



BUTLER 2.0

Modern-day millionaires are calling on experienced household managers to organize their busy lives.

BY MATT ALDERTON

Gary James wasn't always a butler. A track-and-field star in his native England, he loved nothing more than running, jumping and competing. Back then, his life wasn't about serving; it was about striving, sweating and sprinting.

But at age 21, an injury sidelined James' track aspirations and put him on a different career path. After tending bar on a cruise ship for a year, he took a job at the esteemed Broadmoor Hotel, a five-star, five-diamond luxury hotel in Colorado Springs, Colo. There, he trained not in calisthenics, but in the fine art of five-star service.

Upon leaving the Broadmoor, James moved back to Europe, where he eventually answered an ad for an estate manager in England. He interviewed for the position and a month later was running a 6,000-acre British estate as a combination chef, groundskeeper and butler.

"From there, I ended up working for people like Roger Waters of Pink Floyd, running his estates in Switzerland, Greece, America and England," James says. "Then I moved back to the United States and worked for Antonio 'LA' Reid, who was CEO of Arista Records at the time."

In his current role, James manages a six-story brownstone in New York City, where his employer regularly rubs elbows with noted political and social scions. "It's not every day that you get to sit down and talk to Madonna, or have tea with the Dalai Lama," he says. "These are things I've done."

James is part of a new class of modern-day butlers who do much more than "buttle." Called "household managers" in most circles, they're responsible for oiling virtually every cog in the machine that is their employer's everyday life. They're personal assistants and project managers, housekeepers and concierges—everything and anything their employers need them to be. And while many of them enjoy the perks that come with working for an

affluent family, most acknowledge that their job isn't about privilege—it's about service.

"It's about making your employer's life work," James says. "They're busy people and they don't want to be bothered with day-to-day things. You take care of all that for them. You just make it happen."

Toward a Happier Home

These days, a lot of families need someone to "make things happen," says Steven Laitmon, principal of The Calendar Group, a domestic staffing firm. High-net-worth families are no exception.

"There are a lot of headaches with home ownership," Laitmon says. "And when you're living at a certain level, the headaches can be exponential. If you own a 30-acre property and a 50,000-square-foot home, you're going to need somebody to take care of it."

Robert Wynne Parry agrees. As founder of RWP Solutions, a boutique lifestyle management consultancy and placement firm that specializes in domestic and high-end corporate administrative positions, he sees people every day who run large corporations and philanthropies, and yet struggle to maintain their homes. "These people have multimillion-dollar homes and they don't have the time to enjoy them," he says.

But it's more than just having a large house that demands hiring a household manager. It's having a large life.

"People wake up and say, 'I'm killing myself at the office. I don't have the free time—the downtime—that I want. What am I doing this for?'" Laitmon says. "Household managers are a luxury that allows families to enjoy their downtime in a much more efficient way. People get bogged down sometimes and they don't realize how to delegate; they don't realize that they can hire somebody to deal with the minutiae for them."



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Robert Wynne Parry, founder, RWP Solutions

Household Heroes

Details are what good household managers do best, according to Parry. “It’s like living in a fabulous hotel,” he says. “If you have multiple residences throughout the world, it makes sense to hire a professional to tend to them. It’s like hiring a general manager of a hotel to manage it for you, and for that manager, it’s all about paying attention to details.”

While household managers do different things for different families, most are capable of handling a variety of tasks. With an annual salary that averages between \$60,000 and \$150,000, they can play the role of a traditional butler—greeting guests, answering phones and overseeing table service in the dining room. They also can serve as valets or oversee a wide range of tasks, from grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning and entertaining to maintaining wine cellars and protecting personal art collections.

For businesspeople, household managers can function as personal assistants, helping them marry their home and work lives. And, for families with multiple homes and properties, experienced household managers can function as their owner’s representative, serving as their eyes, ears and voice during construction and remodeling projects.

