

TRUE QUALITY CLEANING

RIFFS, RANTS AND RUMINATIONS ON THE
SHOCKING STATE OF GARMENT CARE

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR DRY CLEANER OR SHIRT LAUNDRY
ABOUT GARMENT CARE ON RELATIVELY EQUAL TERMS

BY STU BLOOM

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Oh, by the way. If you share this ebook with your dry cleaner, please tell them that they may not plagiarize this copyrighted ebook or its contents for their own commercial use. Or make unsupported and unsupportable claims that they follow all the garment care protocols advocated in this ebook. Or even utter the phrase “We’re just as good as RAVE FabriCARE.”

And, if you do share this ebook with your dry cleaner, and your dry cleaner reacts negatively to the information in this ebook, please tell that no one’s forcing them to change the way they do things. And ask them to hold the vitriol and the name calling. I’m just not interested in their sensitivities.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Why this ebook?

The vast majority of consumers choose their dry cleaner and shirt laundry the same way they buy chicken – a **hasty examination** of the parts that are visible through the plastic wrap, **and a hope and a prayer** that what's hidden under the plastic wrap will be just fine.

For these consumers, this approach to selecting a dry cleaner and shirt laundry is probably more than adequate.

But for the owners of fine garments, well, not so much.

If you were curious enough to download and, hopefully, explore this ebook, you probably fall into the latter category. And you'd probably agree with the notion that proper garment care – or better still, extraordinary garment care – is integral to maintaining the look, feel and smell of your fine garments, and, as a direct consequence, preserving the life of those garments.

Yet, opinions vary across the board as to what constitutes extraordinary garment care. More specifically, many view dry cleaners and their shirt laundries with a disdain that's typically reserved for used car salesmen. And justifiably so. That's because these opinions are often based on personal experiences with dry cleaners and their shirt laundries and on the advice of trusted tailors and shirt makers who have, too often, witnessed the destructive nature of ordinary, bang and hang garment first hand.

There might be some readers of this ebook who may ask themselves this question: why should we lend any credence to your opinion about garment care?

That's a fair question.

So let me venture an answer....

Prior to entering the “dry cleaning business” over 25 years ago, I spent some time researching the “dry cleaning industry” and identifying the fundamentals of true quality cleaning.

I thought that this research would guide us in the right direction. Within a few months, however, I realized that the quality of our product was no better than ordinary – much like the vast majority of the 26,000 ordinary cleaners in the USA today. And that there was a chasm the size of the Grand Canyon between **ordinary cleaning** (where we were) and **extraordinary fabricare** (where we wanted to be).

It was clear to me, that despite all my prior research and the very best of intentions, I had no clue what I was doing – from an operational point of view.

And that’s a embarrassing admission given the fact that I had spent the previous 12 years working for an international management consulting firm in New York City where my functional specialty was strategic planning and implementation!

So I began visiting and studying the operations of some of the most highly respected cleaners in the country. And adapting, implementing and improving upon the best practices I found. This constant cycle – observing, adapting, implementing and improving – has consumed me over the years.

I believe that I’ve learnt a lot about fine garment care over that period of time. So much so, that, with the help of some of the most technically skilled craftspeople in the industry today, I’ve built a garment care institution that’s nationally recognized as one of the nation’s premier dry cleaners by non-compensated, independent, authoritative third parties.

In order to attract and retain clients who appreciate the quality of the work we do, I’ve also spent an inordinate amount of time and resources educating our clients about true quality cleaning. And, in particular, the difference between true quality cleaning®

and ordinary cleaning ® aka bang and hang cleaning.

You could say that our business has been built on a **foundation of education and sharing our knowledge.**

This ebook is a **personal view** of the state of “garment care” today relative to the processes and craftsmanship I have implemented and refined over the past 25 plus years.

And I’m going to share those views with you.



What's in it for you?

So what's the purpose of this ebook?

It's designed to

- Challenge you to think about garment care in a different light.
- Answer many of the questions that run through your mind every time you walk out the door of a dry cleaner or shirt laundry.
- Provide you with the ammunition you might need to talk to your cleaner about any issue related to the care of your fine garments.
- Tip the “balance of power” in your favor relative to your dry cleaner and/or shirt laundry.
- Convince you to consider modifying or even reversing your opinion about some dry cleaners and/or shirt laundries.

Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

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*“The vast majority of consumers choose their dry cleaner and shirt laundry the same way they buy chicken – a **hasty examination** of the parts that are visible through the plastic wrap, and a **hope and a prayer** that what’s hidden under the plastic wrap will be just fine.*

For these consumers, this approach to selecting a dry cleaner and shirt laundry is probably more than adequate.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2010, Seth Godin, best selling author and prolific blogger, published a blog post entitled “The lesson from two lemonade stands” – the perfect metaphor for the state of “professional garment care” today.

Indulge me for a minute but I’m going to repeat it here (with some minor editing)....

“ The first stand is run by two kids. They use Countrytime lemonade, paper cups and a bridge table. It’s a decent lemonade stand, one in a long tradition of lemonade stands. It costs a dollar to buy a cup, which is a pretty good price, considering you get both the lemonade and the satisfaction of knowing you supported two kids.

