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# *International Domestic Placement Group*

[www.DomesticPlacementGroup.com](http://www.DomesticPlacementGroup.com)

## Guests

Treat EVERYONE with RESPECT - as the most important person in the world.

We are aiming for smooth professionalism – display your knowledge and authority, but do not be over familiar. Remember the WOW factor.

Ring the butler/ secretary of guests for preferences & updates prior to arrival

When serving food, always have an extra serving available - the last person should always have a choice.

Name | # Guests | Room Name/ # | How Arrive | Arrival Date/ Time | Depart Date/ Time | Comments

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Lee | 2 Mr/Mrs | Pink/ #12 | Train | 5/03 16.30 | 5/06 12.15 | Mr- bad leg

All staff will use this information log - housekeeper knows which room to prepare, driver knows where & when to transport, chef knows what meals they will attend, butler knows personal information for guest's comfort. This is all logged into the pantry book.

### **Preparing The Guest Room**

Check that bed, shades, heating/ cooling were in working order. Lie on the bed, sit on the toilet. Check every detail from top to bottom, left to right - world standard, this way someone can finish should you be called away.

Fill the bathroom with beautiful bottles of toiletries - the WOW factor.

Fresh flowers.

Check pantry book for guest's preferences - make every effort to provide everything.

A 'first impression' is made in the first 3 minutes – counts for 75-80% of your overall impression.

When guests are expected, ask the housekeeper 'Have you finished/ Are you ready?' then 'May I have a look?' then 'Oh, I see we need another \_\_\_ in this room. Everything else looks great! You've really outdone yourself this time!'

You may need to arrange a car service/ taxi for a guest if you are busy preparing for their arrival/ a meal.

### **Meeting A Visitor - at an Airport or Train Station**

1. Ensure the car is in perfect condition inside and outside, fueled, 2 newspapers: one is local, the other from the guest's home town if possible, if not a national paper will do nicely.
2. Ensure I am dressed well with fresh breath.
3. A few hours prior to arrival (or once the plane/ train has departed) ensure there are no delays/ diversions, etc by contacting the carrier.

4. Arrive, park and be in place at least 15 minutes prior to actual arrival (could vary from scheduled arrival time). Work backwards in time to figure out when you should leave the house/ office to arrive with plenty of time.
5. Have a meeting point prearranged (at gate/ platform/ baggage claim/ curbside).
6. Have a sign saying 'Mr. Green'. Verify the person's identity by asking 'who are you expecting to meet, sir?' Mr. Lee. 'Right sir, I am representing Mr. Lee. Please allow me to take your luggage. Would you like to freshen up?'
8. While the VIP is freshening up, phone Mr. Lee/ home/ office to notify you have picked up the guest. This is for security reasons - should something happen there is a frame of reference as to who was with you and how far you got in the process of your duties.
9. 'The car is in the carpark, would you like to walk with me, or rather I drive around for you?'
10. When arriving at the car together, open the door for the guest then place the luggage in the boot. 'Would you like to be seated while I stow your luggage?' Your attention must be on the luggage to ensure nothing is pilfered by a stranger.
11. If you are collecting 2 guests, and one is a lady, ask 'Where would you like to be seated, ma'am?'
12. When seating a guest in the car, open the passenger side rear door for his entrance. Demonstrate, from the driver's side rear seat, the location and operation of all the car's amenities (bar/ fax/ phone/ DVD, etc...) and the newspapers. If the guest prefers to sit up front and asks to do so - say 'Certainly, sir.'
13. When driving through town, offer a mini tour (if time permits). Do NOT pretend you know anything about the area/ buildings/ city that you do not know.
14. When 5 minutes from destination, phone ahead to the office/ home to notify of the VIP's arrival 'We will be arriving in 5 minutes'.

### **Rules of the House**

Guests, especially new ones, should be informed of the 'rules of the house'.

- Due to the age and delicacy of the fabrics (or allergies/ health) the Lee's do not permit smoking in the majority of their home. If you should want to smoke, you may do so in the \_\_\_ room, located next to/ behind the \_\_\_ room.
- Add 25% to any scheduled time, so no one will be late or made to wait.
- What time dinner/ drinks are served and suggested attire.
- Breakfast & Morning trays – need to be requested the evening before.
- Pressing? [Schedule a member of staff for these needs – turn down expensive gowns & delicate items (beyond your abilities), but always offer alternatives.]
- Would you like me to have someone unpack for you? In most homes the Butler only valets for their employers, the maid handles all guests.
- Don't offer anything that you can not deliver/ fulfill.
- Explain the room's facilities to each (even repeat) guest. Heat, phone, TV, cable, VCR/ DVD, lighting. Take the time to find out how to phone the guest's home country and leave a note card with directions.

