Fairmont and the Four Legged Guest

What a dog owner gets at each of Fairmont's 94 hotels, measured against one published standard

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary 3

What Fairmont Says 4

How We Measured 6

Where a Dog Is Welcome at All 8

The Welcome, Hotel by Hotel 10

Half a Standard 15

The Price of the Same Dog 17

The Dog in the Lobby and the Dog in the Room 18

Where Fairmont Keeps Its Promise 19

What a Fairmont Dog Standard Would Say 20

Conclusion 22

Methodology and Limitations 24

Sources 25

Executive Summary

Fairmont is the only luxury hotel brand that has made dogs part of its identity. It has kept resident dogs on the staff of its hotels since 2002, it marks International Dog Day with a press release, and in July 2025 it told the world that "Fairmont is committed to ensuring all guests, including four legged, receive luxury and personalized service." No other luxury group has put a sentence like that in print, and a sentence like that invites one question: is it true? This paper takes it at its word and tests it at every Fairmont hotel on earth.

Roch Dog wrote to all 94 hotels on Fairmont's own list as an ordinary guest planning a stay with a dog, asked the questions a careful owner asks before booking, and scored every answer against the published Roch Dog Friendly Standard. Sixty two hotels answered and hold a published grade. Twenty one 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.

The sixty two that take dogs run from an A+ at the Miramar in Santa Monica to six F grades on three continents. Twenty eight meet the six minimum requirements of the standard and thirty four do not. The fee for the same dog runs from nothing to US$250, charged per night, per stay, per dog or per room in a dozen currencies, and the weight limit from none at all to 11 lb. The brand's own showcase, The Plaza in New York, takes a dog of any size for free and still misses one of the six minimums; its Chicago hotel charges $150 and turns away any dog over 40 lb. Both appear in the same Fairmont press release, and a guest reading it has no way of telling them apart.

The resident dog in the lobby, the thing the brand is genuinely famous for, tells a guest nothing about the welcome their own dog will get. Of the thirteen hotels with a Canine Ambassador that we assessed, three are A grade and one is F.

None of this is a failure of ability, and I want to say so at the outset, because the easy reading of these numbers is that Fairmont is bad with dogs and the data says the opposite. Five Fairmonts are among the best dog hotels we have assessed anywhere in the world, and the pieces of a proper welcome, the bed, the bowls, the walking routes, already exist across most of the portfolio. They exist in different hotels.

What Fairmont has is a promise made at brand level and kept, or not, at the discretion of each general manager, which is exactly what our earlier study, Dog Friendly Performance Across Luxury Hotel Portfolios, found at InterContinental and across the wider industry. Fairmont is not the exception. It is the rule, under the one flag that promised to be different. The paper closes with what a Fairmont dog standard would say, and it is short, because the brand's own best hotels have already written it.

SECTION 1

What Fairmont Says

Every luxury brand sells one thing before it sells a room, and that is the promise that the hotel you book will be like the last one. 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, and that is not luck. Behind every luxury flag sits a brand standards manual that runs to hundreds of pages, specifies the thread count of the sheets and the temperature of the welcome drink, and is inspected, with the flag withdrawn from owners who fail.

Consistency is the product. The 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. Fairmont sells that consistency with more warmth than most.

The brand's current positioning, launched in May 2025 as its first global campaign in four years, is called "Make Special Happen". Omer Acar, chief executive of Fairmont and Raffles, described it as "part of our brand DNA and is the sentiment we make our guests feel." Loay Nour, the brand's vice president of brand and marketing, said the company had decided "to double down on this, building into new service culture training, to ensure that every colleague worldwide is equipped to create special moments for our guests." Accor's own description of the brand promises that "Always welcoming, approachable, and authentic, Fairmont creates a space where every guest feels at home while experiencing something extraordinary."

The brand is large enough for the promise to matter. Acar put it at "92 properties in 30 countries globally" in May 2025 and described Fairmont hotels as "social epicenters that blend genuine encounters with the heart of the action"; by October 2026 fairmont.com listed 94 hotels, with more signed from Rishikesh to the Red Sea. Every one of them works to the same brand standards manual, the document that specifies what a Fairmont room, a Fairmont breakfast and a Fairmont welcome must be, and that is inspected. That manual is the reason a guest trusts the name before arriving. It is also the place where the dog is absent.

Fairmont is also, unusually among luxury brands, explicit that the guest may have four legs. In 2002 Fairmont Waterfront in Vancouver took on Morgan, a black Labrador, as the brand's first Canine Ambassador. The programme spread through the Canadian railway hotels and beyond: by 2010 the brand was announcing resident dogs at ten hotels, from Lake Louise to Mount Kenya, who "meet and greet guests" and "go on scheduled walks and runs". It is still running. In July 2025 Fairmont Tokyo opened with a golden retriever named Serene holding the title of Chief Happiness Officer, and Sonoma Mission Inn has Chardonnay, its Director of Pet Relations.

