The Hotel Pet Fee

What Dog Owners Pay, What It Buys Them, and the Law Catching Up With It

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Executive Summary

Nearly nine hotels in ten charge a guest for bringing a dog, and almost none of them can say what the charge is for. This paper is about that fee: what hotels charge, what the guest gets in return, what a dog actually costs a hotel, and the consumer law that has turned a hidden pet fee from a bad habit into a legal risk. It replaces two earlier Roch Dog papers and rebuilds both on the more than 3,000 hotels we have assessed in 56 countries as of October 2026.

The figures are plain. The typical fee across the hotels we rank is about $50 a stay. In the United States it is $100, with $150 the single most common amount, and three American fees in four are charged once per stay. In Britain the typical fee is GBP 20 a night, in Canada about CAD 50, in Italy about EUR 35. One hotel in six takes a deposit as well, and one in eight takes both a fee and a deposit before the guest has slept a night.

None of this is cost recovery. Our survey of 120 housekeepers found fewer than one in twenty who thought a dog added significant work, and the published damage research puts the chance of any damage at all below one in ten and the average repair at about $210. The real incremental cost of a dog in a room is $6 to $25 a stay. A $150 fee is a margin with a cleaning label on it.

What the guest gets for the money bears no relationship to what they pay. The hotels charging the most are not the ones providing the most: the median fee at an A grade hotel and at an F grade hotel is the same $50, and the hotels charging more than $250 are less likely to put a bowl in the room than the hotels charging under $50. The best hotels in our ranking are the most likely to let the dog stay free, and the worst are the least likely.

The law has caught up. Since May 2025 the Federal Trade Commission requires every mandatory fee in the first price an American guest sees, Texas has settled with six chains over hidden hotel fees, and a string of states and New York City have their own rules in force. Britain banned drip pricing in April 2025 and gave its regulator the power to fine without going to court. Australia passed its own ban in July 2026. A pet fee that appears at the desk is now unlawful in every major market a hotel sells into.

The paper closes with the models that already work, from the brand that charges nothing to the hotel that charges once for life, and with the three things a fair fee has to be: stated before booking, proportionate to what the dog gets, and the same on every shift. Guests will pay a fee that buys their dog something. They resent one that buys it nothing, and now they can report it.

SECTION 1

The Question Nobody Asks

Every hotel that takes dogs has a pet fee policy, even if the policy is that there is none, and almost no hotel can explain where the number came from. Ask a general manager why the fee is $150 and the honest answer is that it was $150 when they arrived, or that the hotel down the road charges $150, or that the brand suggested it. Ask what the fee pays for and the answer is cleaning. Ask the housekeepers and they will tell you that is not true.

The fee has a history, and it is not a history of cost accounting. When accepting a dog at all was unusual, a charge for the privilege went unquestioned, and the amounts settled where the first hotels to charge them put them. The policy that carried the fee was written by whoever handled the insurance, which is why so many read as a warning, and the number inside it was copied from a competitor, suggested by a brand standard, or set by a revenue manager asked to price a risk nobody had measured. The fee survives for the same reason it was set: nobody has had to justify it. The guest paid because every hotel charged, the hotel kept it because the guest paid, and the housekeepers who could have corrected the story were never asked.

The fee matters because it is the first thing a dog owner reads about a hotel and often the reason they book somewhere else. In The Fine Print, our study of 236 published pet policies, we found that the fee itself is rarely what loses the booking. What loses it is the fog around it: the fee with no explanation, the deposit nobody mentions, and the fine waiting in the small print. A guest who reads "GBP 25 a stay, which covers the deep clean after you leave" understands the charge and usually thinks it fair. A guest who reads "a pet fee applies" has learned only that the hotel intends to charge them and would rather not say how much.

What the fee should buy is no longer a matter of opinion either. In 2023 five researchers at Kyung Hee University in Seoul ran a controlled choice experiment with 491 dog owners and put a price on each thing a hotel can offer the dog, Joo, Jo, Jo, Choi and Yoon (2023). Owners paid $117 a night more for a hotel with a play area for the dog and $146 a night more for a staffed lounge run by a trained dog specialist, and they paid less, about $57 a night less, for a hotel that added a bed, steps, treats and toys to the room. The room rate carried almost no weight in their choice. Roch Dog's plain English guide to that study, What Dog Owners Will Pay For in a Hotel, is published alongside this paper, and its finding runs through everything that follows: the money is in space and in people, and none of it is in the welcome basket, which is exactly what most pet fees claim to be paying for.

So this paper asks the question the industry does not. What does a dog actually cost a hotel, what does the hotel charge, what does the guest get for it, and what happens now that the law requires the answer to be given up front. It is written for the people who set the fee, the revenue and operations directors and general managers who inherited a number, and it does not ask them to stop charging. It asks them to charge for something.

