The Lexus ES
INSIDER’S GUIDE TO
VALET PARKING

THE LINGO • THE FIVE COMMON PARKING PERSONALITIES
PROPER TIPPING IN POLITE SOCIETY • PARKING DO’S AND DON’TS
THE INSIDE SCOOP ON PARKING IN MAJOR U.S. CITIES
GETTING THE CHERRY SPACE UP FRONT
The Lexus ES
INSIDER’S GUIDE TO VALET PARKING
It’s a moment mixed with satisfaction, personal pride and, let’s face it, more than a little nervous anticipation. You’re behind the wheel of the new car when suddenly the first critical test presents itself with five innocent little words: Pull Forward for Valet Parking.

Scenes from a hundred Hollywood movies flash through your head. Guys like Sinatra made it look so easy, tossing their keys to the valet. They also got the primo spots, of course. But what about now?

What about you? What strikes the fancy of today’s valets? Or more to the point, what on earth will they think of your new car?

Let’s return to that question in a moment. First, a quick primer. Valet parking today is no longer just for red carpets, restaurants and country clubs. As greater convenience becomes a factor in our increasingly active lives, the car attendant is now on hand at airports, health clubs, hair salons, sporting events, doctors’ offices, even grocery stores and cinemas.
According to the National Parking Association, an estimated 200,000 men and women currently work as parking attendants in the United States. That’s a lot of red bow ties!

As the practice of using valet services grows, so do drivers’ expectations. “Nobody, especially an owner of a luxury vehicle, wants to pull up and give his or her car to just anyone,” says Martin Stein, the National Parking Association’s executive director. “You expect a level of comfort knowing you’ll be taken care of. You want your car back exactly the way you left it.”

The good news is mishaps are extremely rare. “Most valets are exceptional drivers, because all they do is drive cars all day,” says John Van Horn, editor and publisher of Parking Today, an industry trade magazine. “They also assume a ton of risk by taking possession of your automobile, and the last thing they want is an expensive claim.”

Still, we wanted to discover firsthand what happens once a car disappears into “Valet Land.” What are the insider secrets valets don’t share with anyone? Are there parking do’s and don’ts that savvy drivers need to know? Then there’s the most loaded question of all: Who gets the coveted spots up front and why?

Fortunately, we did much of our research behind the wheel of the new Lexus ES 350, and while you’ll need to read on to see exactly what happened, let’s just say Ol’ Blue Eyes couldn’t have done it better himself.

Way to make an entrance, baby!

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**THE LINGO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENJI</strong></td>
<td>A hundred bucks. The grand-daddy of gratuities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIKER</strong></td>
<td>A valet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOLY ROLLER</strong></td>
<td>As in window roller; a stinky car.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IGOT</strong></td>
<td>A valet’s dibs on a hot ride (“I got the new ES.”).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>JEWEL CASE</strong></td>
<td>The premier parking spot (“Yo! Keep the Lexus in the Jewel Case.”).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KIDLOCK</strong></td>
<td>A slowdown caused by diaper changes and lost toys.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MANAGER’S SPECIAL</strong></td>
<td>(a.k.a. Manny Spector) Overrules an Igot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PTP</strong></td>
<td>Promise to pay notation (and a legal IOU) on tickets from cashless customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PULL</strong></td>
<td>The act of retrieving a claim ticket.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PULPIT</strong></td>
<td>The podium where the head valet ministers to customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WALKAROUND</strong></td>
<td>Inspecting an arriving car for preexisting dings and dents.</td>
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# GREAT MOMENTS IN VALET HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>First public parking garage opens in Boston.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Carhops from The Brown Derby restaurant in Los Angeles park celebrity coupes and roadsters in vacant lots near Hollywood and Vine. The invention of the Cobb Salad is an afterthought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>The parking meter is patented. Fortunately for valets, the device can’t smile or open car doors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>The city of Hoboken, New Jersey, unveils a $6.2 million robotic parking garage that allocates spaces and retrieves vehicles with an automated system straight out of the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>San Francisco Airport introduces first airport valet parking service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Future film star Bill Paxton works briefly as a valet at the Beverly Hills Hotel.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Herb Citrin Parking Concessions opens at Lawry’s The Prime Rib in Beverly Hills. Valets wear military uniforms without insignia, and an industry standard — not to mention a fashion statement — is born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>A Manhattan parking attendant wins $149 million in a Mega Millions drawing, making him the largest-ever single-jackpot winner in New York. At the time, he has 78 cents in his bank account.</td>
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</tbody>
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## The Lexus ES Insider’s Guide to Valet Parking
The freedom to park one’s car with confidence is one of those unalienable rights we often take for granted in America. But with so many parking options – long-term, short-term, metered, loading-only, VIP – it’s often a relief to turn that task over to a professional. What follows is an inside peek at valet parking from coast-to-coast, with straightforward counsel from the attendants themselves. Be advised, however, all automobiles are not created equal. Lexus drivers still enjoy royal treatment even in the most democratic societies.
Hang onto all those tired clichés about the Windy City. Not one of them holds a blown-out candle to the reality of working the valet stand at The Drake Hotel in Chicago in mid-February.

