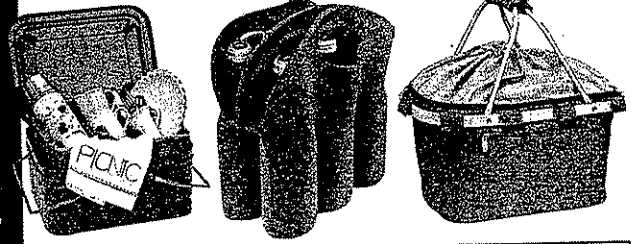


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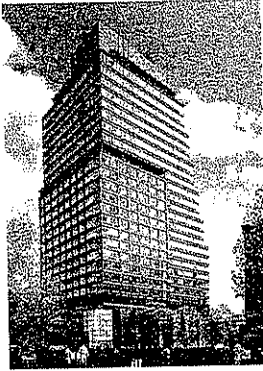
Friday, August 10, 2007

DAILY NEWS

Practical and portable picnics



*Church & Real Estate: A Harlem developer who partners with the power of prayer



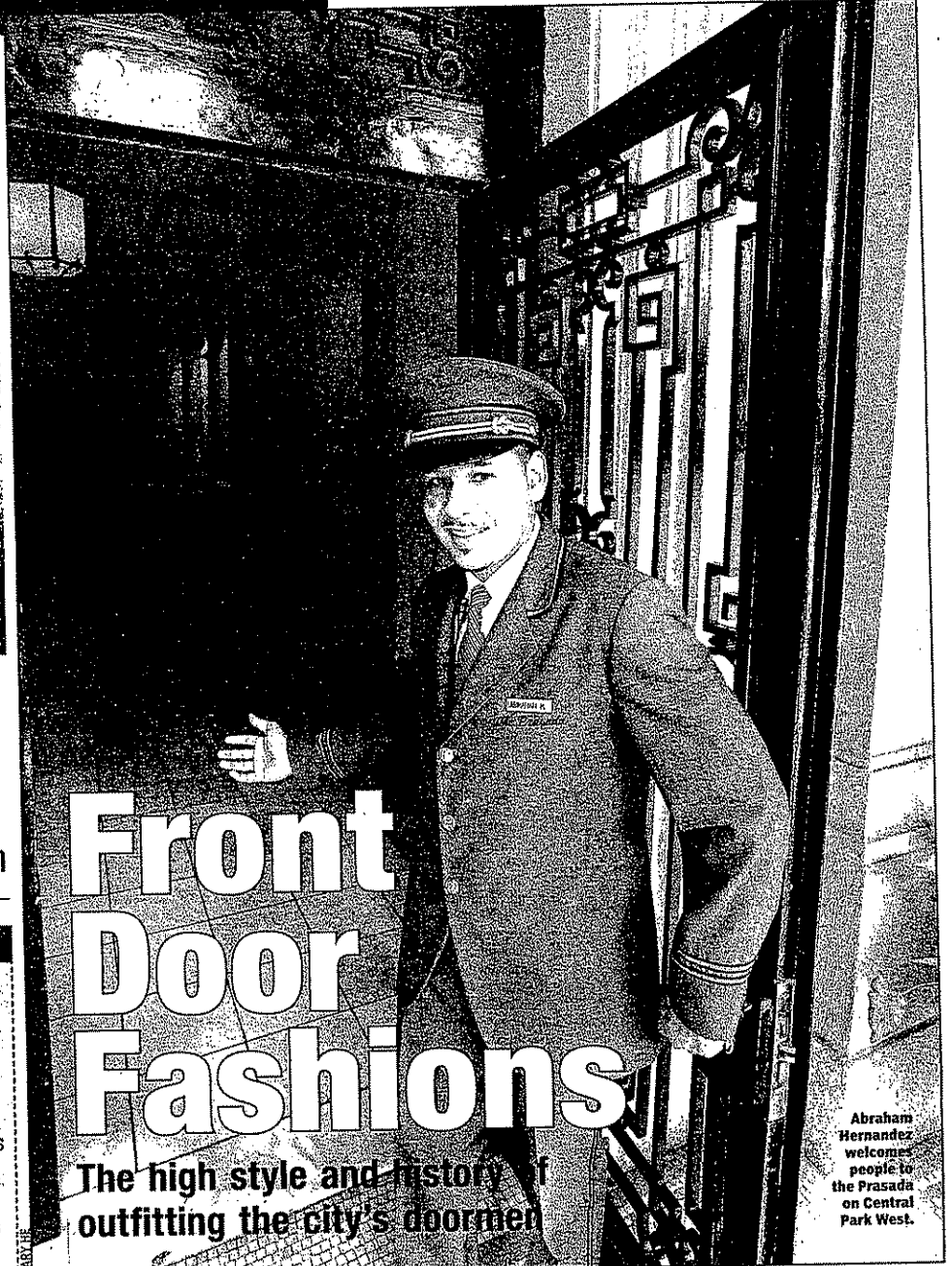
*The Closer: Top chef **Todd English** cooks it up by the Flatiron