SECTION 2

What Hotels Charge

2.1 The Headline

Of the hotels Roch Dog has assessed and ranked, 87% charge for the dog and 13% let it stay free. The share has not moved in two years of assessment. What has moved is our understanding of the amounts, because we now hold the fee in the hotel's own words for every hotel we rank, converted to a common currency.

The typical fee across the whole ranked set is about $50 a stay. Half of all fees fall between about $27 and $100. The mean is far higher, pulled up by a handful of hotels charging several hundred dollars, which is itself the story: there is no industry norm, no standard format, and no reliable relationship between what a hotel charges and what it delivers.

2.2 How the Fee Is Charged

Three structures account for almost every fee. A charge per night, a flat charge for the stay, and a charge per dog that stacks on top of either. Among hotels that state the basis, per night fees outnumber per stay fees by about three to two worldwide, but the pattern reverses sharply by market. Three American fees in four are charged once for the stay; three British fees in four are charged per night.

Neither structure is honest with every guest. The per night fee looks modest for a weekend and expensive for a fortnight: $25 a night is $50 for two nights and $350 for two weeks. The flat fee does the opposite, so that the guest staying one night pays the same $150 as the guest staying seven and subsidises them. A quarter of policies in our Fine Print study never said whether the fee was per night, per stay or per dog, which leaves the guest to find out at checkout.

2.3 The American Market

The United States is the largest market in our data and the one where the pet fee has evolved furthest from any cost. The typical American fee is $100 a stay, half of all American fees fall between $50 and $150, and $150 is the single most common amount, followed by $100 and $50. The clustering is not a calculation. It is an anchor. Once most comparable hotels charge $150, the hotel charging $100 reads as generous and the hotel charging $200 reads as defensible, and neither is tied to anything the hotel does for the dog.

At the top of the American range sit a dozen hotels at $250 a stay and one, the Ojai Valley Inn, at $300 per dog with a two dog maximum, so that a couple travelling with two dogs pays $600 before the room. Per night fees at $100 and above run at the Las Vegas resorts, where Bellagio, Caesars Palace and MGM Grand all charge $150 a night, at Amangiri at $100 per dog

per night plus taxes and service charge and a $1,000 deposit, and at the Boston Harbor Hotel at $100 per dog per night. A week at Bellagio with the dog costs $1,050 in pet fees alone.

2.4 Britain, Canada and Europe

Britain works differently. The typical British fee is GBP 20 a night, with GBP 15 and GBP 25 the next most common amounts, and the charge is almost always per dog per night. Over a two night stay the British guest pays something close to the American guest's flat fee, but the British guest knows what the charge is for, because a nightly charge reads as the cost of the night rather than a penalty for arriving with a dog.

Canada sits between the two, with a typical fee of about CAD 50 and the amounts clustering at CAD 25, 50 and 75, charged per night at some hotels and per stay at others. In Italy the typical fee is about EUR 35 and the most common amount EUR 50, usually per night. France and Spain are similar or lower. The European pattern reflects a different starting assumption: that the dog is a guest's companion whose presence carries no stigma that needs a financial buffer, rather than a risk that needs to be priced.

SECTION 3

What the Fee Buys

3.1 The Fee Does Not Vary With Quality

The simplest test of whether a fee is a price for a service is whether hotels that provide more charge more. They do not. The median fee at an A grade hotel in our ranking is about $50. At a B hotel it is $50. At a C, a D and an F hotel it is $50. A guest who pays more is not buying more. They are paying what the hotel decided to charge, and the decision was made without reference to the dog.

What does vary with quality is whether the hotel charges at all. Among the hotels we grade A and A+, nearly three in ten let the dog stay free. Among B hotels it is about one in five, among C hotels one in eight, among D hotels one in twelve, and among F hotels one in thirty. The hotels that have invested most in the dog are the ones most likely to absorb the cost of hosting it. The hotels that provide least are the ones most likely to charge.

Grade	Dogs stay free
A+ and A	29%
B	19%
C	13%
D	8%
F	3%

The same pattern holds by star rating: five star hotels let the dog stay free almost twice as often as four star hotels and take a deposit less often, while the mid market charges most consistently, demands the deposit most often and imposes the weight limit most readily. One more indicator separates the groups. Among A and A+ hotels, nearly a quarter give some part of the fee or their dog programme to an animal charity; among D hotels it is one in twenty and among F hotels one in fifty. A hotel that shares its pet fee with a cause that benefits animals is describing a relationship with its canine guests that a hotel treating the fee as pure margin does not have.

3.2 What Is in the Room

We can go further than the grade, because we hold what every hotel actually provides. Grouping the hotels by what they charge, the fee buys the dog almost nothing extra as it rises, and at the very top it buys less.

