



# 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*

There's not a huge amount to cheer about as the powers-that-be around the world do what they

think is best. I am sure something will come of their efforts.

Whatever it is, we'll still all be sharing this little bauble we call Earth and either working together to build and nurture, or expending our efforts bickering about things big and small.

I certainly prefer the idea of working together, because as butlers, we are really on the same side: the enemy we face is not each other, but poor and/or uncaring service in need of some attention from us as service experts.

All of which is to say, I believe life to be a fun game, not a drudgery we have to suffer through. If we let others bring us down to the level where life is full of

penalties and worry, whether about our jobs or anything else, the game becomes serious and is no longer a game.

We each have exciting roles to play, games to play, let's keep it that way. For one lesson it has taken me many years to learn, is that one's own mood does not depend upon the state of the game: it depends 100% on me, and you, each one of us.

So when I say, "There is not much to cheer about" in world affairs, I want to clarify that: you can cheer about anything you want, and it will be so for you. And when you are smiling, so will others; and one smile at a time, we can change the mood of the world.

*Steven Ferry can be contacted via email:  
stevenferry@modernbutlers.com*

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Steven,

I had the distinct pleasure of training both Jim Grise and Clever Zulu, both from very different parts of the world,

yet, both with the same very positive attitudes towards service.

From their correspondence with the newsletter, I take a certain pride in their achievements and contribution to the butler world.

With regard to the announcement of yet another 7 Star Hotel I am reminded that I conducted the training at the first Burj Al Arab in Dubai and have recently provided training at the second, Pangu 7 Star Hotel in Beijing.

Where do we go from here, are we expecting a 9 Star Hotel?

Why don't we go metric? Have the next Hotel announce 8 Star service! In this way, when we get to 20 Stars, we can easily quantify the standards of service.

3, 5, and 7 stars are such odd numbers, what do they mean? And most importantly who does the measuring?

As you and I know very well, service is what differentiates one hotel from another; stars or diamonds are arbitrarily attributed.

Great service is what makes the difference; if a hotel awards itself 7,9, or 20 stars, ultimately it is the guest who decides the level of service that pleases them as individuals.

"Great service is a universal language" wanted by so many, understood by so few.

**Robert Watson**  
***Guild of Professional English Butlers***

Dear Robert,

A pleasure to hear from you. We are fortunate to have butlers today who understand what it means to be a butler. Your contributions have certainly been instrumental in maintaining standards.

You bring up an interesting point about these proclamations of superlative service standards. I believe there are some hotels that like to inflate their rating, and some, on the other hand, that are simply straining against the limitations being set by the

current rating agencies. Butlers, as you know, have only recently appeared on the hospitality scene, so the whole new range of service being offered by them is not being measured or validated by the existing organizations in their criteria.

With regard to Burj Al Arab, having trained there as well, I am familiar enough with their offering to wonder about a Five-Star rating accurately measuring the level of service and the property/amenities. My understanding, however, is that it was not the hotel management or its owner that rated Burj a 7-star, but its guests/the media, who were searching for their own approximation of an accurate rating.

In the case of the Town House in Milan, they actually brought in an independent, Swiss rating agency and asked what a 7-Star would be. And then followed those standards. From my understanding of the service being offered, it certainly stands up there at the top. The location is superb, but perhaps the building itself may not quite measure up to what one might guess would be a Seven-Star.

By the way, we did not miss the "Six" designation: there are hotels that conceive themselves to be Six-Star, such as Mr. Horst Schulze's Capella chain, which reportedly includes private swimming pools and private butlers as the criteria for Six-Star.

So, I think we are all used to marketing hype inflating numbers; for instance, what started as "large size" packaging was aggrandized into an "extra-large," "giant-sized," "jumbo-sized," "gargantuan" and, when talking soft drinks, we might even see an indelicate "bladder buster" size. And while I agree that some of this does indeed happen in hospitality, I feel that the higher-end hotels we are discussing are being unfairly constrained, and in a way agree that they *should* raise their ratings.