### **Receiving Overnight Guests**

An overnight guest arrives - open the door, invite them in, cases are taken (by staff), take coat/ hat, LEAD (not direct or follow) them up the stairs, 'the rest of your luggage will be brought up to you'. Show them the room/ shower/ work TV/ slippers & robe/ other amenities. On the table will be a bottle of their favorite beverage/ spirit, flowers, fruit, and a note from Mr/ Mrs Lee. Their coats will be hung in their room. 'May I help you unpack?' The empty luggage should be taken away and stored. Freshen case with fresh tissue paper, wipe off marks, etc...

'By the way sir, dinner will be served at 7.30 this evening, black tie, Mr. Lee will be downstairs at 7pm. Here is the menu, do you have any preferences?' When you have freshened up, would you like a meal/ coffee/ tour of the house?' Bring refreshments to their room.

### **While Freshening-Up**

Guests will nap, have sex, shower, try on clothes, read newspapers & magazines, watch TV... in other words, they make a mess.

### **Staff Assistance**

Coordinate and choreograph a guest's arrival – practice!

Knock, knock 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 knock, knock open the door and say "I'm Chris the houseman, I've brought your luggage, I'll put it here." NEVER on the bed – always have two prearranged places for luggage.

Should the guest request anything of the staff member, instruct them to say "I'll call the Butler for you."

While the Butler is serving drinks and dinner, a housekeeper is upstairs doing the turndown service to your/ employer's standards. Turn down standards may require one to pick up clothes, check flowers, wipe or clean the bathroom, draw the drapes, straighten and turn down the bed, water, cookies/ chocolates, music, lights. Check pantry book for (make note of) each person's side of the bed, then place slippers and nightwear on that side of the bed.

### **Serving Refreshments**

Walk in with a tray, ask 'Where would you like it, sir?' Pour a cup. On the tray you have a few cookies, cream & sugar, flower. If there is room, take items off the tray and remove from room 'Sir, would you like me to pour for you?' If the guest requests more than a light 'tea', ask 'where would you like to eat' and serve butler service, leaving the tray on the sideboard so he can help himself to more while you are away - you have other things to tend to. If they wish to eat in their room: meal: plated, leave on the tray; sandwiches: plate of various sandwiches, empty plate to help themselves. Leave trays.

### **House Tours:**

Avoid private areas - all bedrooms, master's study, wine cellar and kitchen.

### **Tips:**

Never try to do heavy or clumsy work when others may be able to see you - esp. guests. (don't carry suitcases while leading guests).

### **Packing for Guests**

Ask these 4 questions or you will be screwed!

- Are the cases unlocked? (you will need key or combination)
- Is there anything that you do not wish me to pack? Camera/ computer/ gifts...
- Which clothes do you wish to travel in? If in doubt, make a choice! Make note of what they arrived in and choose something of similar style.
- Should I pack things separately? Often couples are not married, reside in separate locations, or one will fly home while the other leaves for a business trip.
- If In Doubt, Leave It Out!! (Glass, files, books/ newspapers)

### **Last Minute Entertaining**

As soon as you know about a last minute guest's arrival (for dinner or an overnight), go outside and start at the front door. Work your way through the house – including the bathrooms. Straighten, touch-up and WOW the house to employer's standards.

### **"Hang-Ons" (Visitors/ Employers who won't go to bed)**

I know, from the pantry book that the guests are Hang-ons and schedule another member of staff to take care of the morning trays so I can sleep in myself.

Ask if you can set the alarm if they are in for the night 'Will you be going out again tonight, sir?' No. 'Well sir, I need to lock up the house for the night.'

If dismissed, set alarm clock for 30 minutes (stay dressed) and return

If guest falls asleep, nudge furniture (not touching the person) until you can tell them

they'd be more comfortable in a bed. 'I'll show you up if you like.'

Check room/ chairs for fallen and misplaced items (cigars, pipes, cigs, cell phone, remote, keys...)

Freshen and clean the room prior to retiring.

If a guest should ask for something (i.e.: drink) that you do not stock, have a staff member run out and buy a small bottle - you may never use it again.

Reasons to have a party/ event: impress your peers, business, reciprocation, to meet someone new, holidays, special occasions, celebrations, simply enjoy their company.