Fee charged, per stay or per night	Real bowls provided	A dog bed provided	Dog allowed in at least one shared indoor space	Treats provided
Up to $50	57%	46%	76%	42%
$51 to $100	70%	65%	73%	40%
$101 to $150	66%	61%	65%	41%
$151 to $250	81%	74%	71%	48%
Over $250	55%	45%	65%	10%

Read the bottom row. The hotels charging more than $250 are less likely to provide a bowl or a bed than the hotels charging $50 or less, less likely to let the dog into a shared space, and one in ten provides a treat. The guest paying the most is, on the evidence of what is in the room, getting the least.

The named cases make it concrete. The Sheraton Dallas charges $150 a stay, grades F, and provides no bowls, no bed and no treats. The InterContinental New York Times Square charges $250 a stay, grades F, and provides none of them either. The InterContinental San Diego charges $150 a stay and a $250 deposit, and provides waste bags.

Against them, the Limelight Hotel Aspen charges $50 a stay, grades A, and provides bowls, a bed, treats, trained staff, and the bar, the restaurant, the lounge and the terrace. Rosewood Vienna charges EUR 50 a night, grades A+, and provides everything a dog could use including walking, sitting and grooming. No38 The Park in Cheltenham charges GBP 15 a night, grades A, and opens the bar, the lounge, the restaurant and the terrace. The Devonshire Arms in Yorkshire charges GBP 20 a dog a night and grades A. The fee at these hotels is a price for something the guest can see. The fee at the others is a price for permission.

The Kyung Hee study in section 1 explains why the first group earns its fee and the second does not. Its owners put their money on the things outside the bedroom, the play area, the staffed lounge, the restaurant they could use with the dog, and marked down the things inside it. A fee that buys the bar, the terrace and a trained member of staff is buying what dog owners have been measured paying for.

SECTION 4

What a Dog Actually Costs

4.1 Ask the Housekeepers

The fee is almost always justified as cleaning. The room needs more work after a dog, the fee covers it, and most guests take the explanation at face value because it sounds reasonable. So we asked the people who do the work. Roch Dog surveyed 120 housekeepers across hotels of every grade and star rating, from budget properties to palace hotels, with one question: does a dog in the room create significantly more cleaning?

The answer was no, and it was not a close call. It was not the dogs who made the mess, they told us, it was the humans, and children above all. What adds real time to a room turn is what people do in a room; a dog adds hair, and hair is a vacuum cleaner. Housekeepers at five star hotels were the most direct of all, because their standard is already so high that every room is cleaned to the same specification whatever stayed in it, and a dog does not change the protocol.

There were exceptions and they were specific: young dogs and dogs not fully house trained, almost always a matter of urine on a carpet, which the housekeepers described as infrequent and quick to resolve with the carpet cleaning equipment most hotels already hold. Fewer than one housekeeper in twenty described dog stays as a routine source of significant extra work.

4.2 What the Damage Research Says

The other justification is damage. The room might be damaged, the fee is a hedge. The independent research on what pets actually do to property has been published for years, and it says the hedge is priced against a risk that largely does not exist.

The US Pet Inclusive Housing Initiative's 2021 study of large rental portfolios found that 9% of pet owning residents reported any pet damage at all, while the managers of the same properties estimated the figure at 28%. The industry's belief about pet damage ran at three times the measured reality, which is the whole fee problem in one number. Where damage occurred the average repair was about $210, against an average of $223 for damage in homes with no pet, so a pet damaged home cost less to put right than a pet free one. A peer reviewed study in Anthrozoös found no statistically significant difference in damage between homes with pets and homes without, and in its least favourable reading put the extra at 10 to 15 percent, roughly $40 over a tenancy. Propertymark's survey of 673 British property managers found 85% had seen damage from pets, 85% had seen damage from adult human guests and 55% from children. The damage risk of a dog is indistinguishable from the damage risk of a guest, and lower than the damage risk of a child.

Hospitality has its own comparison and it is sharper. An unauthorised smoker in a hotel room costs about $1,100 to put right and takes the room out of service for two to four days of ozone treatment. A dog stay that goes wrong costs under $210 on average, and the room is back in service the same day. No hotel takes a smoking deposit at booking, and no hotel charges a family with two children a damage fee, though on the evidence it would be more rational than charging the dog. The reason nobody proposes it is that the fee was never really about damage.

4.3 The Arithmetic

Put the pieces together and the cost of a dog in a room is small enough to state precisely. The baseline cost of cleaning a hotel room is about $10 to $16 including labour, laundry and supplies. An enhanced protocol for a dog room, the enzymatic cleaner and the lint rolling, adds about a dollar in product. Twenty extra minutes of a housekeeper's time at a fully loaded $25 an hour is about $8, and a thorough dog turnover at the top end, with the bedding laundered and the upholstery vacuumed, is perhaps $25. Fewer than one dog stay in ten produces any chargeable damage, and where it does the average is $210, which spread across every dog stay adds about $20 to the expected cost of each. The incremental cost of a dog in a room is therefore $6 to $25 a stay in labour and product, and under $50 even with the expected damage priced in.

