How "Pet Friendly" Hotel Awards Mislead Millions of Pet Owners

The TripAdvisor and USA Today Pet Friendly Hotel Winners, 2024 to 2026, Against a Published Standard

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Executive Summary

Millions of dog owners choose a hotel on the strength of a pet friendly award, and none of the major schemes checks what it is ranking. This paper takes the winners of the two most visible awards, TripAdvisor's Travelers' Choice Best of the Best Pet Friendly Hotels and USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Best Pet Friendly Hotel, in every edition from 2024 to 2026, and sets them against the Roch Dog Friendly Standard, the published standard against which more than 3,000 hotels in 56 countries have been graded A+ to F.

The pattern has not changed in three years. The hotel TripAdvisor named the best pet friendly hotel in the world for 2025 publishes no pet policy on its own website. The booking platforms that list it cannot agree whether its weight limit is 5 kilograms or 10 pounds, or whether its fee is 25 or 40 euros a night. When we researched all 20 of that year's winners, 12 had no public pet policy at all. The hotel at the top of TripAdvisor's first American list, in 2024, grades D under our standard today. And in 2026 TripAdvisor published no pet friendly list at all. The category that launched with a pet food sponsor in 2024 is missing from the June 2026 announcement, and the web address that carried it now serves the general list of the world's best hotels, whose number one the booking platforms list as not accepting pets.

USA Today's 2026 readers' vote turns our grades almost exactly upside down. Its number one, a Boston landmark, grades C. Its number two and number four grade A. Its number six, a Honolulu hotel where dogs of any size stay free, grades A+, the best on the list. The best dog friendly hotel in our entire ranking, an A+ in Miami, has never appeared on either award in any year.

This is not a story of bad hotels. Several winners are good at this and some are excellent. It is a story of awards that measure something other than what they claim: the volume and warmth of general reviews in one case, the size of a hotel's audience in the other. Neither reads the pet policy. Neither asks the dog's weight. Neither sends anyone to check. The result is a ranking that a dog owner cannot use, and a market in which the hotels that have genuinely invested in the dog are indistinguishable from those that have not.

The paper closes with the alternative that already exists: a published definition with six minimum requirements, a grade from A+ to F that every assessed hotel receives at no charge and cannot buy, and independent verification through the year. An award tells a dog owner who voted. A grade under a published standard tells them what they will find at the desk.

SECTION 1

A Label With No Definition

"Pet friendly" has no standard definition, no regulatory framework and no verification mechanism anywhere in global hospitality. Any hotel can apply the label to itself regardless of what it provides, and in April 2025 the Government of Hong Kong said so on the official record, confirming that such premises are self described and that no consistent definition exists. The collapse of consumer trust in the label is the subject of our paper Nobody Trusts Pet Friendly, which traces it through a decade of search data and public complaint. This paper is about what happens when an award is built on top of it.

An award can only rank what it measures. A review platform measures how guests felt about a stay. A readers' vote measures how many people a hotel can mobilise. Neither measures what a dog owner needs to know before booking. Can the dog come into the bar? Is there a weight limit that excludes a Labrador? What is the fee, and is it charged once or every night? Can the dog be left in the room? Is any of this written down? When a label has no definition, an award built on it inherits the vagueness and adds a seal of approval.

Our own data shows how much the label hides. Across the more than 3,000 hotels Roch Dog has assessed in 56 countries, half of those describing themselves as pet friendly grade D or F against a published standard, nearly nine in ten charge for the dog, one in three let the dog into no indoor shared space, more than a third publish a weight limit, and roughly a third accept cats despite the word "pet". These are the properties from which every pet friendly award draws its winners. The awards do not filter them. They cannot, because they never ask.

The law has moved too. In the United States the Federal Trade Commission's Rule on the Use of Consumer Reviews and Testimonials, in force since October 2024, bans bought and faked reviews and requires honesty about how review based accolades are produced. The FTC's separate Rule on Unfair or Deceptive Fees, in force since May 2025, requires every mandatory charge, a pet fee included, to appear in the first price a guest sees. A hotel that shows a pet friendly award on its booking page and reveals a non refundable pet fee at the desk is now exposed on both counts. The Hotel Pet Fee sets out that law market by market.

The question this paper asks of each award is therefore a simple one. Take its winners, read their published policies, assess them against a standard that defines the words, and see whether the ranking survives contact with the facts. Three editions of two awards later, it does not.