The other stand is different...When you pull up, the owner of the stand....takes her time and reaches into a pail filled with ice and lemons. She pulls out a lemon. Slices it. Then she squeezes it with a clever little hand juicershe’s in no hurry. Lemonade doesn’t hurry, she says. It gets made the right way or not at all. Then she urges you to take a bit less sugar, because it tastes better that way.

While you’re talking, a dozen people who might have become customers drive on by because it appears to take too long....A few people pull over and wait in line behind you.

Finally, once she’s done, you put \$5 in the jar, because your....lemonade was worth at least twice that. ”

I love that story. Because it summarizes, in my mind, the difference between extraordinary or true quality cleaning and ordinary cleaning in a way everyone can understand.

Fact is – and you probably wouldn't know this from reading this ebook – but **I love** ordinary dry cleaners and shirt laundries.

- **I love** the descriptions of the services they offer. They're all about 3 or 4 lines long and they all seem to say the same thing. It's almost as if the service descriptions on every dry cleaner's website or brochure were copied from the same source.
- **I love** the panic and confusion they exhibit when customers ask specific questions related to the processes they use to care for their garments and the results that can be expected.
- **I love** the way in which they promote their services with price-oriented statements such as "top quality at an affordable price" and "top quality at a fraction of the price of a true quality cleaner."
- **I love** the way they go to war with one another armed with coupons, discounts, specials and loyalty programs.
- **I love** the way they obsess about fast turnaround and low production costs to the exclusion of the quality of their work.
- **I love** the way they spin the truth about the quality of the product they deliver: The best quality in town. Exceptional quality. Exquisite quality. Quality that only we can deliver. Quality that far exceeds industry standards.
- **I love** the way they think that it's possible to be all things to all people – that they can simultaneously care for garments that you're **really fussy** about, garments that you're **less fussy** about, and garments that you're **least fussy** about. And that they can do all that utilizing the same personnel, procedures, processes, technologies, equipment and facilities – all at the same price and within the same time frame.
- **I love** the way they attempt to circumvent the notion that they can't be all things to all people by offering **three levels of quality and price** – their everyday

service, expert service and couture service, or their diamond, platinum and gold service, or their classic, deluxe and signature service, or their basic, classic and artisan service. **For what is essentially the same product..**

- **I love** the way ordinary cleaners “do things their way” while ignoring the personal preferences of their customers.
- **I love** the way they focus on the packaging – logo printed tissue and poly and wood/chrome hangers – to the detriment of the quality of the product inside the poly bag.
- **I love** the way in which they obfuscate the quality of the work they deliver **by focussing on everything other than** the quality of their work – on same day service, next day service, extended hours, drive through service, 24/7 drop off and pickups, doggie biscuits, promotional giveaways, and all the other quality-defecting gimmicks they can conjure up.

I could go on and on. But, I won't. At least not now. You'll get a sense of that as you delve into this ebook.

Ready to get started? Ready to OUTSMART the ordinary dry cleaners? Here are 60 riffs, rants and ruminations on the state of garment care.

They're all relatively short. Hopefully, you'll learn something about the way dry cleaners operate and the way they “care” for your garments.

I had fun writing this ebook. Hopefully, you'll be entertained reading it.

POSITION PAPERS

General

4 types of dry cleaners:
which profile fits your
local dry cleaner?

Dry cleaners can generally be divided into four categories:

- **Value cleaners (discount cleaners)** – poor quality at a discount price
- **Ordinary cleaners (middle market cleaners)** – mediocre quality at a moderate price
- **Wannabe cleaners (illusion cleaners)** – slightly better-than-average quality at an inflated price
- **Extraordinary cleaners (true quality cleaners)** – extraordinary quality at a high price.

At the low end of the spectrum are the **value cleaners**.

Value cleaners (or discount cleaners) know that they have to **extract every penny of cost** from their operations, primarily by minimizing their investment in skilled labor, processes and equipment. They know that their business is based on the volume of pieces that flow through their facility and that saving a few nickels per garment can mean the difference between failure and survival.

At the high end of the spectrum are the **extraordinary cleaners**.

By contrast, extraordinary cleaners know that they have to **invest significant resources** in skilled labor, processes and equipment over many years in order to develop the institutional capability necessary to produce extraordinary cleaning on a consistent basis. On every garment. On every order.

Both value cleaners and extraordinary cleaners **know** exactly who their clients are and focus solely on serving the needs of those clients.

It's really quite simple. And quite complicated. All at the same time.

That leaves the **ordinary cleaners** who are figuratively and literally "stuck in the middle" (between the value cleaners and the extraordinary cleaners).

Just like Kmart and Sears, ordinary cleaners have no idea who their customers are, what their needs are and how to serve them.

All they know is that they must somehow survive and, in order to survive, they must become "all things to all people".

They believe that they can simultaneously care for garments that you're **really fussy** about, garments that you're **less fussy** about, and garments that you're **least fussy** about. And that they can do all this using the **exact same** personnel, procedures, processes, technologies, equipment and facilities and the **exact same pricing** structure.

In these days of limited resources, growing competition and increasing specialization, that's a rather quaint and possibly doomed notion.

Just ask Kmart and Sears how they're doing!

This brings us to my favorite category of dry cleaner – **the wannabe cleaners**.

Wannabe cleaners are ordinary cleaners **who have convinced themselves** that they are extraordinary cleaners.

They talk the talk but can't walk the walk.

