

MANUEL MARTÍNEZ

The Man, the Myth, the Magic

BY ASHLEY CHASE

From banker to businessman to restaurateur to playwright, Manuel Martínez has taken many fascinating paths in his life, but his passion for writing and his love of self-exploration have brought him closer to the realization of a dream. In his latest novel, "The Dreamer Who Unlocked the Secrets of the Universe: The Adventures of Don Quixote in Miami," Martínez explores the intricacies of life and the multi-faceted beliefs of a present-day dreamer eager to bring hope, faith and goodness to the world.

The Man

Manuel Martínez was born in Madrid, Spain, to a middle class family. His "friendly and free" environment promoted a budding interest in writing, he said, but he needed to feel financially secure before making his long-time hobby an occupational goal. Conquered by a childhood fascination with the United States, he moved to Arizona in 1982 and obtained a master's degree in international business from Thunderbird

"While I was studying for my MBA," he recalls, "I was taking intensive English classes. English was difficult for me in the beginning, but in the end, it was worth it."

Following college, Martínez immersed himself in a marketing training program at Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, and after only five years, became an assistant vice president. He continued to work his way up the corporate ladder, passing through American Express International, Shearson Leahman Brothers and



AXA Advisors. Bearing years of experience and a deep knowledge of the area, Martínez decided to fly solo, opening up his own real estate company on Brickell Bay Drive.

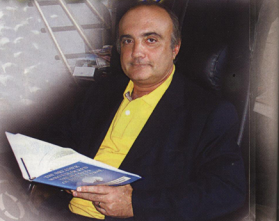
Though achieving success in the "adult world," Martínez says he was determined to satisfy his inner child curiosity and fulfill his quest for the "new and unusual." In 2000, he opened Don Quixote, a Spanish-



Inside Don Quixote restaurant

inspired restaurant in Coconut Grove filled with windmills, murals and other items honoring his favorite literary character—the "dreamer who lives inside each and every one of us."

"Unfortunately, the restaurant business has been a disappointment since day one," says Martínez, who wrote his first play, "The Adventures of Don Quixote in Miami" months before



Manuel Martínez

the restaurant's grand opening. "Too many people wanted to eat from the same cake...but the cake was getting smaller and smaller."

As his restaurant struggled, his play opened in 2000 at Miami Beach's Colony Theatre to praise and acclaim. The script follows the escapades of Dr. Sebastian Camote, a prominent and controversial Coconut Grove psychiatrist who believes he was Don Quixote in a past life. During the next two years, the success of "The Adventures of Don Quixote in Miami" inspired Martínez to delve further into the myth of Don Quixote and his connection to modern man's mentality and beliefs.

The Myth

In his latest book, "The Dreamer Who Unlocked the Secrets of the Universe: The Adventures of Don Quixote in Miami," Martínez crafts a masterful exploration of reincarnation and the theory of karma through the eyes of Dr. Camote. The book begins after the psychiatrist's death, as he reviews his past life in order to understand how he, a man who devoted his entire life to helping others, found himself in a prison cell awaiting execution.

"The book actually begins on the day of his funeral, which symbolizes a new beginning," says Martínez. "Throughout the book, Camote is in the process of discovering himself... he's reflecting on all he has done right and wrong in his life.



Don Quixote's windmill