Against that, the typical American fee is $100 a stay and the most common $150, rising to $250 at a dozen luxury hotels and $150 a night on the Las Vegas strip. A hotel charging $150 for a cost of $25 is not recovering a cost. It is charging a margin of around 85% and calling it cleaning, which, as section 7 explains, is now a problem in itself, because the federal rule treats the mislabelling of a charge as a violation independent of whether the charge was disclosed.

There is nothing wrong with a margin. The hotels that charge no fee and deliver a premium dog stay prove that absorbing the cost is commercially viable, and the hotels that charge a fee and deliver bowls, a bed and the bar prove that a fee can fund something real and be welcomed. The problem is the fee that funds nothing and is described as something it is not. A hotel that wants to charge $150 should be able to say what $125 of it buys the dog.

SECTION 5

The Deposit

One hotel in six among those we rank takes a damage deposit, and one in eight takes both a fee and a deposit. In the United States one hotel in seven takes both. The deposit is a hold on the guest's card rather than money lost, typically $150 to $500, released after checkout, but after checkout can mean days or weeks, and the timing is almost never disclosed. A four stop road trip through deposit taking hotels can tie up $1,000 or more on one card in unreleased holds.

The mechanics are worse than most hotels realise, because the hotel does not control them. A pre authorisation is released when the hotel tells its processor and then when the card issuer acts, which can be five days and can be thirty, and on a debit card the hold is real money gone from a current account for that period. The guest sees the deposit leave on arrival and return long after the stay; the hotel sees nothing, which is why a deposit the hotel regards as a formality is experienced by the guest as a charge.

The combined structure reaches figures no other hotel charge approaches. The Ritz-Carlton New York, NoMad charges $250 plus tax and a $500 per night deposit, so that a four night stay commits $2,000 of the guest's credit before the fee and the room. The Peninsula Chicago charges $250 for a dog under 30 pounds and $400 for one over, plus $150 a night on deposit. Mansion on Sutter in San Francisco charges $150 a stay and holds $500.

Charging both a fee and a deposit for the same stay is incoherent. A cleaning fee covers the incremental cost of the room after a dog; a deposit provides recourse if the dog causes damage beyond normal wear. They are not the same cost, and the guest paying both is pre paying for cleaning and pre funding insurance at once. In hotel pet policy it has become normal, and it is concentrated at the top of the market.

The deposit is also the part of the policy hotels handle worst. In The Fine Print only one policy in nine mentioned a refundable deposit and one in five a hold on the card, leaving nearly three in five silent on the question a guest with a card on file most wants answered: will money be taken, and will I get it back? Most of the silent hotels probably take no deposit at all. They are keeping quiet about good news, and the guest, who cannot tell the difference, assumes the worse.

A fair deposit, if a hotel insists on one, has three features: the amount stated before booking with the fee, the release stated with it in days, and damage charged at cost against the hold with a photograph and a receipt, never as a flat sum. A hotel that would rather not do those three things has the simpler option the best hotels in our ranking have taken: no deposit, a fee that buys the dog something, and the room cleaned the way rooms are cleaned.

SECTION 6

Who Is Excluded

6.1 The Weight Limit

The fee decides what the dog costs. The weight limit decides whether the dog comes at all. More than a third of the hotels we rank publish a weight limit, and in the United States it is nearly half. Where a limit is set, three in four sit at 50 pounds or below and more than a quarter at 25 pounds or below. A 50 pound limit excludes the Labrador, the Golden Retriever, the German Shepherd and the Border Collie, four of the ten most popular breeds in America. A 25 pound limit excludes almost every family dog there is. Travellers have put a number on what that does to the label: in a 2026 survey of 1,041 people in 66 countries, only 12 per cent would call a hotel pet friendly if it accepts some kinds of pet and turns others away (Koufodontis, 2026).

The limit tracks quality as closely as the fee does. A quarter of our A grade hotels publish a weight limit. Nearly half of our F grade hotels do. The hotels that welcome a dog of any size, which includes almost every Kimpton and the best independents, score highest; the hotels that cap at 25 pounds have decided before the booking starts that the dog is a concession rather than a guest. There is no insurance data behind a weight cap and no underwriter prices risk by it. Our standard benchmarks the family dog at a Labrador sized animal of up to about 77 pounds, and The Fine Print sets out the alternative, the Friendly Dog Policy, which judges a dog by its behaviour rather than its weight, because that is the test the law itself already applies to assistance dogs.

6.2 The Cat

Roughly a third of the hotels we rank accept cats, which is better than the industry's reputation but still means that for most of the 46 million American households that own one, "pet friendly" does not apply. The label promises a category it does not deliver, and the industry has read the resulting absence of cat bookings as a lack of demand rather than as the exclusion it is.