Typically, wannabe cleaners deliver a quality of product that is only marginally above average **but at an inflated price**. Then use glitz and the illusion of quality to convince

their clients that their above average cleaning is somehow “exceptional” or “exquisite” and, therefore, worth that inflated price.

As these wannabe cleaners work to transform themselves into extraordinary cleaners, they, nonetheless, don’t want to alienate their existing clients who just want ordinary, bang and hang cleaning. They **need** to somehow retain those clients in order to survive financially.

So they **offer three different levels of quality at three different price levels**. They’ll typically refer to these three quality-price levels as their “everyday service”, their “expert service” and their “couture” service. Or their diamond, platinum and gold service. Or their classic, deluxe and signature service. Or their basic, classic and artisan service.

The notion is absurd.

Their employees get confused about the quality of the product they need to deliver. The clients get confused about the quality of the product they’re paying for. And the management has no idea how to allocate their limited resources to serve three very different types of clients with very different needs.

By contrast, a true quality cleaner would never offer three levels of care.

A true quality cleaner offers one level of quality..... extraordinary care.

At RAVE FabriCARE, for example, we know who our clients are and we understand their needs. There’s no confusion. And, as a result, there are no compromises, no short cuts, no half measures and no trade offs.

We know where we stand. Our craftspeople know where we stand. And our clients know where we stand.

We do it right or we won’t do it at all.

It's a philosophy that's served us well for over 25 years. As a net result ...

- we're Arizona's leader in true quality cleaning
- we're used and recommended by more upscale department stores, clothing boutiques and custom clothiers than all other cleaners in Arizona combined
- we're the only cleaner in Arizona recognized as one of the nation's premier cleaners by non-compensated, independent, authoritative third parties.

Please note the emphasis on non-compensated, independent, authoritative third parties. Because that leads to our next topic.

Does your dry cleaner pay for their
“endorsements” and buy their “awards”?

RAVE FabriCARE is the only dry cleaner in Arizona and one of the very few dry cleaners in the USA recognized as one of the nation's premier dry cleaners by non-compensated, independent, authoritative third parties.

We earned those endorsements from bespoke tailors, bespoke shirt makers and bloggers who opine on classic garments by serving those clients and delivering, on a consistent basis, extraordinary care for their personal garments.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we don't pay for these endorsements. And, unlike other cleaners, we don't buy our "awards".

That's right, a payment of approximately \$500 per month to a **marketing organization masquerading as a standards organization** will buy you the right to *claim* that you were "voted" or "selected" as "one of America's best cleaners" for (fill in a number) years running, or as "one of America's finest cleaners" for (fill in a number) years running, or as "one of America's (fill in a description) cleaners" for (fill in a number) years running.

Membership is available to almost any dry cleaner able to project a little customer service lobby and packaging glitz and willing to write a check – irrespective of the consistency and quality of product they deliver.

These "awards" are very similar to those advertisements littering every airline magazine proclaiming those listed in the advertisement as "America's Best Doctors", "America's Best Lasik Surgeons", "America's Leading Minimally Invasive Spine Surgeons", "America's Best Steak Houses", "America's Best Seafood Restaurants", "America's Best Bed & Breakfasts" or "America's Best Boutique Hotels".

And, if you don't believe that these organizations are primarily marketing organizations, pay close attention to the composition of their membership – mostly [ordinary cleaners](#) and [wannabe cleaners](#) who offer relatively cheap prices and quick turnaround and who are looking for a competitive crutch to differentiate themselves from the competition.

On the other hand, if you're looking for a true quality cleaner, consider a cleaner that's a member of Leading Cleaners Internationale. LCI is the only organization that thoroughly investigates the qualifications and standards of applicants **through on-site interviews and inspections**. Fact is, the application, interview and inspection process is so rigorous and intimidating that very few of the applicants who apply for membership are actually invited to join the organization.

The shocking world of ordinary dry cleaning & shirt laundry

There are over 26,000 cleaners in the USA. And the overwhelming majority believe that “cleaning” is a relatively simple operation ...

Take 40 to 50 “dry clean” garments. Sort them into “lights” and “darks”. Load them into a 60 pound dry cleaning machine with little or no pre-spotting (stain removal prior to dry cleaning). Add detergent (the cheapest one, if you’re lucky), moisture (to “deal” with any water-based stains), fragrance (to disguise the smell of the “foreign substances” in the solvent) and sizing (to stiffen your garments and render them quicker to press).

Next, toss them about in a relatively aggressive, dye-stripping, toxic solvent (perchloroethylene, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal) for 10 minutes or less. Extract at a high RPM and dry at a high temperature for about 30 minutes to further minimize the total wash/extract/dry cycle time.

Then, machine press the garments at a rate of 20 to 40 garments per hour per presser. And, of course, don’t forget to “squirt” them with steam from a hand iron in an (often futile) attempt to conceal any evidence of machine pressing.

Finally, stuff the garments into narrow poly bags and cram them onto a holding rack or conveyor.

What’s more, many of your dry cleanable cottons and linens may, in fact, not have been dry cleaned at all. They’ve probably been washed or wet cleaned, tossed into a dryer, machine pressed, and then “squirted” with steam. Even if the care label says “dry clean only”. Even if you specifically requested “dry clean”.

But wait, there's more ...

