



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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For Service Professionals Worldwide

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

by Steven Ferry

Your Future is yours to Create

The Economist
published an article
at the beginning of

April entitled, "Bling on a Budget," detailing how the rich are cutting back: (http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13356640).

CNN echoed the same concepts in an article at the end of the month, applied to the luxury end of the hospitality market, saying it was down over 15% in occupancy December 2008 to February 2009. Some are down a lot more. In the US, the hospitality and leisure industry is running at an official 11.6% unemployment rate. On our lines and those of domestic placement agencies, more than the usual number of butlers and chefs are finding themselves out of work as employers trim these higher-ticket items and make do with housekeepers

(who no doubt are now doing some of the cooking and management and serving in the household).

At the same time, butler and household management schools are graduating students, many of whom are not finding employment.

All bleak? Far from it: there are still many butlers and household managers employed, and there are still some jobs out there, although salaries are being trimmed back from the often-generous scales being offered before, and some employers are trying to save costs by finding their own personnel.

Like the many Americans who are keeping their cars instead of buying new ones, this might be the time to keep your boss rather than look for a new one at the first signs of a crack in the relationship.

I have written another article for the industry, "Hope Does Not Need Rose-tinted Glasses," which can be found in various publications of recent date. (*See also the link elsewhere in this issue – Editor*) The main purpose was to help increase understanding of the problem we are facing and to steer away from false

promises or optimism about the prospects for the economy while the people who created the problem are enforcing their inadequate solutions on us without giving us the courtesy of an admission of their wrong-doing or allowing competent managers to come in and fix the mess. May I also refer you to “Behind the Curtain” on the IIMB blog:

<http://www.modernbutlers.net/blog/103>

But there is a deeper problem at work here, perhaps what one might call a life-lesson, that it helps to understand in order to estimate for oneself what the future might bring. Solving problems is better done by looking at our situation as it is, not as one would wish it to be.

If there is a message I’d like to communicate in these somewhat trying times, however, it is that one’s own mood and drive is dependent only upon oneself, not on how well or poorly the environment around one is doing. One has inner strength, and *that* is the source of the hope that good solutions will be found for whatever the future feels compelled to present.

Steven Ferry
Chairman

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HISTORY OF CHAUFFEURING PART III

By Frank Mitchell



INSURANCE Know your liability

A few years ago, I was on a team that opened an all-butler service hotel in Cyprus. Billed as the first in the Mediterranean, one of our duties was to



Before you are tempted to take that beauty for its first spin, make sure the drive does not have consequences that ride you for the rest of your life. If this sounds overly dramatic, read on...

collect guests at the airport. We were assured that we had insurance cover, but when one of our team members planted a Pajero into a tree, it turned out that we didn’t. In fact, management had knowingly lied to us, exposing us all to personal liability.

What gave me the cold shudders then, was thinking how in private service I drove very expensive vehicles, but never once thought to check if I was really insured—simply believing what I was told. Until I got a company car, I was taking the kids to school and fetching groceries in a BMW M5. Later I drove even more expensive vehicles, but by then I had wised up and *checked*.

So before you are tempted to go for a spin in that dream car, make sure it does not turn into a nightmare. When I worked at the bank, I had a client who was held responsible for the death of a breadwinner. With no insurance, he now had two families to support and guess whose family the court gave a cut of his pay cheque to first?

You were insured, but...

The fact that your name is on a policy does not mean you will be covered. Here are five things you should check:

If your name was added to the policy, but the insurance company was under the impression you were a friend or family member, and not an *employee*, your claim may be refused. This might happen because the perceived risk for an employee may be higher, resulting in the transaction being regarded as fraudulent.

Another reason the policy may not pay out is because, while your license may be current and unendorsed, it may not be valid for *commercial work*. Many countries require that you have an additional permit if you earn a living by driving a vehicle. Even though you may not be a fulltime chauffeur, this would be another valid reason for the insurance company to reject the claim. In South Africa you need a Public Driving Permit and it is renewed annually with brief medical exam.

A variation of this situation is where you use your own vehicle. Your insurance company might not pay a claim if they decide the vehicle was being used to earn an *income*.

An employer may require you to do much more driving than they themselves do. If they saved on insurance by adding a clause *limiting the mileage* the vehicle does per year, you may do more mileage than they anticipated, leaving you without cover.



We do not anticipate that an employer will have a crummy car, but how many employers do you think bother to check their tyres for wear? Inspect the vehicle, (we will cover 'first-parades' in detail later), make sure the vehicle has been properly

serviced, and is fully licensed. If a vehicle is deemed to have been *un-roadworthy* for whatever reason, you can be sure the insurance will not pay out in the event of an accident. Even if you were not at fault, your ability to avoid the accident may be considered compromised.

Avoid nasty surprises by talking to the broker and disclosing all the relevant information. A good broker will let you know which deficiencies need correcting, or if a clause must be added to the policy. In the next issue, we will take a look at some of the things that should be taken into consideration when driving an unfamiliar vehicle for the first time.



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

INTERESTING LINKS

HOPE DOES NOT NEED ROSE-TINTED GLASSES

With the global economy still front and center and, frankly, a completely distracting and unwelcome subject that has gone on far too long, the questions remaining could be phrased as 'How much longer?' and 'How much worse, or is this as bad as it will be?'

