

A SUITABLE WARDROBE

WILL BOEHLKE'S THOUGHTS ON DRESSING WITH STYLE.

Sunday, April 26, 2009

Maintenance: Whiter Whites

I get more questions from men looking for quality cleaning and alterations services than I do of any other kind, and after I mentioned [RAVE FabriCARE's](#) Clean by Mail cleaning service a few weeks ago I thought it useful to provide a review of the company's Jermyn Street Shirtcare service. Five dress shirts were dispatched to Scottsdale, Arizona by FedEx and arrived back in San Francisco about two weeks later. They literally looked as good as new.

Now in my book, the world of \$400 and up bespoke shirts has been waiting for someone to take advantage of today's moderately priced air shipping services and offer quality shirt cleaning from a lower cost labor area. That day has arrived.

I use what I consider to be the best service in the Bay area and the results, though good, are definitely not up to [RAVE's](#) standard. I doubt if better work could be done at home by a dedicated laundress.

This is no same day service because the preliminaries take longer than that. [RAVE's](#) process begins by soaking each shirt for 12-24 hours in fluid that loosens oil-based grime from collars and cuffs without the abrasion of scrubbing. Ground-in dirt on the inside of one shirt cuff was completely removed. And the combination of [RAVE's](#) soaking process and its quality laundering also means that [RAVE's](#) finished shirts are noticeably cleaner and brighter.

Another most impressive technique is that after laundering the shirts are completely pressed by hand. They are folded gently instead of being pressed hard, so there are no creases. They are folded in half for shipping instead of into the usual third, so the entire shirt front is uncreased. And they are sealed in a heavy gauge shirt bag with a "built in" cushion of air so they resist wrinkles until they are taken out to be worn.

All is not perfect of course. [RAVE's](#) service is priced at about double the cost of my current service, roughly \$14 a shirt rather than the \$7 I usually pay. Call that a \$2,000 a year premium for remote cleaning which is noticeable. But price is not the real barrier for me. Space is.

You see [RAVE's](#) method of folding means their clean shirts take up twice as much space as the system I use currently, so they simply will not fit into the cabinetry that I use for storage. So much as I might be tempted to redesign my closets, I am going to stick with my current supplier.

But men who have the budget and the space are likely to be very happy that they found [RAVE](#).