What is missing, of course, is a standard set by the major standard-setters; but in any sphere, innovators herald changes, and my hat is off to them. The Institute does provide a rating service that assesses hotels against the highest of standards (higher than anyone else), so I expect (and hope) Mobil and AA, RAC, AAA and LHW et al will catch on and create that common language of great service that you mention, so we can all speak it and understand exactly what people mean. Because until then, there is too much room for misunderstanding and upset.

*All the best,  
Steven Ferry*

## HISTORY OF CHAUFFEURING PART II

*By Frank Mitchell*



Early cars could require over one hundred individual points to be lubricated by hand *each time* you set off. Many of these points required further attention every few miles. Fluid levels had to be watched carefully; drip-fed lubrication had to be managed by hand through a device on the dash, which looked like a pipe organ. It was also very often a total-loss lubrication system. Used oil was not filtered and re-circulated; it was simply spat out onto the road. It was not unheard of for a car's oil consumption to exceed its fuel consumption. Pity the yardman cleaning the cobbled drive!

Until Cadillac introduced the electric starter, you needed someone to crank the engine for you. On some early designs, not setting the controls properly before cranking easily resulted in a broken arm.

Wealthy enthusiasts did drive their own cars, but most took a mechanic with them.



*Contact! A mechanic starts the 1902 Mercedes Simplex of William K. Vanderbilt, Jr.*

Once underway, you had to pump your own fuel to the engine, control the enrichment of the mixture in the carburetor and adjust the engine timing according to the load and engine speed. This was in addition to having to deal with leather-faced clutches, gearboxes without synchromesh and harsh brakes operating on the differential only. (Well-trained chauffeurs would often use the handbrake instead; it was gentler.)

If you were foolish enough to travel after dark, you would have to manufacture your own acetylene gas in a highly flammable contraption in order to burn the lamps. This system is so dangerous, modern insurers will not issue a policy on an antique vehicle with a working acetylene system.

Many manufacturers had ideas to simplify the task of driving. Daimler decided that taking the accelerator away would simplify the driver's task and they replaced it with a centrifugal governor instead. When the car reached maximum revolutions in one gear, you simply shifted up to the next. What this was like to control on a busy street can only be guessed at.

One by one the improvements came, many introduced by General Motors: electric starters, synchromesh gearboxes, generators (no more gas lamps), the vacuum advance distributor, automatic gearboxes, etc.

By the time cars were more reliable and easier to drive, people still had chauffeurs and this was often because their cars were hardly runabouts. Just take a look at the beauty below.

### Whatever happened to...?

Literally thousands of manufacturers no longer exist, most disappearing before WWI. Many luxurious carmakers fell victim to post WWII economic realities; Delahaye, Delage, Packard, Isotta-Fraschini, Cord, Duesenberg, Auburn, Minerva, Daimler, Pierce Arrow. Add to this bewildering choice the fact that few luxury motor manufacturers produced their own coach work; Britain, France and the USA all had a thriving coach building industry before WWII, but that is a whole other story in itself.



*1927 Fleetwood bodied Lincoln Imperial Victoria. With 7 seats, 5 windcreens and 2 luggage trunks, the car measures in excess of 17ft. (Bear in mind there was no power steering!) The Mercedes 600 Pullman of the 60's and 70's measured 20.5ft in length and a 60's Phantom V Rolls-Royce could reach 22ft, depending on the custom coach work fitted. These vehicles have enormous turning circles and it requires some planning to get them in and out of tight spaces. Forget parallel parking!*

*Illustrations sources: (1) Pictorial History of the Automobile by Graham Robson. Page (2) Daimler & Benz: The Complete History, by Dennis Adler.*

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

## RESTORING THE ARTS CONVENTION (RTA) 2009

The annual private-service management conference, *Restoring the Art*, will take place at **The Magnolia Hotel** in **Denver, Colorado** on **May 14-16, 2009**. Hosted by Starkey International and co-hosted by the Institute, the theme is **“What does a Service Expert Need to Know?”**

ACT NOW for an early registration discount! Please call 303-832-5510 or contact [RTA@starkeyintl.com](mailto:RTA@starkeyintl.com) to sign up.