FEATURED INSIDE

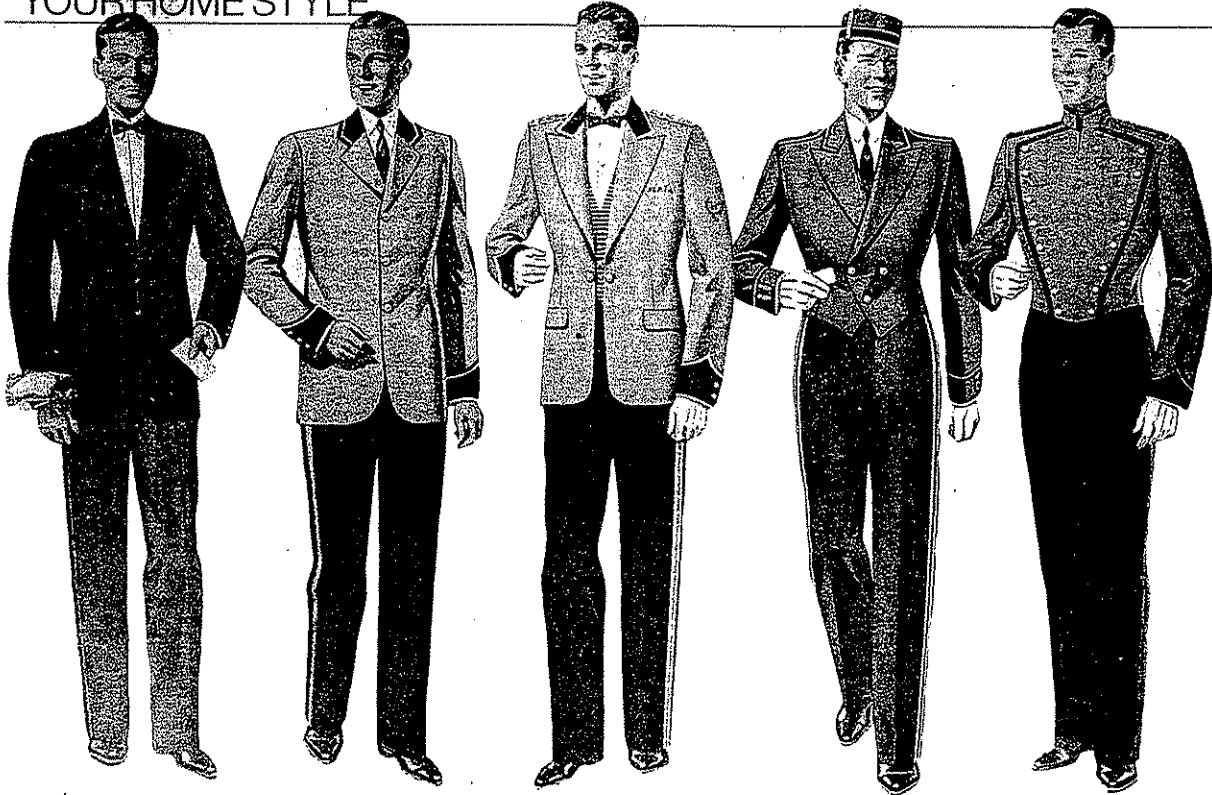
- **On Top of the World Communities** brings a lifestyle of choices to **Ocala, Florida**.
- **The Breakers, in Aventura by the Sea**, boasts waterfront homes with ocean views.
- **Beazer Homes**, joins the Family Fun Fest this weekend in Florida, NY.

Front Door Fashions

The high style and history of outfitting the city's doormen



Abraham Hernandez welcomes people to the Prasada on Central Park West.



Satin lapels and a bowtie for a 1980s lounge lizard feel.

The Benny Goodman and the leader of the big band look.