SECTION 2

How the Awards Are Made

TripAdvisor's Travelers' Choice Best of the Best awards are, in the company's own words, determined by the quality and quantity of reviews and ratings posted over the previous calendar year. The 2025 awards drew on reviews from 2024, the 2026 awards on reviews from 2025. A pet friendly subcategory was added in 2024 in partnership with CESAR Canine Cuisine, a Mars Petcare brand, and Mars announced the first winners in its own press release of 21 May 2024. In 2025 TripAdvisor said it was proud to continue the subcategory with the same brand, and placed it among its Best of the Rest lists beside all inclusive, family, boutique and luxury hotels.

Whether a hotel appears in the pet friendly subcategory at all depends on a listing flag that the hotel sets itself. TripAdvisor does not read the pet policy, does not ask about weight limits or fees, and does not visit. A hotel with a 5 kilogram weight limit and a hotel that welcomes a Great Dane into the bar are equally eligible, and the one with more warm reviews wins. The awards reward the hotel that guests, most of whom did not travel with a dog, enjoyed most.

USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice awards work differently and arrive at the same place. An expert panel nominates 20 hotels, and readers vote, over a fixed period, to decide the top ten. The 2026 panel for the pet friendly category, listed on the award page, was made up of travel and food writers, a dog photographer and an entertainment content creator. The panel sets the field; the readers set the order; and the readers are the audiences the nominated hotels can reach. A hotel with a large marketing list and an active social following has a structural advantage that has nothing to do with the dog.

The rest of the landscape, surveyed by Roch Dog in March 2026, follows one of the same two models or a third. GoPetFriendly has run editorial travel awards since at least 2017 on community nominations and editorial selection, without a published methodology. Business Awards UK ran a pay to enter Best Pet Friendly Hotel category in 2023 in which entrants submitted their own information to judges, the clearest form of pay to play. We found no scheme on any continent, in any year from 2023 to 2026, that applied consistent criteria, read the published policy, verified it on the property, or revoked an award from a winner that failed to deliver.

None of these schemes is dishonest about its method. The dishonesty, if that is the word, lies in the label the awards carry. "Best pet friendly hotel in the world" promises a judgement about the dog's welcome, and the method behind it never looks at the dog's welcome. That is the gap this paper measures.

SECTION 3

TripAdvisor 2024: The First List

The category launched in 2024 with two headline winners. Mars's release named Hotel Fioreze Quero Quero in Gramado, Brazil, the top pet friendly hotel in the world, and the Hyatt Centric Las Olas in Fort Lauderdale the number one pet friendly hotel in the United States. Roch Dog assessed the top three of the American list that summer and published the findings in June 2024.

The two headline winners had one thing in common, and it was not the dog. Both sit in resort towns that generate reviews in volume, Gramado in the Brazilian hills and Fort Lauderdale on the Florida coast, and both carried thousands of warm ratings from guests who had enjoyed their stay. Under a method that rewards the quality and quantity of reviews, that is what wins. Fioreze Quero Quero returned to the pet friendly list in third place in 2025, and Roch Dog has not assessed it; its listing describes the welcome in general terms and we do not grade a hotel on a listing. The American winner we did assess, because it was the one a dog owner in the largest market was being told to book.

The Hyatt Centric Las Olas grades D under our standard today. When we assessed it the hotel provided no dog bed and no bowls, no treats, charged a fee of $75 a stay for a welcome that consisted of permission to enter the building, and kept the dog out of its bar, restaurant and public areas. It was, and is, a hotel that allows dogs rather than one that welcomes them, and it was the best pet friendly hotel in America by TripAdvisor's measure because its guests liked it, which is a different thing.

The Shore Hotel in Santa Monica, second on the American list, grades D under our standard, with a fee of $150 a stay. Celebration Suites in Orlando, third, grades C, with a $40 nightly fee and a 35 pound weight limit that excludes most of the family dogs its guests own. For comparison, the InterContinental Miami, an hour down the coast from Fort Lauderdale, grades A+ under the same standard: dogs in the bar, the lounge and the terrace, bowls, a bed, treats, a dog menu, walking and sitting services, trained staff and a share of the fee given to dog charities. It did not appear on TripAdvisor's list in 2024, or in 2025, and there was no list in 2026.

The 2024 result set the pattern the later years followed. The winners were hotels that guests enjoyed and that had ticked the pet friendly box on their listing. Nothing about the dog's experience distinguished them from the hotels beneath them, because nothing about the dog's experience had been measured. A dog owner who booked the number one pet friendly hotel in America on the strength of the award arrived at a D.

