

Dema Chronicle

House Manager Spotlight
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Debrina Woods



How did you get started in Household Management?

DW: It was actually a fairly smooth transition. I started out as a fine restaurant owner in the Caribbean and later, Food and Beverage manager for premium luxury hotel properties whose policy was to cross-departmentally train all their managers. Thus, in addition to providing 5 star formal dining service, I was also introduced to high end luxury 5 star hotel standards of housekeeping.

Then I ventured into luxury super yachting where service standards are extremely high and where I was exposed to the "NePlusUltra" of luxury lifestyle. From there, I served as flight crew on a private 727 jet aircraft for a young billionaire, which provided its own unique set of service challenges, only now I was called upon to do it globally and at 30,000 ft.

Further, I had the extreme good luck to work with professional and very skilled classically trained Butler's who were generous with sharing their service knowledge and who ultimately inspired me to reach for the top and transition myself into private service, estate management.

Do you have any formal training or degrees for household management?

DW: I taught formal fine dining and wine service for many years in my restaurants. When I went into private yachting and VIP private Large Jet (727) aviation both industries require silver service training and have extremely high expectations and I had wonderful examples of professional fine Butler service to witness on a daily basis.

You see, to experience service done right...is a true art form and something to be very proud to aspire to. If I had actually PLANNED to do this as a career rather than developing into it... I would certainly have invested myself with some of the very fine Butler and Estate Management training, like that offered by the Charles McPherson Academy or The Butler Bureau.

What have been some of the more difficult situations that you have run into on the job?

DW: Well, I could tell you...but then I would have to Kill you (ha-ha) Seriously, in regard to what we see and hear in our positions and what REALLY goes on in these households CONFIDENTIALITY IS PARAMOUNT not only are we often legally bound not to disclose but our employers have a perfect and absolute right to their privacy and I completely support that. Again, discretion is the Estate Manager/Butlers golden rule, staying mum is crucial to job success. "Good secrets. Bad secrets... Exciting secrets... Many secrets... They're all locked away in my little mind".

Domestic Estate Managers Association

What type of principal or homeowner do you prefer to work for?

DW: Ideally, One where the checks DON'T bounce.... HA-HA no just kidding... Personally, I love the challenge presented by managing multiple households both domestically and internationally with owners who entertain semi frequently and travel by private yacht and personal jet aircraft. Also, who are, if not appreciative their staff, at least are NOT abusive.

What direction would like to see the domestic industry go in for the future?

DW: First of all no matter what is ahead for us in the world the continued need for THIS LEVEL of fine personal service WILL ALWAYS EXIST....can you believe that even in these troubled and insecure financial times that there is an actual SHORTAGE of well trained and desirable staff available in luxury yachting!!! Let alone on private estates.

Thus I seek to inspire others to enter this unique industry and have as recently as this summer, introduced some very talented young into to super luxury yachting and they are now based in the Caribbean making more money than they ever thought possible at their age and learning skills that may propel them into the future of land based estate need in the future.

What are your goals for the future?

I am VERY proud to be in personal service it has provided me with an outstanding income on a par with a CEO and I work in beautiful surroundings among bright and super successful people and am challenged creatively daily...so to answer you, I would like to see the industry continue to reach out and offer opportunities to those willing to acquire an air of professionalism, sophistication, true sincerity towards their position and the enthusiasm to drive them into and onward in this wonderful field of endeavor.

What are your interests and hobbies?

DW: Besides my total dedication to my work...I am a sister of the seas who has been to the Big Blue and back, felt the bite of the back spray of a wave waiting for the next set to come in and have been at home in the high altitudes ...

So what's next...maybe playing the back nine on the moon or skiing down the red sands of Mars...Tomorrows Promise is Limitless...so I say make the most of life while you have it....and be nice to everyone all along the way!

Our Sincere Gratitude is extended to Debrina for her time
and the efforts that she has afforded to DEMA.

Sincerely,

Matthew Haack and Michael Wright