



## JON TAPPER



An international celebrity, highly sought-after hospitality industry guru, and creator, executive producer and star of Spike TV's number-one show, *Bar Rescue*, most people know Jon Taffer as a larger-than-life television personality who takes a no-holds-barred approach to helping hotels, restaurants and bars reach their full potential. What most might not know, however, is that Taffer's impressive industry experience dates back nearly four decades—and includes everything from consulting for hundreds of thousands of properties and Fortune 500 companies, to creating what industry experts call “the greatest nightclub in the world,” to changing the game of football for its fans, forever.

It all dates back to 1978, when Taffer accepted a position as the general manager of Troubadour, one of Hollywood's most famous music venues, where an artist by the name Elton John was first discovered. In 1979, after news of his success as Troubadour's general manager made its way throughout the area, West Hollywood's iconic Barney's Beanery recruited Taffer to serve as its lead bartender and manager. It was here, behind Barney's coveted bar, that Taffer fell in love with the bar industry for good. In 1980, with a newfound love for the hospitality industry, Taffer left behind a sunny Hollywood for his home state of New York, where he accepted a position as the regional manager for Beefsteak Charlie's. As part of the new gig, Taffer underwent a 26-week kitchen training program, which became his first official introduction to the food business and forever changed the way he looked at restaurants.

Taffer eventually made his way to Grossinger's Resort and Country Club in the sprawling Catskill Mountains of Liberty, New York. Originally recruited to be the property's food and beverage director, Taffer was swiftly promoted, earning a position as resident manager. With 1,700 rooms, the world's first-ever snow-making machine, and a venue that housed world-renowned boxing matches all to its name, there was no resort in the world at the time that offered an all-encompassing experience quite like Grossinger's—and Taffer's hands-on approach to management and keen eye for effective entertainment proved to be crucial to the unprecedented success the property saw.

In 1983, Taffer received a call from a headhunter who was looking to open “the world's greatest nightclub” in Glenn Mills, Pennsylvania. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Taffer succeeded in creating a club that forever changed the nightlife game, all with the help of a gentleman by the name of Leon Altemose—together, they opened what quickly became the area's most iconic and coveted hangout: Pulsations Nightclub, a 15,000 square-foot venue boasting 10 levels, 11 bars, and 12 VIP hotel rooms.

The best part of the larger-than-life venue, though? A \$400,000 custom-built robot by the name of Pulsar. Every night, a massive spaceship (27 feet in diameter, to be exact), would fly over the packed dance floor on an I-beam and open its door, out of which—amongst a haze of fog and state-of-the-art lighting—Pulsar the Robot would “levitate” down to the crowd, at which point club-goers would take a spin on the robot, dancing on its base as it made its way around the wide-eyed room. The remarkable nightly occurrence quickly became a global hit, with nightclubs around the world attempting, without success, to recreate the awe-inspiring scene. Pulsar’s popularity grew so much so that producers on *Rocky IV* even had a replica of the robot built for the hit box office flick.

Taffer eventually left behind the greatest nightclub in the world (and the beloved Pulsar) to join a hotel management company in Chicago. As part of this role, he consulted for 28 luxury-brand hotels and broke countless hospitality industry records. His most notable industry-changing contribution was the creation of Rooms Inventory Management Systems (RIMS), a formulaic approach to hotel-room pricing, which, to this day, is considered by experts to be one of the greatest contributions to the hospitality industry ever.

Taffer eventually decided it was time to start his own consulting firm and, in 1986, opened the doors to Taffer Management (TMG) in Downers Grove, Chicago. During this time, hotel restaurants simply couldn’t compete with the quality of product and service free-standing restaurants offered, and Taffer made it his mission to turn this trend around. Under the TMG brand, Taffer consulted for over 300 businesses in 30 countries across the world, with a heavy focus on creating hotel food-and-beverage operations that could compete with their free-standing counterparts.

As part of this role, Taffer conceived all of the food-and-beverage operations for Hyatts in Asia, Australia and Jerusalem. Thanks to Taffer’s hands-on approach to management and invaluable expertise, restaurants across the globe saw revenue skyrocket under his guidance—JJ’s in Hong Kong, for example, became the highest revenue-producing-per-square-foot bar in the history of Hyatt hotels. Taffer also became the first-ever consultant to put franchised restaurants in Holiday Inns, Sheraton and other hotel brands. Taffer’s training programs developed for TGI Friday’s are still a centerpiece of the brand. With his hands in successful operations all over the world, it was during these years that Taffer gained unprecedented insight and familiarity with Asian and European Markets, turning him into the global industry expert he is today.

With pleas for his international industry expertise coming in from all over the country, Taffer decided to open TMG offices in Minneapolis in 1989. He immediately took control of the coveted Target Center—which was then the home of the Minnesota Timberwolves—where he managed all restaurants and 68 suites. He spent the following years opening two restaurants in Mall of America, and opening and operating Mystic Lake Casino in Prior Lake, Minnesota, the Golden Nickel Casino in Wisconsin and a number of other grand casinos all throughout the Midwest—bringing the glitz and glamour once only reserved for the country’s coast, inland.

The following years saw countless theme restaurants and successful hotel operations conceived, opened and operated by Taffer and his TMG team (at one point, Taffer owned and operated 17 different successful establishments at once). By the early 1990s, Taffer managed to turn the iconic Rainforest Cafe into the most successful restaurant IPO offering in history. During this time, he won the Operator of the Year award, the Visionary Leader Award and the Property of the Year award (not once—but *twice*). He also worked to create the Nightclub and Bar Show (NCB), the industry’s largest convention held annually in Las Vegas. He remained on the NCB board for over 30 years and served as president of the NCB for six years.