6.3 The Guests Who Travel Most

The fee falls hardest on the two groups the industry says it most wants. The first are the DINKWADs, dual income, no kids, with a dog, the households that control an estimated $259 billion in annual spending power, travel more often than any other segment, book the better room and pay the premium rate when the experience justifies it. They do not leave the dog at home, so they meet the fee on every trip, and a couple who take six trips a year with the dog pay the $150 American fee six times, or the $25 nightly fee on every night of every stay. These are the guests who could most easily afford the fee and are most offended by it, because they can see exactly what it buys, and they are the guests with the most alternatives.

The second are older owners, who travel with the dog more than anyone. The University of Michigan's 2025 National Poll on Healthy Aging found that 55% of adults over 50 own a pet, that owners aged 55 to 64 travel with their pets more than any other age group, and that the share of over 50s citing cost as a reason not to own a pet rose from 21% in 2018 to 33% in 2025, with nearly a third of current older owners saying pet care strains their budget. A retired couple on a two week road trip with a medium sized dog pay the per night fee fourteen times and the per stay fee at every stop, on a fixed income, with a deposit held at each hotel on the way.

Between them these two groups are the frequent travellers of the dog owning market, the ones a hotel wants back every year, and the fee model treats them worst. The guest who visits once a year barely notices a $150 charge. The guest who visits six times a year has paid $900 for nothing they can name, and has six chances to find a hotel that does not charge it. The fee model was designed with the fee in mind, not the traveller who pays it most often.

SECTION 7

The Law Has Caught Up

Until 2025 a hidden pet fee was a commercial mistake. It is now a compliance exposure in every major market a hotel sells into, and the direction is the same everywhere: the first price the guest sees must be the whole price, and a fee may not be called something it is not.

7.1 The United States

The Federal Trade Commission's Rule on Unfair or Deceptive Fees took effect on 12 May 2025 and applies directly to short term lodging. It requires the total price, including every mandatory fee, to be displayed up front as the first and most prominent price; it prohibits drip pricing, where charges appear one at a time through the booking; and it bans vague labels unless the charge corresponds to a described service. A non negotiable pet fee charged to a guest who has booked as a pet owner is a mandatory fee under the rule. The pet fee discovered at check in, or buried in a taxes and fees line, is over in the American market, and the civil penalty runs above $50,000 per violation.

The rule has a second edge that matters more for pet fees than the first. It is an unfair or deceptive practice to misrepresent the nature or purpose of a charge. A hotel labelling a $150 revenue surcharge as a cleaning fee, when the cleaning costs $6 to $25, is exposed under that section whatever its disclosure practice. The arithmetic in section 4 is not only a commercial argument any more.

State enforcement was moving before the federal rule and has not stopped. The Texas Attorney General has settled with Hyatt for $1.25 million in December 2025, the sixth such settlement, after Booking.com for $9.5 million, Marriott, Omni, Choice and Hilton, all over rooms marketed at prices that were unavailable because mandatory fees were added at checkout.

The states have legislated on top. California's Honest Pricing Law has required all mandatory fees in the advertised price since July 2024. Virginia followed in July 2025. Colorado's law took effect in January 2026 with the sharpest teeth in the country: a business that fails to refund an unlawfully charged fee within 14 days of a written demand is liable for the loss plus 18% interest, triple damages, statutory penalties of up to $1,000 per violation and attorney's fees, with a private right of action, which puts an undisclosed $150 pet fee at more than $500 per guest once a plaintiff's firm is involved. Oregon's rule took effect the same month, Connecticut's in July 2026. Minnesota's junk fee ban has applied to hotels since January 2025, Massachusetts has enforced its Attorney General's regulations since September 2025, New York City's rule took effect in February 2026 and reaches any business that advertises prices to New Yorkers, and Illinois has enacted a law that applies from January 2027. The common thread is the all in principle. A fee that appears only after the first price is the fee

the rules were written to stop.

The status of the refundable deposit under these rules is still being worked out, and a hotel reading the federal rule narrowly might conclude that a hold is neither a cost nor a fee. That reading is a bet, not guidance. A $500 per night hold is material to any booking decision, the Colorado, Virginia, Oregon and Connecticut statutes reach charges the guest cannot avoid rather than only non refundable ones, and the Texas theory of harm, misrepresentation and a lack of prominence, applies to a deposit disclosed at check in exactly as it applies to a fee.

7.2 The United Kingdom

The Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act banned drip pricing in Britain from 6 April 2025. The headline price must include every charge the guest will necessarily pay, and the Competition and Markets Authority can now fine a business directly, up to GBP 300,000 or 10% of worldwide turnover, without going to court. A pet fee that is not in the headline price on a pet booking is a drip price.

