederlandse Jager". She is the president of the Welsh Springer Spaniel Spaniel Club Netherlands, Editor of the Club's magazine and the Secretary of the Breed Group of Gundog Breeds in The Netherlands. She is a member of the World Dog Press Association and was a finalist the 2005 Annual Writing Competition of the Dog Writers Association of America. (www.riahorter.com).*



*An important feature is the loose skin, which has a short coat. (Photo: Mt. Holly Kennel, U.S.A.)*



*'Aladim do Rancho Alto' was born July 1947 in the first registered litter in Brazil.*