Dog Friendly Performance Across Luxury Hotel Portfolios

InterContinental, Fairmont and the Brand Promise of Consistency

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary 3

The Promise of a Brand 4

How We Measured 5

InterContinental: Best and Worst Under One Flag 6

Fairmont: Sixty Three Hotels, No Standard 11

Kimpton: The Counterpoint 18

Why the Variance Exists 22

What It Costs 24

What a Consistent Brand Dog Policy Looks Like 25

Conclusion 26

Methodology and Limitations 27

Sources 28

Executive Summary

Inside a luxury hotel brand, the distance between the best and the worst hotel for a guest with a dog is wider than the distance between the brands themselves. That is the finding of this paper, and it has now held across three portfolios and 111 hotels, measured by one method against one published standard.

Roch Dog wrote to every hotel as an ordinary guest planning a stay with a dog and scored the answers against the Roch Dog Friendly Standard. InterContinental runs from the best dog hotel we have ever assessed, an A+ in Miami, to a hotel in Times Square that charges $250 a stay and offers the dog nothing but the room. Fairmont, the one luxury brand that puts dogs in its press releases, runs from an A+ in Santa Monica to thirteen F grades on four continents, and a further twenty Fairmonts refuse dogs altogether.

In both portfolios the fee runs from free to $250 with no relationship to what the dog gets, the weight limit from none to a figure that turns away most family dogs, and most hotels miss at least one of the six minimum requirements a dog owner needs in order to book on the strength of the name. None of this is a brand policy. It is 21 InterContinental policies and 63 Fairmont policies that happen to share a logo. Lets be honest about what that means for the guest: a dog owner who has a good stay at Fairmont Banff Springs books Fairmont San Francisco on the same assumption and gets an F. After that they stop trusting the flag, and the loyalty the brand spent a fortune to earn goes to the individual hotel that deserved it.

Kimpton, which sits inside IHG beside InterContinental under the same owners and operators, shows that the floor is a decision and not a structural impossibility. One brand level policy, no fee, no weight limit, a bed and bowls in every room, produces no F grade across 27 hotels. Hilton has shown that a brand can decide at the scale of a whole system, and also what happens when the decision stops at the front door. The capability exists everywhere in this paper. A brand that cannot tell its own guests what happens when they bring the dog is not keeping the one promise a brand exists to make.

SECTION 1

The Promise of a Brand

Book a Fairmont in Banff and a Fairmont in Monaco and you will recognise the turndown, the toiletries, the breakfast service and the way the concierge speaks to you. Book two InterContinentals a continent apart and the Club lounge, the bedding and the loyalty recognition will be the same. That is not luck. Every luxury group runs a brand standards manual that runs to hundreds of pages, specifies the thread count of the sheets and the temperature of the welcome drink, inspects properties against it, and withdraws the flag from owners who fail. Consistency is the product. An owner pays for the name because the name brings guests who trust it, and the guest pays a premium for the confidence that the next stay will be like the last.

Dog friendly hospitality has been left outside that system entirely. There is no brand mandated minimum for what a dog gets, where it may go, what the owner pays or what the policy says. Each hotel writes its own rules, usually with the insurer looking over its shoulder, and the brand tolerates every answer equally. A Fairmont can hand the dog a bed and a bowl and the run of the bar, or keep it in the room on a 25 lb limit for $250, and both hotels fly the same flag and describe themselves in the same two words. What that produces, measured hotel by hotel, is the subject of sections 3 to 5.

I think it matters more now than it did five years ago, for three reasons. First, the guest with the dog is the most loyal guest in the building. Once a dog owner finds a hotel that genuinely welcomes the dog they stop looking, because finding another one is hard and arriving somewhere that turns out not to welcome the dog is miserable. A brand that cannot be relied on hands that loyalty to the individual hotel that earned it, and to its competitors.

Second, booking data now shows pet friendly properties running fuller and at higher rates than their neighbours, so the variance is a revenue leak as well as a trust problem. The companion paper sets out the arithmetic and section 7 summarises it. Third, the variance is now visible. Every hotel in this paper is published with its grade, its fee and its policy on rochdog.com, and the label "pet friendly" no longer does the job the brand used to let it do. A guest can see the gap between two hotels under one flag before booking either, and increasingly they do.

The question the rest of this paper answers is whether that promise survives the arrival of a dog.

SECTION 2

How We Measured

Every hotel in this paper was assessed against the Roch Dog Friendly Standard (RDFS-02), a published framework of weighted questions covering policy (fees, deposits, weight limits, dogs per room), access (rooms, bar, restaurant, lounge, terrace, garden), amenities (beds, bowls, food, treats, walking and sitting services) and operations (staff training, programmes, an emergency vet number at the desk). Scores convert to grades at fixed thresholds, from A+ at the top to F at the bottom. The assessment framework sets out the questions and weights in full.

Most assessments were made by anonymous guest enquiry. We write to the hotel as a private traveller planning a stay with a dog, ask the questions a careful owner would ask, and record what the hotel says in its own words. A smaller number were submitted by the hotel itself through our free certification, and every answer is then checked through the year with housekeeping, the front desk, reservations and the concierge, and with guests through their reviews. Both routes use the same questions and the same scoring. Where a hotel answers only part of the questionnaire, unanswered questions score No, so every score is a floor rather than a ceiling. Certified hotels are reassessed every year by the same anonymous method.

The standard also carries six minimum requirements: a written dog policy available before booking, real bowls, at least one shared indoor space the dog may enter with its owner, the fee disclosed, the deposit terms transparent, and a stated limit on dogs per room. A hotel that meets all six carries the line "Meets the Roch Dog Friendly Standard" on its public page. A hotel that misses any carries the line that it does not. The tables below record that test for every hotel; which requirement a hotel missed is reported to the hotel, not published.

