Dr. Dörnath in Conservation – Uncut
Dr. Forastieri on the Xoloitzcuintle

Mexiko-Stadt

Wednesday, 10 September 2026

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
Good afternoon, Dr. Ricardo Forastieri. Please briefly explain to the German audience: Who are you?

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
I've been an animal lover since the day I was born and I am deeply committed to breeding the Xoloitzcuintle. I am the technical director of Criadero Caliente. And Criadero Caliente has been responsible for promoting the Xoloitzcuintle worldwide for over 30 years. All the most important breeding kennels in the world—in Russia, Argentina, the United States, and all across the globe—originally started with our bloodlines, and we are immensely proud to have achieved that this national breed, which was unknown in Mexico 30 or 40 years ago, is today a breed that is not necessarily mainstream, but one that is known by everyone everywhere.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
Thank you very much. Please explain these festivities surrounding the Xoloitzcuintle to us and what preparations were necessary to carry them out.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
Well, the festivities kicked off many years ago now. Well, the preparations actually started many years ago. We initiated this activity back in 2013, and in 2014 we managed to secure our very first appointment with INAH. INAH is the country's National Institute of Anthropology and History, and this national institute is responsible for declaring cultural heritage matters before UNESCO and the UN. They were the ones responsible, for example, for declaring Mexican cuisine as Mexican cultural heritage; in fact, the person who made that declaration was my guide throughout this process. At the time, we couldn't declare the Xoloitzcuintle as cultural heritage because UNESCO only declares immaterial matters—that is to say: buildings, historical matters, cultural activities that represent a country. That is why we took on the task of restructuring this entire process, and the Day of the Dead festivities, which are a hugely important national tradition, were finally declared as universal cultural heritage. However, despite the festivities being declared, the Xoloitzcuintle was not integrated into them. And in our cosmogony, in our history, in our traditions, the Xoloitzcuintle is the one responsible for helping us cross Mictlán. And Mictlán is the place where this underworld is divided into nine stages until reaching paradise. For our culture, death was not the end of life; it was the purpose of life. We come into life to learn so that we may

depart into death with knowledge. And so this process that takes place, which is so beautiful in Mictlán, makes us literally shed everything earthly in order to arrive spiritually in paradise. And the Xolo, or Xolotl, or the dog, is the one responsible for guiding us through all those nine stages so that we do not get lost. Not only does he help us cross the river of death, but he takes us all the way to the final stage and tells us what we must do. Therefore, it was vital to take him into account as part of this historical aspect, and we had to justify many things so that he could become part of this culture. This milestone we achieved today—National Xoloitzcuintle Day—is part of this restructuring we now want to carry out so that the dog truly becomes a global, universal, and intangible cultural heritage as part of UNESCO. So, this is merely part of a process; naturally, for Russia—or rather, for Mexico, it is a celebration, because October 27th is being dedicated precisely to this, which is the day when the Day of the Dead festivities begin in our country and is the day dedicated to celebrating deceased animals. Thus, it was decided that this date was the correct one because historically it is when this entire pilgrimage toward Mictlán begins.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
The next question—you've already answered a little bit of this, but I am going to ask it anyway: Please explain to us the cultural and historical significance and the identity that the Xoloitzcuintle holds for Mexicans.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
Well, as I just told you, technically he is the one responsible—and he was also responsible in our culture before the arrival of Europeans in our country or our region; at that time we didn't have a country, we were a region. Before the Europeans arrived, every single family had their very own Xoloitzcuintle to be the one responsible for guiding them to this Mictlán. And every person living in our country was buried—at least in this central zone of the country—they were always buried in a vessel; well, they were buried in the earth, but inside a vessel they placed the remains of this dog because it was the one responsible for helping us cross over, so when our dog died, it went with us. To give you a clear context, I personally keep the ashes of my Xoloitzcuintle in a very beautiful, very ancient clay vessel, because the day I die, I want to be buried with him.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
I understand, I understand that.

How many Xoloitzcuintles are currently in Mexico, and how many are there worldwide?