On 28 July 2025 the brand issued a press release for International Dog Day that goes further than any other luxury group has gone in print. It invites guests to "heartwarming stays that go beyond just 'pet friendly'", and states that "Fairmont is committed to ensuring

all guests, including four legged, receive luxury and personalized service." It promises that "Whether it's your pup's first stay or fifteenth, Fairmont ensures that every furry guest feel right at home", describes a "Tail Wagging Welcome" of a bed, bowls of fresh water and a welcome gift, and asks guests to share their stories under the hashtag #FairmontLovesDogs. The release names eleven hotels. It is careful, in one clause, to say that "many properties offer bespoke amenities", not all.

That is the promise, and I want to give the brand its due before I test it, because it is a good promise and nobody made Fairmont make it. Most luxury groups say nothing about dogs beyond a line in the terms and conditions, and a brand that puts the dog in its press releases, on its home page and on its payroll has decided that the dog is part of what the name means.

It also matters more now than it did in 2002, for three reasons. 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 is hard and arriving somewhere that turns out not to welcome the dog is miserable. A brand that can be trusted collects that loyalty at brand level; one that cannot hands it to the individual hotel and to its competitors.

Booking data now shows pet friendly properties running fuller and at higher rates than their neighbours, so an inconsistent welcome is a revenue leak as well as a trust problem, and the arithmetic is set out in The Economics of Dog Friendly Hospitality. And the variance is now visible, because every hotel in this paper is published with its grade, its fee and its policy on rochdog.com, and the words "pet friendly" no longer do the job the brand used to let them do.

The question the rest of this paper answers is whether Fairmont's hotels agree with Fairmont.

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, and the method is the same one used in our earlier portfolio study, Dog Friendly Performance Across Luxury Hotel Portfolios.

The portfolio is the one Fairmont publishes. On 16 October 2026 fairmont.com listed 99 properties: 94 hotels and five Heritage Place residence clubs, which are fractional ownership products rather than hotels and are left out. We wrote to all 94 as a private traveller planning a stay with a dog, asked the questions a careful owner would ask, and recorded what each hotel said in its own words.

A hotel that did not reply was written to again over two rounds between July and October 2026. Two hotels, Le Château Frontenac in Quebec City and Chicago Millennium Park, were completed by telephone by the author on 24 October 2026 using the same questions. Where a hotel answered 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 94 hotels break down as follows. Sixty two answered, take dogs, and hold a published grade. Twenty one replied that they do not take dogs; each refusal is quoted from the hotel's own reply in section 3 and none is scored. Fairmont Grand Hotel Geneva is closed for renovation until 2028. Fairmont New Orleans opens on 2 November 2026 and Fairmont The Red Sea has not opened. Eight hotels did not answer two rounds of enquiry: Southampton in Bermuda, Chengdu and Yangcheng Lake in China, Jaipur and Udaipur Palace in India, and the three Kenyan safari properties, Mara Safari Club, The Norfolk and Mount Kenya Safari Club.

The standard 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, 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 table in section 4 records that test for every hotel; which requirement a hotel missed is reported to the hotel and is not published.

The data is as of 27 October 2026 and every hotel named here is published with its grade, its fee and its policy on rochdog.com. It is worth placing Fairmont in context before reading a single grade. 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, and Fairmont's spread sits comfortably inside that picture.

Our earlier study, Dog Friendly Performance Across Luxury Hotel Portfolios, found the same pattern at InterContinental, from the best dog hotel we have ever assessed in Miami to a hotel in Times Square that charges $250 and offers the dog nothing but the room, and found that the distance between the best and worst hotel inside each brand was wider than the distance between the brands themselves. Fairmont is not an outlier. It is a fair reflection of how the luxury hotel industry treats the dog, which is to leave the question to each general manager and tolerate every answer equally.

The same is true across the industry. Our survey 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. Hotels have written their dog policies as liability documents, and Fairmont's hotels have written theirs the way everyone else has. What earns Fairmont a paper of its own is not that it does worse than its peers. It is that it is the one brand that has told dog owners, in public and for more than twenty years, to expect more.

SECTION 3

Where a Dog Is Welcome at All

The first thing the promise has to survive is the front door. Twenty one of the 94 Fairmont hotels do not take dogs, and every one of them said so in writing to a guest who asked.