A word on fairness before a single grade is read. A hotel that answers a guest briefly may score below what it offers, and a hotel that answers fully gets credit for it. The method rewards hotels that tell guests what they do, which is the point: a dog owner booking from the hotel's own words is in exactly the position we were in when we asked.

The hotels were assessed between July 2025 and October 2026 and the data is as of 25 October 2026. Scores move as hotels are reassessed, so every figure here is a snapshot, and the live grade for any hotel is on its rochdog.com page. Across the more than 3,000 hotels Roch Dog has assessed in 56 countries, roughly half score D or F and one in eleven scores A or better, so neither InterContinental nor Fairmont is an outlier. They are the industry, measured.

SECTION 3

InterContinental: Best and Worst Under One Flag

The first edition of this paper assessed 30 InterContinental Hotels and Resorts in December 2025 and found a 57 point spread between the best and the worst. Seven of those 30 never answered enough to hold a grade and two no longer hold a published assessment, so the portfolio with a live grade today stands at 21. Several have been reassessed since. The spread is now 64 points, and both ends of it are in the United States.

#	Property	Score	Grade	Meets the Standard	Dog fee	Weight limit
1	InterContinental Miami	69	A+	Yes	$100 per stay	No limit
2	InterContinental New York Barclay	39	A	Yes	Dogs stay free	50 lb
3	InterContinental Washington Willard	34	B	Yes	$200 per stay	40 lb
4	InterContinental Rome Ambasciatori Palace	32	B	Yes	EUR 25 to 35 a day, plus EUR 70 cleaning	No limit
5	InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown	30	B	Yes	$125 per stay	40 lb
6	InterContinental Boston	29	C	No	$150 per stay	25 lb
7	InterContinental Kansas City At The Plaza	29	C	No	$125 per stay	No limit
8	InterContinental Mark Hopkins San Francisco	28	C	No	$50 per stay	50 lb
9	InterContinental Porto Palacio das Cardosas	27	C	No	EUR 30 per night	33 lb
10	InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta	25	C	Yes	$100 per stay	70 lb

11	InterContinental Lisbon	25	C	Yes	EUR 40 per night	33 lb
12	InterContinental Washington D.C. The Wharf	21	C	No	$75 per pet	50 lb
13	InterContinental San Diego	19	D	No	$150 per stay	No limit
14	InterContinental San Francisco	19	D	Yes	$100 per stay	50 lb
15	InterContinental Hotel Minneapolis	17	D	Yes	$50 per pet	No limit
16	InterContinental Montreal	16	D	No	$40 per night, per dog	No limit
17	InterContinental New Orleans	15	D	No	$150 per stay	No limit
18	InterContinental Toronto Centre	14	D	No	$50 cleaning fee	50 lb
19	InterContinental Chicago Magnificent Mile	10	F	No	$150 per pet, per stay	40 lb
20	InterContinental Houston	10	F	No	$150 cleaning fee per room	100 lb
21	InterContinental New York Times Square	5	F	No	$250 per stay	75 lb

Nine of the 21 score D or F. Nine meet the six minimum requirements. Two score A or better, and one of those is the highest scoring hotel in our entire dataset.

3.1 Miami and Times Square

InterContinental Miami is a 653 room convention hotel on Biscayne Bay, and it has made an affirmative decision on almost every question we ask. Dogs may use the bar, the terrace, the lounge and the garden. They may stay in the room unaccompanied, which matters enormously to an owner who wants the gym, the spa or dinner without worrying. There is no weight limit, so a Labrador is as welcome as a Chihuahua.

The hotel sells dog food, provides real bowls and beds, hands out treats and toys, publishes walking routes, arranges professional walking and sitting, offers grooming, runs dog activities and events, supports a canine charity, has trained its staff, keeps the emergency vet's number at the desk and has a dedicated dog space on the property. Its fee is $100 a stay, below the portfolio median. Miami does not charge more for a better experience. It charges less, and it has built a programme a dog owner can see from the booking page.

InterContinental New York Times Square, a 607 room hotel in one of the most visited places on earth, told us two things in the dog's favour: most of its rooms take dogs, and there is green space nearby. That is the whole offering. No bar, lounge, garden or terrace. No bed, no bowls, no treats, no walking, no sitting, no route guidance, no training, no vet number. A 75 lb weight limit and a $250 fee, the highest in the portfolio. The guest pays two and a half times what Miami charges and receives, in measured terms, a room.

These two hotels share a name, a booking engine, a loyalty programme and a brand promise. They sit on the same page of the InterContinental website under the same pet friendly description. A guest choosing between them on the strength of the brand has no way of knowing which experience they are buying, and the brand has no mechanism that would make the second hotel more like the first.

3.2 The fee tells you nothing

Across the 21 hotels the fee runs from nothing at the New York Barclay to $250 a stay at Times Square. Set the fees against the scores and there is no relationship between what a dog owner pays and what they get. Where a pattern exists it runs the wrong way. The three hotels at the bottom of the table charge $150, $150 and $250. The hotel at the top charges $100 and the hotel in second place charges nothing. The Willard in Washington charges $200 and delivers a B; Times Square charges $250 and delivers two yeses.

This inversion is not a quirk of a few properties. It is what a fee looks like when it is set as a deterrent rather than as a price for a service. At the top of the table the fee funds something: Miami's $100 buys beds, bowls, walking, sitting and a staff that has been trained. At the bottom the fee funds nothing, because there is nothing to fund. There are no walkers to pay, no food to stock, no amenities to maintain. The fee exists to reduce the number of guests who arrive with a dog, and it is priced accordingly. The deposits tell the same story: Chicago, one of the three F grades, is one of only four hotels in the portfolio that take one.