In the mid-90's, Taffer took his expertise to the country's favorite playing field, where he served on the advisory board for NFL Enterprises and changed the game with one Earth-shattering idea: the creation of Sunday Ticket. The idea allowed fans from all over the country to finally watch from the comfort of their couch as their favorite teams took the field each Sunday afternoon. To this day, Taffer is known amongst NFL executives and football fans alike as "The Godfather of the Sunday Ticket."

Throughout his decades of globetrotting and industry-shaping, Taffer began giving internationally acclaimed keynote speeches, which, by the mid-1980's, became the most well-known and sought-after appearances in the industry. It was at one of these appearances when the idea for *Bar Rescue* was sparked, after a fan approached him and told him he should consider being on television. It was that simple statement that changed Taffer's career forever.

He immediately got to work shooting a sizzle reel and pitching his idea for what was tentatively titled *On the Rocks* to four major studios. Within 4 days, Taffer had offers as large as his personality on the table from all four studios. He accepted an offer from Spike TV, and *On the Rocks* quickly became what is today the network's hit television show *Bar Rescue*, a reality show that spotlights Taffer as he saves failing bars from looming closure, using his four decades of unprecedented industry experience and trademarked Reaction Management strategy to consult on everything from menu design to cost management.

*Bar Rescue* premiered on Spike TV on June 11, 2011 and, by its sophomore season, had climbed its way to the top of Spike's rankings, securing its spot as the number-one show on the network. The show's unprecedented success led to the network increasing the length of *Bar Rescue* to 40 episodes in its third season and 50 episodes in its fourth season, which over 91 million viewers tuned in to watch. In March of 2015, *Bar Rescue* surpassed a coveted 100 episodes—a milestone that's extremely rare for a reality show of its kind. Currently in its fifth season, *Bar Rescue* is on track to exceed 150 episodes in 2017, which experts would argue is nearly impossible. Under Taffer's lead, the show has become a workhorse for Spike TV, accounting for nearly 20 percent of its total programming minutes and becoming the network's number-two ad-revenue generator, having brought in over \$39 million national advertising dollars to Spike TV in 2016 alone.

When Taffer isn't in front of the camera on *Bar Rescue*, you can find him sharing his industry knowledge with audiences around the globe. He's been featured in *Forbes Magazine*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vice Magazine*, *Inked Magazine*, *Entrepreneur Magazine*, *Business Insider*, *Bar Business Magazine* and *The New York Times*, among a number of other prominent international media outlets, and has appeared as a guest on shows ranging from *Rachael Ray* to *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* to *Good Morning America*.

A coveted keynote speaker and chairman of both Taffer Dynamics Inc. and Taffer Media Inc., Taffer spends what little off-camera time he has as a key strategic consultant for the National Restaurant Association, Anheuser Busch, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits, and Diageo. He is one of only six inductees into the Nightclub Hall of Fame, and is the only American to hold the United Kingdom's "Pub Master" distinction. In 2016, he was inducted into the world-famous New York Friars Club, a private club in New York City whose membership is composed of world-renowned comedians, award-winning actors and international celebrities. In 2017, Taffer received the first-ever Dom Perignon Award of Excellence from the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Taffer now resides in Las Vegas, Nevada, where he runs Taffer Virtual Teaching, his digital teaching platform, and Taffer Dynamics, his consulting firm. Over the years, he's consulted for a range of well-known establishments, including: the NFL, Ritz-Carlton hotels, Hyatt hotels, Marriott hotels, Holiday Inn hotels, Sheraton hotels, Intercontinental Hotels, Peninsula Hotels, Fridays, BWW, Famous Dave's Barbecue, Wolfgang Puck Express and N9NE Steakhouse at Palms Casino Resort.

When he's not dedicating his time to bringing back restaurants and bars from the brink, Taffer volunteers his time with the Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health, St. Jude's Ranch for Children, and Ronald McDonald House. He also regularly offers up his seasoned hospitality skills to the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he helps faculty develop curriculum that's in line with industry expectations and trends. Every year at the holidays, he and his wife, Nicole, host the annual Taffer's Gift of Giving, with proceeds benefitting the children of St. Jude's Ranch in Boulder City, Nevada—a 40-acre home for abused and abandoned children located just outside of the Las Vegas Valley.

While Taffer has touched hundreds of thousands of properties and restaurants during his unprecedented career, he doesn't plan on slowing down anytime soon. He continues to run his consulting firm, just finished a pilot for a major television network, is in the midst of finishing up plans for a major talk show, and continues to field daily offers for appearances. Author of the instant *Wall Street Journal* bestseller, *Raise the Bar: An Action-Based Method for Maximum Customer Reactions*, Taffer is currently working on his second book, which is under contract with Penguin Random House and slated for release in 2018.

Married for 17 years to a woman he fell in love at first sight with at Super Bowl XXX, Taffer spends what little spare time he has traveling with his wife, Nicole, spending time with his daughter (who's currently taking the liquor industry by storm), and occasionally sipping one of his favorite age-old cocktails: *The Godfather*.

**To book Jon for your next keynote, conference or event, please contact us at: [Speaking@taffermedia.com](mailto:Speaking@taffermedia.com) or call us at: 702-826-3993**