

Joachim 'Jon' Fels, CHA
Owner - President
Fels Hotel Group, LLC

Biography

As a certified hotel professional and licensed real estate broker, Fels has served the hospitality industry internationally for 40 years. He has developed, managed, consulted and/or brokered hotel and resort assets valued at nearly One Billion Dollars, throughout the **United States, Europe, the Pacific Rim and Caribbean Basin.**

A native of Germany, Fels escaped after numerous attempts over the **Berlin Wall** during the early 60's. After he graduated from the Lewis Hotel School in New York in 1965, he accepted a management trainee's position at the former **Statler Hilton Hotel** (now **Capitol Hilton**) in Washington D.C. Only three years thereafter, Fels was appointed as General Manager to the 360 room **Kennedy Airport Hilton**, and in 1970 to **Leona Helmsley's Sheraton Sand Castle**, Sarasota, FL.

In 1971, Fels accepted an assignment by the late **Kemmons Wilson**, founder of Holiday Inn International, to open a **365 room Holiday Inn** prior to the Olympics in **Munich, Germany**. After a very successful opening, other assignments followed: from a **740 room Resort Hotel Development in Las Palmas, Grand Canary Islands** (Spain), as V.P. of Special Projects with corporate headquarters located in Munich, to a **\$325 Million Dollar Mega-Resort Development** at Germany's Baltic Sea as Managing Director. This project received media attention throughout Europe, not only for its size of **2,000 hotel rooms/7,000 beds** including 150 townhouses, but for its unique concept, facilities and amenities. It included a Medical Center with 500 beds for Sports Rehabilitation and Preventive Medicine, a Health Spa, an Olympic Hall, a Marina with 150 slips for Boats & Yachts, a Heliport, Championship Golf Course, an Equestrian Court, a Language School, Convention Center, 5 Restaurants, and more. Fels received full credit for conceptual planning, coordination and positive financial results.

In the late 70's, Fels returned to the United States and formed Fels Hotel Group. Since then, his company has managed, consulted and/or brokered **Hiltons, Sheratons, Radissons, InterContinental Hotels, Best Western International, Choice, Cendant, and more, as well as independent Boutique, Historic Landmark, Convention and Resort Hotels.**

For nearly 30 years now, Fels has lived in Baton Rouge, LA and was 100% stockholder of three corporations held under Fels Hotel Group's umbrella. He **owned two (2) Boutique Hotels (New Orleans and Baton Rouge), and one (1) Office Park in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.** Fels Hotel Group's services have been provided to investors, developers, lenders and the FDIC. His firm has been retained for **management and brokerage contracts, including specialized services such as Expert Witness, Court-Appointed Special Receiver/Trustee, Valuations, Repositionings and Conversions.**

Since 1985, Fels Hotel Group's management included the **Thunderbird Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas**, a 4,000-acre resort development in West Virginia, (2) resort hotels in Texas and (1) in California. He has consulted hotel investors in Florida, i.e. Miami's **upscale Grove Isle Club & Resort**; five resort hotels in the **Caribbean Islands** (Honduras, Curacao, Belize and the Cayman Islands); including the **Princess Beach Resort Hotel & Casino** in Curacao; as well as a **600-room Convention Hotel Development in Bangkok, Thailand.** Having served as hotelier on three Continents qualified Mr. Fels to become a member of the prestigious **Global Hoteliers Club.**

In Louisiana alone, his company has brokered, consulted, or managed eight hotels in New Orleans, including the *famous* **Bourbon Orleans** and **Maison DeVille** in the **French Quarter**; the **Avenue Plaza Suite Hotel** (timeshare) on *St. Charles Avenue*; and the **Landmark Hotel** in Metairie; six hotels in Baton Rouge, including the **Hilton** and the **historic Capitol House**; five hotels in Alexandria, including the **historic Hotel Bentley**; four hotels in Lafayette, including the former **Sheraton Hotel**, as well as the **historic Natchez Eola** in Mississippi, and others.

Many industry professionals consider Fels to be one of the most knowledgeable hoteliers in the country. His management style, communication and marketing skills, combined with his innovative and aggressive approach to performance and results, has earned him the Holiday Inn's **European Innkeeper of the Year Award, Dale Carnegie Leadership Award**, and an unprecedented **six (6) Gold Key Achievement Awards**, a prestigious event presented annually by the *American Hotel and Lodging Association*. He has also been a Board Member of Convention and Visitor's Bureaus, Hotel Associations, and Commercial Real Estate Associations.

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