



# 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

*by Steven Ferry*

Another month is upon us, more momentous news that confounds logic having graced the virtual world and airwaves, and we are all still here to tell the tale. At the Institute, our news is less dramatic but hopefully more logical: we have changed Web host (as the earlier one had problems with emails disappearing, we suspect because it was a big player and so subject to more attacks). What does this mean to you? Very little: If you had any links to our site, they will no longer work; please do reconnect them. The Web site is the same as before, so the pages have not changed: just their location in the Word Wide Web.

We are also only using the email addresses ending in [modernbutlers.com](mailto:modernbutlers.com). Please do not send emails to [modernbutlers.net](mailto:modernbutlers.net) any more.

In the change of hosts, postings on the blog were lost, unfortunately, so please do repost any you had made. If you would like to join

the blog, please email me ([stevenferry@modernbutlers.com](mailto:stevenferry@modernbutlers.com)) and you will be sent an invitation to join as an author.

We wish you good health and success for the month ahead.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



*Dear Modern Butlers,*

I just wanted to write to thank you for the wonderful service you are providing. My great grandfather had a butler and with my family's busy life style, we miss having one (my great grandfather was always perfectly turned out thanks to his

butler).

I purchased a new pair of black Oxfords recently and was wondering if I should polish them before wearing them for the first time. I was also under the impression that I should polish them (cream or wax polish) after every wear. I see many people on the streets today with

hideously scuffed shoes (especially people in my age range, 18-30).

Another question I have is whether it is unfashionable to dress like your family has had success? My family is of a very WASPy affinity and my father, who married into my mother's family, dresses very poorly. I have taken to wearing my shirts with turn-back cuffs, employing the use of my great grandfather's cuff links, beautiful gold double-sided ones (three different pairs). I have been mocked by my father and some friends for looking to them like a stuck-up snob. The only problem is, I like being well groomed, and I was wondering if I should sacrifice this little thing to make everyone happy, even though I love the look it presents, a more classic air.

Sincerely,  
J.D. Mills

P.S. Jeeves from Jeeves & Wooster endeared many people towards butlers. You do a very important job that not many people acknowledge. Cheers.

Dear Mr. Mills,

Thank you for your kind sentiments and appreciation of the profession and the lifestyle it stands for. Your great grandfather sounds like (what today is a rare example of) a paragon of sartorial elegance, and I am happy to know you are following in his footsteps.

There would be no harm in polishing a new pair of shoes, especially if they have lain in the shop for a while and been much handled by a variety of prospective buyers.

Polishing after every wear is generally recommended. The exception would be if the wearer had not ventured outside and had not scuffed them during a short wearing, which would render it unnecessary to apply more polish. Butlers may be fastidious, but they are above creating extra work for themselves when there is no appreciable advantage to be gained and other responsibilities may better occupy their time.

Your last question is more complex. The senior datum would be to follow your Code of Honor,

*meaning hold to what you believe to be true, no matter what others may say. However, your father and friends are part of your environment, apparently, and so one has to bear in mind that if one creates effects they cannot easily tolerate, there will be repercussions, which one can look at nobody other than oneself for having created.*

*One thing to bear in mind is that there are invariably people who mock, and one generally is better off ignoring them and carrying on with maintaining the standards and achieving the goals one has set for oneself.*

*Not wanting to see a rift between yourself and your father, maybe the best thing to do is to take him aside one day when he is in a receptive mood, perhaps after you have done something for him that HE appreciates, and then tell him that you respect his lifestyle and his right to it, but you would like to receive the same respect for honoring the lifestyle of your great grandfather and what he stood for.*

*As for your friends, there is no harm in banter and some mockery. You can either meld in with them, or stick by your standards, or look to new (additional) friends who share your standards and interests. It is all part of the game, and the main thing is to have fun at choosing and following your options.*

Sincerely,  
Steven Ferry



**Announcing the  
IAPSP Inaugural Conference  
THE SECRETS OF SERVICE**

After nearly a year of planning, and hundreds of dedicated volunteer hours, the International Association for Private Service Professionals is proud to announce that registration is now open for its First Annual Private Service Conference, "The Secrets of Service!" This educational event will take place in Dallas, Texas 9-11 October 2009.

This milestone could not have been accomplished without the support, resources and guidance of over 20 Industry Professionals and the input of 100 community members in our recent survey. Thank you for coming together to help create this unique event!

*Join us 9-11 October 2009 at the Fairmont Hotel in Dallas!*

For more information, or to request a registration form, call (213) 220-3788 or email [conference@iapsp.net](mailto:conference@iapsp.net) now!