"There are gusty days when the corner of Walton and Michigan feels like the coldest spot on earth," says Ulyses Varela, one of 25 parking attendants at the landmark 1920 hotel. "Personally, I love it. It makes you run faster."

The Chicago valet scene is a world unto itself. A blustery one, at times, and blazingly hot at others. But it’s also rich with unexpected rewards. Yes, there are days when die-hard attendants like Varela are out with scrapers and hairdryers clearing ice from customers’ cars. "It’s times like those," he says, "when I really appreciate the cars with heated drivers’ seats." But more often, the job is an excuse to savor Chi-town’s famously down-to-earth personality.

"We see it all — and I mean everything," laughs Everette Yoakum, who’s been parking cars 16 of his 35 years. He now oversees 1,000 spaces as garage manager for the Hyatt Regency Chicago. "Mostly, it’s ‘Welcome back, sir. Great to see you again.’ But our drivers have found

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**A TIP FROM THE VALET**

"They call it the valet key for a reason, so use it," says Ben Akbary, president of L.A.’s Quality Parking Services. "We’ll take responsibility for your car, but you’re responsible for locking things away safely."

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"With weather like this, you can’t really be halfway about parking cars. You either have the calling or you don’t."

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**Chicago in Winter**

Daytime: 22˚  
Night: 8˚
snakes in cars, cars so dirty you can’t squeeze inside, and once or twice a year, someone will almost forget the baby is asleep in the backseat. Our valets make sure everybody – and everything – remains safe and sound.”

That includes the vehicles, of course. And spend enough time working a busy establishment in the Loop, and you’ll drive every ride known to man. At a farming convention a few years back, extra-long, many-wheeled machines – including a tractor or two – motored into the Hyatt lot. “The average parking space is eight feet long,” says Hector Moreno, another Hyatt veteran. “Some of that equipment required three times that much space.”

Good thing Chicago valets are famous for their Midwestern can-do attitude. “It’s not just about parking cars,” says Dan Buescher of System Parking, one of the city’s oldest parking companies. “We have valets fixing flats, topping off gas. One of our guys spent four hours tracking down the owner of a lost wallet.”

Perhaps System’s most famous operation is at the space-agey twin structures known as Marina City. The cylindrical complex has 15 floors of parking, with valets accessing vehicles via a chain-and-pulley “manlift” hidden from customers. The building was immortalized in a 1980 movie in which the villain loses control of his car and drives off the garage into the Chicago River.

Lexus owners needn’t worry about something like that happening to their cars. Back at the Drake, Varela insists Chicago valets are a cut above. “With weather like this,” he says, the wind picking up again, “you can’t really be half-way about parking cars. You either have the calling or you don’t.”

Now there’s a cliché we can all live with.
Many are the ways to valet in L.A. In a city where what you drive is as significant as who’s financing your movie or the yoga studio where you practice your asanas, the parking attendant is an omnipresent figure on the famously sprawling cityscape. At supermarkets and movie theaters, concert venues and even churches, the tossing of the keys is an everyday event for many Angelenos.

“Frank Sinatra was the most generous. When people were tipping a dollar tops, he was tipping $20. One night he came in and said to the head guy, ‘How many fellas are working here tonight?’ He said, ‘Four, Mr. Sinatra,’ and Frank handed him four $100 bills.”

Drivers who valet park at the fabulously refurbished Century City mall in Los Angeles get pocket pagers in exchange for their keys. And since this is L.A., the vehicles in waiting may have the complete spa treatment (detailing, fluid checks and other services), while shoppers and moviegoers go about their mall activities. Then, with a press of the pager button, the vehicle is ready for the driver in about five minutes. Soon we’ll be hearing, “Have your valet call my valet!”
A CONVERSATION WITH

HERB CITRIN
FATHER OF VALET PARKING

"You give us your car. We get it back to you safely."