Take 40 to 50 "laundry" shirts. Scrub the collars and cuffs with a hard-bristled brush. Sort them into two loads: "lights" and "darks". Then subdivide each load into "starch" and "no starch".

Next, stuff a load into a 60 pound shirt washer, adding hot (even boiling) water, harsh caustic industrial grade detergents and bleaches. Starch with cheap synthetic glue. Remove the damp shirts from the washer and run them through a series of pressing machines that have all the subtlety and precision of a sledgehammer. At a rate of 40 to 50 shirts (or more) per hour.

Then, using a hand iron, crease the sleeves in an (often futile) attempt to conceal any evidence of machine pressing and impart that distinctive "I pressed this myself at home while watching TV" look.

Finally, cram the shirts into narrow poly bags so that they're returned looking only slightly better than the day they were dropped off or sent in. Or machine fold them for that desired "slept in" look.

Voila, they're done! With almost no investment of time or skill. They're in by 9:00 and out by 5:00. Picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.

Welcome to the world of "professional cleaning." Where **every** cleaner **claims** to be either a true quality cleaner or, at the very least, well above average.

Unfortunately, fine garment care – true quality cleaning – requires more than just a knowledge of loading and unloading a dry cleaning machine or a shirt washer. More than just banging those garments out on a press. And more than just an assembly-line cleaning and pressing operation, where every garment is barcoded and treated as interchangeable irrespective of brand and/or original cost.

Based on this definition, any supermarket stock room employee can be taught to be a dry cleaner or presser in 2 weeks (actually, in a few days).

And, if you don't believe that, consider this quote from a July 21, 2015 article in the American Drycleaner, the dry cleaning industry's premier trade magazine:

“Inspect for stains before cleaning. It should go without saying that a cleaner’s task is to clean items, not just put them through a repetitive process. Even better, have the customer service representative (CSR) ask: “Are there any spots and stains that we need to be aware of?”. Then place spots and stains in a unique location for further consideration. But, if your CSR knows more about stain removal than your cleaner, well, you have a problem, and *you should switch their jobs* (ITALICS ADDED).”

A truly mind blowing statement. With advice such as this, is it any wonder why dry cleaners are so mediocre?

Truth is, true quality cleaning requires:

- an extensive knowledge of and commitment to the art and science of textiles, garment construction, cleaning and hand ironing,
- a never-ending commitment to process improvement (no matter how marginal),
- a stubbornness to reject labor (and hence cost) saving technologies that negatively impacts true quality,
- an unyielding commitment to invest in true quality rather than extract every last penny out of the cleaning, hand ironing and packaging process,
- a sense of pride in one's work,
- a passion for perfection (to the extent that perfection is achievable),
- the time necessary to “do the job right,” and, most importantly,
- a personal philosophy that says that true quality has inherent meaning and value – for the cleaner, his employees and his clients.

If true quality was all about speed
we'd all be dining at Denny's

True quality in garment, household textile and accessory care is all about process. Not speed.

Fact is, speed is the enemy of true quality. And can only be achieved through shortcuts and compromises in process.

It's true for fine dining. It's true for fine hotels. It's true for fine salons. And true for almost everything else that's worth doing right.

And, of course, it's true for fine garments, household textiles and accessories.

At RAVE FabriCARE, for example, our turnaround time on regular garments is one week. By contrast, ordinary dry cleaners – even the so-called “better cleaners” or self-styled “couture care specialists” – offer a turnaround of 1 or 2 days if you're an in-store client and 3 days if you're a pick up and delivery client.

Those 3 to 4 extra days provides us with the opportunity to do things right: to produce true quality cleaning and not ordinary, “bang and hang” cleaning in a poly bag with a fancy logo.

So what are the primary differences between RAVE FabriCARE and any other dry cleaner in Arizona – even the so-called “better cleaners” and the self-styled “couture care specialists”?

Dry cleaning

At RAVE FabriCARE, we pre-spot every garment. Then we clean your garments in dermatologically friendly, fabric gentle, non-dye stripping, crystal clear, odorless, sizing free and fragrance free siloxane dry cleaning fluid.

We don't use relatively aggressive dry cleaning solvents such as perchloroethylene (aka Dowper), synthetic petroleum (aka DF 2000 or EcoSolv) or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal (aka K4 or Solvon).

Next, we hand finish your garments. Inside and out. By hand. Not by machine.

And finally, we thoroughly inspect every garment – inside and out – and package each garment individually using premium packaging materials.

So what happens at ordinary cleaners - even the so-called “better cleaners” and the self-styled “couture care specialists”?

Your garments are sorted into lights and darks, loaded into a machine and cleaned in a toxic, fabric aggressive, dye stripping dry cleaning solvent that's saturated with sizing and fragrance. Solvents such as perchloroethylene (a chlorinated solvent), synthetic petroleum (a hydrocarbon solvent) or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal (a formaldehyde solvent).

Then they're machine pressed at the rate of 20 to 40 garments per hour per presser and stuffed in a narrow poly bag.

And the difference?

Brilliant whites, creams and pastels. Intense colors. Softest feel. Zero fragrance. Zero odor. Perfect smoothness (where required). No hard press or shine. No seam or button impressions. Expertly packaged with premium packaging materials, one garment to an extra-wide poly bag.

Other cotton and linen garments (non-shirt laundry)

At RAVE FabriCARE, every cotton or linen garment is pre-spotted, dry cleaned and hand finished.