Home vs. Hotel- people attend for free

See that people arriving together for an overnight stay are placed in rooms next to each other, connected if possible. (Leave a key in the lock on the woman's side if unsure of their relationship)

If Mrs Lee plans a theme party (i.e.: Chinese) speak with the chef and plan 3 alternative entree choices to have available for guests.

To wake up your employer- open a curtain or turn on a side table light - if they are still asleep, nudge the side of the bed and gently rock the pillow. When he starts to stir, step back and say 'good morning sir, it is 8 o'clock'.

### **Announcing Guests:**

When announcing guests, maintain the same level of importance and tone in your voice for all, a Prince is just as important as Uncle George..

When announcing guests you do not know, ask their name only twice. If you still don't know what they said, direct them through. Later, inform Mr. Lee that you have not announced that particular guest because you couldn't understand their name. (He may not know it either!)

Titles: Announce/ Address as:

Lords: Lord Jones/ My Lord or Lord Jones

Knights: Sir Robert Wilson/ Sir Robert

Ambassador: His/ Her Excellency the Ambassador of \_\_ / His/ Her Excellency, Ambassador

Commissioner: His Excellency the High Commissioner of \_\_

When they are escorting/ed, announce: and His Lady, Mr. Jones, Her Consort.

"7 For 7:30" means guests are invited for drinks at 7pm and guests will be seated for dinner at 7:30pm. It is RUDE to arrive early. You say 'Mr & Mrs Lee are just finishing dressing and should be down any moment', and offer them a drink after you take their coats.

\*\* When confronted with situations between Mr & Mrs Lee, you must not get involved. 'Not to my knowledge, ma'am'. 1. If you say 'YES', you and Mr. Lee are in trouble. 2. If you say 'NO', you are lying. Never come between a Husband and Wife. When asked to decide/ break a tie/ deadlock/ give an opinion: look at them, with a twinkle in your eyes and say 'I think you are both right!'

### **When a houseguest is asked to leave:**

Mr. Lee informs you that Mr. White is no longer required (welcome) for dinner, wants him to leave immediately, and wants you to take care of the matter.

Knock. Door open, 'May I have a private word with you, sir?' Yes. Door closes.

'I'm very sorry to have to tell you this. Mr. Lee has asked me to inform you that he does not wish for you to attend dinner tonight. He would like you to leave as soon as possible.' But... Why... 'I don't know sir. I'm very sorry. May I suggest that I have a meal sent up to your room, I can help

you pack your bags and arrange for a cab to take you to the station once the others have gone in for dinner. I'm very sorry.' follow through.

### **Groping Guests**

If someone tries to fondle/ grab you, spill on him or her if possible, step back and glare at the person. When the commotion focuses on you, say 'I felt a strange hand on my leg' or 'someone grabbed my leg!'

Mr Lee 'Sir, may I have a private word with you?' 'I've just been informed that Mr. Brown has made advances towards one of the staff.' Mrs. Lee may be more sympathetic - tell her the entire story if needed (rather than Mr. Lee). Handle it right away.

An employer who makes advances must be informed that you enjoy your job, but are there only as a butler. If it does not stop immediately - you must find a new job.

### **Prying Guests** (i.e.: the brother-in-law, Mrs. Lee's brother)

Hello Weedon, how are you today? 'Very well, thank you.' He begins to discuss expensive items in the home. 'Yes sir, that was in the newspapers' to issues of public knowledge. But issues of a private nature need to be handled very carefully with as little information and body language as possible. 'That is something only Mr/ Mrs Lee can answer, let me get him/ her for you, sir.' Oh no... that's not necessary... please don't... Get away and inform Mr/ Mrs Lee about the questions. 'Excuse me sir but I must check on (staff/ meal prep/ anything).'

### **Drunken Guests** (at the dinner table)

When you notice others are bothered by a drunken guest, go to Mr. Lee and quietly say 'Sir, I think that one of your guests is upsetting some of the others.' 'Deal with it.' Go to the sideboard and pick up a bottle of wine that is corked (either currently being served or for the next course). Show the label to Mr. Lee and confirm the wine selection - this throws the guests off track. Put the bottle back on the sideboard and slowly walk around the table - checking glasses and all the usual things. When you stop to rest near the door, you pretend that you hear the phone ringing. Leave the dining room and find 2 members of staff (male for male guests, female for women). Inform them of the situation - have them standing outside the door to help prevent the guest from re-entering the party. Return to dining room, quietly tell the guest that he has a very important phone call outside, 'please follow me'. If they are not agreeing, pick up their glass and lead them with the 'carrot' out of the room, close the doors. Immediately tell them that you are sorry, but you brought them out on a pretense. 'Apparently other guests are upset and Mr. Lee has asked that you leave.' Try to keep him out of the dining room 'Mr Lee does not want to see you right now.' DO NOT USE FORCE. Seat guest, serve coffee. If driving ask for keys 'so I may bring your car around for you.' Pocket keys and call a cab. Never use Mr. Lee's car - he may become ill while in transit. In a nice way explain how much more convenient will be for him to return by cab. Have a member of staff follow behind in his car and return in the cab (if clean).

