



# 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

Volume 6, Issue 7 - July 2010



### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the July issue of the Modern Butlers' Journal.

Our profession is still under pressure from the recession/depression or whatever we call it. I attended New York University's 32nd Annual International Hotel Investor Conference at the beginning of June, and came away with encouraging news about hotels around the world enjoying a strong surge in demand, and that rack rates were going back up a bit.

But I also heard, in one panel discussion, the CEO of a luxury chain saying that the company had pulled any images of butlers holding silver trays from their web site and literature, as being too ostentatious: hotel guests want to be pampered, it seems, but not to be seen to be pampered.

And the same can be said of private service employers. Where private service butlers have run into trouble, though, it seems more because their ex-employers hail from the lower end of the butler-employing spectrum. They have been impacted by their loss of wealth on the stock market and the uncertain future, and have taken to hiring "executive

housekeepers" with the duties of a butler at half the salary; and to finding their own personnel, cutting out agencies.

I was interviewed by the author of the rather optimistic *Richestan*, meanwhile, who is doing a follow-up book to show how the recession has pulled the rug out from underneath (some) household managers and butlers. If you find yourself in such a situation and would like to share your experience, please let me know and I will put you both in touch (private service only, not hospitality).

Otherwise, I have seen recent public relations releases by The Plaza in New York City, The Lanesborough in London, and Sandals Resorts all promoting their butler service, so well done to them for continuing to promote the obvious: a key resource for pampering guests in hotels IS butlers!

And finally: silly butler in West Palm Beach, Florida, whose boss he surely knew was soliciting underage prostitutes and who, perhaps in a misguided effort at loyalty, withheld from the police the journal documenting the billionaire's sexual exploits. Or perhaps it was because the butler saw dollar signs: he was caught trying to sell the journal for \$50,000. Either way, his boss received a more lenient sentence than he should have, and the butler has exactly the same sentence as his boss. The moral of

the story: yes, protect your boss, but whoever said that violating the law in so obvious (and distasteful) a manner deserved protection? As with any profession, ethics is a key element to being a butler (as opposed to jail bait). Which then brings up even more recent news: a scandal in France over a butler taping his employer, the wealthiest lady in the country, talking to a financial advisor about the 80 billion Euros they had hidden (in Switzerland) from the taxman. The butler had nothing to gain, perhaps, he performed a civic duty, and stayed within the law, rather than being party to a crime; but he also added to the list of reasons why employers may not want to hire a butler. Perhaps we could fine-tune that statement to, "why *dishonest* employers may not want to hire a butler." A tricky situation, but did the butler do the right thing? This is why an understanding and practice of ethics is so critical to being a butler, yesterday as well as today, and into the future.

*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/>)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Mr. Ferry,  
I hope this mail finds you well. I would like to have your views about these points:

- (1) Should a Hotel Butler wear white gloves while he/she is welcoming the guest?
- (2) Should he/she use them while packing or unpacking?

Looking forward to

receive your valuable comments,

Best wishes,  
*Oswaldo Torres*

Dear Mr. Torres,  
I am not certain there is a requirement to wear white gloves as a hotel butler.

One certainly could. Wearing gloves while packing would indicate a certain concern for hygiene, as well as style.

In welcoming a guest, one could certainly wear white gloves. Again, it would show a touch of style. As one does not shake hands with guests, it would not interfere with the shaking of hands.

All the best,  
*Steven Ferry*

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Dear Steven,

I enjoyed the unusual coverage in last month's newsletter. ... From animal care to picnic butlers and the interview on the butler in Italy, as well as tips on how to tie, etc. ... nice touches! About the Nepali butler/inheritor, between inheritance tax and security, that man has inherited some problems with the gifts! ... Thanks for sharing!

*Maureen Herron*  
MH-Global Communications Network

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Dear Mr. Ferry,

I've searched for, and watched many, many videos on the subject of a perfect shoeshine for my daughter's upcoming wedding. In my opinion this is the best. Little things like rapidly flicking of the wrist rather than using long brush strokes from the elbow. Very well done and I thank you, Sir.