Britain has also set a marker for what a pet charge is worth in principle. The Renters' Rights Act's pet provisions took effect in England on 1 May 2026: a tenant may ask to keep a pet, a landlord may not unreasonably refuse, and the landlord may charge no pet deposit, no pet fee and no pet insurance premium at all, the proposal to allow a separate pet deposit having been dropped before the Act passed. The Act applies to homes rather than hotels, but the British legislature has now decided, on the evidence, that the right to keep a dog is not something to be exploited for fee revenue, and the hotels serving British guests are selling to people who know it.

7.3 Australia and Europe

Australia's Parliament passed the Competition and Consumer Amendment (Unfair Trading Practices) Bill in July 2026, with the new regime applying from 1 July 2027. It contains a specific drip pricing provision requiring any transaction based charge to be disclosed alongside the base price rather than at checkout, defines consumer detriment to include wasted time and confusion rather than financial loss alone, and carries penalties reaching the greater of AUD 100 million, three times the benefit obtained or 30% of adjusted turnover. In the European Union the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive and the 2019 Omnibus Directive already treat a mandatory fee omitted from the headline price as misleading, enforced country by country.

There is no market in our data where the trend runs the other way. Fee transparency is becoming the norm across every major Western market, and a hotel that still relies on the fee being found late is relying on a practice that has been outlawed where it earns most of its money.

SECTION 8

The Structures Most Exposed

Five fee structures found in our data are the ones most difficult to sustain under the new rules, and they are worth describing because a hotel that recognises its own policy here can fix it before someone else notices.

The first is the fee that resets mid stay. Park Hyatt Chicago charges $150 a stay for up to five nights and $150 again from the sixth. Park Hyatt Aviara charges $150 for up to seven nights. The Hyatt Regency Portland charges $50 for one night, $100 for up to six and $100 for every six after, with a $75 a night deposit on top. A ten night stay costs $300, not $150, and if only $150 is shown when the rate is displayed, the listing fails the prominence requirement for any stay over the reset. The guest most affected is the one booking the longest stay, which is the guest the hotel says it values most.

The second is the fee that varies by weight. The Peninsula Chicago's $250 under 30 pounds and $400 over cannot be shown as a total at the point of booking because no booking engine asks the dog's weight before it shows a price. Either the engine is redesigned to collect it or the fee becomes one amount. The same problem attaches to any fee that varies by the number of dogs, as at the JW Marriott Savannah, $150 plus taxes for the first dog and $50 for the second, or the Ojai Valley Inn at $300 a dog: the engine has to know how many dogs are coming before it can show an honest price, and most do not ask.

The third is the per night fee at a three figure rate, where the gap between the headline room rate and what the guest pays is the largest in the industry. A fortnight at $150 a night is $2,100, and a listing that shows the room rate on a pet filtered search without it is showing a price the guest cannot book at. The fourth is the fee that is really two fees: Faena Miami Beach charges a $250 flat fee and a $25 cleaning fee a day, W Scottsdale $100 plus $25 a day, The Little Nell a $100 cleaning fee and a nightly $25 fee. Each half may be disclosed and the total still never shown. The fifth is the fee plus deposit stack described in section 5, where the material charge, the hold, appears nowhere in the advertised rate at all.

There is a sixth exposure that is not a structure but a word. Mandarin Oriental New York charges a "$250 cleaning fee". Hotel Croydon charges a "$250 non refundable cleaning fee". Under the misrepresentation section of the federal rule the label has to be true, and section 4 sets out what a cleaning costs. A hotel that wants to charge $250 should call it a pet fee and say what it buys. A hotel that wants to call it cleaning should charge what cleaning costs.

Each of these is fixed the same way. One amount per stay or per night, stated before booking, in the first price the guest sees, with no reset, no tier, no second half and no hold hiding behind it. The hotels in section 10 show that every one of these structures can be replaced by something simpler without giving up the revenue, and in most cases while earning more of it.

SECTION 9

The Brands

A brand's job is to make the guest's experience predictable, and on the pet fee most brands do the opposite. Our portfolio study, Dog Friendly Performance Across Luxury Hotel Portfolios, found that inside InterContinental the fee runs from $100 at the best dog hotel in our dataset, the A+ InterContinental Miami, to $250 at an F in Times Square, with no relationship between the two. The pattern repeats across the major groups.

Brand, among the hotels we rank	Dogs stay free	Publishes a weight limit	Takes a deposit
Kimpton	88%	4%	12%
Four Seasons	three in four	two in three	none
Marriott group brands	19%	46%	9%
Fairmont	9%	32%	22%
Accor city brands	4%	38%	4%
InterContinental	0%	71%	14%
Hyatt	0%	75%	15%
Hilton group brands	0%	79%	20%

Two things stand out. The first is Kimpton. It sits inside IHG, under the same corporate leadership and the same franchise infrastructure as InterContinental, and nearly nine Kimptons in ten let the dog stay free, almost none publishes a weight limit, and the brand scores consistently in the upper bands. InterContinental, inside the same company, charges at every hotel we rank, limits by weight at seven in ten, and spreads from A+ to F. The difference is not capability, budget or corporate structure. It is a decision.

