

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Robb Report

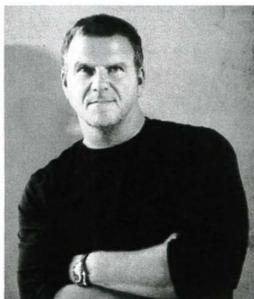


The **California** Issue

A window on the cars, wine, food, art, and people that define the dream

Out of Office with TILMAN FERTITTA

Owner of the Houston Rockets and chairman, president, and CEO of Landry's Inc.



The world's richest restaurateur should be happy. He's just finished writing his first book, *Shut Up and Listen*, and recently opened The Post Oak, a luxury hotel in his hometown of Houston that he calls his "legacy project". Still, he admits he's mad. One of his latest acquisitions, the NBA's Houston Rockets, lost the night before and he is frustrated. Since buying the team in 2017 for \$2.2 billion—the most ever paid for a U.S. pro sports franchise—he's approached it with the same level of intensity he's shown when doing a hostile takeover of McCormick & Schmick's or pulling an Atlantic City casino back from the brink. In his office, surrounded by samples of Rockets merchandise and even a live feed of the team's training facility beamed to one of his 10 desktop computer screens, the multitasking NBA owner shares a few secrets. *JEREMY REPANICH*

What's the one thing you have to do daily to stay sane?

[Long pause] I'm not sane. [Laughs] Honestly, this is just what I do, and nothing really phases me. I can deal with multitasking 10 things.

Your biggest annoyance at work?

When somebody doesn't give 100 percent. Also, when they assume something's done and don't follow through to make sure it was done.

What do you look for in an employee?

Somebody who wants to always move up, and can tell me where they want to be in five years, or 10 years, or 20 years. I tell young kids that it's easy to set yourself apart from others if you just do it. You come in a little earlier, you work a little later, and you attack problems. You don't just sit there and wait for orders.

How long should a meeting last?

Fifteen minutes. I don't believe in all the bullshit.

Do you prefer email, phone, or text?

Email, phone, and text—I'll do all three at the same time. I could be talking on my phone with my AirPods in while texting and emailing.

One adjustment everyone can make in their lives to be more successful?

You've got to have goals. If you don't have goals, you're never going to get anywhere. You have to make things happen for yourself; it does not happen accidentally.

Best advice you were given?

I really wasn't given any advice. I've just kind of watched everybody out there in the world. I never had that one particular mentor. I

just knew I wanted to be successful and I felt like God gave me the business mind to do it. Everybody is given a gift by God, but you've got to find out what that is and then go be good at it. I wasn't given artistic talent. I wasn't given musical talent. I wasn't given athletic talent to play more than high school sports. I just understood the math of business. Not the calculus of engineering a bridge, but revenue, cost of sales, labor, and other expenses—that's what I know.

One thing you want to improve in your work life?

I'm old enough and I'm successful enough that at some point I need to stop paying as close attention to the details. But I think that's why I've stayed successful, and succeeded through every recession, and every bad time, because I've never changed.