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THE NEW YORK TIMES – METRO SECTION – January 17, 2010 THE LATEST (OR NOT) IN DOORMAN FASHION

By **ROBIN FINN** special to the *NY Times*



If clothes make the man, what to make of a doorman in a \$500 uniform that may or may not include top hat, tails, white gloves, golden epaulets, an equestrian jacket, embroidered building logos, and pants with a tuxedo stripe that is not necessarily black?

A century ago, most New York doormen were similarly attired, as throwbacks to liveried servants. These days, the regalia of the city's thousands of doormen (women are still a rarity) varies wildly. The hipster trend downtown is uniformless more imagewear; at the Empire State Building, the uniforms are dyed the precise shade of gray as the marble in the elevators.

Doormen have been around ever since the Romans coined a job title — ostiarius — for the slaves who guarded their doors. New York's full-time doormen, who earn base pay of \$31,000 to \$40,000 a year plus overtime and holiday bonuses that can reach \$10,000, have been the focus of a 1995 *Seinfeld* episode, a saucy 1997 documentary (Dree Andrea's "All Visitors Must Be Announced: The Lives and Loves of Doormen in New York City") and a 2005 book ("Doormen," by Peter Bearman).

The book, by the director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy at Columbia University, concludes that uniforms, so long as they are not gaudy, can foster a feel-good relationship between tenants and doormen by making it clear who serves whom and creating an aura of crime deterrence.

The men who mind the doors do have one widespread plea: Spare us the white gloves!

And individuality is occasionally an issue. Jennifer Busch, a uniform designer, with NAUMD Member Company I. Buss Uniforms, was recently asked by an Upper West Side doorman if she would customize his pants so they would hang on his hips, allowing his underwear to show. She declined.

Clearly fashion is evident in Doorman attire, and the industry helping the building owners better acclimate to the newest styles!

Slideshow click here: http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2010/01/17/nyregion/0117-DOORMEN_2.html

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