

secret agent man

John Allen was having a quiet dinner at Mizner Park some 10 years ago when a stranger approached him with a rather curious proposition. His assignment, should he choose to accept it, was to don a tuxedo—and heave a smartly dressed man into Donald Trump’s swimming pool.

Allen wasn’t as shaken by the idea as he was stirred. His uncanny likeness to Sean Connery had prompted the unusual request—and Allen accepted, unaware that doing so was about to change his life forever.

He went on to “save” the wife of a Hollywood mogul from a staged kidnapping at her birthday party, held at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago Club. A decade later, the Delray Beach resident continues to slip into his trademark white tux as the nation’s pre-eminent Connery/007 impersonator—a career that, he says, is far more lucrative (not to mention way cooler) than his first incarnation as a furniture importer.

“I’m making six figures, and I’m booked solid,” says Allen, 60. “This is my biggest year yet, because it’s 007 in 2007; there are lots of James Bond-oriented events. ... I fly around the world, go to the best parties and meet the best people.”

Even Blofeld would be impressed by the luminaries with whom Allen has rubbed elbows. Over the years, he has performed at parties for Ringo Starr, Harrison Ford and Goldie Hawn (to name a few), and appeared on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” and “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno.” He’s also shot television commercials in the United States and abroad.

Allen even has worked as a double for the great Scot himself. He says Connery was as gracious and suave as his devoted fans would expect. “He said, ‘John, you look wonderful today,’” Allen recalls. “And I said, ‘Of course, sir—I look just like you.’”

Being a dead ringer for Connery comes with perks—even when you’re off-duty. Allen says he never fails to land a good table at restaurants, and, yes, he’s had his share of, shall we say, interesting propositions. But Allen is quick to add that, unlike some in his profession, he knows when to step out of character. “It can be dangerous,” he says. “I’ve known impersonators who have gotten in trouble for crossing the line and saying they were their characters. But I’m quite happy being me.”

>> AND THE WINNER IS: At the recently held Reel Awards—the Oscars of celebrity impersonators—Allen captured Best Actor for his work in the film “Bamboo Shark,” a comedy featuring Mickey Rooney that’s scheduled for release sometime this year. And, in 2004, the International Guild of Celebrity Impersonators and Tribute Artists named him Most Outstanding Impersonator of a Male Legend.