SECTION 4

TripAdvisor 2025: The Best Pet Friendly Hotel in the World Publishes No Pet Policy

For 2025 TripAdvisor named Hotel Moments Budapest the top pet friendly hotel in the world, with Hotel Vision Budapest, under the same ownership, in second place. Roch Dog researched the published pet policies of all 20 winners in March 2026. Twelve of the twenty had no publicly accessible pet policy at all: no fee listed, no weight limit stated, no access rules, no amenities described. For hotels that had just won the most visible pet friendly award in the world, the basic information a dog owner needs before booking was not available on any public page. The first minimum requirement of any credible standard is that the dog policy be available to the guest before booking, and more than half the winners would fail it.

Hotel Moments is the clearest case because it is the winner. We rechecked it for this edition. The hotel's own website carries no pet policy on any page we could find; its policies section says nothing about animals. The information exists only on the booking platforms, and they disagree with each other. One lists a maximum weight of 5 kilograms per pet, another a limit of 10 pounds. One lists the fee at 40 euros per pet per night, another at 25. A 5 kilogram limit excludes a Beagle; a 10 pound limit excludes almost every dog that is not carried. A dog owner cannot find out, from any public source, what the best pet friendly hotel in the world will do with their dog when it arrives. That is not a quibble about paperwork. It is the whole problem: the award certifies a welcome that nobody, including the hotel, has written down.

The list had its exceptions, and they matter because they show what the award could have measured and did not. Kimpton Maa-Lai Bangkok, thirteenth, publishes a policy that welcomes pets regardless of size, weight or breed at no extra charge, with beds, bowls and treats on request, and grades B under our standard. The Widder Hotel in Zurich, nineteenth, grades A: dogs are welcome in its restaurants and bar, beds and bowls are provided, and staff arrange walks. South Lawn Hotel in Hampshire, fourth, accepts dogs of any size, provides doggy dining in the restaurant and a secure paddock, and publishes all of it. Three hotels out of twenty whose published policy a structured standard would recognise, and none of them at the top of the list.

The American winners tell the same story from the other side. The Verb Hotel in Boston, eighth in the world, grades D under our standard, with a $75 fee and a $75 deposit. Chileno Bay in Mexico, twentieth, charges $125 a stay and caps the dog at 40 pounds. FivePine Lodge in Oregon, twelfth, charges a nightly fee through pet packages. These are hotels guests love, and the reviews say so. The dog is not why.

SECTION 5

TripAdvisor 2026: The Category Disappears

TripAdvisor announced its 2026 Best of the Best hotel winners on 9 June 2026, based on reviews posted between 1 January and 31 December 2025. The announcement lists three categories: the top hotels in the world, the top hotels in the United States, and a returning One-of-a-Kind category. There is no pet friendly list. The release does not mention the pet friendly subcategory, the Mars partnership or the CESAR brand that had sponsored it for two years. The web address that carried the pet friendly list in 2024 and 2025 now serves the general list of the world's best hotels. We could find no public explanation, and we do not offer one; we record that a category launched with a pet food sponsor in 2024 and described in 2025 as one TripAdvisor was proud to continue is absent in 2026.

The general list that replaced it is instructive, because the only pet references in it are the ones a dog owner would least want. The world's number one hotel for 2026, G.H. Universal Hotel in Bandung, Indonesia, is described in the announcement as home to Indonesia's only luxury pet hotel, where pets receive dedicated care throughout the stay. The major booking platforms list the same property as not allowing pets. The two statements are consistent if the pet hotel is a boarding facility, where the dog is cared for while the owner stays elsewhere in the building, and that is what the description suggests. A dog owner reading "pet hotel" in the citation for the world's best hotel would be forgiven for expecting something else.

Two 2025 pet friendly winners rose into the 2026 general list, Hotel Sporting in Livigno at third and FivePine Lodge at fifth and first in the United States, and Hotel Moments Budapest, the 2025 pet friendly winner with no published policy, sits at ninth in the world. The Royal Lancaster London, fourth in the world, is the one hotel in the top ten whose dog policy we could read in full on its own website: GBP 25 per pet per day, no weight limit, dogs welcome in the Park Lounge Bar and the Living Lounge but not in the three restaurants, never to be left unattended in the room, and a pet sitting service at GBP 40 an hour. It is a clear, published, reasonable policy, and the point is that nothing in the award told the dog owner so. They would have to find it themselves, which is exactly what the award was supposed to spare them.