In no other dimension of luxury hospitality would a brand tolerate this. If a guest paid two and a half times more for a room at one InterContinental and received a room measurably worse than at another, the brand would intervene, because the brand has a standard for the room. It has no standard for the dog, so nothing triggers. What a fee should fund is set out in our guide to the Kyung Hee choice experiment, What Dog Owners Will Pay For in a Hotel: owners pay for service and shared space, and not one of them pays for a rule.

The deterrent fee has also become a regulatory question in the brand's largest markets. The US Federal Trade Commission's rule on unfair or deceptive fees, in force since May 2025, requires mandatory charges to appear in the headline price, and the Texas Attorney General has extracted settlements from Hyatt, Marriott, Hilton, Omni, Choice and Booking.com over hotel fees that surfaced late. The UK's drip pricing ban has applied since April 2025. A dog fee a guest discovers at check in, attached to no service, is the kind of charge both regimes were written to expose.

3.3 The access divide

The clearest line between the top and the bottom of this portfolio is not amenities. It is access, and specifically whether the dog is allowed anywhere other than the room.

Across the 21 hotels, 19 allow dogs in most room categories, but only 11 allow a dog in the lounge, five in the bar and three in the restaurant. Ten of the 21 allow the dog in none of the three. Fourteen provide bowls and thirteen a bed. Five say their staff are trained to handle dogs. Nine keep an emergency vet's number at the desk.

None of the three F grades lets the dog into the bar, the restaurant or the lounge. Times Square I have described. InterContinental Chicago Magnificent Mile, 792 rooms, provides a bed and bowls and walking routes, then charges $150 per pet, holds a $150 deposit, imposes a 40 lb limit and allows the dog nowhere outside the room. InterContinental Houston has the most generous weight limit in the portfolio at 100 lb and then charges a $150 cleaning fee per room for a dog that may use the terrace and little else. Each of these is a large urban hotel at a luxury rate in a city full of dogs.

The consequence for the guest is not abstract. An owner whose dog is confined to the room cannot use the lobby bar, cannot eat in the restaurant, cannot work in the lounge. They are paying a luxury rate for a constrained version of the stay. So they order room service, or they leave the hotel to eat, and in either case the hotel has forfeited the spend that a guest who feels welcome throughout the building would have left in it. The money does not disappear. It goes to the restaurant down the street or to the hotel across it that let the guest sit in the lobby with the dog.

The weight limit does the same work at the front door. Boston's 25 lb limit, the tightest in the portfolio, turns away Labradors, Golden Retrievers, German Shepherds, Border Collies, Boxers and most mixed breed dogs before the question of access even arises. Fourteen of the 21 hotels impose a limit of some kind. Seven have none. The standard takes the view set out in the Friendly Dog Policy, that a hotel should judge the dog on its behaviour and not its weight, and a third of this brand's own hotels already do.

3.4 Measurement moves hotels

Being measured changes things, and this portfolio shows it better than any other we hold. When this paper first appeared in March, InterContinental Washington D.C. The Wharf charged $250, imposed a 25 lb limit and scored 8. Its policy today is $75 per pet with a 50 lb limit and it scores 21. Mark Hopkins San Francisco has gone from 12 to 28 on reassessment. Boston from 15 to 29.

The third edition of this paper, three weeks ago, led with InterContinental San Diego, a 400 room waterfront hotel that had answered yes to two of our questions and scored below zero. On reassessment it provides a bed and bowls, opens its terrace to the dog, sets no weight limit and scores 19. InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown has gone from 16 and a D to 30 and a B in the same period, opening its bar, lounge and terrace and meeting all six minimum requirements. InterContinental San Francisco has moved from an F to a D and now meets the six.

None of these hotels spent capital to move. They answered the questions differently, which is to say they decided differently. That is the whole thesis of this paper in a handful of rows: the variance is a product of decisions, and decisions can be changed in a quarter. It cuts the other way too. Houston has slipped from a D to an F since the last edition, and the Wharf, which met the six minimum requirements when the third edition appeared, no longer does. A brand that measured its own hotels would have seen all of this before we did.

InterContinental, to be fair to it, has never promised a dog owner anything. Its website says pet friendly and leaves the rest to the hotel, and what the table shows is the gap between a label and a guarantee. The next portfolio is a harder case, because this brand did make a promise.

SECTION 4

Fairmont: Sixty Three Hotels, No Standard

Fairmont is the brand that makes the argument hardest to dodge, because Fairmont markets its dog friendliness. Resident Canine Ambassadors at Banff Springs and Lake Louise since 2002, doormen with treat pockets, a heritage of dogs in the great Canadian railway hotels that the brand's own marketing leans on, and a press release in July 2025 promising that all of its guests, the four legged ones included, receive luxury and personalised service. If any flag could be relied on by a dog owner it should be this one. We tested that promise at every Fairmont on earth in Fairmont and the Four Legged Guest, published this month, and the full account of the brand, its refusals and its Canine Ambassador hotels is there. What follows is the portfolio as it stands beside InterContinental and Kimpton.

Of the 94 hotels on Fairmont's own list, 63 take dogs and hold a published grade, including The Plaza in New York and The Savoy in London, which Fairmont manages. Twenty refused the dog outright, in writing. One is closed for renovation, two have not yet opened and eight did not answer two rounds of enquiry.

