



## History Lesson: *The Ritz-Carlton's cultured beginnings*

They famously called him the "king of hoteliers and hotelier

to kings," for **César Ritz**, the son of a Swiss farmer, came to define lavish service with his deft

management of The Ritz in Paris and The Carlton in London. The Ritz, in particular, struck a chord with the smart set: **Proust** was smitten by it; **Chanel** walked across Rue Cambon from her atelier and retired to it — every night for 30 years. Mr. Ritz was all about service and style, boasting,

said *Time* magazine, in 1928, "that he never forgot a face." After he passed away in 1918, his wife Marie-Louise carried on, opening hotels until The Ritz-Carlton Investing Company was established by Ritz's right-hand man, **Albert Keller**, who bought and franchised the name

in the States. The very first "Ritz-Carlton" was built in Boston, opening in 1927 at a dear \$15 nightly. Who checked in over the decades? The likes of **Irving Berlin**, **Bette Davis** and **Howard Hughes**. In 1983, The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company was formed with the purchase of

The Ritz-Carlton, Boston, and the rights to the famous name. There are now 60-plus Ritz-Carltons across 21 countries, from Canada to Chile, Singapore to Spain, employing 32,000 very well-trained employees, known in-house today as "Ladies" and "Gentlemen."

# Puttin' Up *The Ritz*

Buff up the Bentley and button on the spats: The Ritz-Carlton hotel is about to open — and with it, some eyebrow-raising new residences and a restaurant by a certain Dean of Southwest cuisine. **Rob Brinkley** checks out where — and why — you should be checking in.



The two towers of the Ritz-Carlton, Dallas: the hotel and residences tower, left, opening soon, and the all-residences tower, right, opening in 2009.

## Star-chitect Designed: *Who penned the place*

The Ritz-Carlton complex in Uptown — bordered by Cedar Springs Road, McKinney Avenue and Pearl and Olive streets — is the creation of the dean of the Yale School of Architecture, the well-documented **Robert A.M. Stern** and his 300-person New York firm. Under their belts? The Disney BoardWalk and Disney's Yacht and Beach Club Resorts in Lake Buena Vista, Florida; the Museum for African Art in New York; The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, in Massachusetts; and, on Preston Road just north of Northwest Highway, the home of husband-wife lawyers **Fred Baron** and **Lisa Blue**, 15,000 square feet wrapped in a postmodern guise that Stern described in *Architectural Digest* as "English Regency sifted through American Federal ... It's big, and it looks big." We'll say: The house includes its own spa, indoor lap pool and five-room master suite.

### Ritz Bits: The essential information

**Developer:** Crescent Real Estate Equities Company (as in The Crescent, Dallas, plus the Canyon Ranch resorts and The Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa)

**Architect:** Robert A.M. Stern Architects, LLP, 212.967.5100; ramsa.com

**Hotel reservations/information:** 800.241.3333, 214.922.0200; ritzcarlton.com

**Ballroom information:** 214.922.0200

**Residences information:** 214.855.2020; theresidencesdallas.com

**Fearing's Restaurant:** fearingrestaurant.com

## Chanel Would've Slept Here: *Checking in*

When the 21-story Ritz-Carlton, Dallas, opens on August 15, guests will gawk at the 218 roomy hotel rooms, from 425 to 1,700 square feet and beginning at \$329 per night. Thirty-one of those rooms are on the tony Club Level, where the extra perks include a separate lounge, a packing/unpacking service, five complimentary food-and-beverage "presentations" daily and an iPod while you stay, loaded with 1,000 tunes. All rooms boast glittery Dallas views and big bathrooms, stocked,

you should know, with Bulgari bath goodies. Rooms brim with 32-inch, flat-panel, high-definition televisions with 14 HD channels; wired and wireless high-speed Internet; and, if you upgraded to the Club Level or one of the sinful suites, an in-mirror TV in your bathroom. A little *Sunset Boulevard* with your bubble bath? The hotel's sinfully luxurious spa (the only Prada Beauty facial massage in the state) and glittering ballroom (the biggest around) stand at the ready.

Now if you're blue  
And you don't know where to go to  
Why don't you go where fashion sits?  
Puttin' on the ritz.

— **Fred Astaire**, in the 1929 song "Puttin' On the Ritz," by **Irving Berlin**

## Home Suite Home: *Residences with room service and Regency leanings*

Tucked high away on floors nine through 21 of the hotel tower are the private pads: 70 sold-out condominium residences. For their \$600,000 to \$9 million, Ritz-Carlton residents can brag about interiors by **Sherry Hayslip** and her Hayslip Design Associates, as well as a private auto court to keep the Volante from view. Did we mention the twice-daily maid service, full laundry and dry-cleaning services, and the nightly turndown service? As they say at the Ritz-Carlton, "all the day-to-day domestic assistance you will ever need."

(Bet we could think of some more.) Come mid-2009, 96 more sky-high aeries — think \$700,000 to \$6.275 million for one- to three-bedroom residences and two penthouses — will fill a second tower, to be connected to the hotel tower by an enclosed glass-and-stone walkway. Where might you find the triple-A-list? Ensnared in Regency Row, a freestanding bank of four brown-stone-style homes also by Robert A.M. Stern and built as "blank canvases" to be completed inside by the new owners. The Regency Row quartet, you see, will offer just a touch more separation from the goings-on at the hotel and the residential tower.



The lobby at The Ritz-Carlton residences, Dallas



The Gallery at Fearing's Restaurant

## The Dean Scene: *Gourmet grazing at Fearing's Restaurant*

He's baaaack. The boot-wearin', guitar-strummin' **Dean Fearing** has a brand-new gig: head honcho at Fearing's Restaurant, a seven-zone extravaganza, designed by Fearing and **Bill Johnson** of retail-store firm Johnson Design Group, that includes a fine-dining room called The Gallery; an open-air pavilion called the Sendoro; two bars, called the Live Oak and the Rattlesnake (name your poison!); and a dine-in chef's kitchen. What's cooking? Mouthwaterers such as maple black peppercorn buffalo tenderloin and chilled sweet-corn vichyssoise. No sir, The Dean isn't abandoning his Southern roots now that he's gone Uptown: Dishes here will be regional and true to Texas, but with Fearing's sophisticated spin. For the oenophiles among us, he's also specifying some rather hard-to-find wines. See you in the kitchen?