So what happens at ordinary cleaners - even the so-called better cleaners and the self-styled “couture care specialists”?

Your cotton and linen garments are washed, tossed in a dryer and machine pressed.

Why washed? To mitigate the odors and dinginess associated with cleaning in a dry cleaning solvent that’s not crystal clear, i.e., dry cleaning solvent that has not been continuously distilled or purified and that has not been continuously filtered.

And the difference?

Brilliant whites, creams and pastels. Intense colors. Softest feel. Zero fragrance. Zero odor. Perfect smoothness (where required). No hard press or shine. No seam or button impressions. Expertly packaged with premium packaging materials, one garment to an extra-wide poly bag.

Shirt laundry

At RAVE FabriCARE, we first soak your shirts in our fabric gentle siloxane fluid in order to dissolve oil-based stains (such as body oil and salad dressing). Then we soak them in water-based solution for a minimum of 8 hours (12 hours for french cuffs) to remove water-based stains (such as perspiration and soda). At this point, all the stains – both oil-based and water-based – have been removed through soaking alone.

Next, we launder them for about 5 minutes in cold to cool water with a gentle enzyme detergent.

Finally, we hand finish them to perfection and package them individually in extra wide poly bags.

So what happens at ordinary cleaners - even the so-called “better cleaners” and the self-styled “couture care specialists”?

Your collars and cuffs are scrubbed with brushes. Then your shirts are washed in hot water with caustic, industrial grade detergents and fabric degrading bleaches for about 30 to 45 minutes in an (often futile) attempt to remove both oil-based and water-based stains. Finally, your shirts are machine pressed at the rate of 40 to 50 per hour and the sleeves are creased for that distinctive “I pressed this shirt myself at home while watching TV” look.

And the difference?

Brightest whites, creams and pastels. Intense colors. Perfectly finished with rounded collars and cuffs, no puckered seams, no wrinkled underarms, no creases in the sleeves (unless specifically requested) and finely pressed sleeve pleats. Expertly packaged with one shirt to an extra-wide poly bag.

Shirts that look much, much better. And shirts that last much, much longer than the industry standard of 25 to 35 washings.

Knits

At RAVE FabriCARE, every sweater and knit garment is pre-measured prior to cleaning. After cleaning, they're de-pilled, delinted and blocked (shaped) to your original measurements. And every item is returned with proof of blocking.

So what happens at ordinary dry cleaners - even the so-called “better cleaners” and the self-styled “couture care specialists”?

We'll, nothing.

And the difference?

Brilliant whites, creams and pastels. Intense colors. Softest feel. Zero fragrance. Zero odor. Perfect smoothness. No hard press or shine. No seam or button impressions. Expertly packaged with premium packaging materials, one garment to an extra-wide poly bag. With proof of blocking attached.

Fine bed and table linens

At RAVE FabriCARE, we follow the identical process used for shirt laundry (see above).

So what happens at ordinary cleaners - even the so-called “better cleaners” and the self-styled “couture care specialists”?

Your fine linens are washed in hot water with caustic, industrial grade detergents and fabric degrading bleaches for about 30 to 45 minutes in an (often futile) attempt to remove both oil-based and water-based stains. Then they’re machine pressed using a Mangle (that machine is pronounced “mangler” for good reason).

And the difference?

The cleanest possible linens. Smooth as silk. Minimal folds. Finest presentation.

Final thoughts

At RAVE FabriCARE, we could offer ordinary, “bang and hang” cleaning instead of true quality cleaning. We could offer same and next day service and pick up and deliver in 3 days just like ordinary cleaners instead of the 5 days necessary to do the job right.

We could operate like ordinary cleaners but we wouldn’t dream of compromising your fine garments, household textiles and accessories.

We’d sooner lock the doors, throw away the keys and move to the Coast.

The 10 deadly sins of ordinary dry cleaners

There's over 26,000 dry cleaners in the USA and over 400 in the metro Phoenix area alone.

And almost every single one claims to be “best of class” and to offer “exceptional”, “exquisite” or “award winning” dry cleaning and shirt laundry services.

Your intuition and experience should tell you that these claims - even those proffered by so-called “better cleaners” and self-styled “couture care specialists” - are nothing more than puffery.

More specifically, the vast majority of ordinary cleaners commit the 10 Deadly Sins of Dry Cleaning.

They are.....

1. Skip the stain removal process entirely

True quality cleaning takes time. Lots of time.

At the very least, garments must be pre-spotted/flushed with steam and completely hang dried – prior to placing them into a dry cleaning machine.

However, when you offer same or next day service and/or pickup and delivery service that promises pickup on day 1 and delivery on day 3, the focus of all employees is diverted to getting the work out ASAP. There simply isn't the time to do the job right.

So ordinary cleaners simply sort their garments into lights and darks, load their machines and press the start button.

And if the spots and stains miraculously disappear based on a combination of the dry cleaning solvent (the more aggressive the better), the dry cleaning detergent (if any), the addition or injection of moisture into the dry cleaning machine (a reckless undertaking), and the dry cleaning machine's tumbling action (the faster the better), you're in luck. If not, well, that's **your** problem and they'll simply hang one of those sorry-we-tried-but-we-couldn't tags on your garment.