Eight of the twenty one are in the Gulf: five in the United Arab Emirates, two in Saudi Arabia and one in Qatar. Eight are in East and South East Asia, three of them in China. The rest are scattered: Mumbai, Cape Town, Taghazout in Morocco, Hamburg and Barbados. Four, Beijing, Shanghai, Seoul and Makati, make an exception for certified service dogs and no other. The replies are courteous and short, and the table below gives each hotel's own words.

Almost none of them gives a reason, and I find that more revealing than the refusals themselves. Beijing was the exception, declining "In consideration of hygiene regulations, allergies of other guests and hotel policies". Singapore, having explained that the questions about fees and weight limits "would not be applicable", went on to mention an incidental deposit of SGD 100 a night for the human guest. The rest simply state the policy, as a hotel does when it has never been asked to defend it, and nothing in the brand's own materials suggests that anyone at Fairmont ever has.

Some of this is culture and some of it is law, and a brand cannot change either, so I have no quarrel with a hotel in Makkah or Jakarta that says no. But the pattern inside single markets shows how much of it is simply a hotel's choice.

Fairmont Riyadh takes dogs; Fairmont Ramla Riyadh, in the same city under the same flag, does not. Fairmont Wuhan and Fairmont Sanya Haitang Bay take dogs; Beijing, Shanghai and Xiamen do not. Three Moroccan Fairmonts take dogs; Taghazout Bay does not. Nothing in German or South African law stops a five star hotel from welcoming a dog, and the two that decline are among the most celebrated addresses the brand has. Hamburg's Vier Jahreszeiten put it plainly: "Unfortunately, dogs and any other pets are not allowed as guests in our hotel." Cape Grace was warmer and no different: "Regrettably, our hotel is not a pet-friendly property".

A guest reading "all guests, including four legged" does not know any of this. The Fairmont website lists all 94 hotels under one name and one promise. At one hotel in five the answer to the dog is no, and the only way to find out is to ask. We say often that allowed is not the same as welcome, and that is the argument of the rest of this paper; at these twenty one the dog is not even allowed, and the brand's own pages do not say so.

Hotel	Country	In the hotel's words
Fairmont Dubai	UAE	"Fairmont Dubai is not a pet-friendly hotel"

Fairmont The Palm	UAE	"dogs are not permitted on the hotel premises"
Fairmont Fujairah Beach Resort	UAE	"our hotel is not pet friendly"
Fairmont Bab Al Bahr	UAE	"our hotel is not pet friendly"
Fairmont Ajman	UAE	"unable to accommodate dogs or other pets"
Makkah Clock Royal Tower	Saudi Arabia	"pets, including dogs and other animals, are not permitted"
Fairmont Ramla Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	"unable to accommodate pets at the hotel"
Fairmont Doha	Qatar	"our hotel is not pet-friendly"
Fairmont Beijing	China	"does not allow pets to stay at the hotel"
Fairmont Peace Hotel	China	"domestic pets are not allowed at our hotel"
Fairmont Xiamen	China	"our hotel has a strict no-pet policy"
Fairmont Singapore	Singapore	"currently not a pet-friendly hotel"
Fairmont Ambassador Seoul	South Korea	"does not permit pets within the guest rooms"
Fairmont Hanoi	Vietnam	"pets are not permitted at Fairmont Hanoi"
Fairmont Jakarta	Indonesia	"our hotel does not allow pets as part of our policy"
Fairmont Makati	Philippines	"only certified service pets are allowed in the hotel premises"
Fairmont Mumbai	India	"pets are not allowed in the hotel"
Cape Grace	South Africa	"our hotel is not a pet-friendly property"
Fairmont Taghazout Bay	Morocco	"Fairmont Taghazout Bay does not accept pets"
Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten	Germany	"dogs and any other pets are not allowed as guests in our hotel"
Fairmont Royal Pavilion	Barbados	"we are unable to accommodate dogs at the hotel"

SECTION 4

The Welcome, Hotel by Hotel

The sixty two Fairmonts that take dogs, from the best grade to the worst and by score within each grade. The grade is the live Roch Rank on 27 October 2026; the fee and weight limit are what each hotel told us, in the hotel's own currency. Every hotel links to its full published assessment.

