



# INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN BUTLERS

Promoting Service Standards through Training in Staffed Homes, Luxury Hotels, Resorts and Spas

*The Institute is dedicated to raising service standards in private estates and the hospitality industry by broadly disseminating the mindset and skills of that time-honored, quintessential service provider, the British Butler, adapted to the needs of modern employers and guests.*

## THE MODERN BUTLERS' JOURNAL

For Service Professionals Worldwide

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### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

#### THE BUTLER GOES MAINSTREAM

Since its founding, the Institute has been beating a quiet but persistent drum about the need to export the mindset of the butler to other service industries, with the vision covering all service industries, all corporations, wherever one person provides another with service.

The drumbeat is reverberating finally in the corporate sector – according to *trendwatching.com*, which talks of BRAND BUTLERS. This is not a term that would be familiar to a traditional butler, but in the corporate world it is defined as: *“With consumers increasingly looking for control, for convenience, for assistance, and yes, to be cared for (both offline and online), brands need to shift their product development and advertising prowess to brand-consistent services (and an accompanying ‘butlering mindset’) that assist consumers in making the most of their daily lives. For brands, this means that there are now endless creative and cost-effective ways to deliver on this need for assistance, for ‘butlers’.”*

As noted in the April issue of *trendwatching.com*: *“It has never been more important to turn your brand into a service. Jaded, time-poor, pragmatic consumers yearn for service and care, while the mobile online revolution (it’s finally, truly here!) makes it possible to offer über-relevant services to consumers anywhere, anytime. Basically, if you’re going to embrace one big consumer trend this year, please let it be BRAND BUTLERS! While we introduced BRAND BUTLERS back in 2007 as an emerging trend, we believe that now is the time to go all out on ‘serving is the new selling.’”*

What does this mean, in plain-speak? It means firstly that butlers are acknowledged as the solicitous providers of superior and caring service, and secondly, that this mindset is recognized in the corporate world as the missing ingredient, or the next big breakthrough, in servicing consumers.

I would say we are making inroads, as a profession, in terms of raising service standards. That would be a collective win for one and all. Let’s carry on the good work by simply doing what we do best: servicing others in the time-honored tradition of the British butler and his many flag bearers around the world.

*Steven Ferry*  
Chairman

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Ferry,

I was fascinated to read in your newsletter (which I enjoy every month, although my familiarity with butlers is limited to those I have met in hotels and, indeed, on cruises) that there are vacancies for butlers from Sri Lanka on a luxury yacht. I am so pleased about this as I have lived in Sri Lanka for 30 years and can heartily recommend Sri Lankans for their ability, loyalty, and competence. I have met many Sri Lankans working as "butlers" in the Maldives - and even in hotels in Sri Lanka - and always recommend your newsletter and book to them so that they have a real grasp of butlering, instead of just being obliging. I hope your client finds two good, suitable Sri Lankans.

Incidentally, by following the link to boiled eggs I discovered something I never knew, thanks to you: that collecting of egg cups is known as pocillovy. Marvellous!

Yours sincerely,  
R.E., Sri Lanka



worked for three decades at Buckingham Palace, is a lifelong learning experience. This is actually, in my view, true of any profession, because the day one ceases to be curious about improving systems, tools, and approaches, is the day one settles into a rut and ceases to be creative. Meaning not only that one's skills no longer advance or improve, but one also falls into a rut in terms of creating one's work, losing interest first in the position and then in life as a whole. In other words, the desire and push to train is like a canary in the coal mine: it is a small but important signal that worse is to come when its heart ceases to flutter.

Like a violinist who can spend a lifetime learning to play tens of thousands of pieces or composing an infinite variety of musical pieces, the butler/household manager touches many separate subjects, each of which could legitimately take a lifetime, or tens of years to master. Take the subject of libations, or just the world of wines alone; or the recognition and care of fine clothes, materials, and furnishings; or electronic equipment; or yachts and seafaring; or vehicles and chauffeuring. How about cooking? We have not even entered into the soft skills of dealing graciously with people no matter their mood, public relations, or even counseling, each of which would legitimately add to the value and effectiveness of a butler. Then there are laws and human resources management skills, and the list is just endless.

### *What to Do?*

The simplest and usual way to continue one's training is to read books, attend seminars, and these days, conduct online research. It is possible one can also attend schools, or take correspondence courses where time and money make it difficult to take off several weeks at a time to travel to and stay at a school.

Correspondence courses combine the books, Internet research, and school solutions, but obviously have a downside, in that there is no peer interaction, and the opportunity for face-to-face interaction and guidance with a tutor or mentor is reduced. But here again, the Internet comes to the rescue in the form of emailed lessons receiving rapid response, home videos or sound recordings of exercises

## SEEKING PERFECTION



Photograph © 2010, Steven Ferry

Being a butler, according to one who

done, and videoconferences to sort out stubborn questions using Skype (no fee wherever one is in the world with trainers also on Skype).

The Institute has been running correspondence courses for a number of years now, with modules that address major elements of the butler/household manager profession. They obviously are just one brick in the road of improving skills, but they allow greater in-depth coverage of several subjects than is possible in schools; and the guidance and discipline that is often lacking from simply reading books. And they do represent a good solution at a time when budgets are stretched (modules can also be paid one or two at a time). For those who have difficulty studying effectively, a module exists at the front end of the course to discover the problem and provide tools to resolve them. Because if one thing is true, it is that one cannot increase one's skills and knowledge if reading, retaining, and applying information is difficult. And for those wanting to enter the profession, the last module guides the student through the steps needed to find a position.

Courses exist for housekeepers as well as household managers/butlers, and the emphasis is on gaining new knowledge as well as putting it into practice, because we all know that makes perfect...which is where we all want to be.

*Steven Ferry*  
Chairman

*Steven Ferry can be reached via email ([stevenferry@modernbutlers.com](mailto:stevenferry@modernbutlers.com)) or the IIMB Blog (<http://bloggingbutlers.wordpress.com/>)*

Editor's Note: This article also appeared in DEMA's on-line newsletter, April 2010 issue, and is reprinted with permission.

## INTERESTING LINKS

The International Institute of Modern Butlers now partners with UK-based *Suite Collection* to offer butler services in the most prestigious and extraordinary of hotel suites in five star hotels around the world. See:

<http://www.suitecollection.com/>

## EUGENE ALLEN, WHITE HOUSE BUTLER FOR 8 PRESIDENTS, DIES AT 90

*By Wil Haygood, Washington Post Staff Writer*  
Friday, April 2, 2010, Eugene Allen, who endured a harsh and segregated upbringing in his native Virginia and went on to work for eight presidents as a White House butler, died March 31 of renal failure at Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park. He was 90. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/01/AR2010040103444.html>

**BARTON G. WEISS COMPLETES THE TRANSFORMATION** of the Former Residence of Fashion Designer Gianni Versace to The Villa By Barton G., The Villa Includes a 10-suite Hotel (Rates Start at \$2,100) and an Old-world Fine Dining Restaurant - go to [http://hotel-online.com/News/PR2010\\_1st/Mar10\\_VillaBartonG.html](http://hotel-online.com/News/PR2010_1st/Mar10_VillaBartonG.html)

**LAS VEGAS SANDS CORP. TO DEBUT FIRST PHASE** of \$5.5 billion Marina Bay Sands in Singapore: [http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2010\\_1st/Feb10\\_MarinaBay.html](http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2010_1st/Feb10_MarinaBay.html)



## HISTORY OF CHAUFFEURING PART XIV

*By Frank Mitchell*

## Passenger

## Comfort (Part Two)



## Further Comforts

Remember passenger's preferences. This includes the settings of the driver's seat in case the owner drives the vehicle on your off day. Doing this is much easier if the seat has

a memory function. Another preference worth remembering is the preferred climate control setting.



Place the morning paper in the car and retain old newspapers for a week before discarding. If there is no drinks cabinet, stow an icebox with water and cold towels in the boot (trunk) in hot weather. Should the vehicle have a drinks cabinet, you should keep the crystal clean and polished. Check crystal regularly for chips and note that shallow chips may be polished out by a restorer.

In some areas it is now illegal to have opened alcohol in the car, let alone allow a passenger to consume it. The law applies equally to people drinking and driving, as it does to sipping champagne in the back of a Rolls Royce. You have a duty of care to your employer to determine what is legally permissible in your area. (Remember that your license is at risk.)



If you are driving a long vehicle, try to scout the destination beforehand so that you do not drive in somewhere where you cannot turn around to get out.

### Wet Weather

Always travel with generously proportioned umbrellas in the car and practice holding an umbrella for a passenger, making sure that you do not direct the water down their neck. You should also make a plan for stowing the wet umbrella. Unless your ride sports the convenience below, your best bet may be to place the umbrella on a neatly folded towel placed in the front passenger foot well.



I always secret a chamois in the spare wheel well, so that I can dry off the vehicle in case the rain stops. However, you must ensure that there is no mud or grit, which will scratch the paint. Absorbent rags come in handy for wiping moisture off leather seats. Scan where you plan to stop for puddles so that you do not park the vehicle with a puddle where the passenger must step out.

### Breakdowns

This will always inconvenience passengers and in certain circumstances can be downright dangerous. Fortunately, modern cars are very reliable. Keep the vehicle serviced on schedule and do the period checks mentioned earlier, as well as any additional checks mentioned in the owner's handbook. In addition, modern vehicle manufacturers offer roadside assistance as part of their guarantee. In some countries such assistance is mandatory and can be purchased for older vehicles. Many people are struck down and killed when they get out of a vehicle which has broken down alongside the road. Take great care that it is safe to do so before getting out and changing a flat tyre or opening the hood.

In the event of a breakdown, your first concern is the safety of your passengers. Arrange for them to be quickly and safely transferred to an alternative vehicle as soon as possible. Thereafter make arrangements for the safe transportation and storage of the vehicle.



## Bad weather driving

Extremely hot or cold weather places stress on the vehicle as the design envelope is approached. Maintenance issues which would not normally have affected the vehicle's reliability may result in a breakdown. If you live in an area which experiences extreme weather, check weather reports before setting out and refer to local experts for advice and training in order to safely drive in these conditions. If the route you are taking does not enjoy mobile phone coverage, ensure that someone is expecting you; they can raise the alarm if you do not meet your ETA. Consult page 70 of *The SAS Driver's Survival Handbook* for more information on packing for, and driving in extreme weather.

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## NEW FINDING IN TARNISH REMOVAL

by Jeff Herman

Tarnish is easily removed when first noticed (usually as a yellowish tint), and will become increasingly difficult to deal with, as it turns to light brown and eventually black. Occasionally washing an object with a non-

lemon-scented phosphate-free detergent is preferred to waiting until tarnish forms and gets so stubborn that polishes have to be employed. (All polishes have some degree of abrasion.) If you start to see very light tarnish that can sometimes only be detected when the object is viewed against a glossy white piece of paper, Windex with vinegar or a liquid, non-abrasive, unscented, aloe-free hand sanitizer, such as Purell, may remove the tarnish. Use a large cotton ball and rotate it regularly to expose unused surfaces, as elements in the tarnish itself can be very abrasive; then dry the piece with a Selvyt cloth or cotton dishtowel. Try this technique first, as it is the least abrasive of all silver cleaning methods.

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Photograph of Mr. Herman by Bill Hicks

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**The Institute is the only organization teaching butler skills with a focus on the mindset and superior communication skills of the traditional butler as applied to the modern world's service needs. Contact us for all your training needs via email at [enquiries@modernbutlers.com](mailto:enquiries@modernbutlers.com) or via telephone: USA 1-813- 354-2734. We invite you to also visit our website, <http://www.modernbutlers.com> for more information.**

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