2. Use chlorinated, hydrocarbon and/or formaldehyde solvents

95% of all dry cleaners clean your fine garments and household textiles in perchloroethylene aka "perc" (a chlorinated solvent branded "Dowper"), synthetic petroleum (a hydrocarbon solvent branded "DF 2000" or "EcoSolv"), or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal (a formaldehyde solvent branded K4 or Solvon).

These solvents are excellent on oil-based stains (about 10% of all stains a dry cleaner sees), but, rather ineffective on water-based stains (about 90% of the stains a dry cleaner sees). More importantly, chlorinated, hydrocarbon and formaldehyde dry cleaning solvents are way too aggressive for fine designer, high fashion, specialty and couture garments.

If you operated a uniform rental business specializing in auto repair shops, you'd definitely want to clean in perc, the solvent used by about 80% of all dry cleaners.

3. Reuse their dry cleaning solvent over and over again

That would be fine **if** they continuously purified every single drop of their dry

cleaning solvent before and after each and every load. And continuously filtered their solvent during each load.

But they don't do both.

Instead, they either filter with zero purification, filter with inadequate purification, filter with irregular purification, or filter with inadequate and irregular purification.

And the result? Greyish and dingy whites, creams and pastels. Dull and faded colors. And that all-too-familiar "dry cleaning solvent smell."

4. Use the cheapest dry cleaning solvent detergents or none at all

Just like you add a detergent to your home wash, a dry cleaner must add or inject a dry cleaning detergent into their dry cleaning solvent to boost the effectiveness of the cleaning solvent.

Many are cheap; some expensive. Many are ineffective; some effective.

Most ordinary cleaners opt for cheap.

And, in many cases, where the pressure on costs is great, they don't even use a dry cleaning detergent. Even the cheap ones!

5. Add or inject fragrance or perfume into their dry cleaning solvent

Ordinary cleaners love fragrance or perfume.

And the reason? A futile attempt to “disguise” or “neutralize” the odor associated with dry cleaning in “dirty dry cleaning solvent” – dry cleaning solvent that has not been both continuously purified and continuously filtered.

6. Add or inject sizing into their dry cleaning solvent

Sizing is to dry cleaning what starch is to laundry.

Ordinary cleaners love sizing.

So they add or inject sizing into their dry cleaning machines during the wash cycle. In much the same way that you might add detergent or softener to your home wash.

Purportedly, to quote one Arizona cleaner, it's to “keep your garments feeling new and crisp.” And even to “retain your garment's original shape, weight and feel”, an irrational, meaningless statement.

Truth is, the more sizing, the more garments a presser can bang out in an hour. Which you've got to do if your entire business model is geared to quantity and speed. Not quality of product.

7. Take unacceptable risks in their dry cleaning process

It's all done in the name of cutting costs and cutting turnaround time.

Typically these risks involve: mixing garments of different colors; mixing regular and fragile garments; overloading their dry machines; adding or injecting moisture into their dry cleaning machines; reducing their “wash” cycle times; and increasing their “dry” cycle temperatures.

All of which produces the fastest, cheapest – and worst – cleaning.

8. Machine press your garments

This gives true meaning to the term “bang and hang” cleaning. The result? Crimes of fashion such as crushed nap; shine; seam, flap and button impressions; and wrinkled seams and linings.

9. Fail to inspect your garments

It's the old story: why bother with a careful, thorough inspection – from top to bottom – from inside to outside – when the entire operation is geared towards getting your garments into a machine, onto a press, and into a bag. ASAP. They're in by 9:00 and out by 5:00; or picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.

10. Stuff your garments into a bag, then cram them on a holding rack or conveyor

Just look at the holding racks or the conveyor of any dry cleaner with a reasonable volume of business. The orders are packed like sardines in a tin. So instead of the packaging reflecting and enhancing the “care and attention invested in the cleaning and finishing process,” your garments are returned to you – “pressed” and on a hanger – looking only slightly better than the day you turned them over.

Conclusion

There you have it. The 10 Deadly Sins of Ordinary Cleaners.

But we must confess. There are many more than 10. Were you to spend some time on our website studying our position papers, white papers and ebooks, you'd probably

come up with at least 150. All related to knowledge, expertise, skills, processes, procedures, technologies, craftsmanship, equipment and facilities. And all directly related to minimizing costs and speeding throughput.

Then again, the 150 Deadly Sins of Ordinary Cleaners just doesn't have the same ring to it.



The myth of three levels of dry cleaning and shirt laundry quality

Your cleaner tells you that they're a true quality cleaner. That they offer "exceptional", "exquisite" or "award winning" cleaning.

Yet, they offer three different levels of quality – artfully called their "everyday", "expert" and "couture" service. Or their diamond, platinum and gold service. Or their classic, deluxe and signature service. Or their basic, classic and artisan service.

Pressed for details, they'll tell you that their "expert" and "couture" service is their "extra care service," where your garments, particularly your designer, high fashion, specialty and couture garments, are "cleaned by their best cleaner", "pressed by their best presser", inspected "by hand", hung on wishbone-shaped wood and chrome hangers, and stuffed with logo printed tissue.

Can it help?

Possibly. But not likely.

The real question you should ask yourself is this: is the fancy packaging worth the premium price?

Because, in many cases, that's probably the only difference between their "everyday" and their "expert" and "couture" services.