The agenda is as follows:

### **THURSDAY, May 14, 2008**

1:00 - 4:00 PM. REGISTRATION

4:00 - 6:00 PM, ANNUAL MEETING:  
RTA Int'l Association for Private Service  
Managers

6:00 - 8:00 PM, RECEPTION at the  
Starkey Mansion

### **FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2009**

8:30 - 9:00 AM, CONTINENTAL  
BREAKFAST

9:00 - 10:15 AM, WELCOME  
ADDRESS: *Creative Leadership In Service.*  
Retired Air Force, Rich Hassan, CEO  
TSM

10:30 - 12:00 AM, GENERAL SESSION:  
*Maximizing the Effectiveness of your  
Housekeeping Staff: Training, Supervising  
Implementing and Fine Tuning a Housekeeping  
System.* Debra Bullock, Dir. of Education,  
Starkey International

12:30 - 1:30 PM, LUNCH: *Antidotes Tips  
for Staying on the Employers Agenda.* J.  
Paulin, CHM Retired, Bob Hope Golden  
Door

1:30 - 3:00 PM, GENERAL SESSION:  
*Household Manager Technology Toolbox:  
Blackberry, PDA, I-Phone.* Aaron Burhouse,  
AT&T Hands-On Demo

3:00 - 4:30 PM, GENERAL SESSION:  
*Utilizing Starkey Service Mgmt. Software:  
Create the Service Plan, 2009 Version!* William  
Althoff & Brad Weber

5:00 - 8:00 PM, AFTER HOURS  
GATHERING *A Wine Time* Ms. Lucia  
Miltenberger

### **SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2009**

8:30 - 9:00 AM, CONTINENTAL  
BREAKFAST

9:00 - 10:30 AM, ROUNDTABLE  
DISCUSSION: *Managing your Career: for  
Household Managers and Butlers.* Mary Louise  
Starkey, CEO

10:30 - 12:00 PM, GENERAL SESSION:  
*"Seeing the Forest for the Trees" Understanding*

*Family Dynamics.* Kim Curtis and David  
Berman: Wealth Legacy Institute

12:00 - 1:30 PM, LUNCH: *Growth of  
Luxury Market and Private Service Profession*  
Gregory J. Furman, Keynote Speaker  
Visionary and CEO International  
Luxury Market Council

1:30 - 3:00 PM, GENERAL SESSION:  
*Your First Two Weeks and your Position  
Challenges, Setting yourself up to Succeed.*  
William Althoff, Private Service  
Instructor

6:00 - 9:00 PM, DINNER: *Growing a  
Profession Service Presentation: Household  
Manager of the Year.* Dr. Lloyd Lewan,  
Retired CEO Semester at Sea

### **INTERESTING LINKS**

#### **The latest in cruise-ship luxury: A butler with every cabin.**

MIAMI -- You know you're in one of  
the top suites on a ship when it comes  
with a personal butler. Or, at least, that  
was the old rule. Now some of the  
world's ritziest lines are promising  
butlers to all.

[http://www.usatoday.com/travel/cruises/  
item.aspx?type=blog&ak=64332961.blog](http://www.usatoday.com/travel/cruises/item.aspx?type=blog&ak=64332961.blog)

#### **Heaven on Earth is two hours away at Las Ventanas in Cabo San Lucas**

Heaven on Earth does exist after all!  
It's the palace of private pleasures where  
George Maloof of the Palms took pop  
princess Britney Spears to speed her  
recovery and return to music. It's the  
incredible indulgence where Brad Pitt  
not only romanced Jennifer Aniston, but  
also wooed Angelina Jolie.

[http://www.vegasdeluxe.com/blogs/luxe-  
life/2009/mar/19/heave-earth-two-hours  
-away-las-ventanas-cabo-san-l/](http://www.vegasdeluxe.com/blogs/luxe-life/2009/mar/19/heave-earth-two-hours-away-las-ventanas-cabo-san-l/)

*NOTE: The Institute trained the Butlers at  
Las Ventanas in December of 2007.*

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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