#	Property	Score	Grade	Meets the Stan dard	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)	33	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	Fairmont Monte Carlo (Monaco)	32	B	Yes	EUR 50 per dog, per night	No limit
11	Fairmont Kea Lani (Maui, USA)	31	B	Yes	$40 per day	20 lb
12	The Fairmont Hotel Macdonald (Edmonton, Canada)	31	B	Yes	C$35 per pet, per night	No limit
13	Fairmont La Hacienda Costa del Sol (San Roque, Spain)	30	B	Yes	EUR 25 per dog, per day	No limit
14	Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu (La Malbaie, Canada)	29	B	Yes	C$60 plus taxes per night	No limit
15	Fairmont Hotel Vancouver (Vancouver, Canada)	29	B	Yes	C$50 per night plus taxes, capped at C$100	No limit
16	Fairmont Chateau Laurier (Ottawa, Canada)	27	B	Yes	From C$50 per stay	No limit
17	Fairmont Rio de Janeiro Copacabana (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)	27	B	Yes	R$50 per night plus charges	55 lb
18	Fairmont Century Plaza (Los Angeles, USA)	42	C	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
19	The Plaza (New York, USA)	38	C	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
20	Fairmont Scottsdale Princess (Scottsdale, USA)	32	C	No	Not stated	No limit
21	Fairmont Empress (Victoria, Canada)	31	C	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
22	Fairmont Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, USA)	31	C	No	$50 per stay	No limit

23	Fairmont Olympic Hotel (Seattle, USA)	31	C	No	$75 per stay	No limit
24	Fairmont Le Château Frontenac (Quebec City, Canada)	28	C	No	C$60 per night	No limit
25	Fairmont Quasar Istanbul (Istanbul, Turkey)	27	C	No	EUR 25 plus VAT	15 lb
26	Fairmont Le Château Montebello (Montebello, Canada)	27	C	No	C$55 plus taxes per room, per night	No limit
27	Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth (Montreal, Canada)	25	C	Yes	C$50 per night	No limit
28	Fairmont Grand Hotel Kyiv (Kyiv, Ukraine)	25	C	Yes	EUR 60 per night	11 lb
29	Fairmont Tremblant (Mont-Tremblant, Canada)	24	C	Yes	C$60 per day plus taxes	No limit
30	Fairmont Riyadh (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)	24	C	No	SAR 50 per day	No limit
31	Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park (Chicago, USA)	24	C	Yes	$150 per stay, $300 for stays of 7 to 30 days	40 lb
32	Fairmont Grand Del Mar (San Diego, USA)	23	C	No	$150	No limit
33	Fairmont Dallas (Dallas, USA)	23	C	No	$100	No limit
34	Fairmont La Marina Rabat-Salé (Rabat, Morocco)	23	C	Yes	MAD 500 per night	110 lb
35	Fairmont Copley Plaza (Boston, USA)	22	C	No	$50 per night	No limit
36	Fairmont San Francisco (San Francisco, USA)	21	C	No	$100	No limit
37	Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge (Jasper, Canada)	21	C	No	C$50 per night	No limit

38	Fairmont Waterfront (Vancouver, Canada)	20	D	No	C$35 per night	No limit
39	Fairmont Le Montreux Palace (Montreux, Switzerland)	20	D	No	CHF 30 per pet, per stay	No limit
40	The Fairmont Winnipeg (Winnipeg, Canada)	20	D	Yes	C$25 per night, per pet	No limit
41	Fairmont Cheshire The Mere (Knutsford, UK)	20	D	Yes	GBP 75	No limit
42	Fairmont Mayakoba (Playa del Carmen, Mexico)	20	D	No	$25 per pet, per day	25 lb
43	Fairmont Breakers Long Beach (Long Beach, USA)	19	D	Yes	$150 per stay	No limit
44	The Savoy (London, UK)	19	D	No	GBP 25 per day	25 lb
45	Fairmont Wuhan (Wuhan, China)	17	D	No	RMB 350	33 lb
46	Carton House, a Fairmont Managed Hotel (Kildare, Ireland)	16	D	Yes	EUR 50 per night	Not stated
47	The Fairmont Palliser (Calgary, Canada)	15	D	Yes	C$40 per pet, per night	No limit
48	Fairmont Bangkok Sukhumvit (Bangkok, Thailand)	15	D	Yes	THB 2,000 per pet, per day, plus charges	66 lb
49	Fairmont Baku Flame Towers (Baku, Azerbaijan)	15	D	No	AZN 60 per pet, per day	13 lb
50	Fairmont Nile City (Cairo, Egypt)	15	D	No	$25 per day, per pet	No limit
51	Fairmont Orchid (Hawaii, USA)	14	D	No	$75 per night plus tax	No limit
52	Fairmont Vancouver Airport (Richmond, Canada)	14	D	No	Not stated	No limit