#	Property	Score	Grade	Meets the Standard	Dog fee	Weight limit
1	Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows (Santa Monica, USA)	46	A+	Yes	$125 per stay	No limit
2	Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn (Sonoma, USA)	44	A	Yes	$150 per room	No limit
3	Fairmont Banff Springs (Banff, Canada)	42	A	Yes	C$50 per night, capped at C$100	No limit
4	Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise (Lake Louise, Canada)	37	A	Yes	C$85 per day, capped at C$450 per stay	No limit
5	Fairmont Royal York (Toronto, Canada)	36	A	Yes	C$60 per stay, per dog	No limit
6	Fairmont Pacific Rim (Vancouver, Canada)	35	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit

7	Fairmont St Andrews (St Andrews, UK)	35	B	Yes	GBP 50 per night, per pet	No limit
8	Fairmont Chateau Whistler (Whistler, Canada)	32	B	Yes	C$50 per night plus taxes, capped at C$100	No limit
9	Fairmont Golden Prague (Prague, Czechia)	32	B	Yes	EUR 35 per pet, per night	No limit
10	The Fairmont Hotel Macdonald (Edmonton, Canada)	31	B	Yes	C$35 per pet, per night	No limit
11	Fairmont La Hacienda Costa del Sol (San Roque, Spain)	30	B	Yes	EUR 25 per dog, per day	No limit
12	Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu (La Malbaie, Canada)	29	B	Yes	C$60 plus taxes per night	No limit
13	Fairmont Chateau Laurier (Ottawa, Canada)	27	B	Yes	From C$50 per stay	No limit
14	Fairmont Kea Lani (Maui, USA)	27	B	Yes	$40 per day	20 lb
15	Fairmont Century Plaza (Los Angeles, USA)	42	C	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
16	The Plaza (New York, USA)	38	C	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
17	Fairmont Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, USA)	31	C	No	$50 per stay	No limit
18	Fairmont Olympic Hotel (Seattle, USA)	31	C	No	$75 per stay	No limit
19	Fairmont Hotel Vancouver (Vancouver, Canada)	29	C	No	C$50 per night plus taxes, capped at C$100	No limit
20	Fairmont Le Château Frontenac (Quebec City, Canada)	28	C	No	C$60 per night	No limit

21	Fairmont Empress (Victoria, Canada)	27	C	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
22	Fairmont Rio de Janeiro Copacabana (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)	27	C	No	R$50 per night plus charges	55 lb
23	Fairmont Le Château Montebello (Montebello, Canada)	27	C	No	C$55 plus taxes per room, per night	No limit
24	Fairmont Riyadh (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)	26	C	No	SAR 50 per day	No limit
25	Fairmont Monte Carlo (Monaco)	26	C	No	EUR 50 per dog, per night	No limit
26	Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth (Montreal, Canada)	25	C	Yes	C$50 per night	No limit
27	Fairmont Grand Hotel Kyiv (Kyiv, Ukraine)	25	C	Yes	EUR 60 per night	11 lb
28	Fairmont Scottsdale Princess (Scottsdale, USA)	25	C	No	Not stated	No limit
29	Fairmont Tremblant (Mont-Tremblant, Canada)	24	C	Yes	C$60 per day plus taxes	No limit
30	Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park (Chicago, USA)	24	C	Yes	$150 per stay, $300 for stays of 7 to 30 days	40 lb
31	Fairmont La Marina Rabat-Salé (Rabat, Morocco)	23	C	Yes	MAD 500 per night	110 lb
32	Fairmont Copley Plaza (Boston, USA)	22	C	No	$50 per night	No limit
33	Fairmont Waterfront (Vancouver, Canada)	21	C	No	C$35 per night	110 lb
34	Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge (Jasper, Canada)	21	C	No	C$50 per night	No limit

35	The Fairmont Winnipeg (Winnipeg, Canada)	20	D	Yes	C$25 per night, per pet	No limit
36	Fairmont Cheshire The Mere (Knutsford, UK)	20	D	No	GBP 75	No limit
37	Fairmont Mayakoba (Playa del Carmen, Mexico)	20	D	No	$25 per pet, per day	25 lb
38	Fairmont Breakers Long Beach (Long Beach, USA)	19	D	Yes	$150 per stay	No limit
39	Fairmont Grand Del Mar (San Diego, USA)	19	D	No	$150	No limit
40	The Savoy (London, UK)	19	D	No	GBP 25 per day	25 lb
41	Fairmont Le Montreux Palace (Montreux, Switzerland)	18	D	Yes	CHF 30 per pet, per stay	No limit
42	Fairmont Makati (Makati City, Philippines)	18	D	No	Dogs stay free	80 lb
43	Carton House, a Fairmont Managed Hotel (Kildare, Ireland)	16	D	No	EUR 50 per night	Not stated
44	The Fairmont Palliser (Calgary, Canada)	15	D	Yes	C$40 per pet, per night	No limit
45	Fairmont Nile City (Cairo, Egypt)	15	D	No	$25 per day, per pet	No limit
46	Fairmont Orchid (Hawaii, USA)	14	D	No	$75 per night plus tax	No limit
47	Fairmont Dallas (Dallas, USA)	14	D	No	$100	No limit
48	Fairmont Royal Palm Marrakech (Marrakech, Morocco)	12	D	No	MAD 500 per stay	44 lb
49	Fairmont Windsor Park (Windsor, UK)	12	D	No	GBP 50 per dog, per stay	35 lb
50	Fairmont Wuhan (Wuhan, China)	12	D	No	RMB 350	33 lb