The second is the three brands at the foot of the table. No Hyatt, InterContinental or Hilton group hotel we rank lets the dog stay free, and three in four of them publish a weight limit. These policies were tolerable when nobody was watching. Under a federal prominence rule, a Texas Attorney General who has already settled with two of the three, and a Colorado statute with triple damages, they are becoming an operating cost. Four Seasons is the instructive exception in the other direction: three in four let the dog stay free, but two in three cap its weight, which is why a brand with the most generous fee policy in the luxury tier still fails our standard at a third of its hotels.

SECTION 10

The Models That Work

The failure of the pet fee is not a failure of imagination. Better models exist today, in every tier and every market, and each of them is already compliant with the law described in section 7.

The free brand model is Kimpton's: no fee, no weight limit, any dog that fits through the door, the same at every hotel. The economics are in The Economics of Dog Friendly Hospitality. The absence of a fee removes the friction that turns interest into abandonment, the consistency removes the brand penalty, and the inclusivity captures the large dog households that weight limited competitors turn away. It works in the economy tier at Red Roof and Motel 6 as well as in the upper upscale.

The lifetime fee is the Paséa Hotel and Spa in Huntington Beach, California: $150 once, on the first stay, and the dog stays free on every visit after. It grades A. It is a loyalty instrument disguised as a pet fee, taking revenue on the first visit and removing the per stay sting that drives repeat guests to competitors, and it is fully disclosed because the first fee is stated up front and every later stay is transparently free. We recommend it to any hotel looking for a middle path.

The transparent nightly fee is the Aspen Meadows Resort at $25 a night, an A+, with bowls, a bed, treats, the bar, the restaurant and the lounge; the Staypineapple chain at the same $25 a night across every hotel, with no weight limit and no deposit; and the Fairmont Banff Springs at $50 a night capped at $100, which charges the short stay fairly and stops charging the long one. A nightly fee shown in the first price is the minimum defensible position for a hotel that chooses to charge, and a cap turns it into one the long stay guest can accept.

The European nominal model is the fee of EUR 15 to EUR 50 a night, usually with the dog welcome in the lobby, the bar and the restaurant at no extra charge, that runs through the best continental hotels: Rosewood Vienna at EUR 50, the Alchymist Grand Hotel in Prague at EUR 40. American operators sometimes argue that European hotels offset the lower fee with higher room rates. European rates at equivalent tiers are comparable or lower. The difference is absorbed operationally.

The charity model is the hotel that gives part of the fee to an animal cause, which nearly a quarter of our A grade hotels do. It converts the thing guests resent, paying for permission, into the thing they admire, and it is compatible with any of the structures above.

Each of these models exists today, is profitable, and scores at or near the top of our ranking. The question is not whether the industry can adopt a better fee. It is which one, and how soon.

SECTION 11

A Fair Fee

Roch Dog is not against the pet fee. A clear, reasonable fee tied to real amenities and access is fair, and the hotels charging it are among the best we rank. A fair fee has three properties, and the law now requires the first.

It is stated before booking. The total cost of the stay with the dog, fee, deposit, taxes and any service charge, is the first price the guest sees, in the booking engine, on every platform and in the policy, never in the house rules, the confirmation email or at the desk. If a deposit is taken, the amount and the date it comes back are stated with it. If none is taken, that is stated too, because silence reads as a surprise waiting at the desk.

It is proportionate to what the dog gets. A fee of $6 to $25 recovers the cost. A fee above that is buying the dog something, and the hotel should be able to say what: the bowls, the bed, the treats, the bar, the walk, the sitter. The Canine Hospitality Playbook sets out what each of those costs to provide and what it returns. A hotel that cannot name what the fee buys is charging for permission, and under the federal rule it is also calling the fee something it is not. One amount, per stay or per night, no reset, no weight tier, no stack.

The Kyung Hee study tells a hotel where to put the money the fee raises. Its owners paid $117 a night more for a place for the dog to play and $146 more for a lounge with a trained dog specialist in it, and paid less for every extra item left in the room. A fee that funds a terrace the dog can use, a bar where it can lie under the table, a named member of staff who knows dogs and a walk or a sitter when the owner goes out is funding what dog owners have been measured paying for. A fee that funds a larger welcome hamper is funding the one thing they marked down. The bowl and the bed stay, because they are the floor, but nobody pays extra for a floor.