53	Fairmont Washington (Washington, USA)	13	D	No	Dogs stay free	No limit
54	Fairmont Royal Palm Marrakech (Marrakech, Morocco)	12	D	No	MAD 500 per stay	44 lb
55	Fairmont Windsor Park (Windsor, UK)	12	D	No	GBP 50 per dog, per stay	35 lb
56	Fairmont Austin (Austin, USA)	11	D	No	$100	25 lb
57	Fairmont Amman (Amman, Jordan)	10	F	No	JOD 25 per pet, per day	15 lb
58	Fairmont Hamilton Princess (Hamilton, Bermuda)	2	F	No	US$250	25 lb
59	Fairmont Tokyo (Tokyo, Japan)	0	F	No	Not stated	No limit
60	Fairmont El San Juan Hotel (San Juan, Puerto Rico)	-3	F	No	$150	25 lb
61	Fairmont Tazi Palace Tangier (Tangier, Morocco)	-3	F	No	MAD 500 per day	22 lb
62	Fairmont Sanya Haitang Bay (Sanya, China)	-3	F	No	RMB 400 per night	33 lb

The grades run one A+, four A, twelve B, twenty C, nineteen D and six F. The median score sits in the middle of the C band. Forty nine points separate the Miramar from the three hotels at the foot of the table, and that distance is inside one brand, under one promise, at one price tier. I have looked at a great many hotel portfolios and I have yet to find a luxury brand whose rooms, restaurants or service vary a fraction as much as its welcome for a dog does, and the reason is the one set out in section 1: the room is in the manual and the dog is not.

SECTION 5

Half a Standard

The six minimum requirements of the Roch Dog Friendly Standard are the floor, not the ceiling, and we kept them deliberately simple. They ask nothing of a hotel that a reasonable dog owner would not ask at the front desk: that the dog rules can be read before booking, that the dog gets a real bowl, that there is one indoor space other than the bedroom where the dog may sit with its owner, that the fee is stated, that the deposit terms are stated, and that the hotel says how many dogs a room takes.

None of the six costs money, and a hotel can meet all of them in an afternoon with a page on its website and a decision about the lounge. Twenty eight of the sixty two Fairmonts meet all six. Thirty four do not, and my feeling is that this is the most telling number in the paper, because it measures not what a hotel has chosen to spend on the dog but what it has bothered to decide.

The requirement missed most often is the one that costs nothing, and it is the one I would fix first at every hotel in the world. Twenty nine hotels allow the dog into neither the bar, nor the restaurant, nor a lounge, so the dog may sleep in the room and walk through the lobby on a lead and that is the whole of its welcome indoors. Ten of those twenty nine allow the dog onto a terrace, which is pleasant in Monaco in June and no use at all in Montreal in January.

This is the distinction we draw between tolerance and hospitality. A hotel that confines the dog to the bedroom has allowed it, and allowed is not the same as welcome; the owner who cannot bring the dog down to breakfast eats somewhere else, and spends the evening somewhere else too.

Seven hotels have no written dog policy a guest can see before booking, eight do not provide bowls, three have not stated a fee, and one has said a deposit applies without saying how much. Every hotel stated how many dogs a room takes, which tells you which question hotels are used to being asked.

What the six requirements expose is that a high score and a complete welcome are two different things, and the standard separates them on purpose. Fairmont Century Plaza in Los Angeles scores 42, level with Banff Springs, takes the dog for free with no weight limit, and still misses one of the six. The Plaza in New York, which the brand's own International Dog Day release holds up for taking two dogs of any size at no charge, scores 38 and misses one too.

Nine hotels with scores in the A or B bands fall short on a single basic, and the three highest scoring of them are American flagships of the brand. These are hotels that have built a great deal for the dog and left one plank out of the floor, and the guest who happens to need that plank finds out on arrival.

The reverse is also true. The Fairmont Winnipeg meets all six and grades D, as do five others, because meeting the floor is not the same as building on it.

The standard asks two questions of every hotel, and they are different questions. Does this hotel have the basics a dog owner needs to book with confidence? And beyond the basics, how much has it built? A hotel that meets all six carries the line "Meets the Roch Dog Friendly Standard" on its public page whatever its grade, and a hotel that misses any of them carries the line that it does not, at any grade, because the standard is the floor and the grade is the quality. Fairmont's portfolio answers yes to the first question at twenty eight hotels and gives every possible answer to the second.

The pieces are there, and this is the part of the data that should encourage the brand rather than embarrass it. Fifty two of the sixty two provide a dog bed and fifty four provide bowls, which means the brand's "Tail Wagging Welcome" is already the norm rather than the exception, whatever the release says about select locations. Fifty three are near a park or green space and forty four will tell you where to walk. Thirty one hand out treats.

But only twenty one let the dog into a lounge, fourteen into a bar and nine into a restaurant, only eighteen let it stay in the room alone, only eighteen hand out poop bags, and two of the sixty two said their staff had been trained to look after a dog guest. The brand has most of the parts of a programme. It has them in different hotels, which is what you get when sixty two general managers each answer the question for themselves and nobody adds up the answers.

