

## Mystery shopper

Hotel lobby lounges



# Service spy

This month, Ethos Consultancy's team of mystery shoppers visited lobby lounges at four of Dubai's top hotels — so was it shining five-star service, or did some of the luxury lose its lustre in the lobby?

## This month:

Dubai hotel lobby lounges cafés

- **The Monarch Dubai**  
Arcadia Lobby Lounge
- **The Address Dubai Mall**  
Karat Lobby Lounge
- **Kempinski Hotel**  
Mall of the Emirates  
Aspen Cafe
- **Mina A'Salam**  
Al Samar Lounge

### THE WHAT:

Caterer Middle East has partnered up with customer service experts Ethos Consultancy to highlight F&B service standards at outlets across the UAE. Each month, we'll reveal mystery shoppers' assessments of four different F&B outlets, to explore what these venues are doing right and what could be improved.

### THE WHY:

This isn't about catching F&B outlets with their trousers down: by measuring performance and providing expert advice on areas for improvement, we want to help better these operations — and the industry in general.

### THE HOW:

Ethos Consultancy's trained mystery shoppers are given a specific selection of outlets. Each shopper visits their assigned restaurant and dines as usual. Within 24 hours of every experience, each shopper fills out an online report, providing Ethos consultants with the information they require to offer constructive advice.

Each mystery shopper is instructed to look out for the following:

### Appearance

- Did the outlet appear clean and tidy?
- Were menus clear and easy to follow?

### Sales and service

- The greeting and farewell received from staff
- The appearance of staff
- Time taken to be served
- Did the waiter ask questions to establish his customer's preferences and needs?
- Was the waiter knowledgeable about the items on offer?
- Did the waiter offer undivided attention while serving?
- If an item was not available, did the waiter provide other helpful suggestions?
- Did the waiter attempt to up- or cross-sell by suggesting complementary items?

### Overall Experience

- Would your experience encourage you to visit this outlet again?
- Did you leave the outlet with a positive impression of the venue?
- Would you recommend this outlet to friends, family or colleagues?

- How satisfied were you with the overall quality of service delivered?
- What could have been done to better your entire experience?

### The expert analysis:

This month, Service Spy is all about the five-star experience, with our mystery shoppers visiting four of Dubai's most luxurious hotel lobby lounges.

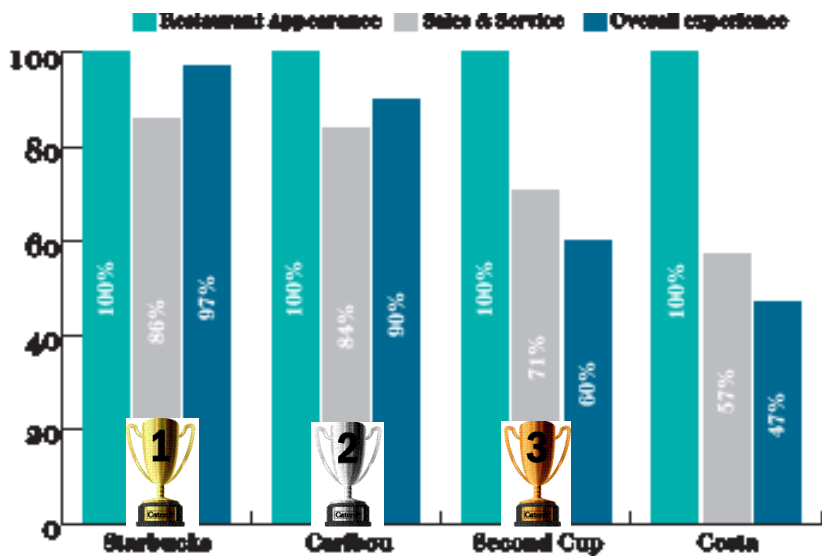
Let's start by congratulating each and every hotel lobby lounge included in this study. Reading this month's mystery shopping reports was an absolute pleasure, as the standard of service and level of customer interaction was brilliant.

All four hotel lobby lounges scored above 78% — with this month's winner, Aspen Cafe at Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates, achieving a whopping 95%; the highest service quality performance score since Service Spy began in September.

Now, don't go assuming our shoppers walked in, had a coffee and quietly disappeared! All waiting staff were put through their paces with a number of tricky questions being thrown their way.

What's the difference between a café latte and latte macchiato? Do you sell good quality coffee? Do your cookies contain nuts? Are

	Appearance		Sales & Service		
	Did the outlet appear clean and tidy?		How long did you have to wait to be served?		
	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 1	Visit 2	
<b>Kempinski</b>	Yes	Yes	1 minute or less	1 minute or less	
<b>The Address</b>	Yes	Yes	1 minute or less	1 minute or less	
<b>Mina A' Salam</b>	Yes	Yes	5 minutes or more	1 minute or less	
<b>The Monarch</b>	Yes	Yes	1-3 minutes	1 minute or less	



your mochas made with chocolate powder or syrup? All valid questions — and all answered politely and with confidence which indicates these staff have been trained well. Just what we like to see!

Each of our eight mystery shoppers indicated they would happily return and even recommend their visited hotel lobby lounge to family and friends, which is a fantastic result.

Let's have a look at why our shoppers would be so willing to do this:

- No one had to wait longer than five minutes to be served;
- All lobby lounges were clean, tidy and smelled pleasant;
- All waiting staff were well presented, in uniforms and wearing name badges;
- All shoppers except one reported that their waiter had great product knowledge;
- All staff were happy to chat and interact;

- All shoppers indicated they were very satisfied with their purchased food items.

#### What could have been done better?

- One of our shoppers missed out on the side cookies that would normally be served with a coffee purchase, because she told the waiter she was allergic to nuts. Instead of removing the item completely, the waiter should have found an alternative.
- One of our shoppers walked directly to a table within the lobby lounge without making eye contact with any of the waiting staff. This was done on purpose to see if they would be noticed. Unfortunately, having sat there for about two minutes, our mystery shopper had still not been attended to and was forced to approach the staff to place their order. We suggest placing staff in charge of different table sections within the lounge, so

#### ABOUT ETHOS CONSULTANCY

Originating in the UK in 1995, Ethos Consultancy relocated to Dubai in 2003, where a team of five has grown to 50 — with an Abu Dhabi office opening in 2008. Our consultants have come from some of the most mature customer service markets in the world, ensuring experience and best practice in everything we do.

Ethos prides itself on being at the forefront of online customer service solutions and was awarded Most Innovative Small Business in the UAE at the 2008 Lloyds TSB Small Business Awards.

Through years of experience, Ethos has developed a variety of services to help clients understand how their business is performing. Our solutions include mystery shopping, satisfaction surveys and a range of benchmarking services. Once clients have a clear understanding of how they are performing, we help them improve via training, consulting and implementation of The International Customer Service Standard.



that every table is closely monitored 100% of the time and situations like this are avoided.

- Although all of our shoppers reported the lobby lounges as clean and tidy, there were one or two instances where they noted cups or plates still on tables after clients had finished and departed. Dirty dishes should be cleared as soon as a customer leaves. ☺

				Overall Assessment			
Was the sales person knowledgeable about the items on offer?		Did the sales person try to up sell or cross sell ?		Would your experience encourage you to visit this outlet again?		How satisfied are you with the overall quality of service delivery?	
Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 1	Visit 2
Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes