



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.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Carrying The Torch

Recently it was suggested that I write an article on the passing of the torch within our community that started last year with Ivor Spencer's passing,

and will continue over the next couple of years as many 20-30-year veterans retire.

At first, there seemed little point in commenting on what is, after all, a condition of life...that it moves on, players coming onto the stage and, in time, leaving so that others may perform. We admire and applaud each performance, talking still of the great ones; and in time, the audience also moves on and all that is left is a blowing of programs and biographies in the wind where once stood a theater. Our profession began a thousand years ago, if we trace the uninterrupted development of the butler and household manager. In that time, many butlers and their cousins, majordomos and household managers, have come and gone, each adding to the profession if only in providing that unbroken continuity that brings about the survival of the species, so to speak.

So what is different about the current passing? I would say, not much in principle, but that would be to ignore the one change we have witnessed over the last three decades: change itself, driven principally by technology and the erosion of standards by an international global culture that calls into question those customs and expectations considered sacrosanct by individual cultures and professions. Who cares whether the port is passed to the left or the right? Is it particularly relevant in Shanghai or Dubai, in cultures where there is no alcohol, let alone a tradition of port? Are the sacred customs of the British butler of any great relevance?

It seems not so much, and that is what we butlers, and in their own ways the household managers et al, have been struggling through over the last three decades.

Mr. Spencer made the first break with tradition by starting a butler school, where before one only worked up through the ranks. It was an upstart idea, one perhaps decried by traditional butlers, (some) employers and agencies, but without this rather basic idea, where would the profession be as the great houses fell away and no longer provided a training grounds for butlers?

And the very watering down of standards by cultures coming together in a great global confluence of influences also provided the tools to reassert the standards that are relevant; and so there were (and are) those who used those tools to forward the skills and expectations of the profession around the world. This included expanding the presence and service of the butler beyond the private estate into the public domain in hotels, corporations, cruise lines, etc. with varying degrees of success. The more valuable a service to the greater number of people, the more likely it is that service will flourish.

So what do we owe to those old timers, some of whom are set to retire? At a minimum, keeping the torch lit at a time when unprecedented winds of change have risked extinguishing the flame. For centuries, change came slowly and the conservative tone of the butler mirrored that pace. Today, we need a more dynamic approach to butling, a more enthusiastic, ears-to-the-ground, eyes-wide-open approach if we are to steer our way through the rapid and incessant changes that come...as more Chinese millionaires expect service with no understanding whatsoever of the finer points of service, for instance; as fortunes are lost in the ongoing economic upheavals and perhaps we return to the feudal age from which the butler sprang a millennium ago. Wherever the winds of change take us, superior service style will always be the domain of the private service professional as long as we each carry and pass that torch.

And as with every butler over the millennium passed, we can thank those about to leave the stage for carrying the torch during the beginnings of the great upheaval, shining the light on the way ahead.

Steven Ferry
Chairman

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Ferry,

It has been a little while and I thought you might want to know how we are doing here. Since the beginning of February, my production has skyrocketed – both Number of Nights Occupied and Daily Actions as a Butler are



higher than they have ever been before. The guests are really satisfied and most of them are actually wowed. I have received many recommendations and letters of thanks from my guests and they are pretty much raving about their stay. Last week, I had a VIP in the Governor Suite, who arrived VERY upset indeed. I spent a lot of time with her during her short stay and she sent this email after leaving:

'Thank you for the most incredible treat I could have received...most importantly, it was your magical touch that made it so special. When I arrived, I was in a bit of personal turmoil, and by the time I left, I felt like a feather of happiness. It was such a soothing, comforting environment and having you as my personal butler was the experience of a lifetime. My every wish was answered in a flash, you are very expert in so many areas, and you understood immediately what was needed. Your manner exceeds any expectation from the most skilled butler in the world. I grew up in Europe and have experienced top-notch service in world-class hotels, but this was beyond the beyond. It is your being, your personality and kindness that shine through. My only regret is that I could not stay longer!'

This result is absolutely due to the application of what we learned during our training with you.

KG, Head Butler, Members Only Hotel, USA

Dear Mr. Ferry,

My presence as head butler here at La Gemma has had a lot of ups and downs – such that at one stage I nearly thought of leaving. After careful consideration, I

decided to stay and once again things are back to normal.

My work [here] has been amazing. My conduct and attitude with regards to my job blew away everyone here and more and more [people] are becoming interested in the butler profession. I have touched and shaped many lives through the butler profession here in Zanzibar.

I have been asked by someone who runs a hospitality college to share my butler experience with his students. I am really excited to let you know that; thanks for all the inspiration.

*Mr. C. Zulu,
Head Butler, Luxury Resort*

Dear Mr. Zulu,

Congratulations on creating such a wonderful standard for people to look up to.

I am glad you decided to stay and make things work for the best. It is not always easy to service others, but the occasional difficulties are really what make the work challenging and rewarding

*All the best,
Steven Ferry*

Dear Mrs. Ferry,

Our company is a full butler-tailored concierge service business. We are licensed, insured & bonded and we have had a tremendous response for our services.

There is a big, black-tie fundraiser for the BC Children's Hospital at Buschlen Mowatt Art Galley in Vancouver, sponsored by Costco Wholesale & Global TV, on May 13th, 2010. In community support, we have donated a Gift Certificate for the silent auction, valued at \$1,100.00. A fellow butler from our team and I will be attending the formal dinner that evening. To represent proper butler etiquette, could you advise us as to when to remove our top hats: upon entry to the function or after the red carpet? Do we have to remove the top hats and white gloves at all? We would appreciate any input that you could offer.

*Ms. Sharon Tucker
Done Deeds Errand Services
Vancouver, Canada*

Dear Ms. Tucker,

Thanks for the enquiry. Perhaps you can clarify the role of the butler at this occasion?

Butlers do not wear top hats, so if he is working as a butler, then he can simply skip wearing one. Also, top hats are only worn during daytime occasions, so is this planned event during the day or evening? Maybe nobody should be wearing top hats?

Or is the butler meant to be showing what to do by example, as the consummate butler?

If so, one would never wear a top hat inside, but turn it in with any overcoat on entering the building; so the next question is: is the red carpet outside (I presume)?

As a guest, one wears gloves for formal indoor occasions: receptions, balls, and on arrival at a luncheon or dinner party, including through the receiving line (but remove the right-hand glove so as to shake hands) and at any cocktail party until the drinks and hors d'oeuvres are passed around.

Gloves come off when at the banquet/dinner table, as they are never worn while eating or drinking.

White gloves could be worn all evening as a butler, on the other hand, as a butler never shakes hands, drinks or eats while serving.

*Sincerely,
Steven Ferry*



INDIAN, SRI LANKAN, AND NEPALESE HOTEL BUTLERS NEEDED

A Palace in New Delhi is launching butler service and is looking for 20 butlers, or those with hospitality experience to be trained, and work, as butlers. If you know someone who would be interested in such a position, please let them know and ask them to contact stevenferry@modernbutlers.com.

A commission will be paid for leads that result in hiring, so let us know you referred the individual.

HOTEL BUTLERS NEEDED IN SOUTHERN US

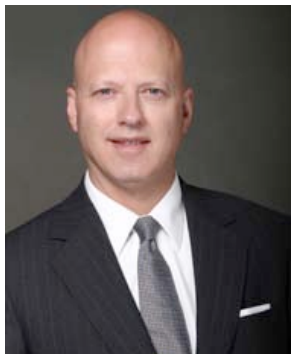
A casino resort in the US is searching for 2 butlers (US citizens or green card holders only). This is an excellent opportunity for anyone who has completed butler training and is looking for an internship or his or her first position. If you know someone who would be interested in such a position, please let them know and ask them to contact stevenferry@modernbutlers.com.

A commission will be paid for leads that result in hiring, so let us know you referred the individual.

A TELEVISION SHOW WITH A DIFFERENCE...

...seeks cast members. If you are tired of TV shows that promote conflict, upset, and unpleasantness, where only one person can win and where the profession is not shown in its best light, then you may be interested in the show that the Institute has decided to support. We are seeking individuals who can fill the following household positions: chef, nanny, housekeeper, gardener, chauffeur, handyman. If you know someone who would be interested in such an activity, please let him or her know and ask them to contact stevenferry@modernbutlers.com at their earliest convenience.

THE NO GOSSIP ZONE: A NON-SENSIBLE GUIDE TO A HEALTHY HIGH-PERFORMING WORK



ENVIRONMENT
BY SAM CHAPMAN
(2009, SOURCEBOOKS)

A Book Review by Jim Grise

After finishing *The No Gossip Zone: A Non-Sensible Guide To A Healthy High-*

Performing Work Environment by Sam

Chapman (2009, Sourcebooks), I realized how essential appropriate communication is for our overall health. Like the foods we choose to consume and the ethics we subscribe to, our communication choices help create our very selves. Simply put: garbage in, garbage out. This breezy read of a book offers an accessible approach to the buffet of workplace communication and how to make healthier choices at work.

Gossip is, according to Chapman, “an exchange of negative information between two or more people about someone who isn’t present.” Gossip is neither effective communication nor data gathering. The best rule of thumb is: If you wouldn’t repeat it in front of them, it’s gossip. Often dismissed as natural human behavior, gossip is no more natural than feeding any other need in unhealthy ways. What is indeed natural is the hunger for information, yet, like junk food, creating or spreading rumors isn’t a healthy way to satisfy that need. Gossip is the jellybean diet of communication—colorfully exciting and a quick sugary high—yet with a crash for everyone as authentic communication is suddenly nowhere to be found.

Chapman outlines the benefits of eliminating gossip from your workplace, offering a workable solution: Create a no-gossip zone. It’s really that simple and Chapman suggests making it a policy and building it into your cultural norms. Establish up front with others that, when approached with gossip, you expect them to: 1) Inform the gossiper their behavior is inappropriate, and 2) Let the gossiper know you expect them to inform the person they were just gossiping about and tell them exactly what was being said, and you intend to follow up about it with both parties to see that the air was cleared.

You’ve now set a high standard for appropriate, mature behavior in your workplace. Additionally, you can redirect that energy into more productive communication. Gossip requires constantly hiding your identity from your targets and covering your tracks, whereas authentic and positive communication encourages the creation of environments in which you can openly be proud to engage. Gossip saps

your energy, whereas authentic communication produces energy. Although it's a simple concept, it does take commitment. Chapman notes that he sadly had to terminate several of his own key employees because they continued to behave in old, corrosive manners toward others and refused to support the new company culture of respectful and authentic communication. The new culture eventually flourished and created a healthy, happy work environment that facilitated a high level of production from everyone. This approach can produce remarkable success in any environment, including private estates and hotels.

By taking the initiative and creating a no-gossip zone, those useless jellybeans will begin to disappear from your plate and in their place healthier choices will now be served, choices that demonstrate your value for the respectful communication and dignity that all human beings deserve. It's now up to you. What type of environment will you choose to create?

Jim Grise is a butler and service professional who resides in the San Francisco area. He can be reached at jimgrise@yahoo.com

INTERESTING LINKS

MASDAR: ABU DHABI'S CARBON-NEUTRAL CITY

The world's first zero-carbon city is being built in Abu Dhabi and is designed to be not only free of cars and skyscrapers but also powered by the sun.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8586046.stm



LVMH EXTENDS POSH LABEL TO NEW LUXURY RESORTS

[LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton](http://www.travelandleisure.com/blogs/carry-on/2010/4/9/lvmh-extends-posh-label-to-new-luxury-resorts) is checking into the hotel business. The world's largest luxury-goods company, home to brands such as the Louis Vuitton fashion house and champagne maker Veuve Clicquot, said Thursday it will develop resorts using the name of its Bordeaux winery, [Cheval Blanc](http://www.travelandleisure.com/blogs/carry-on/2010/4/9/lvmh-extends-posh-label-to-new-luxury-resorts).

<http://www.travelandleisure.com/blogs/carry-on/2010/4/9/lvmh-extends-posh-label-to-new-luxury-resorts>

WORLD'S FIRST ARMANI HOTEL unveiled in Burj Khalifa, Dubai: http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2010_2nd/Apr10_ArmaniBurjDubai.html



JUST WHEN YOU THINK YOU HAVE HEARD IT ALL...

The article below caught our attention recently. We couldn't help thinking: "Why are we not surprised?"

SOUTH BEACH, Fla., April 21 (UPI) -- A Florida hotel's search for a "tanning butler," a man who applies lotion to sunbathing hotel guests, resulted in only three applicants, officials said.

The Ritz-Carlton South Beach announced a "casting call" for the position, which was invented about seven years ago, but only three men turned up to apply for the position Tuesday, despite national media reports about the search, The Miami Herald reported Wednesday.

"Finding a tanning butler is hard," hotel publicist Michelle Payer said.

She said the hotel has lost two previous tanning butlers to Armani modeling campaigns.

Payer said the hotel will continue searching for the right person to fill the job.

MAY 2010 CALENDAR

The IAPSP has scheduled several meetings this month, as follows:



Saturday, 8 May 2010: Los Angeles - Estate Construction Planning & Management
Sunday, 16 May 2010: Chicago - Event Planning, Contracts and Caterers

Saturday, 5 June 2010: San Francisco - Etiquette & Protocol

Visit <http://www.iapsp.net> for more data and to sign up.

DEMA has scheduled a new chapter launch in **San Diego** for *May 27, 2010*.



In addition, they have scheduled the following chapter meetings:

May 16, Washington, DC
May 19, Chicago, IL

May 20, Detroit, MI

They have also scheduled a WEBINAR entitled HOSTAGE SURVIVAL 101 for *May 18, 2010*.

Visit <http://www.domesticmanagers.com/> for more information and to sign up.

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 or via telephone: USA 1-813- 354-2734. We invite you to also visit our website, <http://www.modernbutlers.com> for more information.

NOTE TO OUR READERS: We continuously add to our mailing list the names of those people who contact us directly or who contact our board members. If you do not wish to receive the Journal or other mailings from the Institute; please email the editor of the newsletter to unsubscribe.

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