SECTION 6

The Price of the Same Dog

A dog owner who wants to know what Fairmont charges for the dog has sixty two answers. Five hotels take the dog for free: Century Plaza, The Plaza, Pacific Rim, the Empress and Washington. At the other end Fairmont Hamilton Princess in Bermuda charges US$250, and Fairmont Chicago charges $150 for a short stay and $300 for a stay of a week or more. In between it is charged per night, per stay, per dog or per room, sometimes capped and mostly not, in twelve currencies.

Banff Springs caps it at C$100 a stay; Chateau Lake Louise, an hour up the same valley, at C$450. Nothing about the fee predicts the welcome: one of the five free hotels grades D, and the two highest fees in the portfolio sit at an F and a C. A fee that buys the dog nothing is a canine tax, not a service charge, and the highest ones here buy the least.

Twelve hotels take a deposit on top of the fee, and fifty do not. The deposit runs from GBP 50 a night at St Andrews to THB 30,000 a stay at Bangkok Sukhumvit, and one hotel said a deposit applies without saying how much. A guest who has stayed with the dog at Banff, where there is no deposit, arrives at Royal York, under the same flag in the same country, to find C$200 a night held on the card.

Twenty hotels impose a weight limit and forty two do not. The limit runs from 11 lb at Fairmont Grand Hotel Kyiv, which excludes almost every dog, to 110 lb at Fairmont La Marina in Rabat, which excludes almost none; five hotels, The Savoy and Fairmont Austin among them, draw the line at 25 lb. The brand's own release says The Plaza takes "no size or weight limit", and so it does; the Fairmont on Millennium Park in Chicago turns away a Labrador. Neither hotel is wrong by its own rules. They simply have different rules, and the guest cannot tell from the name. The standard takes the view set out in the Friendly Dog Policy, that a hotel should judge the dog on its behaviour rather than its weight, and a brand that wanted one rule has a model for it in two thirds of its own hotels.

The number of dogs a room will take is the one policy on which the portfolio nearly agrees: thirty six hotels say two, twelve say one, two say three and twelve set no limit. It is the one question where a guest could guess the Fairmont answer and usually be right.

What a fee should buy is a question with an evidence base. The Kyung Hee University choice experiment, set out for hoteliers in What Dog Owners Will Pay For in a Hotel, found that owners pay willingly for things the dog can use, a bed, a bowl, somewhere to sit together, and resent a charge that buys nothing. Our own survey of published policies, The Hotel Pet Fee, found the same. Fairmont's fees are not high by the industry's standards. They are simply unexplained, and they vary between hotels that offer the dog the same things, which is the one kind of variation a luxury brand is supposed never to permit.

SECTION 7

The Dog in the Lobby and the Dog in the Room

The Canine Ambassador is the most visible thing Fairmont does for dogs, and it is a good thing. A guest who has left a dog at home finds a Labrador in the lobby, takes it for a walk, and goes home with a story. The question this paper can answer, because it has assessed the hotels, is whether a hotel that keeps a dog on its staff treats a guest's dog any better than one that does not.

It does not. Thirteen of the hotels named in Fairmont's Canine Ambassador announcements over the years hold a published assessment. Three grade A, Banff Springs, Chateau Lake Louise and Sonoma Mission Inn. Two grade B, five grade C and two grade D. One grades F: Fairmont Tokyo, where Serene the golden retriever holds the title of Chief Happiness Officer and the hotel, asked as a guest, did not state a fee for a visiting dog. Six of the thirteen meet the six minimum requirements and seven do not. The ambassador hotels are, taken together, indistinguishable from the rest of the portfolio, and I doubt anyone at the brand knew that until now, because nobody had measured it.

The hotels the brand chooses to name are the sharpest test. Fairmont Washington, where Georgie the yellow Labrador greets guests in the lobby, takes a visiting dog for free with no weight limit, and will put a bed, bowls and treats in the room. Beyond the room the dog may go nowhere in the hotel, and it grades D.

Fairmont Waterfront in Vancouver, where the programme began with Morgan in 2002, provides a bed and bowls, will arrange a sitter, charges C$35 a night and sets no weight limit; it grades D. Jasper Park Lodge, where Calla greets guests at the main entrance, provides a bed, bowls and treats, lets the dog sit on the terrace and stay alone in the room, and grades C. None of these is a bad hotel for a dog. Each has done the warm part and not the complete part.

The release's "Tail Wagging Welcome" is promised at six named hotels. All six told a guest they provide the bed and the bowls, so the kit is real and it arrives in the room. One of the six grades A, one B and four C. What the dog is allowed to do once it has stepped out of the room is decided hotel by hotel, and that is where the grades part company.