In other words, apart from the packaging, there is almost no difference in the quality of the product between your cleaner's "everyday", "expert" and "couture" services.

To illustrate the **absurdity** of offering three levels of service, let us draw an analogy...

Just imagine if McDonalds, Denny's and Morton's moved next door to one another and **built a single kitchen to be shared by all three restaurants.**

Furthermore, imagine if those three restaurants utilized the same "chefs" and "servers", purchased their food and other supplies from the same vendors and set McDonalds prices at 400% below Denny's prices and Denny's prices at about 400% below Morton's prices.

Do you think it's possible for that shared kitchen to **consistently** deliver a steak of Morton's quality to Morton's diners just because their steak is prepared by their shared kitchen's "best short order cook" and "served by their best server"?

Don't think so.

Is it possible for the same personnel, processes, equipment and facilities that routinely produces ordinary, bang and hang cleaning to also produce true quality cleaning?

Of course, they can't.

The notion is absurd.

Their employees get confused about the quality of the product they need to deliver. The clients get confused about the quality of the product they're paying for. And the management has no idea how to allocate their limited resources to serve three very different sets of clients with very different needs along the quality-price spectrum.

A true quality cleaner would **never** offer three levels of care.

A true quality cleaner offers one level of care extraordinary care.

Clients who choose a true quality cleaner want best of breed. Not a mutt that has the characteristics of two or more breeds.

Glitz and the illusion of true quality cleaning

Maybe, at some time in the past, many ordinary cleaners did a fairly “decent job”.

But as competition from new market entrants and economic pressures on labor cost have increased over the past few years, they’ve increasingly resorted to glitz to deflect their clients’ attention away from **the only matter that really counts for the owners of fine garments: the quality of their product.**

Instead of focusing on quality of product, many ordinary cleaners shifted their focus to image and style. Using cues such as color coordinated uniforms, multicolored brochures, logo printed tissue and poly, straight/thin/cheap wood and chrome hangers, granite countertops and recessed lighting, boutique-style fashion posters and picture wrapped delivery vehicles to promote the illusion of true quality cleaning.

So why do ordinary cleaners invest in image and style?

For two reasons.

First, image and style deflects attention away from the quality of their work and fools most of their customers into believing that the quality of their product is somehow “superior” to other ordinary cleaners.

Second, by substituting glitz - the illusion of quality - for actual product quality, they’ve been able to significantly reduce production costs. Primarily by substituting aggressive, fast turnaround processes and relatively low skilled machine operators who are paid by the piece for gentle, time consuming processes and well-paid, technically skilled craftspeople.

The image and style formula worked well for a while. Then the recession hit and many of their customers sought out cheaper alternatives.

Much to their chagrin, these customers discovered that, apart from image and style, there wasn't much difference in the quality of product. And that, over the past few years, they'd been paying relatively high prices for ordinary cleaning.

Clearly, the cubic zirconium strategy wasn't working any more.

So some ordinary cleaners adopted a new approach. They introduced a three tier pricing system, typically dubbed their "everyday", "expert" or "couture" service. Or their diamond, platinum and gold service, their classic, deluxe and signature service, or their basic, classic and artisan service.

The rationale was simple.

We'll tell our customers that they can continue to receive our "existing quality" at a **reduced price**. We'll call this our "everyday" service. We'll also tell them that we've been able to introduce this **lower priced service** for their "**less fancy**" garments by eliminating the fancy packaging.

Further, we'll tell our customers that they can continue to receive our "expert" service for their "**fancy**" garments at our **current price levels**.

Of course, **what we won't tell them** is that, apart from the price and the packaging, *there's no real difference in quality* between our "everyday" and our "expert" service. And we'll gain by charging a premium price for what is essentially an "everyday" garment dressed up with fancy packaging.

And, for their "**most fancy**" garments, we'll tell our customers that we're now offering a "new" service - we'll call this our "couture" service - that's a cut above our "expert" service - a service where everything is "cleaned by our best cleaner" and "pressed by our best presser."

Of course, **what we won't tell them** is that, apart from the price and the packaging, *there's no real difference in quality* between our “everyday”, our “expert” service and our “couture” service. And we'll gain by charging a premium price for what is essentially an “everyday” or “expert” garment dressed up with fancier packaging than our “expert” service.

It follows that when you question these cleaners about each of their 3 levels of “product quality” and the detailed processes that produces each of those 3 levels of product quality, they have no choice but to misrepresent what they do and what they don't do.

What they're overlooking, of course, is that clients with a significant investment in their wardrobe tend to be quite savvy and aren't easily fooled. *These clients* know that glitz and premium packaging has its place: **as a complement** to true quality cleaning, **never as a substitute** for true quality cleaning.

It's the equivalent of putting lipstick on a pig.

Understanding the difference between a dry cleaner and a fabricare specialist

We hear many questions every day. Questions like

- “What makes you different from ordinary cleaners?”
- “Why don’t you dry clean in perchloroethylene (Dowper), synthetic petroleum (DF 2000 or EcoSolv) or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal (K4 or Solvon) like ordinary cleaners?”
- “Why don’t you offer same or next day service like ordinary cleaners?”
- “Why don’t you pick up and deliver in 2 or 3 days like ordinary cleaners?”

While each of these questions is perceptive and probing, no question digs deeper into the essence of true quality cleaning than “why isn’t there a ‘cleaners’ in RAVE FabriCARE?”