*Anonymous*

## DROPPING THE OTHER SHOE

Talking of the shoe shine video on YouTube:

([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IeScJ\\_Hemno](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IeScJ_Hemno)), the shoes I mention in the video are now I believe 38 years old, a source of surprise for many viewers. They are as comfortable as any old pair of slippers, but I wear them to work often, their leather still in good condition.

However, I am humbled by the report of a size 7 lace-up leather shoe (right foot only) found in a cave in Armenia recently: prehistoric Prada dating back 5,500 years to the Copper Age, when humans are believed

to have invented the wheel and domesticated horses, quite in addition to making fine leather shoes (and wine, according to the National Geographic Society's archeological dig findings).

In view of the fact that this shoe is older than the pyramids of Egypt, you have to wonder at the technique: Did they use Kiwi or Meltonian? Did they alternate the two to keep the leather supple? It seems these cowhide shoes were tanned with vegetable oil and stored not in cedar but under layers of sheep dung. Oh well, I can't see anyone's boss being quite so keen that their Prada and Lobb last 5,500 years.



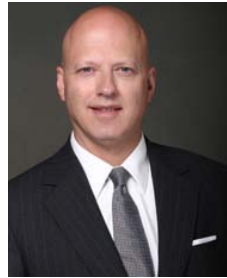
© AFP/Getty Images

Nineteen years ago, a mummy buried in ice in the Alps near the Italian-Austrian border was still wearing his shoes, dating back 5,200 years. With bearskin soles, deerskin panels, tree-bark netting and grass socks, he was probably wearing the equivalent of snow boots. Footwear even older than 5,500 years has been found in Missouri and Oregon, but made of plant fibers. It seems, therefore, that on a planetary scale, 5,500 years ago was a turning point in footwear; and no doubt, my fine shoes, while being also-rans in terms of age, have a strong pedigree and there is hope they may well last thousands of years, too—perhaps the address of a sheep farm, Mrs.

Ferry?  
*Steven Ferry*  
Chairman

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**And more on the subject of shoes....**



**PRODUCT  
REVIEW:  
BOOTIE BUTLER**  
*by Jim Grise*

It's an all-too-common scene repeated daily in the finest estates

everywhere:

You've just finished cleaning to perfection the gloss finish on Madam's white ash hardwood floor, with guests expected to ring within minutes. Suddenly, your valued electrician, plumber, interior decorator, or other vendor arrives to put the finishing touches on today's installation or repair. But there's just one problem: shoes – the bane of clean floors for countless centuries – have arrived along with them and are the one item able to ruin in seconds what has taken staff hours to perfect. Now, they must either remember to wipe their shoes or boots on the mat (often ineffective even with good mats) or remove their footwear altogether (cumbersome and/or impractical for safety reasons).

Bootie Butler arrives to the rescue. Not simply another silly idea siphoning off credentials from the distinguished Butler namesake, this device admirably serves all concerned by installing a comfortable yet industrial-grade blue bootie over any size of shoe or boot. Placed at the service entrance, Bootie Butler can be loaded with new, clean, disposable booties, including a non-skid/anti-static variety for efficient protection between your service providers' debris-encrusted soles and your gleaming floor finishes. Best of all, having a Bootie Butler stationed in place eliminates having to make continuous requests for removing shoes and also the unsafe balancing act on one foot while stretching on booties manually.

Several models are available to fit any budget, yet the Kinetic Bootie Butler Large model is most effective, utilizing a grab-bar atop the unit, allowing the user to steady himself if needed and so further reducing the chance of a mishap and fall (and a liability lawsuit for your employer). The company even produces a nifty bootie removal unit, to make your vendors' exit just as easy, safe, and pleasant as their arrival. Visit: <http://www.bootie-butler.com/bootie-butler-kinetic.shtml>

*Jim Grise has been a domestic service professional since 1989. He has a passion for workplace training and development. Jim resides in Northern California.*

## INTERESTING LINKS

Thanks to Ms. Pamela Spruce from Australian Butler Services, who forwarded this story, showing the butler profession is alive and well down under:

**LIFE IS DUTIFUL FOR THE BUTLERS WHO SAY YES TO SILENT AND SEAMLESS SERVICE**  
<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/life-is-dutiful-for-the-butlers-who-say-yes-to-silent-and-seamless-service-20100619-yo2i.html>