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article38356.html>

LUXURY HOTELS IN BALANCING ACT WITH PRICE, IMAGE

http://www.cnn.com/2009/TRAVEL/04/24/luxury.hotels.bad.economy/index.html?iref=t2test_travelfri

THROUGH THE EYES OF A HOTEL BUTLER: GUEST SATISFACTION MEASUREMENT

http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2009_2nd/Apr09_Checkmarks.html

RESTORING THE ARTS CONVENTION (RTA) 2009



PRIVATE SERVICE MANAGEMENT ANNUAL CONFERENCE
WHAT DOES A SERVICE EXPERT NEED TO KNOW?
MAY 14TH - 16TH, 2009
THE MAGNOLIA HOTEL
DENVER, COLORADO

EARLY REGISTRATION DISCOUNT:
REGISTER BEFORE APRIL 1 FOR \$499.95
REGISTER AFTER APRIL 1 FOR \$600.00

DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A
ONE WEEKEND MEXICO GETAWAY
AT THE ESPERANZA HOTEL, CABO, SAN LUCAS



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?”**

For registration call 303-832-5510 or contact RTA@starkeyintl.com to sign up.

MAAS - ONE CLEANER PROVIDES OUTSTANDING RESULTS

The Institute's VP Aviation Services, Ms. Nuala Galbari, recently tested a new product and thought you might like to know about it. Photo courtesy of the Institute's Medical Director, Dr. David Justis.



While browsing through the March/April issue of *The English Home*, I noticed an advertisement for MAAS products. As the product was listed in an advertorial format, I almost dismissed the information. However, reading on I noticed that the MAAS cleaners have been tested and approved by companies such as Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, and are reportedly being used by the U.S. military forces. The Chicago Tribune notes, *“One amazing metal polish is the best at everything.”* I decided to order a starter kit and test the product myself.

My cupboard is currently filled with a variety of cleaners and, like many, I have a different product for each metal. Many of the products have unpleasant fumes and I was seeking a superior cleaner that would not only work well on most metals, but would have a less disagreeable odor.

In testing the MAAS products, I can confirm their efficacy on all metals I have

cleaned. Even heavily oxidized metals were restored to a nearly new appearance. The products can be used on fiberglass, crystal and glass, linoleum, lawn furniture, Plexiglas, refrigerators, microwave ovens and dishwashers.

I tested the product on copper, silver, pewter, stainless steel and aluminum and was found the results to be admirable. When used on metal trim and faucets in baths and showers, MAAS easily removed serious build-up and spots, revealing a restored beauty and luster. The finishing polish seals the metal or other surface with a waterproof, protective coating that prevents tarnish. MAAS is also excellent for cleaning and preserving antique weapons, such as muskets, pistols and edged weapons, many of which combine multiple metals, including gold, silver, steel, iron, brass and copper. The product is safe for use on most weaponry. The product has certainly cut my work substantially.

The products are non-abrasive, non-flammable and contain no chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). MAAS products are fairly priced and can be ordered via the Internet at www.maasinc.com, or in the UK by calling 01424 797 700, or at www.lastingshine.co.uk

FINDING A SILVER RESTORATION SPECIALIST

Introducing Jeffrey Herman

You're cleaning a Revere porringer and it escapes your grasp, bouncing off the tile floor causing a major dent. You stand there in horror, afraid to even touch the piece.

You have two choices: place it back in the china cabinet with the undamaged side facing out, hoping your employer won't notice, or take the ethical high-road and tell the porringer's owner that you'll have it

professionally restored. Hopefully you choose option two. So, where do you go?

You can contact a decorative arts curator at a museum housing a major silver collection, such as the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Yale University Art Gallery, or the Victoria & Albert Museum in England, to name a few. These museum curators are knowledgeable as to who will perform a proper restoration job because of their intimacy with the medium.

Another excellent source is to consult a notable high-end antique silver dealer.

Or, you could contact Mr. Jeffrey Herman. Mr. Herman started Herman Silver Restoration & Conservation in 1984, and has built a national reputation of quality craftsmanship and sensitivity towards the finishing of every piece. He is also the Executive Director of the Society of American Silversmiths.

He has repaired & reconstructed everything from historically important tankards, tea services, and tureens to disposal-damaged flatware. And yes, he will also polish a single spoon or fork.

Mr. Herman considers himself an environmentalist, using the safest, non-toxic, most organic products on the market. He encourages anyone with silver-related questions that can't be answered on his Web site to contact him. If you have a piece in need of help, he invites you to e-mail him an image for an estimate.

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Photograph of Mr. Herman by Bill Hicks

NOTE TO MBJ READERS:

Mr. Herman is opening his online SilverChat to members of IIMB to answer your silver care and restoration questions. The chat is scheduled for Tuesday, May 5th from 9:00-10:30 p.m EST.

This is an excellent format for discussion, as it tends to prompt questions from participants, which leads to answers that will benefit everyone attending. All that is required is that you have a Java capable browser. To get to the chat, go to hermansilver.com and click on "SilverChat" in the site index.

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.

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