Increasingly, families are looking for household managers of the high-tech variety—modern butlers, not outmoded ones. “People today want smart homes,” James says. “They want you to be able to use a Mac, they want you to be able to use a PC and they like it if you can use Outlook and Entourage.” It is also important for the household manager to be able to manage detailed travel between many countries, working closely with assistants in the offices all around the world, he says. “It’s really about making sure that the life the employer has is the life the employer wants.”

Primarily, they want you to be as connected as they are. “Technology allows you to work more and from anywhere,” Laitmon says. “Our clients’ lives necessitate traveling between homes and working in different places, and they need somebody who can keep the moving pieces in place for them.”

Staffing Secrets, Solutions

The adage suggests that good help is hard to find, but it’s not impossible. In fact, many great household managers belong to one of myriad guilds that can be found in both the United States and Europe, such as the International Guild of Professional Butlers, the Guild of Professional

English Butlers and the International Guild of Butlers and Housemanagers. Such guilds are responsible for recruiting, training and placing household managers, and are a great resource for families who are looking for qualified domestic help.

Reputable domestic staffing agencies, of which there are dozens in the United States, also are good resources. “A reputable agency for me is one that tries to satisfy the necessary meeting of minds between an employer and the putative butler,” says Steven Ferry, a former butler and chairman of the International Institute of Modern Butlers.

Ferry and his contemporaries offer these tips for families who are looking for a service-minded savior:

■ **Identify your needs.** Families must study their homes and analyze their lifestyles in order to determine the help they need. “Conjure up a job description,” Parry suggests. “Do a feasibility study of your home.” In other words, figure out what is and isn’t working in your life, and then find someone who’s ideally suited for filling those particular holes. “You should really try to take a mental and emotional inventory of your life,” Laitmon adds.

■ **Choose a dependable agency partner.** The best staffing agencies will consider your needs, connect you with only a few of the very best candidates and be available

for you 24/7. What’s more, Laitmon insists, they’ll have a track record of successful placements. “Reputation is important,” he says, “and references are very important. Do your due diligence.”

■ **Remember, character is key.** Chemistry is perhaps the most important thing to look for in a household manager, the best of whom are able to anticipate their employer’s needs. “Experience is secondary,” Ferry says. “It’s better to start with someone who has the right mindset and attitude, and then train them.”

■ **Take a trial run.** Before you hire someone, invite the candidate to work for you for a week, Ferry suggests. “Pay them and see how things go,” he says.

Finally, consider running your home like a business. “If you have a CEO looking after your company, why don’t you have one looking after your estates?” Ferry says. “A butler is the CEO of Home Inc.”

Still, houses are homes. All household managers are charged with making them efficient. The very best also make them warm. **YL**

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A LA CARTE BUTLER

Everyone can use butler service sometimes and the need for additional help only increases as you or your loved ones age. As time goes by, dealing with changing medical, legal and financial necessities have the potential to become stressful and confusing. While most people want to maintain as much independence as possible, they also might find that they no longer want to deal with such issues. Fortunately, there are services available that can help resolve this dilemma.

For example, **Wells Fargo Private Bank Elder Services** is a wealth and life management service that provides concierge-like services to help with additional needs faced by our clients or their family members as they age.

Experienced professionals can form a safety net to help you or your loved ones stay self-reliant and maintain your lifestyle. These readily available services range from assistance

with healthcare management, financial and legal matters, and even everyday needs. As part of the planning process, you or your family members who require additional assistance in managing their life and wealth concerns participate in the design and application of the desired services, resulting in a customized solution based on individual preferences.

As you look ahead, it’s possible that you might find that you or your family members require more than those household management needs met by a traditional butler. The team at Wells Fargo Private Bank Elder Services will listen to your needs, take the time to understand your unique situation, then help identify and coordinate any services you might need, ultimately offering peace of mind.

To learn more about Wells Fargo Private Bank Elder Services solutions, talk to your relationship manager.