That is not a criticism of the ambassadors. It is a description of what they are for. A resident dog is a hospitality gesture to guests without dogs, and it works. A dog policy is a service to guests with dogs, and it needs a bed, a bowl, a space where the dog may sit with its owner, a fee the guest understands and a rule that does not change at the next Fairmont. The brand has invested in the first for twenty three years and left the second to each hotel.

A guest who has read about Cori Copley, "the hotel's most photographed team member", books Copley Plaza with a dog and finds a C grade hotel that misses one of the six basics. The gesture and the policy have been allowed to drift apart, and the hashtag covers both.

SECTION 8

Where Fairmont Keeps Its Promise

The top of the portfolio is as good as anything in our data, and it is the strongest argument in the paper, because it means the brand does not need to be shown how.

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, and supports a pet charity, for $125 a stay with no deposit and no weight limit. Sonoma Mission Inn, with Chardonnay in residence, is a point behind it. Banff Springs and Chateau Lake Louise, the two railway hotels the brand's dog friendly reputation was built on, both grade A, and the Royal York in Toronto completes the five. Every one of them meets the six minimums, charges a fee a guest can understand, and sets no weight limit.

What the five have in common is not money. Banff Springs lets the dog into the lounge, onto the terrace and into the garden, provides a bed, bowls and treats, hands out bags, publishes walking routes, arranges walking, sitting and grooming, keeps a vet's number at the desk and supports a pet charity, for C$50 a night capped at C$100. Lake Louise and the Royal York do most of the same. Each of them has decided that the dog is a guest rather than luggage, written that down, and told a stranger who asked. Outside North America the nearest things to them are Fairmont St Andrews, Fairmont Golden Prague and Fairmont Monte Carlo, all of which admit the dog to the bar and the lounge, all B grade, all without a weight limit.

Canada is where the promise holds best. Of the nineteen Canadian Fairmonts, three grade A and six B, and none grades F. The United States splits: an A+, an A and a B at the top, ten hotels in the C band and four in the D band, with no F. Outside North America the picture thins quickly. Twenty six hotels hold a published grade, five of them B, none A, and six F. That geography is not an accident either; the Canadian railway hotels are where Fairmont's dog culture was born, and a culture that has never been written down travels badly.

The distance between the Miramar and Fairmont Austin, the brand's largest hotel, is 35 points. Both are large Fairmonts in major American cities at luxury rates. Fairmont Austin, asked as a guest, answered yes to six things: most rooms take dogs, there is a bed and a bowl, cats are welcome, there are poop bags, and the policy is published. A 25 lb weight limit and a $100 fee complete it. One hotel 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.

SECTION 9

What a Fairmont Dog Standard Would Say

Fairmont already has a brand standards manual that specifies the bed linen and the welcome drink at every hotel, and a service culture programme that trains every colleague worldwide to make special happen. What it does not have is a page in that manual about the dog. The page would be short, and its contents already exist at the brand's best hotels.

It is worth being precise about why sixty two policies exist, because the causes are the same ones we found at InterContinental and they are not peculiar to Fairmont. 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, and a policy nobody owns drifts. Where a group template exists it covers liability, waivers and fees, the things the lawyers care about, and says nothing about beds, bowls, access or service, the things the guest cares about.

The usual defence is that a brand cannot impose dog standards on independent owners and third party operators, and I have heard it more than once. Kimpton, under exactly that mix inside IHG, runs one brand policy, no fee, no weight limit, a bed and bowls in every room, and produced no F grade across the 27 hotels in our earlier study. 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.

Until this dataset existed nothing was measured: Fairmont had no number for the Miramar and none for Austin, and so no reason to ask why they differ. What is not measured is not managed, and the table in section 4 is what unmeasured discretion produces.

First, the six minimum requirements as the floor at every Fairmont that takes dogs: a written policy on the hotel's page before booking, real bowls, one indoor space other than the bedroom where the dog may sit with its owner, the fee stated, the deposit terms stated, the number of dogs stated. Twenty eight hotels meet all six today and thirty four would need to change something, in most cases one thing, and in most of those cases the cost is a decision rather than a budget.

Second, one policy format on every hotel page. Not one policy, because a ski lodge and a city tower will differ, but one layout, so that a guest comparing Banff with Chicago sees the fee, the deposit, the weight rule, the dog limit and the rooms the dog may use in the same five lines on both pages. Our survey of 236 published policies, The Fine Print, found that the clearest policies in the industry are the short ones, and Fairmont's own better hotels write them already.

Third, the "Tail Wagging Welcome" as a brand standard rather than a feature of select locations. Fifty two hotels already provide the bed and fifty four the bowls. Making it universal would take the brand's own phrase and make it true at every door.

Fourth, a plain statement of which Fairmonts take dogs. Twenty one do not, and a guest should be able to learn that from the brand rather than by writing to the hotel. A sentence on each of those twenty one pages would turn a refusal at the door into a decision made at home, and it costs nothing.

