

## Tourists take to marches like ducks to water

**DUCKS** from D-1

bus loads of tourists and students. They give the hotel an identity distinct from hundreds of competitors.

Wines, a former Sea World employee and dinner-theater actor, is training for his duties by studying under members of Save the Wildlife. He also spends time at a St. Cloud farm where the Peabody houses its four back-up duck teams, some of which make out-of-town appearances.

The team at the hotel marches every day at 11 a.m. to the lobby, escorted by Wines along a red carpet.

Once in the lobby, the ducks usually stay put, preening and taking dips between photo sessions. At 5 p.m. they return to their \$130,000 rooftop "palace" — a marble and brass fountain enclosed in glass.

Entertaining tourists daily is enough to fray a fowl's temper, however, so the ducks are rotated every six months.

When Wines is not walking the ducks, which takes two hours a day, he works on public relations for the hotel. He may talk to reporters, escort visitors from the travel industry or write press releases.

He cheerfully wears a feather-design tie every day and takes his share of duck jokes (Will the job be all it's cracked up to be?). His boss keeps dozens of duck figurines in her office, from stately bronze replicas to the yellow bathtub variety.

The hotel is careful to protect its fluffy corporate symbol. Duck is kept off the restaurant menus, except as a cartoon character, and Wines says the Peabody supports its retired ducks for life.

"The ducks are our calling card," he said.

## Hotel trainer gets all his ducks in row

□ Peabody's new duck master learns to combine PR and animal care.

By Nancy Feigenbaum

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

The Peabody Orlando hotel could have written the job opening this way: "Wanted. Someone good at public relations and animal husbandry who doesn't mind wearing a feather-design tie every day. Green jacket with big, gold epaulets a must."

The position of caring for the Peabody's famous mallards came open in July when veteran duck master Keith Lauby took a sales job at another hotel.

The Peabody never had to advertise. Terry Wines stepped in immediately, with apparent disregard for his resume. A former night manager, he had been appointed to the evening shift when he heard Lauby was leaving.

"I saw the opportunity," Wines said.

Duck master may not sound like much of a promotion, but the position got Wines' predecessor into magazine articles and elementary schools, allowing him to promote the hotel and his love of wildlife.

Ducks are a serious part of public relations at the Peabody, attracting



JOHN RAOUX/SENTINEL

Please see **DUCKS, D-2** New duck master Wines watches a duck named J.J. Mallard.