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
It is a very niche breed worldwide; however, in Mexico there are no more than 13,000 or 14,000 Xoloitzcuintles, as far as my last count—I'm giving you an approximate figure because it's been a long time since I looked at these

specific numbers. But as far as I knew 8 years ago, Mexico had barely 11,000 registered specimens. I think right now it's likely that Russia or some other European country has more specimens than Mexico. It is indeed very probable, because the breed isn't even popular in Mexico. In Mexico, our beliefs are popular, but the dog itself isn't a dog that convinces everyone as a pet; the Xoloitzcuintle has something very interesting: either you dislike it because you don't know it, because it's hairless, because it's different, or you adore it because you perfectly understand the unique value that a dog possesses, which is totally different in every sense from any other.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
And Dr. Forastieri, from your perspective, what significance does our meeting hold for the rescue and preservation of the Xoloitzcuintle?

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
Well, to begin with, I want to thank you in particular.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
Thank you to you.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
No, I want to thank you, because about two and a half years ago you contacted me to tell me about this huge problem that was happening in your country, and honestly I felt you were very sincere and very desperate to see that a lack of accurate information leads people trying to promote welfare to fail to understand the biological, historical, cultural, and scientific value possessed by an animal to which hours of study are dedicated through the National Autonomous University of Mexico by specialists; there is an entire department of specialists studying Mexican hairless dogs. It is a tremendously important cultural part of our country, and ignorance deems a hairless dog to be a defective dog. It fails to take into account that it is the oldest living dog in existence, yet the most evolved of all.
We lost our hair many, many years ago—thousands, millions of years ago—and it was an evolutionary process. The exact same thing happens with the Xoloitzcuintle; the Xoloitzcuintle also lost its hair as an evolutionary process because—I don't know if you knew this or not, and this is for all your audience, and principally for people who do not understand the breed—more than 2,000 years ago, between 2,000 and 4,000 years ago, there was a period of extreme heat. This refers to a condition of extreme heat that was abnormal on our planet.
And this climate change is recognized—and anyone who knows how to use artificial intelligence can check this fact—it is recognized because there was more than 2 metres higher sea level than what currently exists on the planet. Therefore, it is known that the temperature on the planet at that time reached much higher averages. At least between 3 and 5 degrees warmer on average than what currently exists in the world. The region where this phenomenon originates is a jungle region of our country, in Mexico, where

currently the annual humidity average hovers between 90 and 95 percent, with an average temperature of 34 to 38 degrees Celsius.
Now imagine, with that temperature and humidity, 2,500 years ago, 5 degrees hotter, a dog with fur would be sitting at forty-odd degrees permanently. Its function or its nature was very clever: it allowed it to sweat. And as we all know, and studies prove—we have those studies—dogs in general do not have sweat glands all over their bodies. However, the Xoloitzcuintle has those sweat glands all over its skin. Thus, this allows it to this day to sweat and release body heat in order to maintain a normal temperature.
Let us remember that dogs have a body temperature of 38.5 degrees Celsius—2 degrees higher than us! 2 degrees higher than us! So, with 2 degrees higher than us, at 40 degrees, with a humidity percentage of 100%, it was entirely logical that an intelligent species would make the biological decision to shed that fur in order to be better off. There is a gene known as FOX-I3, which the entire scientific community knows perfectly well, and yet that FOX-I3, when it manifests, manifests in formal studies on mice and does not allow them to live beyond 3 months after birth because it carries mutations that are detrimental to the individual.
Those mutations cause it to be born hairless, lacking some teeth, missing some dental arches, but the integumentary tissue does not develop completely, some of the internal organs do not develop completely, and the little animals or individuals born with this detected gene die. However, this gene, far from killing the dog, modifies it and turns it into an exceptionally efficient living being. And this sadness arising from this ignorance—not only in Germany, but across all European countries that made the decision to support this legislative initiative—is that they failed to take this information into account in order to legislate.
The saddest thing of all that we are discussing is that, for example, Mexico also belongs to the Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI), Germany belongs to the FCI, and Austria belongs to the FCI. In 2027, the World Dog Show is being held in Austria, and Xoloitzcuintles will not be permitted to participate due to this ignorance, because they are judged as a dog that is abnormal. All these facts are ignored, and worst of all, Mexico is hosting a World Show with the FCI in 2028 as well. And so, despite the fact that we will also be part of that world exhibition, Mexico is doing nothing with the FCI, as representatives and a member country of the FCI, to demand that something be done globally as a world registry association.
Tristically—sadly, they leave all of this up to the breeders; sadly, we breeders, we independent individuals, the ones who truly know, the ones who genuinely love the breed, are the ones working to prove to the world that this dog is the strongest, healthiest, most robust dog best suited to any climatic condition on the planet.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
I completely agree: it is an ancient dog, and you and I as veterinarians know that the Xoloitzcuintle is a healthy, vital, robust dog. And as Deputy Ana Erika Santana González said, it is out of ignorance that in Europe, in Germany, and in Austria, they treat this very lovely creature, this unique dog, this sacred dog, so grandly—I have no words. And I simply think: only the animal that we know, we understand and love, and only when we love something can we conserve and preserve it. It is because of ignorance, and it breaks my heart that this is happening over there, and politicians in Germany, bureaucratic people, official veterinarians do not want to listen to the facts, they do not want to listen. So I asked for political help here in Mexico, and diplomatic help. And it is also very important to touch people's hearts. And I, as a German, asked for forgiveness—it is not my fault, but I feel terrible, because the Xoloitzcuintle is more than a dog. He is part of the soul of Mexico, part of its culture, and these dogs have no defects, they do not suffer, they have been living for thousands of years. I simply do not understand this, and therefore, to close: What message would you like to send directly to politicians and authorities in Germany regarding the protection and animal welfare of the Xoloitzcuintle?