The Officer Valet doorman with a satin-striped vest.

Bellhop-accentuated waist for the younger figure.

The theater usher for the steek at heart.

By Jason Sheftell

Front Door Fashion

The family who has outfitted NYC's most prestigious doormen for 115 years

DAILY NEWS Friday, August 10, 2007 nydailynews.com



Stuart Busch, daughter Jennifer and sister Seralie run the shop at I. Buss, New York City's oldest uniform company; it was founded by Busch's grandfather in 1892.

When children first see New York, they're shell-shocked by the mammoth buildings lining Central Park West, Fifth Ave. and Park Ave. It's their first glimpse of Manhattan real estate.

Then they see the doorman, an amenity created by turn-of-the-century building owners for wealthy buyers. They see stripes on the doorman's pants, braids on his jacket sleeve, and the military dark-brimmed hat. They watch him charge up with whistle in hand to hail a cab. They see him opening and closing the car door, and marching back to the entrance to another grand building of old New York.

Ever since there were doormen in New York, I. Buss Uniform Co. has been hand-tailoring their outfits. Founded in 1892, the fourth-generation family business is still hard at work designing, supplying, tailoring and maintaining the outfits worn by the men who work the entrance and elevators at New York's top residential buildings.

"People don't realize that every doorman uniform is hand-measured, hand-cut and hand-sewn to fit the body of those who wear it," says Stuart Busch, whose grandfather Ike started the company, selling wool blankets to warm the laps of horse and buggy drivers. "At least every doorman uniform we've ever made."



GARY HE

Maybe that's why they've lasted this long. Out of their E. 24th St. showroom office, I. Buss provides and manufactures the outfits for the doormen of more than 100 buildings, including the Dakota, London Terrace, 101 Central Park West, 100 W. 57th St., the Carnegie House and more than 40 Park and Fifth Ave. buildings.

"A doorman in uniform is a sign of great authority," says Busch's sister Seralie, who has handled the business's finances since the late 1950s. "They are there for security."

Throughout their long history, I. Buss has outfitted the New York Police Department, the U.S.



The pilot look was popular in the 1970s.

The French gendarme adds a European charm.

The military greatcoat for the classic doorman.

Formalwear for the subdued effect.

The Victorian coachman adds extreme elegance.

Postal Service, U.S. Army officers during World War I, the Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center and Coca-Cola drivers.

"Up to the late 1960s, every bottling company had a uniform," says Stuart, who goes out to hand-measure the uniform recipients until 11 p.m. at night. "They used to come to us to get measured, but now it's part of our service package."

That service package includes uniform design, measurement, hand-sewing, machine fusing, delivery and cleaning. The company rents as well as sells their uniforms. In the 1950s, most buildings provided their doormen with winter and summer suits.

"Now it's more of a rugged lightweight wool stretch fabric for all year round," says Stuart. "Styles haven't changed too drastically over the years, but the fabrics have."

With the current real estate boom in full swing, the elder Buschs are allowing Stuart's daughter Jennifer to focus on uniform design as a company selling point. Recently, the younger Busch signed on such new developments as 200 Chambers and Barlizon 63. She also just inked I. Buss as the outfitters for the Empire State Building's new uniform redesign, with a tie she personally designed becoming the signature piece of the official building suit.

"I usually go and get a feel for a lobby and a building's vibe," says Jennifer, an art photographer as well as uniform designer. "We create looks that blend with a building or contrast it."

According to Jennifer, sleeker suit types and Nehru jackets have become the choice of new construction projects, while older buildings prefer traditional looks. She's quick to point out the difference between a uniform and well-made suit.

"When a famous fashion designer is brought on to design a uniform for a new hotel or building, it's clear they know fashion, but not uniforms," she says. "A uniform has to be functional, not too flowing or lightweight. And it can't cut into the person or fit too snug."

The cost can also be a factor. A custom-made-to-measure jacket and trouser combination for a typical doorman costs up to \$350.

"That really isn't much at all for a hand-cut garment," says Stuart, whose daughter points out a custom-made suit at Brioni can cost up to \$3,000. "Competition keeps the price down. Otherwise, these outfits would cost a lot more."

Maybe that's why doormen always smile. It's the custom-made suit. See, they get perks, too. —To contact I. Buss Uniforms, call 212-529-4655.



Eric Quinones (above) mans the door at 30 Waterside Plaza; Rafael Pajares (far l.) greets people at 14 Horatio St.; on the job (l.) at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.