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\$150K GUARD DOGS ARE THE NEW MUST-HAVE SECURITY SYSTEM FOR THE RICH



Pricey, highly trained pups are a status symbol for wealthy Angelenos.
Instagram/DeltaK9Academy

Release the hounds!

Dogs have long been a status symbol in Los Angeles, but the latest must-have breed isn't some tiny designer fur bauble, bred for Instagram. With home invasions soaring in the City of Angels, mansion owners with the cash to splash are shelling out for highly trained security dogs costing up to \$150,000 each.

Marketed as "personal canine bodyguards" or "executive protection dogs," the furry beasts have become more in demand than ever, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Angeleno Arteom Bulgadarian recently paid \$70,000 for Rocky, a 2 1/2-year-old German shepherd. The four-legged security alarm was bred and trained at the nearby Delta K9 Academy to be a family pet first, but also to patrol Bulgadarian's 5,000-square-foot San Fernando Valley home, and — if need be — stop would-be interlopers at the property's iron gate.

Bulgadarian had reason to be cautious. Before the aerospace industry executive snapped up the Sherman Oaks spread, it belonged to former LA Dodger Yasiel Puig, who was targeted by thieves while



These German, Dutch and Belgian shepherd mix dogs — bred and trained in Montana — are in high demand among fearful Los Angeles homeowners.

Facebook/SVALINN

the right fielder was on the road. The unlawful haul: a whopping \$170,000 worth of jewelry and other valuables.

“What’s the price that you would put for your family’s security, especially when that particular house has been burglarized?” Bulgadarian told the outlet. “\$70,000 — you amortize it over 10 to 15 years, whatever the dog’s life is, and it’s not that big of a price tag.”

Bulgadarian is taking no chances — he owns several guns, while the family’s six-bedroom home is equipped with surveillance and alarms.

The father of three isn’t the only one doubling — or tripling — up on protection. Wealthy residents all over America’s second largest city reported feeling compelled to beef up security as a “growing lawlessness” sets into the city. That includes double-digit increases in burglaries, smash-and-grab thefts in tony shopping districts and a wave of “follow-home” robberies, one which notably claimed the life of 81-year-old Jacqueline Avant in her Beverly Hills home in 2021.

In the wake of that senseless act of violence, two protection dog brokers said they saw a large spike in inquiries.

“A dog is always my recommendation if you’re not going to have a gun in the house,” said Kris Herzog, who owns Bodyguard Group of Beverly Hills, a firm that connects clients with various security providers, including one outfit selling trained guard dogs for \$55,000.

“Every celebrity client, at one time or another, and billionaire has said to me these exact words: ‘What about a dog?’” said Herzog, adding, “They’re status symbols and over time can even be cost saving: People don’t want to pay \$400 an hour for two off-duty police officers.”



Mike Israeli of Delta K9 Academy in Los Angeles, which trains security dogs.
Instagram/DeltaK9Academy

High-end realtor Branden Williams said security dogs have become so popular among his tony clients he is looking for one himself after a neighbor was robbed at gunpoint in Beverly Hills.

“I will say they’re not cheap; the ones I’m looking at are between \$60,000 and \$100,000. It’s a whole other level of training; we’re not talking about doggy day care here,” said Williams.

At Svalinn, a breeding and training company located on a sprawling ranch in Montana, founder Kim Green revealed that while only four years ago she was charging \$75,000, demand has doubled the price tag.

“To be very blunt, our dogs that were born in 2022 are being sold at a price of \$150,000. It’s a coveted product,” said Green, whose facility produces no more than 18 adult protection dogs each year.

Green's dogs, which are a crossbreed of German, Belgian and Dutch shepherds, start training when they are eight weeks old and work with handlers daily until they are prepared to be placed in a home.

"We're taking deposits on puppies as young as 4 months of age for delivery two-plus years later. We can't create the assets quickly enough," she added.

And the dogs' training is tailored to the client's high-flying tastes.

"Let's say you own a yacht. You need a dog that's comfortable on a boat," said November Holley, president of Harrison K-9, which imports German shepherds and trains them on a sprawling South Carolina compound. Her clients include professional athletes, Oscar-winning actors and business moguls.

"We listen to the client and try to mimic their lifestyle."

And despite their avowed purpose, the beasts still make good family pets.

Holley said, "These are good solid companions that take care of their family. They're not trained to kill — we don't train killers — they're trained to stop the threat."



A four-legged security guard in training at Delta K9 Academy in North Hollywood.

Instagram/DeltaK9Academy