## HISTORY OF CHAUFFEURING PART VI

### PERIODIC CHECKS *By Frank Mitchell*

#### Weekly Checks

#### CHECKING TYRE PRESSURES

- Do not drive to the gas station to check the tyre pressure, as even a short drive will warm the tyres up. Readings should be taken cold and garage gauges tend not to be very accurate either.
- Use a good quality gauge and top up with a hand pump. This is easier than it sounds; only 5 pumps are needed to bring my cars' tyres up .1 bar.
- Use the pressures stated in the owner's manual and don't forget the spare.
- Any tyre losing more than .28 bar per week must be checked by a professional.



#### CHECKING FLUID LEVELS

All fluid levels are always checked with the car parked on a level surface with the handbrake set.

- Check the **coolant** with the engine cold to avoid burns. On modern cars it is not necessary to open the radiator at all; the level is checked in the overflow reservoir.
- Top up with a water/antifreeze mix as per the owner's handbook.
- Water losses that do not reflect as leaks may be leaking *into* the engine. This is serious; have it checked out.
- The **brake fluid** container should have maximum and minimum marks. On older cars without marks, the fluid should come to the bottom of the filler neck.
- *Always* use a new bottle top up brake fluid. Brake fluid is hydrophilic and the opened bottle will have had time to absorb moisture. Under severe braking pressure, the moisture boils, resulting in a sudden loss of braking power.
- In warm climates, windscreen and headlamp **washer reservoirs** can be filled with plain water, but in colder climates you will have to add screen wash antifreeze: do *not* use radiator antifreeze! Also, do not put dishwashing liquid into the reservoirs. It will rot your pump and causes rust if it gets into the bodywork's cavities.
- Always use clean, non-lint rags to wipe the dipstick when checking the **engine oil**. Consult the owner's manual; some cars are checked cold, others warm. If the oil must be checked

warm, take care not to burn yourself on the exhaust.

- On some older cars, **clutch** and **transmission** levels must be checked regularly. Follow the guidelines in the owner's manual carefully as the car may need to be driven until it reaches operating temperature and then allowed to stand for a few minutes while the fluid pools. It is not difficult, but unless you do it correctly, you will not get an accurate reading. These dipsticks are often buried deep in the engine compartment and since the engine will be hot, you must take care not to burn yourself.
- Most **batteries** are now sealed units. If you still have a battery that needs topping up, do it when the battery is warm, otherwise you may overflow it. If it overflows, the acid will cause damage. Use battery acid or distilled water, *never* tap or kettle water. Be sure the ignition is off and avoid making sparks. Clean and grease the terminals if there are signs of corrosion building up.

## LIGHTS

If you don't have someone to help you, you can do this yourself at night in a dark garage, by backing up to a wall, or by looking at the reflections in a shop window. Check park, reverse, brake, indicator, hazard, fog, high beam and low beam settings. Keep spare bulbs and fuses in the car.



## Monthly Checks WIPERBLADES

Should be checked front and back before the rainy season starts, especially after a hot

summer or after freezing weather. Extreme hot or cold will damage the blades. Use manufacturer-approved, brand name replacements.



*Check the trunk of your employer's car to make sure all the necessary tools are still there. The lack of a jack or wheel spanner can turn an inconvenience into a disaster.*

## SERVICE INTERVAL / MILEAGE COMPARISON

Plan and book services so that they take place on schedule and at a time that is least inconvenient to your employer. If necessary, organize a loaner or a rental of a similar vehicle.

## AIR CONDITIONING

Have it tested and, if needed, serviced before a long trip or before the summer.

## OIL THE LOCKS

This is easily done by putting a drop of oil on the key and then inserting it into the lock a few times. Wipe off key before putting it back in your pocket!

Do not play the radio all the time while driving on your own. Listen to the engine and learn what sounds normal so that you will know when it is making unusual sounds that would indicate something is going wrong. Pay attention to any strange smells, particularly burning smells. If you know something is wrong, have it checked out; do not drive a car until it breaks. The results are almost always more inconvenient, dangerous and expensive.

## Annual Checks

### WHEEL ALIGNMENT AND TYRE BALANCING

Take the vehicle in to have the tyres balanced and rotated, and the alignment checked. This is also a good time to have the shock absorbers, CV joints, wheel bearings and tyres checked since these are often not included in the annual service. Fitment centers will do these checks free of charge if you are paying for the alignment and balancing.

Next month we continue the maintenance theme when we look at cleaning and maintaining the vehicle's appearance.

*Frank Mitchell is a professional butler and butler trainer for the IIMB. He lives near Cape Town in South Africa and can be reached via email at [frankmitchell@modernbutlers.com](mailto:frankmitchell@modernbutlers.com)*

actor Christian Bale was arrested in London's Dorchester Hotel and charged with assault. The world held its breath: Had the caped superhero meted out swift justice to an intruder in the tea lounge?