In the meantime, couvert is removed saying ' Mr. Brown has taken ill - it seems he has been on an anti-biotic all day.' To Mrs. Brown 'would you like to return with your husband or stay at the party?'

**Mr Lee is drunk:** do nothing until: 1. He passes out, have members of staff carry him out (in his chair). 2. Mrs. Lee asks you to have him leave the room.

### **Unexpected/ Unwanted Guest** (as guests arrive for a dinner party)

A stranger arrives at the door, explain that Mr Lee does not see anyone without an appointment and he will have to schedule that by phone. Shut the door on him if you need to consult Mr Lee (do not let a stranger in the house for any reason).

When Mr Green arrives unexpectedly (we know him), welcome him in, take his coat and direct him away from the guests to a quiet room. Explain that 'we do have a dinner party tonight, I'm sorry, but you are not on the guest list.' Oh, I'm sorry - I didn't know... I'll leave now... 'No, Mr Lee would be most unhappy if I didn't offer you a drink. May I fetch a glass of champagne before I inform Mr Lee of your arrival?' No - don't tell him. 'Sir.' with a nod. Leave the room and inform

Mr Lee - he may need to see Mr Green. No. 'I'm so sorry but Mr Lee is unable to see you tonight, may I freshen your glass before you leave?' You told him?? I said not to.. 'Sir, it's the rule of the house. I must inform Mr Lee of anyone important who enters the house.' Give him a few minutes to finish his drink. Return with his coat over your arm and say 'I'm sorry sir but I'm about to announce the guests to dinner'. I guess I have to leave now... 'Sir.'(nod). Escort him out the door. If he arrived by cab & mentions it - call one for him. The butler can always ask what their mode of transport is: 'May I ask, how did you arrive sir?' 'May I call you a cab sir?'

### **Pilfering Guests**

Immediately tell Mr. Lee that 'I saw Mr Brown absentmindedly put/ slip one of your snuffboxes into his pocket. He could say no/ leave it (a game)/ yes - handle it. 'Right sir.' Next time you see Mr. Brown in alone (ASAP) say 'Excuse me sir, but I couldn't help noticing your interest in Mr Lee's snuff box collection. When you have finished examining those on display, he has a further collection he would be delighted to show you. Of course, the set of English Kings are his favorite.' (Henry IIIIV is in his pocket.) If it returns you have done your job. If not, tell Mr Lee 'Mr Brown has not returned your snuff box.'

\*\* If anything is EVER missing, tell Mr/ Mrs Lee NOW - staff are the first to be accused. You have to trust your staff - you hired them.

When apologizing to a guest ~ you are sorry that you are the one that has the duty of an unpleasant task.

Whenever you see a 'wallflower', go up to one of the hosts and say that 'that young lady needs someone to talk to... is not mixing with anyone...' Don't leave anyone off on their own - help them get acquainted. It's possible they were sent as a company rep and don't know anyone at all.

If/ when a new guest is coming to dinner/ visit, phone their butler/ secretary and explain 'This is Ms. Asper the butler. I am calling because the Lee's will be enjoying the company of M/M Jones on the xx of YYY. If I read you the menu, will you be so kind as to advise me of their likes and allergies?' If you cannot contact someone, go around with the table plan and menu during reception.

### **Strange Head in the Bed**

You ask 'Breakfast in your room as usual, sir?' He NEVER has breakfast in his room. Yes. You tell the chef that Mr. Lee is VERY hungry. The chef prepares a huge breakfast, you take it to your office, where you have extra dishes and divide the food between 2 plates and serve. If he thinks you don't know that someone else is there, return with an extra cup & saucer. If he says they will be down for breakfast, you tell the chef there is an extra person for breakfast - nothing more.

### **Multiple Trays at the Same Time**

If you need to wake 5 people in different rooms at 7.30, 1-7.20, 2-7.25, Mr. Lee at 7.30, 4-7.35, 5-7.40. 'It's just before 7.30, ma'am.' 'It's just past 7.30, sir.' Wake women earlier if you must - it takes them longer to get ready (generally). Check pantry book for habitually late guests - wake them first.