Whether the pet friendly category returns in 2027 is TripAdvisor's decision. What its two years produced is on the record: a 2024 American winner that grades D, a 2025 world winner with no published policy and a weight limit that excludes a Beagle, twelve of twenty winners with no public policy at all, and the hotels that actually do this well placed thirteenth and nineteenth or not placed at all.

SECTION 6

USA Today 2024 to 2026: The Readers' Vote

USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice award has run its pet friendly category every year through the period, and because several of its winners are in our ranking it allows the cleanest comparison in this paper: the same hotels, ordered by readers and ordered by a published standard.

In 2024 readers put The Peabody Memphis first. The Peabody is a fine hotel with a famous lobby and a dog policy that caps the dog at 75 pounds and requires it leashed or carried in public areas; it grades B under our standard. Headlands Coastal Lodge in Oregon finished ninth with readers and grades B with us. Four Seasons Hotel Austin, where dogs stay free, bowls and beds are provided and the three acre lawn is theirs, finished tenth with readers and grades A with us. Our September 2024 analysis argued that Paséa Hotel and Spa in Huntington Beach was the real winner.

In 2025 readers agreed. Paséa was voted first, the Peabody second, Central Station Hotel in Memphis sixth and The Plaza in New York seventh. Under our standard Paséa grades A, The Plaza A, Central Station B and the Peabody B. For one year the readers' top choice and the standard's agreed. In 2026 the two measures came apart again.

The 2026 list placed the Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston first. The Copley Plaza is a landmark with a canine ambassador in the lobby, a Fairmont Furiend package and a policy that welcomes pets of all sizes for a one time fee of $50, two pets to a room, never left unattended. It grades C under our standard. Paséa, second with readers, grades A. The Peabody, third, grades B. Four Seasons Austin, fourth, grades A. The Surfjack Hotel in Honolulu, where dogs of any size stay free and are welcome indoors, finished sixth with readers and grades A+, the highest grade on the list. Of the five 2026 winners we have assessed, the readers' order is almost exactly the standard's order reversed.

The five we have not yet assessed show, from their own published policies, the range the single word "pet friendly" is covering on one list. Stanford Inn by the Sea in Mendocino, fifth, charges $45 a stay, sets no weight limit and provides bowls and treats. Inn by the Sea in Maine, eighth, charges nothing and provides bowls, blankets and a dog menu, with dogs welcome on its deck and in its lounge. Dolphin Bay in Pismo Beach, seventh, is listed by the platforms at $65 to $70 a night, and Paws Up in Montana, ninth, sells a $50 a night pet package. A free stay and a $70 a night fee sit a place apart on the same list under the same label.

None of this makes the Copley Plaza a bad hotel for a dog. The point is narrower. The award says it is the best pet friendly hotel in America. A published standard, applied to the same hotels, says the best on that list is the one that finished sixth, and the gap between those two statements is the gap between a vote and a measurement.

SECTION 7

What the Winners Have in Common

Read across three years and two awards, the winners share a profile, and it is not the dog's. They are hotels that guests enjoy, that have a story to tell about pets, and that have the audience to tell it. The Peabody has its ducks and a century of fame. The Copley Plaza has a black Labrador in the lobby with her own Instagram account. Hotel Moments has thousands of five star reviews in a city tourists adore. The Hyatt Centric Las Olas sits on a boulevard full of reviewers. Each of these is a real asset and a reason to stay. None of it is a pet policy.

The hotels that score highest on a published standard share a different profile. They let the dog into the places the guest actually sits. They put bowls and a bed in the room before the guest asks. They set no weight limit, or one that a Labrador clears. They state the fee before booking, or charge none. They train the staff, and they can name the emergency vet. The InterContinental Miami, Limelight Hotel Aspen, the Surfjack, Four Seasons Austin, Paséa and the Widder all do these things. The awards found two of them, placed one sixth and one nineteenth, and never found the other four at all.

The reason is structural. The awards measure a hotel's relationship with its guests in general, and the dog is a minority interest among reviewers. A hotel can earn thousands of warm reviews from guests who never brought a dog, tick the pet friendly box, and win the pet friendly award. The readers' vote measures reach, and reach comes from marketing budget and brand, not from the dog bowl. A hotel that has quietly built the best dog programme in its city, with no famous lobby animal and no large mailing list, has no route to either award, and a dog owner looking for it cannot find it through them.

