

Mom's Joy Room

Where Obsolescence Ends and Wonder Begins

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

LaMar Toy Co. Panda Bear, c. 1950s-60s

ESTIMATED WORTH

\$180-\$300



15" LaMar panda bear — genuine fur, jointed head, red satin bow



Original LaMar Toy Co. hang tag, "America's Finest Fur Toys"

A rare 15-inch vintage panda bear by LaMar Toy Co., dating to the 1950s-60s, constructed of genuine fur in the classic panda coloring — deep black fur on the ears, arms, and lower body, contrasted against a plush, tightly-curved cream-white face and chest. A red satin ribbon bow is tied at the neck, and the original LaMar hang tag remains fully intact, reading "LaMar — America's Finest Fur Toys." Unlike most of LaMar's fixed-head novelty animals, this panda features a jointed head that turns and tilts, a more sophisticated and less commonly encountered construction detail among the company's surviving fur toys.

*"He wore his black and white so proudly, bow tied just right — a gentleman panda,
dressed for company."*

History

LaMar Toy Company, Inc. was an American manufacturer headquartered in Brooklyn, New York, and one of the most recognized names in genuine fur novelty toys during the postwar decades. A period trade advertisement from March 1959, placed in the toy industry's trade magazine "Playthings," announced LaMar's complete 1959 line of "original fur toys" from their offices at 444-12th Street, Brooklyn, and proudly noted the company had been "first in sales in '58, and again in '59" — evidence that LaMar held a genuinely prominent position in the American fur toy market at the height of its production years, not merely a minor regional maker.

LaMar built its reputation specifically on genuine fur construction, branding itself "America's Finest Fur Toys," a slogan that appears on this panda's original hang tag exactly as it did on the company's 1959 trade advertising. This distinguishes LaMar from several similarly-named toy companies of the era, most notably Kamar International, founded by Pascal Kamar, which specialized in synthetic plush novelty toys manufactured largely in Japan from the 1960s through the 1980s. Where Kamar's animals were soft synthetic plush, LaMar's toys — cats, kittens, poodles, and pandas among them — were constructed from genuine fur, most commonly rabbit fur, which the company dyed in a range of colors to achieve its signature novelty animal designs.

This panda's fur is consistent with that documented LaMar standard: the black portions of the coat show the dense, dye-friendly texture typical of rabbit fur when colored dark, while the cream-white face and chest retain a tightly curled, natural texture consistent with undyed or lightly processed rabbit pelt. The two-tone panda coloring would have required careful matching and dyeing of pelts to achieve LaMar's crisp black-and-white contrast, a more involved production process than their single-color poodles and kittens, and one that likely made pandas a smaller and more specialized part of the company's overall fur toy output.

Panda-themed toys held a particular fascination in mid-20th-century America, buoyed by the panda's status as one of the era's most beloved zoo attractions and a recurring subject in illustrated children's books and advertising. A genuine fur panda from a company as reputationally significant as LaMar would have represented a premium purchase at the time — a step above the simpler cats and poodles that made up the bulk of the company's catalog, and a testament to LaMar's willingness to take on more technically demanding designs.

Genuine fur toys of this vintage are inherently fragile: fur is susceptible to insect damage, moisture, sunlight fading, and dryness leading to brittleness over sixty-plus years. This panda's fur remains full, soft, and well-retained in both color zones, with no significant balding, staining, or pest damage visible — an excellent survival for a mid-century fur toy of this age and complexity. The fully intact original hang tag, still legible and attached, is itself a meaningful rarity, as paper tags on handled toys are frequently lost, torn, or discarded over decades of ownership.

Notable Features

- ♦ 15" LaMar Toy Co. panda bear, dated to the 1950s-60s
- ♦ Genuine fur construction — likely rabbit fur, dyed black and left natural cream-white per LaMar's documented production standard
- ♦ Jointed head — turns and tilts, a more sophisticated feature than LaMar's typical fixed-head animals

- ◆ Original red satin ribbon bow at neck
- ◆ Fully intact original LaMar Toy Co. hang tag reading "America's Finest Fur Toys"
- ◆ Excellent fur condition with strong color retention in both black and white zones
- ◆ LaMar was documented as the top-selling fur toy maker in the industry in 1958 and 1959

COLLECTOR NOTES

LaMar Toy Company, Inc. (Brooklyn, NY) should not be confused with the similarly-named Kamar International — a separate and unrelated company that produced synthetic plush novelty toys, largely manufactured in Japan, from the 1960s through the 1980s. LaMar's toys, including this panda, were built with genuine fur throughout the company's production run, consistent with their "America's Finest Fur Toys" branding. Pandas appear to be a scarcer design within LaMar's documented fur toy line compared to their more common cats, kittens, and poodles.

Sandy Wade

Proprietor, Mom's Joy Room

This certificate accompanies the item at time of sale and reflects research conducted at the time of cataloguing.