51	Fairmont Baku Flame Towers (Baku, Azerbaijan)	10	F	No	AZN 60 per pet, per day	13 lb
52	Fairmont Amman (Amman, Jordan)	10	F	No	JOD 25 per pet, per day	15 lb
53	Fairmont Vancouver Airport (Richmond, Canada)	9	F	No	Not stated	No limit
54	Fairmont San Francisco (San Francisco, USA)	5	F	No	$100	No limit
55	Fairmont Washington (Washington, USA)	5	F	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
56	Fairmont Austin (Austin, USA)	4	F	No	$100	25 lb
57	Fairmont Hamilton Princess (Hamilton, Bermuda)	2	F	No	US$250	25 lb
58	Fairmont Tokyo (Tokyo, Japan)	0	F	No	Not stated	No limit
59	Fairmont Bangkok Sukhumvit (Bangkok, Thailand)	0	F	No	THB 2,000 per pet, per day, plus charges	66 lb
60	Fairmont Quasar Istanbul (Istanbul, Turkey)	-1	F	No	EUR 25 plus VAT	34 lb
61	Fairmont El San Juan Hotel (San Juan, Puerto Rico)	-3	F	No	$150	25 lb
62	Fairmont Tazi Palace Tangier (Tangier, Morocco)	-3	F	No	MAD 500	22 lb
63	Fairmont Sanya Haitang Bay (Sanya, China)	-3	F	No	RMB 400 per night	33 lb

4.1 A third meet the standard

Twenty three of the 63 meet all six minimum requirements and forty do not. The grades run one A+, four A, nine B, twenty C, sixteen D and thirteen F, an average score at the bottom of the C band. The shortfall that costs the most and costs nothing to fix is indoor access: 31 of the 63 keep the dog out of the bar, the restaurant and the lounge by their own rule, and nine more are kept out by local law, so the owner who does book eats and drinks somewhere else.

The portfolio provides more than its grades suggest, and that is the point. Forty eight of the 63 provide a dog bed and 45 provide bowls; 39 publish walking routes, 31 allow the dog on a terrace and 29 hand out treats. But only 19 allow the dog in a lounge, 13 in a bar and nine in a restaurant, and only three of the 63 said their staff are trained to handle dogs. The brand has most of the pieces. It has them in different hotels.

Two of the brand's showpieces make the case on their own. Fairmont Century Plaza in Los Angeles scores 42 and The Plaza in New York 38. Both take any dog free with no weight limit, and neither meets the six minimum requirements. A high score and a complete welcome are different things, and a guest booking on the brand's reputation has no way of telling which they have been sold.

4.2 One flag, a dozen currencies, no pattern

The fee inside this one brand runs from free at Century Plaza, The Plaza, Pacific Rim, the Empress, Makati and Washington to US$250 a stay at Hamilton Princess. It is charged per night, per stay, per dog or per room, capped or uncapped, in a dozen currencies. Banff caps the fee at C$100 and Lake Louise, an hour up the same valley, at C$450. Thirteen Fairmonts take a deposit, from GBP 50 a night at St Andrews to THB 30,000 a stay in Bangkok.

Twenty two impose a weight limit, one of them without saying what it is, from 11 lb at Kyiv, which excludes almost every dog, to 110 lb at Waterfront and Rabat, which excludes almost none; five draw the line at 25 lb, The Savoy and Fairmont Austin among them. Forty one impose none. Thirteen hotels allow one dog per room, 36 allow two, two allow three, and twelve set no limit at all. That is 63 local policies, and a dog owner reading the Fairmont website cannot tell which one applies until they ask.

4.3 What the best and worst Fairmonts actually offer

The top of the portfolio is as good as anything in our data. Fairmont Miramar in Santa Monica, the A+, allows the dog in the bar, the restaurant, the lounge, the terrace and the garden, provides a bed and bowls, sells dog food, hands out treats, publishes walking routes, arranges walking, sitting and grooming, supports a canine charity and has no weight limit, for $125 a stay. Fairmont Banff Springs does most of the same at C$50 a night capped at C$100. Sonoma Mission Inn runs activities for dogs and has won awards for it. These are hotels that have decided the dog is a guest.

The bottom of the portfolio has decided the opposite, and it includes some of the brand's most prominent addresses. Fairmont Austin, the brand's largest hotel in the United States and its second largest anywhere at 1,048 rooms, answered yes to four things: most rooms take dogs, cats are welcome, there are poop bags, and the policy is published. A 25 lb weight limit and a $100 fee complete it. Fairmont San Francisco, the hotel that gave the brand its name, offers most rooms and no weight limit, and nothing else at all, for $100.

Fairmont Hamilton Princess in Bermuda offers rooms, a 25 lb limit and a US$250 fee, and nothing else. Fairmont El San Juan answered yes to nothing, imposes a 25 lb limit and charges $150. Fairmont Bangkok allows the dog in a lounge, then charges THB 2,000 a day with a THB 30,000 deposit on a 66 lb limit. The Savoy provides a bed, bowls, treats and a terrace, a reasonable start, then caps the dog at 25 lb and scores a D.

The distance between the Miramar and Fairmont Austin is 42 points on the standard. Both are large Fairmonts in major American cities at luxury rates. One has built a programme and the other has written a policy, and the guest booking either has the same website, the same logo and the same July press release to go on.

4.4 Canada, and everywhere else

The brand's strength is where its history is. Of the 19 Canadian Fairmonts, three grade A and five B, and only one, Vancouver Airport, grades F. The United States splits down the middle: an A+ at the Miramar and an A at Sonoma above three Fs at San Francisco, Washington and Austin, with seven hotels in the C band between them. Outside Canada and the United States the picture thins quickly. Twenty seven hotels hold a published grade, three of them B, none A, and nine F. In Britain, St Andrews earns a B while The Savoy, Windsor Park and Cheshire The Mere all score D. That geography is not an accident. The Canadian railway hotels are where Fairmont's dog culture was born, and a culture that has never been written down travels badly.

Then there are the twenty Fairmonts that do not take dogs at all: five in the Emirates, three in China, two in Saudi Arabia, and one each in Barbados, Hamburg, Singapore, Mumbai, Jakarta, Doha, Taghazout Bay in Morocco, Cape Town, Seoul and Hanoi. Some of those are explained by local law or custom. Hamburg and Cape Town are not. A guest who has learned to trust Fairmont with the dog in Banff books the Vier Jahreszeiten in Hamburg on the same assumption and is turned away, and nothing on the brand's own pages warned them.