There is a cost to the good hotels in this that the awards never count. When the honest signal and the dishonest signal are identical, there is no return on honesty. A hotel that has invested in the dog appears in the same results, under the same two words, as a hotel that has invested in a lobby dog, and the award cannot tell them apart. The investment is real and the differentiation is zero. Nobody Trusts Pet Friendly shows what that does to the label over a decade. This paper shows what it does to a ranking in a single year.

The awards also never revisit. No winner in three years has been reassessed, downgraded or removed for what its policy actually says, because nobody read it in the first place. A hotel that wins and then introduces a weight limit or doubles its fee keeps the badge. A certification that does not revoke is a certificate of having once been popular, and that is what a pet friendly award is.

SECTION 8

What It Costs

Awards that rank hotels by popularity rather than by what they provide misallocate demand. They direct bookings toward properties that under deliver for the dog and away from the hotels whose investment in the dog generates measurable returns, and the market is large enough for the misallocation to matter.

The returns are measured where hotel data is not. In the short term rental market, AirDNA finds that listings which take pets earn $17.41 more a night and 5.4% more demand than those that do not. KeyData's September 2026 analysis of managed rental portfolios puts paid occupancy at 54% against 48%, average daily rate at $379 against $346 and revenue per available night at $204 against $165. The trade press has long claimed that dog owning guests return at 76% against an industry benchmark in the thirties; that figure comes from American trade magazine pieces of 2004 and 2006 cited through Buhalis and Chan, and we treat it as indicative rather than as our own data.

What dog owners will actually pay for has been measured directly. A choice experiment with 491 dog owners at Kyung Hee University found a premium of about $146 a night for a staffed pet lounge and about $117 for a play area, and no value at all in a basket of in room kit. Our guide to that study, What Dog Owners Will Pay For in a Hotel, sets out what it means, and The Economics of Dog Friendly Hospitality builds the revenue model on it.

The demand side is growing. The pet friendly hotel market is estimated at $4.6 billion in 2025, rising to $8.17 billion by 2030 on Research and Markets' figures. Amadeus's Travel Trends 2026 reports, from a survey of 2,896 travellers in Britain and America, that 27% of the owners who took their pet on their main holiday in 2025 were doing so for the first time. A July 2026 survey of 2,000 American pet owners by Talker Research for Subaru found that 45% had turned down a trip because it could not accommodate their pet and 41% named finding pet friendly accommodation as the hardest part of travelling with one. Those are the guests an award is supposed to help, and the ones it sends to a D.

Every major hotel group now markets a pet friendly portfolio, and no award can tell a guest which of its hundreds of properties means it. The hotels best placed to capture the dog owning guest, the ones that have done the work, are the least likely to appear on a list built from general reviews or reader reach. The awards do not merely fail to reward them. They reward their competitors for the lobby dog.

SECTION 9

The Alternative: A Grade That Can Be Checked

The gap this paper describes is filled by a published standard, applied to every hotel and verified independently, and it already exists. The Roch Dog Friendly Standard (RDFS-02) defines in writing what it means for a hotel to be dog friendly, sets six minimum requirements that answer directly to the failures in this paper, and above that floor grades every hotel from A+ to F.

The six requirements are the questions the awards never ask. The hotel must have a written dog policy and make it available before booking, published or supplied on request; more than half of TripAdvisor's 2025 winners would fail that one alone. It must provide food and water bowls in the room as standard. Dogs must be allowed into at least one indoor shared guest area, a lounge, bar, restaurant or cafe. Any fee must be stated in the policy with its amount and basis, and zero is a valid answer. The hotel must say whether a deposit applies and, if so, how much. And it must state how many dogs a room may hold.

A hotel that meets all six carries the designation Meets the Roch Dog Friendly Standard and may grade from B to A+. A hotel that misses any one is still assessed, graded and listed, but ranks no higher than C, and its page says plainly that it does not meet the standard. There is no exclusion and no "fail", because the record is the point.

Above the floor, the grade. Every hotel is scored across more than 70 data points covering what the dog gets, where it may go, what the stay costs, which dogs are welcome and what the hotel can do for them, from a dog menu and a walking service to trained staff and a front desk that knows the emergency vet. The grade is published with a written review on rochdog.com. Certification is free for every hotel, every assessed hotel is graded whether it asked to be or not, and the grade cannot be bought, changed or opted out of. A hotel that wants a better one has one route to it: change what it does and be reassessed.