Fifth, a fee with a reason. The brand need not set the price, but it can set the logic: per stay or per night, what it buys, whether a deposit applies, and the same answer to those three questions at every hotel.

Sixth, an annual check by someone who did not write the policy. A brand standard that is never verified is a press release. Roch Dog reassesses every certified hotel each year by the same anonymous method, and the next edition of this paper will record what changed.

None of this requires Fairmont to become something it is not. It requires the brand to take the promise it has already made in public and write it down for the people who have to keep it.

SECTION 10

Conclusion

This paper asked whether one sentence from one brand, "all guests, including four legged", survives contact with the 94 hotels it covers. It does not, and the research supports three conclusions.

The first is that Fairmont is losing money across the group, and not in one place. Twenty five of its sixty two dog hotels grade D or F, which on their own answers means the segment is not being captured, and twenty nine 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 250 room luxury hotel at $1.88 million a year in incremental revenue, roughly half of it reaching operating profit. Even at half that figure, twenty five hotels 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. At the bottom of the table the fee is the whole strategy, a charge attached to nothing, and the two highest fees in the portfolio sit at an F and a C. And the loyalty of the most loyal guest in hospitality, which a consistent brand collects at brand level, is being collected instead by Banff, by Sonoma and by the Miramar, hotel by hotel, with nothing left over for the name.

The second is that Fairmont is letting down the one promise a luxury brand exists to make. Consistency is the product. The brand specifies the thread count of the sheets and the temperature of the welcome drink at every hotel and inspects both, and a guest pays a premium for the certainty that the next Fairmont will be like the last. For a guest with a dog that certainty does not exist. Sixty two hotels have written sixty two policies. The fee runs from nothing to US$250 and the weight limit from none at all to 11 lb. Banff caps the fee at C$100 and Lake Louise, an hour up the same valley, at C$450. Banff takes no deposit and the Royal York holds C$200 a night. The Plaza takes any dog for free and Chicago turns a Labrador away, and both appear in the same press release. Twenty one hotels do not take dogs at all, and the brand's own pages do not say so. That is not a brand standard with a gap in it. It is the absence of one, and the guest who trusts the flag on the strength of one good stay will, more often than not, be let down by the next and draw the lesson about the brand rather than the hotel.

The third is that the dog in the lobby has worked for the brand for twenty three years and the brand has never returned the favour. The Canine Ambassador programme is the most visible thing any luxury brand does for dogs, and it has done exactly what a gesture does: it has taught dog owners to trust the name. But a gesture is for guests without dogs. The thirteen ambassador hotels we assessed grade no better than the rest of the portfolio, three A and one F, and the hotel where a golden retriever holds the title of Chief Happiness Officer could not tell a guest what a visiting dog would pay. The brand invested in the welcome for the camera and left the welcome for the guest's dog to chance. The

gap between the two is where this paper lives, and it is the gap Fairmont can close fastest, because the kit is already in most of the rooms and five of its own hotels already show what the finished article looks like.

None of this needs a budget. It needs a decision at brand level that what the dog gets is a Fairmont matter and not a hotel one, and that decision has already been made at five of its hotels. Take the six requirements they 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 Banff with Chicago reads the same five lines. Say on the brand's own pages which twenty one hotels do not take dogs, so that a refusal at the door becomes a decision made at home. Treat Banff, Lake Louise, Sonoma, the Royal York and the Miramar as the floor rather than the exception.

Fairmont has spent twenty three years asking dog owners to trust its name, and five of its hotels have earned that trust on the brand's behalf. The rest are one decision away from it, and it is not a decision any general manager can make alone. It is the brand's to make, and the hotels that would have to carry it out have already shown how.

Methodology and Limitations

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, and two 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 27 October 2026 and live grades are on rochdog.com.

The portfolio is the 94 hotels listed on fairmont.com on 16 October 2026; the five Heritage Place residence clubs are excluded as not hotels. Of the 94, 62 hold a published grade, 21 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. Nothing is inferred about the eleven hotels without an answer. 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. 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 of the six minimum requirements any named hotel missed is reported to the hotel and not published. Quotations from hotels are reproduced from their written replies; quotations from Fairmont and Accor are from the published sources listed below. The Canine Ambassador comparison in section 7 uses the hotels named in Fairmont's own announcements that hold a published assessment; the programme's current roster may differ. The InterContinental, Kimpton and Hilton figures cited in sections 2, 9 and 10 are those published in the fourth edition of Dog Friendly Performance Across Luxury Hotel Portfolios (RDWP-LHP-01), on data as of 25 October 2026, and have not been reassessed for this paper.

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