<http://www.forbestraveler.com/resorts-hotels/famous-stories-hotels-story.html>

## PURSUING A DREAM

*By Ms. Saba Al-Mabadin*



*Editor's Note:*

*Ms. Mabadin recently graduated from the Institute's Hotel Butler Correspondence Course*

*and shares with us what brought her into the profession.*

## INTERESTING LINKS

### THROUGH THE EYES OF A HOTEL BUTLER: SMALL DETAILS - BIG DEGREE OF DIFFERENCE

*by Osvaldo Torres Cruz - go to*

[http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2009\\_3rd/Jul09\\_ButlerEyes.html](http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2009_3rd/Jul09_ButlerEyes.html)

### ZAGAT NIGHTLIFE SURVEY FOR LOS ANGELES

NEW YORK, July 1, 2009 - Zagat Survey today released the results of its ninth annual Los Angeles Nightlife survey. Given the troubled economy, it's not surprising that surveyors say they're going out less often than last year.

[http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2009\\_3rd/Jul09\\_LAZagat.html](http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2009_3rd/Jul09_LAZagat.html)

### CELEBS GONE WILD: BAD BEHAVIOR IN GOOD HOTELS

*By Douglas Roger, Forbes.com*

The day before the 2008 European premier of Batman blockbuster The Dark Knight, bad boy

For me, a butler is all about an "attitude": attitude towards oneself, a guest, and most importantly towards a high-standard and "unpredictable" profession. Embarking on such a whole new career was motivated by a 2-minute glimpse of a well-dressed, well-spoken gentleman on TV one day. That incident happened in 2003, while I was studying for my postgraduate degree in the UK. I have always known that I wanted a job where I could be with people and around people, and serve people. I guess many professions offer that possibility, but I was aiming for something big and different—something where I could not only really look after my guests'/clients' needs, but also excel as an individual. I must say right away, it has not been handed to me on a silver platter. I started with general hospitality studies. I worked for a while, then did further studies. But up until that point, I still felt that something was missing and I ought to figure it out. It was a bit of a challenge for me, but I knew that I had to find that missing piece in the service industry.

I finally did, and those two minutes I watched on TV were just the turning point I needed. I instantly became fascinated and curious at the same time, and I knew I had to know more

about what that gentleman was talking about. So I did my homework and surfed the net for whatever information I could find to learn about that particular service. The more I read, the more passionate I became, not just about learning the skills of the butler profession, but about what that profession has to offer in terms of self-development, both personally and professionally.

For me, the overwhelming bit about this profession in particular was the fact that it is one of very few, if not the only profession that tackles personal skills and manners in a very profound way. In a sense I feel that, in time, those skills act as a definition of who one really is. They become a habit rather than a duty, a personality rather than a character, an existence on its own rather than just a title or a job description.

I have always been intrigued by the differences among individuals, and to be able to understand those differences, one ought to be equipped with the right knowledge and personal skills to handle them with utmost respect and appreciation. To achieve that, one's personality has to be honed to the level where one can succeed in building the right lines of communication with others and thus deliver the right product/service as the "icing on the cake." With the right foundation, nothing is impossible.

For me, that right foundation was the Institute's *Hotel Butler Correspondence Course*. I enrolled in January 2009, and throughout the course I was presented with many details relating to personal as well as professional methods of how to become a better, more inspiring, and more capable individual. Moreover, the course has helped me put my own traits into productive and creative use.

I have only been introduced to the butler profession in depth a short while, and becoming a female butler has been worth the challenge against the norm that butlers are only males. The Institute has helped me accomplish my dream of being different and unique in the service world. Moreover, the

course has paved the way for me to become a well-mannered and respectable individual with a passion to serve—just like that gentleman I saw on TV in 2003.

*Ms. Al-Mabadin lives and works in Jordan and can be reached via the Institute.*



## A WORD ABOUT CLEANING SILVER

*by Jeffrey Herman*

Here is some silver cleaning advice from renowned London silversmith Paul de Lamerie, (1688-1751):

*"Clean it now and then," he advised his customers, "with only warm water and soap, with a sponge, and then wash it with clean water and dry it very well with a soft linnen cloth and keep it in a dry place, for the damp will spoyle it...by no means use either chalke, sand or salt."*

That piece of advice may be almost 300 years old, but it is still very workable today!

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*Mr. Herman owns Herman Silver Restoration & Conservation and can be contacted via [jeff@hermansilver.com](mailto:jeff@hermansilver.com). Visit his website: <http://www.hermansilver.com>*



## **BUTLERS & HOUSEHOLD MANAGERS**

***Book now available in Italian!***

We are pleased to announce the release of the Italian translation of the industry bestseller: ***BUTLERS AND HOUSEHOLD MANAGERS, 21ST CENTURY PROFESSIONALS***, written by the chairman of the IIMB Mr. Steven Ferry, and translated by Italian butler Mr. Giovanni Lodigiani. The book (**Maggiordomi & Direttori di Casa**) has been published by Booksurge Publishing and is available for purchase on *Amazon.com* as well as *Amazon.co.uk*.

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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