Valet parking may not have started here (nobody knows for certain where the first car jockey took the wheel), but the undisputed father of valet as we know it — the smiles, the uniforms, the white-glove service — is L.A.’s Herb Citrin, 83, who started his parking company 60 years ago with three employees at Lawry’s The Prime Rib on La Cienega Boulevard. Valet Parking Service would eventually grow to 1,500 employees with operations in nearly a dozen cities across America, but Citrin, who sat for a chat with Lexus recently, insists the basic idea still hasn’t changed: “You give us your car. We get it back to you safely.”

How did you first become a car-parking superhero?

My father parked cars back in the ’30s. A month shy of my 16th birthday, I started helping him out. Honestly, it’s the only thing I ever thought
The worst was in August 1965. Marina del Rey was just built, and there was a popular Polynesian restaurant there. One of our valets forgot to set the brake on a vintage 1937 Zephyr in what kids used to call ‘cherry condition.’ It rolled down an incline and ended up in 15 feet of seawater.

What’s your favorite valet story?
For many years, we worked the Academy Awards®, and a number of years ago I decided to go as a guest. I pull up with my wife and see about 60 or 70 valets, all of whom immediately recognize me and wave and start surrounding the car, opening my door, patting me on the back. My wife, meanwhile, is still in the car. She looks out at me getting all the fuss and says, ‘Hey, what am I? Chopped liver?’ I still laugh about that.

Is it true what they say? The bigger the star, the bigger the car, the bigger the tipper?
Not by a long shot. But Frank Sinatra was the most generous. When people were tipping a dollar tops, he was tipping $20. One night he came in and said to the head guy, ‘How many fellas are working here tonight?’ He said, ‘Four, Mr. Sinatra,’ and Frank handed him four $100 bills.

What makes a great valet?
Enthusiasm, grace under pressure and attention to detail. Knowing the names of your regular customers is one thing. Knowing the names of their grandkids, now that’s service.

Did you ever lose a car?
Over the years, everything has happened at least once.

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What was the state of valet parking back then?
In a word, appalling. Valets didn’t know how to greet people. They might open the car door, or they might not. They might look neat, but usually they didn’t. After coming out of the service in ’45, I thought customers deserve better than turning over their cars to some guy in a dirty white smock. My first order of business was to put valets in brand-new uniforms personalized with the name of Lawry’s restaurant, our first account. We became part of the establishment, and the Hollywood establishment, no less.

Words of Herb
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You’ll need to stay up late—very late—to experience the wonders of valet parking in Miami.

“In most cities everything’s dead by 11 p.m., 12 a.m. or 2 a.m. at the latest,” says Jerry South, who runs Towne Park, the city’s premier valet service. “In Miami, people start heading out at 10:30 p.m. or 11 p.m. You’ll find as many valets on the overnight shift as the day shift. We might have eight or 10 valets at a location at 4 a.m., 5 a.m. or 6 a.m.”

This goes to show, the tropical heat doesn’t slow the traffic in a city as famous for its club lines as its tan lines. Not surprisingly, making an entrance at one of the trendier hot spots—say, Nobu or the Mandarin Oriental Hotel’s Azul restaurant—is something of an art form. “Everybody’s a celebrity here,” South says with a smile. “Everybody wants their car up front.”

The trick for valets is to make split-second decisions about whose vehicles go where. Here’s where a little inside-the-valet-world knowledge can serve the driver. It’s not necessarily the biggest or most tricked-out car that gets the showcase spot.
"With 400 or 500 cars coming in a night, we don’t blink at ‘one-of-a-kind’ cars,” says Sergio Hernandez, the head valet at the Mandarin Oriental. “What we like to see are well-maintained cars and drivers who are genuinely considerate people.”

Hernandez says valets like cars that project an air of urbane sophistication. Sleek lines, radiant design elements, you know, that ES 350 look. “Some classic Cuban music on a great sound system doesn’t hurt either,” he says, though he’s quick to add the stereo goes off the moment the car enters the garage.

Being generous also ups your odds. A recent national poll of valet attendants found that Miami drivers are the handsomest tippers in America. Five- and ten-dollar tips are typical, but the sky is the limit for exemplary service. “I’ve seen $500 exchange hands at some places,” South says. “But that’s the tip of a lifetime.”

One thing that sets Miami valets apart is the dedication. The best attendants are full-time pros, not dabblers waiting for their big break in some other field. That’s partly why valet has become a way of life for the city. From South Beach to Coconut Grove, neighborhood delis to the finest boutique hotels, there’s bound to be a uniformed parking jockey waiting to whisk your wheels to safety. "A city like Miami, it’s fast, it’s happening, it’s go, go, go,” South says. "Valets know that what you drive says a lot about how you respond to that energy.”

