

The King of Class

When luxury hotel and spa owners anywhere in the world need advice, they call Dallas and ask for **Atef Mankarios**.

ATEF MANKARIOS WAS BORN WITH AN EYE FOR DETAIL—HE can spot the difference between 1,000- and 250-thread-count sheets from 50 feet away. When he enters one of the many luxurious hotels he has developed, the staff snaps to attention, a look of fear in their eyes. Understandably so—the man who transformed the Mansion on Turtle Creek into a five-star property is a demanding boss.

“I can’t stand it when I go into a restaurant and the waiter’s or bus-boy’s uniform is missing a button or the sleeves are too short,” says Mankarios, who was the president and chief executive officer of Rosewood Hotels & Resorts for 10 years. “A stain on the tablecloth? I lose it. A water spot on a glass? The end of civilization as I know it,” he says, only half kidding.

During the last 30 years, the suave, Egyptian-born perfectionist has created a reputation that has allowed him to work around the world. After he split from Rosewood in 1998, he formed a company that developed, managed, and operated luxury properties in the United States, Barbados, Egypt, France, Italy, Monaco, Spain, and Turkey.

His success caught the attention of decision makers at Starwood Hotels & Resorts. Mankarios ran the company’s St. Regis Hotels & Resorts division until he resigned in January, moved back to Dallas, and formed the Mankarios Partnership, a consulting firm.

Why does this handsome, debonair, smooth-talking guy—who, at midnight, spotted a run in the carpet of the lobby at the Mansion and had the entire room recarpeted before breakfast—choose Dallas over Paris, London, or Tobago?

“Oh, those are wonderful places for sure,” he says. “But they don’t have the Dallas Stars.”

BY NANCY NICHOLS PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM HUSSEY