Fairmont is not a bad dog friendly brand; its best hotels are among the best anywhere. It is an unmanaged one. Nothing in its own rules connects the top to the bottom, and the guest finds out which of the 63 they have bought when they arrive.

SECTION 5

Kimpton: The Counterpoint

Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants is an IHG brand, operating under the same parent, the same mix of franchised and managed hotels and the same corporate infrastructure as InterContinental. The difference is that Kimpton has a dog policy at brand level: no fee, no weight limit, a bed and bowls in every room.

#	Property	Score	Grade	Meets the Standard	Dog fee	Weight limit
1	Kimpton Vero Beach Hotel & Spa (Vero Beach, USA)	52	A+	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
2	Kimpton Schofield Hotel (Cleveland, USA)	46	A+	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
3	Kimpton Fitzroy London (London, UK)	45	A	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
4	Kimpton Sawyer Hotel (Sacramento, USA)	42	A	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
5	Kimpton Hotel Monaco (Seattle, USA)	39	A	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
6	Kimpton Hotel Palomar Philadelphia (Philadelphia, USA)	37	A	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
7	Kimpton Canary Hotel (Santa Barbara, USA)	36	A	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
8	Kimpton Hotel Monaco Washington DC (Washington, USA)	33	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
9	Kimpton Hotel Eventi (New York, USA)	32	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
10	Kimpton Seafire Resort (Grand Cayman)	32	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
11	Kimpton Blythswood Square Hotel (Glasgow, UK)	30	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	77 lb

12	Kimpton Gray Hotel (Chicago, USA)	30	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
13	Kimpton Riverplace Hotel (Portland, USA)	30	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
14	Kimpton Charlotte Square (Edinburgh, UK)	28	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
15	Kimpton Hotel Vintage (Seattle, USA)	28	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
16	Kimpton Hotel Palomar Phoenix Cityscape (Phoenix, USA)	27	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
17	Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs (Palm Springs, USA)	26	B	Yes	Dogs stay free	No limit
18	Kimpton Marlowe Hotel (Cambridge, USA)	34	C	No	$250	No limit
19	Kimpton Hotel Monaco (Philadelphia, USA)	31	C	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
20	Kimpton Maa-Lai Bangkok (Bangkok, Thailand)	24	C	Yes	THB 3,000 per night	No limit
21	Kimpton La Peer Hotel (Los Angeles, USA)	22	C	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
22	Kimpton Alton Hotel (San Francisco, USA)	18	D	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
23	Kimpton George Hotel (Washington, USA)	18	D	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
24	Kimpton Hotel Enso (San Francisco, USA)	18	D	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
25	Kimpton Everly Hotel Hollywood (Los Angeles, USA)	16	D	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
26	Kimpton Hotel Wilshire (Los Angeles, USA)	15	D	No	Not stated	No limit

27	Kimpton Hotel Palomar Los Angeles Beverly Hills (Los Angeles, USA)	13	D	No	Dogs stay free	No limit

Twenty four of the 27 stay free, 26 have no weight limit, 25 provide a bed and 24 provide bowls. Eighteen meet the six minimum requirements, seven score A or better, six score D and none scores F. The average score is five points above InterContinental, inside the same company, and the floor is eight points higher.

Set the three portfolios side by side and the shape of a brand level policy is visible in the numbers.

	InterContinental	Fairmont	Kimpton
Hotels assessed	21	63	27
Average score	24.4	21.0	29.7
Lowest to highest	5 to 69	-3 to 46	13 to 52
A or A+	2	5	7
D or F	9	29	6
F	3	13	0
Meet the six minimum requirements	9 of 21	23 of 63	18 of 27
Dogs stay free	1	6	24
Hotels that impose a weight limit	14	22	1
Dog bed in the room	13	48	25
Real bowls	14	45	24
Dog allowed in a lounge	11	19	20
Dog kept out of bar, restaurant and lounge by the hotel's own rule	8	31	6
Staff trained for dogs	5	3	1
Hotels that refuse dogs	not counted	20	0

The table shows what a brand level policy does and does not do. It guarantees the floor, the fee, the limit, the bed and the bowl, where Kimpton is near uniform and the other two scatter. It does not guarantee the ceiling. Kimpton's bar access, services and staff training are no better than the others, and six Kimptons score D because beyond the floor they have built nothing. Kimpton Vero Beach, the A+, opens the bar, restaurant, lounge and terrace, runs activities, sells dog food and has a dog wash. Kimpton Palomar Beverly Hills, the lowest D, provides the bed the brand requires, opens its lounge, and offers nothing more.

Four Kimptons have drifted off the brand policy: Marlowe in Cambridge at $250, Maa-Lai Bangkok at THB 3,000 a night, Blythswood Square in Glasgow with a 77 lb limit, and Hotel Wilshire in Los Angeles, which answered our question about the fee with a price list for damage. Even the most consistent brand in our data drifts when nobody checks.

SECTION 6

Why the Variance Exists

Three portfolios, one method, and the same causes in each.

Nobody owns the dog. At almost every hotel we assess, the dog policy was written by whoever handles the insurance, is enforced by whoever is on shift, and is reviewed by nobody. Our study of 236 published hotel pet policies, The Fine Print, found that nine in ten contain more prohibitions than courtesies, that the typical policy forbids six things and offers fewer than two, and that only one in five mentions a water bowl. A policy nobody owns drifts, and 63 policies nobody owns drift in 63 directions.