A second study, published in October 2026, says the same from the guest's side. Koufodontis (2026), in the International Journal of Hospitality Management, asked 1,041 travellers in 66 countries what a hotel must do before they will believe its pet friendly claim. Only 11.7 per cent would still believe it of a hotel that charges a high fee for the dog, the lowest score of any arrangement tested, below even a hotel that turns away some kinds of pet. Rules did not trouble them: nine in ten endorsed a hotel that admits the dog, publishes its rules and provides the basics. The study concludes that amenities earn their value only once access and facilities are in place, citing the Kyung Hee experiment for the point, and that a hotel should meet and disclose its baseline before it adds anything optional. That is the order this paper argues for: state the fee, make it buy the dog somewhere to go and someone who knows what to do, and only then think about the hamper.

The amount follows from that. A hotel with nothing to offer the dog beyond the room should charge nothing, because it has nothing to sell. A hotel with bowls, a bed and access to its

shared spaces can fairly charge $25 to $50 a night, or $50 to $100 for the stay, with a nightly fee capped so the long stay guest is not punished for loyalty. A hotel with a programme, walking, sitting, a lounge, a menu, trained staff, can charge $100 or more a stay, and nobody complains, because the guest can see what it buys.

It is the same on every shift. The fee, the deposit and the welcome do not change between booking channels or between the morning and evening desk, and within a brand they do not change between hotels.

Then have it verified. The pet friendly label has no definition, and a hotel that charges fairly and delivers well is indistinguishable, on its own website, from the one down the road charging $150 for nothing. Independent assessment against a published standard is what separates them, and the hotels in section 10 all carry one.

SECTION 12

Conclusion

The industry has spent two decades building a pet fee that nobody likes. Guests do not like it, because it buys them nothing they can see. Regulators do not like it, because it is hidden and mislabelled. And on an honest reading of the data, the hotels charging it are not served by it either: the fee that funds nothing drives the most loyal segment in hospitality to a competitor, the weight limit that comes with it excludes the family dog, and the disclosure practice behind both is now unlawful in every market that matters.

The fee was never about the dog. The typical charge is the same at an A hotel and an F hotel, the hotels charging the most provide the least, and the housekeepers who supposedly justify it say the children make more mess. What a dog costs a hotel is $6 to $25 a stay. What a hotel charges is whatever the hotel next door charges. And what the guest would actually pay for, measured in a controlled experiment, is the one thing most fees do not fund: space for the dog outside the bedroom and a person who knows what to do with it.

The law has settled the first question for the industry. In the United States, Britain and from next year Australia, the fee goes in the first price or it is unlawful, and a fee called cleaning has to be a cleaning fee. The hotels that have settled with the Texas Attorney General did not lose an argument about whether they could charge. They lost an argument about whether they could hide it, and every hotel still running a pre 2025 booking flow is making the same bet with worse odds. A hotel that reads this paper and does nothing else should at least put the fee in the headline price this month, because that part is no longer a choice.

The better model is not theoretical. Kimpton charges nothing and scores at the top. Paséa charges once for life. Aspen Meadows and the best British and European hotels charge a nightly fee they can explain and put the dog in the bar. Every one of them is compliant with the rules that have arrived, and every one of them is full of the guests the fee charging hotels are losing. None of them has given up revenue to do it. They have replaced a fee the guest resented with a fee the guest understands, or with no fee and a fuller hotel, and in both cases the money is larger than the fee it replaced, because the guest comes back.

A fair fee is stated before booking, proportionate to what the dog gets, and the same on every shift. The law now requires the first. The guests have always required the other two, and a hotel that meets all three and has it verified has something its competitors cannot buy: a dog owner who knows, before they book, exactly what they are paying for. Price is not a signal of quality in this market. What the hotel provides is, and from now on the price has to say so up front.

Methodology and Limitations

The fee, deposit, weight limit and provision figures in this paper are drawn from the hotels Roch Dog has assessed and ranked against the Roch Dog Friendly Standard (RDFS-02) as of 7 October 2026, out of more than 3,000 hotels assessed in 56 countries since 2023. Most assessments were made by anonymous guest enquiry, the rest by self assessment subject to verification; unanswered questions score as not provided, so every provision figure is a floor. Fees are held in the hotel's own words and converted to US dollars at October 2026 rates for comparison; a fee stated without a currency or a basis is counted as a fee but excluded from the amount analysis. Deposits are counted where the hotel stated one. Brand figures cover the hotels of that brand we rank, which skew to flagships and to North America and Europe, and are shown as percentages or fractions rather than counts for that reason. The sample is not a random sample of the world's hotels, and the dataset has not been externally audited.

The cost of hosting a dog rests on Roch Dog's 2025 survey of 120 housekeepers and on the published damage research cited in the sources. The legal section describes the law as published by legislatures, regulators and courts as of October 2026; it is not legal advice, and a hotel should put the questions it raises to its own advisers. Named hotels are described from their own answers to our assessment and from their published policies; where a hotel's policy has changed since, the live listing at rochdog.com is the current record.

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Roch Dog is the dog friendly standards and certification body. We define what dog friendly means, then assess, certify and rank hotels, workplaces, and residences against the Roch Dog Friendly Standard.

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