**THE MIAMI INTERNATIONAL HOTEL HOUSEKEEPER WHO TURNED IN \$6,000 IN CASH** Receives Outpouring of Phone Calls and Donations for Her Good Deed - go to [http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2010\\_2nd/Jun10\\_GoodDeed2.html](http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2010_2nd/Jun10_GoodDeed2.html)

**A ROOM WITH A VIEW, AND A PRICE** For \$35,000 a Night, a Butler, a Waterfall and Free Room Service (Caviar May Be Extra)  
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704256604575294621593546414.html>

**THE SWAROVSKI CRYSTAL EMPIRE CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF SPARKLING HILL RESORT AND WELLNESS CENTER HOTEL** with Dancers, Symphony, Celebrities, VIP's - go to [http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2010\\_2nd/Jun10\\_NorthwindSparkling.html](http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2010_2nd/Jun10_NorthwindSparkling.html)

**HISTORIC OCEAN HOUSE IN WATCH HILL, RHODE ISLAND** Re-Opens Following \$140 million Rebuild and Restoration - go to [http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2010\\_2nd/Jun10\\_OceanHouse.html](http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2010_2nd/Jun10_OceanHouse.html)

## SANTANDER'S HQ: TECH WONDERLAND WITH ROBOTIC BUTLERS

It's called Santander City. This sprawling corporate HQ for one of Europe's biggest banks is a visually stunning concept integrating advanced robotics, interactive design and LED-based art murals.  
<http://thefinancialbrand.com/12044/santander-bank-headquarters/>

## SILVER WITH LOOSE AND DETERIORATED COMPONENTS

by Jeffrey Herman



Photograph of Mr. Herman by Bill Hicks

Over time, insulators, handles, finials (decorative part of a lamp shade support, etc., projecting upward from the tip), inserts, and other porous components of tea- and coffeepots, saucepans, wine bottle coasters, hairbrushes and the like, can become loose and/or cracked. This may be the result of natural shrinkage, aggressive handling, or running water over the component and allowing moisture to enter the socket or ferule (rod) that holds it in place, causing rot that can't be seen. These susceptible materials include: wood, ivory, baleen, rhino

horn, mother-of-pearl, and tortoise shell, among others.

Unstable objects that are used on a daily basis will only become more unstable over time. This can lead to crumbling insulators, a broken-off handle, or a warped coaster bottom, with additional damage occurring to the object's body.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Always support a teapot or coffeepot from the bottom when holding it by the handle.

2. If a handle or brush is loose, have it secured by a reputable silver restoration specialist. Have broken or rotted components stabilized or replaced;

3. Never allow water to come into contact with porous components;

4. Remove dried polish with a cotton ball, Q-Tip, or soft brush;

5. With a lint-free cloth, apply three coats of a high-quality, crystal-clear carnauba paste wax, which will protect against moisture and deterioration. This wax will also prevent silver polish from accumulating in wood pores;

6. It is safe to clean or polish an object if: (a) components are securely held in place and there are no gaps through which moisture can seep into hollow areas and (b) wax has been applied to the components. (hair brushes, nail buffers, and combs should be cleaned only with non-abrasive, unscented, aloe-free hand sanitizer, or with silver polish that is allowed to dry, and is then buffed off);

7. Periodically re-wax porous components;

8. Consult a silver restoration specialist with any questions.

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*Mr. Herman is the owner of Herman Silver Restoration & Conservation. He can be contacted by phone 800-339-0417 or via email: [jeff@hermansilver.com](mailto:jeff@hermansilver.com)*

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## **INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PRIVATE SERVICE PROFESSIONALS (IAPSP)**

announces its Second Annual Conference for Private Service, titled "Knowledge | Empowerment | Community." The event is to be held in Houston, Texas 23-26 September 2010.

The IAPSP conference is designed as an educational, leadership and networking symposium; promoting professionalism, superior management skills and service expertise. By request, the conference team has added another whole day to this year's event. The conference will begin on Thursday afternoon, and will offer a variety of workshops, breakout sessions, roundtables and networking opportunities throughout the weekend. Also included is a marketplace of businesses that provide products and services catering to the private service and luxury markets. Saturday evening's Award Dinner, a fundraiser for the IAPSP, will close the conference and will include an after-party in the Hotel ZaZa's exclusive Conspiracy Room Speakeasy.