The brand standard stops at the pet policy template. A luxury brand specifies the thread count of its sheets and says nothing about whether a dog may sit in the lounge. Where a group template exists it covers liability, waivers and fees, the things the lawyers care about, and nothing about beds, bowls, access or service, the things the guest cares about. The Fine Print found that the waivers and indemnities which make these documents so unwelcoming are, in the four legal systems it reviewed, somewhere between weak and worthless, so the template delivers the coldness without even the protection.

The franchise mix is used as an excuse. The argument runs that a brand cannot impose dog standards on independent owners and third party operators. I have heard it more than once, and Kimpton, under exactly that mix inside IHG, disproves it. Brand standards for the room, the breakfast and the uniform are imposed on the same owners every day. The mix is a reason it takes effort, not a reason it cannot be done.

Hilton shows both halves of the lesson. In June 2022 Hilton announced that more than 4,600 hotels across seven of its brands in the United States and Canada welcome dogs, and gave every one of them access to virtual veterinary advice through Mars Petcare for the length of the stay. It is the largest brand level decision about the dog any hotel company has taken, and it proves that a decision can be made for thousands of hotels under hundreds of owners at once.

It also shows where such a decision usually stops. The bed and the bowls in the room belong to one brand's programme, Canopy; elsewhere the release says only that many hotels offer bowls and waste bags. The fee and the weight limit were left to each hotel. In the Hilton family hotels we hold, most set a weight limit, from 22 lb to 111 lb, and the scores run from 5 to 41. Hilton decided to admit the dog at scale. It has not yet decided to welcome it.

Nothing is measured. Until this dataset existed, no brand could see its own spread. IHG had no number for Miami and no number for Times Square, and so no reason to ask why they differ. Fairmont had no number for the Miramar and none for Austin. What is not measured is not managed, and a general manager who has never seen the number cannot be expected to move it. The leaderboards in this paper are what unmeasured

discretion produces. The hotels that moved between editions moved because, for the first time, someone had measured them.

And at the bottom of both luxury portfolios the fee is doing the policy's job: a charge high enough to discourage the booking, attached to nothing the dog receives. The hotels charging the most in these tables consistently offer the least, which is the opposite of how either brand prices anything else it sells. A dog owner reads that fee for exactly what it is, and the hotel across the street that charges less and offers more gets the booking.

None of these causes is expensive to remove. Each is a decision that has not been taken, usually because nobody in the building has the job of taking it. The next two sections put a number on what that indecision costs and set out what taking it looks like.

SECTION 7

What It Costs

The revenue model is set out in full in The Economics of Dog Friendly Hospitality, with every assumption stated. Its base case is a representative 250 room luxury hotel at $350 a night and 70% occupancy.

Revenue line	Basis	Annual value
Room revenue	5% occupancy lift, 4,563 extra room nights at $350	$1,597,050
Rate premium	$17.41 a night, AirDNA's measured premium on pet friendly listings, across 10,951 dog occupied nights	$190,657
Pet fee	$50 a stay on 1,782 stays	$89,100
Total incremental revenue	$1,876,807	

The 5% occupancy lift sits below the measured gap: KeyData's booking data shows pet friendly rentals at 54% occupancy against 48% for the rest, and AirDNA finds 5.4% more demand. On property spend from dog guests is left out as upside, because no hotel has yet published it. The one off investment to reach a credible programme is $25,000 to $50,000, with running costs of about $3,000 a month, most of it housekeeping; roughly half the incremental revenue reaches operating profit.

Applied to these two portfolios the arithmetic is direct. Fairmont has 29 hotels scoring D or F and InterContinental has nine, each by its own answers not capturing the segment, and each able to meet the standard through the six decisions in section 8 without a renovation. Thirty eight hotels at even half the base case is tens of millions of dollars a year handed to the restaurant down the street and to the competitor that lets the dog into the bar.

The cost of the variance itself is harder to count and matters more. Dog owners return to the hotel that welcomed the dog rather than gamble on another, and a consistent brand collects that loyalty at brand level. A guest who has had a good stay at InterContinental Miami books Times Square with confidence, has a bad one, and does not conclude that Times Square is the problem. They conclude that InterContinental cannot be trusted with the dog, and the next booking goes to the individual hotel that earned it, or to a Kimpton. An inconsistent brand does not merely fail to earn the segment's loyalty. It trains the segment not to trust the flag.

SECTION 8

What a Consistent Brand Dog Policy Looks Like

The standard's six minimum requirements are the floor a dog owner needs in order to book on the strength of a name, and they are what a brand should write into the manual for every hotel under its flag that takes dogs. They were designed to be reachable within a quarter and they cost almost nothing. Five of the six rules below are those requirements, written the way a brand would write them. The sixth, the weight limit, and the bed in rule five, are where the brand's own best hotels have already gone further, and where a brand that wants the segment should follow them.

1. **A written dog policy, available before booking, the same shape at every hotel.** One document in the brand's template, on every hotel's page, saying what the dog gets, where it may go and what it costs. Not one policy, because a ski lodge and a city tower will differ, but one layout, so that a guest comparing Banff with Chicago reads the same five lines on both pages. The Fine Print found that the clearest policies in the industry are the short ones. A brand can fix this in a week.
2. **The fee published in the headline price, in one shape, with a reason.** Every hotel under the flag charges per stay or per night, not a mixture; the amount may vary by market, the structure may not; and the fee is disclosed before booking and tied to what the dog receives. Regulators already require the disclosure. The brand should require the consistency, and the choice experiment tells it what the fee should buy.
3. **No weight limit below 50 lb, or none at all.** A 25 lb limit turns away the dogs most guests own. Kimpton runs 26 of 27 hotels with no limit and Fairmont 41 of 63; the Friendly Dog Policy judges the dog on its behaviour, which is the only thing a hotel can actually observe.
4. At least one shared indoor space the dog may enter with its owner. A lounge, a bar or a restaurant, so that the owner can eat and drink in the hotel without leaving the dog upstairs. Thirty one Fairmonts and eight InterContinentals keep the dog out of all three by their own rule. This is the single decision with the largest effect on both the score and the revenue, and a terrace does not do the job in November.
5. Real bowls and a bed in every dog room. Kimpton provides a bed in 25 of 27 hotels and bowls in 24. Fairmont already provides beds in 48 and bowls in 45; the policy asks the brand to make it 63.
6. A stated limit on dogs per room and plain deposit terms. Whether a deposit is taken, how much, and when it is returned, in the same document as the fee. Honesty rather than generosity.