The assessment is independent, which is the difference between a grade and a vote. Most hotels are assessed by anonymous guest enquiry, in the language of the market, with the questions a prospective guest would ask; the rest self assess, and every self assessment is verified the same way. Through the year our assessors check the answers with housekeeping, the front desk, reservations and the concierge, at separate times and without announcing themselves, and we listen to guests when they report on their stays in reviews. A hotel that delivers what it says holds its grade. A hotel that does not is regraded on what its own staff told us.

The standard is public, in 20 languages, and any hotel can read it before it is assessed and any guest can read it and know what a grade means. The distinction is simple. Certification is based on what the hotel delivers, checked by someone who does not work for it. Awards are based on who voted.

SECTION 10

Conclusion

The global pet friendly hotel landscape is not short of visibility, demand or marketing effort. It is short of definition, verification and accountability, and the awards built on it reproduce the shortage with a badge attached.

Across three editions of the two most visible schemes, recognition was driven by review volume or reader reach rather than by anything measured at the property. The first American winner grades D. The 2025 world winner publishes no pet policy and is listed with a weight limit no family dog could meet. Twelve of twenty winners that year published no policy at all. In 2026 the TripAdvisor category vanished without explanation, and the readers' vote placed a C above two As and an A+. The hotels that are genuinely excellent at this, several of them on these very lists, were placed where the dog's welcome did not count, and the best in our ranking never appeared.

This is a structural inefficiency, not a consumer clarity problem alone. Demand is directed toward properties that under deliver for the dog, while hotels that have invested in access, provision, staff and policy are under recognised. The outcome is lost revenue for the good hotels, a degraded experience for a growing segment of travellers, and a label that signals less every year.

An award organiser that wanted to deserve the label could fix it in a season. Read the published policy of every nominee before the vote, and exclude the ones that have none. Print the fee, the weight limit and the indoor access beside each winner, so that the badge carries the facts a dog owner needs. Revisit the winners the following year and withdraw the badge from any whose policy no longer matches the citation. None of this needs an inspector. It needs someone to read what the hotel has already written, which is the one step every scheme in this paper has skipped.

A hotel that has won one of these awards can do its own part without waiting. Publish the dog policy beside the badge, in full, with the fee and any limit, so that the guest the award brings arrives knowing what to expect. The Fine Print sets out how to write that policy, and The Canine Hospitality Playbook sets out what to change so that the next assessment, by anyone, finds a hotel that earns the word. A badge is a promise made on the hotel's behalf by people who did not check. The policy is the promise the hotel makes itself.

The market requires a different kind of signal: a published definition, a graded assessment applied to every hotel at no charge, and independent verification behind it. That signal exists. Until it replaces the vote, a pet friendly award will remain a record of popularity, and a dog owner who books on the strength of one will keep arriving at the desk to find out what it meant.

Methodology and Limitations

The award results in this paper are taken from the award organisers' own announcements and award pages as they stood in October 2026: Mars's press release of 21 May 2024 and Roch Dog's June 2024 analysis for TripAdvisor 2024; TripAdvisor's 2025 announcement as syndicated by Hospitality Net for TripAdvisor 2025; TripAdvisor's media room and PR Newswire release of 9 June 2026 for TripAdvisor 2026; and USA Today 10Best's award page of 1 July 2026 and its press coverage of July 2025 and September 2024 for the USA Today editions. The 2025 USA Today list is cited only for the placements we could confirm from the organiser's or the hotels' own publications. Hotel policies were read on the hotels' own websites where published and on the major booking platforms where not, and are described as of October 2026; where sources conflict the conflict is reported rather than resolved. The March 2026 research into the published policies of all 20 TripAdvisor 2025 winners is reported as of that date.

Grades are those of the hotels as ranked and published on rochdog.com in October 2026 under the Roch Dog Friendly Standard (RDFS-02), drawn from more than 3,000 hotels assessed in 56 countries since 2023, most by anonymous guest enquiry and the rest by self assessment subject to verification; unanswered questions score as not provided, so every provision figure is a floor. Where this paper names a hotel's grade, the grade reflects the hotel's own answers to our assessment and its published policy; which minimum requirement, if any, a named hotel misses is not stated, and a hotel's grade can change on reassessment. Several award winners are not yet in our ranking and are described from their published policies only, without a grade. The revenue figures in section 8 are third party and are presented as reported; the repeat rate is trade press via the academic literature and is indicative only. The dataset has not been externally audited, and the sample is not a random sample of the world's hotels. The legal references describe published rules as of October 2026 and are not legal advice.

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