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
I hope the translation into German can be as close as possible to what I am going to tell you, but my message is very clear: ignorance and political agendas that are favouring these absurd ideological currents are not taking legislation into account—not just in Germany, but in all countries in general—in a serious manner. But if they took it seriously and carried out an analysis... I will tell you something, and I have nothing against it, because I told you that in my own house, alongside the Xoloitzcuintles, I have German Shepherds because of the sport I practice, because I love it. And I've had German Shepherds for 25 years, and I've bred Rottweilers too, because I like the breed as well. I am a true animal person, it's not one or the other; I believe in life, I believe in biology, I believe in species as part of the nature that surrounds me. But the message I can give you is that the Xoloitzcuintle is the oldest dog in the world, the most modern of all, it is much healthier than the German Shepherd, vastly healthier than the German Shepherd, vastly healthier than the Rottweiler, vastly healthier than the Boxer, vastly healthier than the Great Dane, vastly healthier than most German dog breeds, and yet a technical, scientific, biological, historical, and anthropological study is genuinely not being taken into account to make this decision.
I believe your politicians and your doctors need to inform themselves; they are making a grave mistake by segregating, literally segregating, the possibility of a living being that they do not know and that they judge poorly out of ignorance. On the other hand, it also matters—and this is also a message for your country: there are many hairless dogs in the world, but not all of them are Xoloitzcuintles. Irresponsible breeding has sought to sell dogs,

not breed Xoloitzcuintles, and what may be manifesting is this crossing of a pure Xoloitzcuintle with dogs that are not, and then abnormalities can indeed appear that are not correct in any living creature.
However, the reality is that the dog as such—the pure Xoloitzcuintle—is one of the healthiest, strongest, and most robust dogs, as you mention, of any breed in the world.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
Yes.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
Let me tell you, and also as a message: I personally, heading Criadero Caliente, with more than a thousand litters over the years we have been breeding, have not had a single specimen with kennel dysplasia! Not one! Ever!

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
They are healthy, vital, and robust dogs, and...

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
That's right.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
Thank you very much, Dr. Forastieri.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
At your service.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
Thank you very much for this interview and also for inviting me.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
And I would like you to be our ambassador—the one who will transmit the voice of Mexicans in your country. Hopefully this visit—and honestly, excuse the presumption, but that was the intention...

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
With all my heart.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
...that this visit gives you sufficient information so that you can arrive over there with more weapons, more drive, and more push to achieve the rescue of this ignorant segregation of a wonderful living creature that very few people understand.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
I am always at your service.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
Likewise.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
For me, it is a great honour to be the ambassador of the Xoloitzcuintle in Germany or in other parts of the world, to explain and to feel how wonderful a dog the Xoloitzcuintle is. And whenever you need help, I will be there.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
Thank you, likewise.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
Thank you for this interview. And to close: Together we help, conserve, and protect the Xoloitzcuintle.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
That's right.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
Thank you.

Dr. Ricardo Forastieri:
Thank you to you.

Dr. Kerstin Alexandra Dörnath:
Thank you to you.