Just wait till they feast their eyes on that glorious new machine of yours.
Curbside parking in the Big Apple? Fuhgeddaboudit!
Not in a city with official street signs that warn, "Don't even THINK of parking here!" and "No Parking, No Standing, No Stopping, No Kidding!"

Parking in Manhattan inevitably means valeting it, and like all things New York, the valet scene here is faster, bolder and brasher than just about anywhere else.

"On your 'average' night in midtown, we might have two Broadway openings, a major convention in town, a huge fashion event and a game at Madison Square Garden, and a good percentage of those people will be looking for places to park," says Hector Chevalier, a vice president for Central Parking System, which manages 442 parking facilities in the city, including both Yankee Stadium and Shea Stadium and the valet concession at hotels like the Waldorf-Astoria. This translates to 150,000 parking slots, of which 80 percent are valet.

And since all those drivers want their cars in and out in a New York minute, Chevalier and other masters of the Manhattan parking universe work miracles behind the scenes: Century-old stables are repurposed as high-tech auto barns. Hydraulic lifts hoist and stack cars five and six high. Valets race on foot or scooter through oncoming traffic to distant garages.

"The big parking challenge in New York is finding open space, and there's less and less of that every day," says Dennis Cunning, who started parking cars 15 years ago at Lincoln Center and...
to have some luxuries, and with so many vehicles in motion, ES drivers can rest easy knowing that there are more than 100 onboard sensors available to monitor such things as wheel speed, steering angle and even the proximity of an adjacent car – so your valet can keep the focus on returning the car safely.

"New York parking is tough, but it’s also exciting,” says Chevalier, who still carries the first dollar tip he made parking cars at the Fulton Fish Market 22 years ago. "Everybody from the mother of three on a shopping spree to the biggest VIPs on the planet needs parking at one point or another, and we take great pride knowing they’ve given us the responsibility of taking care of their cars.”

But don’t even THINK of parking without getting that claim ticket!

A premium indeed. Many people pay more for parking in Manhattan than people in other cities pay for housing – upwards of $1,000 a month at top-end locations. Naturally, the best valet attendants are rewarded accordingly. "I’ve seen a tailor from a building give a valet a $1,200 suit for looking after his car,” says Cunning. “Or an attendant will hand wash a top customer’s car all year for free knowing he’ll get $10,000 at Christmas.”

Not that New Yorkers don’t love a parking bargain, which explains why the early-bird parking special – in by 6 a.m., out by 6 p.m. – is as much an institution as the Coney Island hot dog and free Met concerts in Central Park. Then again, it’s nice

The Lexus ES Insider’s Guide to Valet Parking

is now a leading parking industry consultant. "That’s why New York City parking is at such a premium.”

A TIP FROM THE VALET

RECOgnize Service When You See IT
If you see a valet
Going the extra mile, say,
Cleaning a windshield or
Just really hustling,
It’s nice to compensate them.
People forget that
In 1960 valets were getting
A buck a car. Well, we’re
Not in 1960 anymore.

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TIP NO 3

SPARE THE CHANGE

One of the oldest tricks is tipping
with change and letting a few
coins fall to the floor. It’s a
less-than-dignified way of showing
the world what a great tipper you are.
Express your gratitude only with the
crispest of paper currency. Think of it
as good karma for your car.

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The first one is definitely the most nerve-racking.

A fashionably dressed businessman pulls up to the podium and eagerly trades his gleaming automobile for a little paper ticket. There’s barely time to thank him – behind his gorgeous vehicle is another and another and … and … HELP!!

Welcome to my debut as a valet parking attendant. To understand the ins and outs of the parking scene, I’ve joined the ranks of L.A.’s finest car jockeys at a posh shopping center in Brentwood, a tony section of the city. The lunchtime rush is underway, and already I’ve forgotten everything I learned at my morning training session. Do I open the passenger door first or the driver’s side? Can I adjust the seat if the customer is seven-feet tall? And what if I get lost in the ninth circle of Valet Land?

The fact is, valet parking isn’t as easy as it looks, mainly...
because making it look effortless is the whole point. A guest should never need to touch the door handle, never wait around for a claim ticket, never feel anything but 100 percent confident turning the keys over to you and never ever wonder, “Where the heck is my car?”

“This one’s yours,” the unruffled garage manager tells me as a silver SUV slows to a halt. Inside my head, I repeat the valet’s mantra: Smile, open door, greet, give ticket, rinse, repeat. And with that, the car is mine. This one has an expensive-looking orchid perched precariously on the passenger’s seat. Navigating down the ramps, I recover a memory from high school driver’s ed class about keeping the hands at “ten” and “two” on the steering wheel. Miraculously, automobile and exotic flower survive.