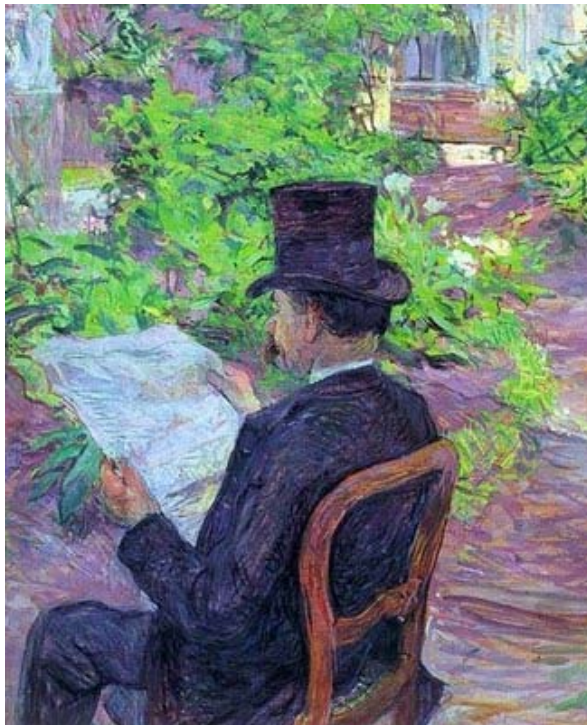
Following the tradition set at last year's inaugural event, executive-level domestic staff members across the globe and from all disciplines of Private Service, as well as those who work in related services will convene in Houston, Texas for the one-of-a-kind conference. Those who should attend

include Estate Managers, Property Managers, Butlers, Personal Assistants, Household Managers, Management Couples, Managing Chefs and their staffing agents and educators.

IAPSP president, David Bernick, had this to say about the event, "Past conferees have agreed that attending a weekend event like this has a focused, lasting and positive effect that can't be compared to an hour or two at a local meeting. This year's conference team has worked hard to create an environment that caters to the diversity of our trade and it is absolutely magical to see it all come together over the weekend, supporting a group with one common thread – a commitment to excellence in service."

*Registration is now open. Please login to the website [www.iapsp.net](http://www.iapsp.net) and click on the conference logo to learn more and/or enroll.*

## SINGING TO UNSUNG HEROES



*We are starting a monthly column that is open for anyone to write in with stories of effective, discreet*

*service. The first comes to us from Mr. Lloyd White concerning a long-term butler (whose parents were also in private service), Mr. Robert Dapozzo.*

Mr. Dapozzo, while serving as an estate manager, was called to the office of the principal during the Christmas season. She had heard a plea for help over the radio: a local restaurant company needed support in fulfilling gift requests, placed on Christmas trees in their restaurants, for needy children in the community. Patrons were meant to take a request at random, purchase it, and return the gift to the restaurant. However, there were more requests than people willing and able to fill them. Mr. Dapozzo was tasked with gathering all the unfilled requests from each restaurant, filling them, and returning the gifts anonymous. He gathered hundreds of very specific individual requests listing specific clothing styles, sizes, and colors, not to mention the toys and games. Understanding the time and effort involved in fulfilling all these requests, Mr. Dapozzo recruited a local department store to assist with the project, where the store management arranged for a team of eight staff to manage the requests. Mr. Dapozzo rented a large truck and then proceeded to drop off the gifts at the restaurant headquarters. The restaurant management team was so thrilled with the generous gifts that they insisted on arranged a television interview. Mr. Dapozzo informed his principal of the interview request, and of the significant work undertaken to bring it about, and stepped back, out of the picture, so the principal could take full credit in the television interview for the project. Congratulations, Mr. Dapozzo, for understanding and demonstrating as second nature, the nuances and expectations of being a professional butler.

*We look forward to receiving many more such stories. Please send them to [info@modernbutlers.com](mailto:info@modernbutlers.com)*

**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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