Those six put a floor under every hotel. Above it, the brand's own strongest hotels show what to add, none of it needing capital: a published walking route, treats at the desk, a vetted walking and sitting partner, the vet's number on file, staff briefed so that every shift gives the same answer, and the thing Miami has understood better than any hotel we have assessed, a weekly event that gives the dog a social life and the hotel a reason to be photographed.

And one rule that keeps the floor from sinking: assess every hotel every year, by the same method, and publish the result. Kimpton's four strays, the Wharf's slide and Houston's slip show that a brand policy drifts unless someone checks it. Roch Dog's certification is free, assesses by anonymous enquiry and reassesses annually, so a brand can have the measurement without building it. What it cannot outsource is the decision.

SECTION 9

Conclusion

This paper asked whether the promise a luxury brand makes to every guest survives the arrival of a dog. Across three portfolios and 111 hotels it does not, and the research supports three conclusions.

The first is that both luxury brands are losing money across the group, and not in one place. Thirty eight of their hotels grade D or F on their own answers, and 24 of those 38 keep the dog out of the bar, the restaurant and the lounge, so the owner who does book eats and drinks somewhere else. The Economics of Dog Friendly Hospitality puts a credible dog programme at a representative luxury hotel at $1.88 million a year in incremental revenue, roughly half of it reaching operating profit. The loyalty of the dog owner, which a consistent brand collects at brand level, is being collected instead by Miami, by Banff and by the Miramar, hotel by hotel, with nothing left over for the name.

The second is that both brands are letting down the one promise a luxury flag exists to make. Consistency is the product. For a guest with a dog it does not exist. InterContinental holds the best dog hotel we have ever assessed and a hotel that charges $250 for a room and nothing else. Fairmont holds five A grade hotels, thirteen Fs and twenty refusals under a brand that puts dogs on its home page. In both, the fee bears no relationship to what the dog receives and the weight limit is whatever a general manager once decided. That is not a brand standard with a gap in it. It is the absence of one.

The third is that the excuse has run out. Kimpton keeps the promise with one brand policy under the same corporate roof as InterContinental, with the same owners and operators, and the result is a brand with no F grade, where the fee, the weight limit and the bed are the same at almost every door. Hilton has decided, for 4,600 hotels at once, that the dog comes in. The Wharf, San Diego and Los Angeles Downtown moved within weeks once someone was counting, and spent no capital to do it. What is missing in the two luxury brands is not budget, not ownership structure and not know how. It is a decision at brand level that the dog is part of what the name means.

So this is the ask, to IHG and to Accor. Take the six requirements your own best hotels already meet and put them in the manual that specifies the sheets. Give the fee a reason and the policy one shape on every page, so that a guest comparing two of your hotels reads the same five lines. Say on your own pages which hotels do not take dogs, so that a refusal at the door becomes a decision made at home. Then have someone who did not write the policy check every hotel against it once a year. Miami, Banff, the Miramar and Vero Beach already do all of it. The rest of your hotels are one decision away, and no general manager can make it for them. It is yours to make.

Methodology and Limitations

This fourth edition reassesses all three portfolios on the data of 25 October 2026 and replaces the third edition of October 2026. It brings the Fairmont figures into line with our dedicated study of that brand, Fairmont and the Four Legged Guest, which uses the same definitions: a hotel is counted as keeping the dog out of its bar, restaurant and lounge only where that is the hotel's own rule and not local law, and a weight limit is counted where the hotel says one applies, whether or not it states the figure.

All assessments use the Roch Dog Friendly Standard (RDFS-02): weighted questions scored and graded at fixed thresholds, with six minimum requirements determining whether a hotel meets the standard. Hotels were assessed by anonymous guest enquiry between July 2025 and October 2026, or by self assessment through free certification; both routes use the same questions and scoring. Two Fairmont hotels were completed by telephone using the same questions. Unanswered questions score No, so every score is a floor. The data is a snapshot as of 25 October 2026 and live grades are on rochdog.com.

The InterContinental and Kimpton samples are the hotels we have assessed, not the brands' full systems. Our 21 InterContinentals come from a brand with more than 200 hotels and our 27 Kimptons from a brand of roughly 80; both lean to flagships and to North America. The Fairmont sample is the brand's full published list of 94 hotels as of 16 October 2026, of which 63 hold a grade, 20 refused dogs in writing and are counted but not scored, one is closed, two have not opened and eight did not answer two rounds of enquiry.

We hold smaller samples of other luxury groups; they show the same pattern but are too small to publish hotel by hotel and have been left out. The Hilton figures in section 6 are drawn from Hilton's own June 2022 release and from the Hilton family hotels in our dataset, which are not a representative sample of that company.

Grades and scores are Roch Dog's assessment opinion, produced by applying the published criteria to what each hotel told us or published; the dataset has not been externally audited. Where a hotel's policy has changed since it was assessed, its live page will reflect the next reassessment. Which of the six minimum requirements any named hotel missed is reported to the hotel and not published. The revenue figures in section 7 are the companion paper's model, not measured results, and carry the limitations stated there.

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