Much of the day is a blur of bucket seats and concrete stairwells. One car is more expensive than the house I grew up in. Another hasn’t seen a car wash since the disco era. My favorites have features that make the job a cinch: keyless ignition, electroluminescent dashboard lighting, and, joy of joys, a backup camera.

At the end of my day, I spot a luxurious sedan idling near the podium. Ah, the long sleek lines! The luscious curves! The forward-leaning L fronting the handsome grille! An ES! An ES!

“Is that the ’07?” the head valet asks, sotto voce.

“Uh huh,” I say.

“Sweet,” he says, his face finally breaking into a smile. “This baby stays right up front with us.”

You should have seen the look he gave me when I told him it was mine.

The Lexus ES Insider’s Guide to Valet Parking
The cost of parking clearly isn’t what it used to be. In the early 1930s, rates were 15 cents for the first hour, 25 cents for up to 12 hours and $10 for the entire month. Today, the median daily parking rate in America is approaching $15, and the median monthly rate is just shy of $150, according to Colliers International’s 2005 North America Parking Rate Survey.

The survey also ranks the most expensive districts to park for the day as No. 1 Manhattan, No. 2 Honolulu, No. 3 San Francisco, No. 4 Boston and No. 5 Los Angeles.

Fig. 6: Academy Awards, Los Angeles, 1958
THE VALET’S DREAM
HOW TO MAKE YOUR FAVORITE VALET REST EASY

- One-touch starting. How cool is that?!  
- Supple leather-trimmed seats with a natural feel are a welcome relief after a long jog through the lot.
- Heated and ventilated front seats.
- Remote-control power mirrors, puddle lamps and — holy moly! — a backup camera. Thank you, thank you, thank you!
- Sonar-assisted parking? You’re right! This must be a dream.
- Water-repellent glass, rain-sensing wipers and integrated foglamps keep a dark and rainy night in check.

- Headlamps that swivel to light more of the road around a curve! This is one smart car.
- Advanced Thinsulate™ sound absorption. So that’s why it’s so quiet in here.
- Even the steering wheel feels luxurious.
- Electroluminescent gauges are so 21st century.
- A 10-way power-adjustable driver’s seat! Bluetooth® technology that provides voice-activated dialing by name or number! The Mark Levinson® Premium Surround Sound Audio System with 300 watts at 0.1% THD of enveloping, concert-quality sound! I know I’m not supposed to touch, but …!
Valet parking is a science of numbers. The fewer minutes it takes to safely park and retrieve the most vehicles, the more happy customers a business will have. It’s also a ritual that most of us go through from time to time, if not regularly.

Lexus wondered how drivers feel about this transaction which puts one of their biggest investments—their cars—in the hands of complete strangers for hours or days at a time. So the automaker commissioned Kelton Research to survey more than 1,000 Americans about their valet parking habits and concerns, from how much customers tip to what their biggest valet parking worries are.

On average, 61 percent of Americans use valet parking, with Northeasterners relying on it the most (only 27 percent of them say they never use a valet).
Overall, Americans tip valets an average of $3 per vehicle — and 73 percent are confident that when they tip, they are tipping the right person the right amount. Good service definitely counts in this exchange of cash for car. The valet’s friendliness and politeness are by far the biggest factors influencing how large a tip a customer leaves, followed by how bad the weather is — 75 percent say inclement weather increases the gratuity.

Surprisingly, speed isn’t as much of a factor in customer satisfaction. Americans are willing to wait up to an average of nine minutes for the valet to return their cars before becoming impatient! But the younger the driver, the more impatient — nearly half of those ages 18 to 34 will only wait one to five minutes before getting restless.

What’s the biggest fear about valets? That they take the nicest cars out for joyrides (64 percent think it’s at least a possibility). One in two surveyed also worries the car will be returned damaged. Then there’s "car shame," that nagging feeling that the valet is judging one’s vehicle. Interestingly, women are twice as prone to suffer from it as men, just as drivers who are unmarried are twice as likely to be embarrassed by their car as married customers. Fortunately, there’s a 100 percent solution for car shame. It’s the Lexus ES 350.
ODE UPON A VALET TUX

O valiant valet tux,
The glammest of service togs.
A vestment formal and forgiving,
Graceful even on a jog.

Black and white or crimson red,
A bow tie for good measure.
For dapper charioteers well-bred,
We entrust to them our treasure.

From coast to coast and curb to curb,
Toward gallantry it skews.
A uniform that's built to serve
Noble penguins in running shoes.
LEXUS

THE PASSIONATE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

LexusValetGuide.com