What may appear to be an omission or oversight is really a conscious decision. Simply put, we’re fabricare specialists – true quality cleaners. Not ordinary, “bang and hang” cleaners.

There is a difference. And it’s not just one of semantics.

In a nutshell, we could ...

- Load all garments into a dry cleaning machine and maybe post-spotting them like ordinary cleaners **instead of** pre-spotting them prior to loading them into our dry cleaning machines. Pre-spotting is targeted stain removal by a skilled technician prior to cleaning the garment in a dry cleaning machine.

- Clean your garments in a fabric aggressive, dye stripping, toxic solvents (such as perchloroethylene, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal) like ordinary cleaners **instead of** cleaning them in an odorless, crystal clear, dermatologically-friendly, fabric-gentle dry cleaning fluid.
- Wet clean or wash your cottons and linens and toss them in a drier like ordinary cleaners **instead of** dry cleaning them as you requested or as specified by the care label.
- Add or inject moisture, sizing and fragrance into our dry cleaning solvent like ordinary cleaners **instead of** operating our dry cleaning machines with zero moisture, zero sizing and zero fragrance.
- Machine press all your garments like ordinary cleaners **instead of** hand ironing them.
- Conduct cursory look overs of your garments like ordinary cleaners **instead of** detailed, individualized inspections of every garment - inside and out - prior to packaging.
- Shuttle your garments around our facility on a roller coaster-like automated system like ordinary cleaners **instead of** moving them gently by hand.
- Return your garments in a manner that adds to **our** bottom line like ordinary cleaners **instead of** customizing the finishing of your garments to your personal preferences.
- Assign all necessary repairs to your garments to the first customer service representative with nothing to do like ordinary cleaners **instead of** employing skilled, on-site tailors and alterationists to make those repairs.
- Use non-contoured non-shoulder supporting hangers, acidic logo-printed tissue and thin poly bags like ordinary cleaners **instead of** packaging your garments using premium packaging materials that are technically aligned with and supportive of your garments over the long and short term.
- Stuff multiple garments into a narrow poly bag like ordinary cleaners **instead of** packaging them individually.

- Offer same or next day in-store service on your garments like ordinary cleaners **instead of** the 4 to 5 days necessary to “do the job right” (in most cases).
- Pick up and deliver your garments in 2 or 3 days like ordinary cleaners **instead of** the 4 to 5 days necessary to “do the job right” (in most cases).

The list of differences is endless.

As a fabricare specialist – a true quality cleaner – we could conform to the conventional wisdom of ordinary cleaners but we wouldn’t dream of it.

If all this sounds a little complicated, technical, labor-intensive and time consuming, it is. Luckily, there’s an easier way to identify a fabricare specialist – a true quality cleaner.

A fabricare specialist – a true quality cleaner – will be delighted to disclose the ins and outs and the hows and whys of their processes and craftsmanship to you. ***In detail. And in writing.***

You see, fabricare specialists – true quality cleaners – have nothing to hide. Quite the contrary. They believe the more you understand about their processes and craftsmanship the better. So they distribute position papers, white papers and ebooks. And conduct educational seminars and tours.

Ordinary cleaners, on the other hand, ***hate disclosure***. They provide little or no information, often citing “trade secrets” as an excuse. Instead of accurate, detailed information about their specific processes and craftsmanship, they offer glitzy, multi-color, photo-rich brochures that proffer meaningless platitudes such as:

- We provide great cleaning, fabulous service and quick turnaround.
- Each and every day we work hard to earn compliments from our customers.
- We treat your everyday wear – polo shirts, chinos and jeans – as if they were fine couture pieces.

- We give your shirts and linens the focussed care that only we can provide.
- Our packaging is the talk of the town.

Etc. Ad neuseum.

And, consistent with these meaningless platitudes, their testimonials tend to focus on the friendliness of their staff and the broadness of their smiles. Not a whisper about their processes and craftsmanship.

So, instead of detailed information about their processes and craftsmanship, you get single paragraph generalities such as.....

DRY CLEANING

You'd expect any place with "Cleaners" in their name to do a decent job in Dry Cleaning, wouldn't you? If we didn't know better, so would we. We wouldn't use a cleaner who doesn't distill their cleaning solutions, hand inspect and hand spot-clean each garment. You shouldn't either.

LAUNDRY SERVICES

Our strict attention to detail produces clean and crisp creases on all dress shirts and finely finished table and bed linens. When you bring your laundry to ABC Cleaners, we give your shirts and linens the focussed care that only we can provide.

It's equivalent to opening the quick start guide that comes with every new car today and finding that the guide consists of a single paragraph: Insert the key in the ignition, turn the key, place the car in gear and step on the gas.

You see, it's not that ordinary cleaners can't disclose the ins and outs and the hows and whys of their processes and craftsmanship. ***It's just that they won't.***

And why won't they make full disclosure? Simply, because they're afraid that disclosure – any disclosure – will make it easier for you to evaluate the relative quality of the product they deliver. And will point to the fact that their “exceptional”, “exquisite” or “award winning” cleaning – apart from the fancy packaging – is no different from the ordinary, bang and hang cleaning offered by any other above average cleaner across the street or across town.

Finding a true fabricare specialist – a true quality cleaner – in your city is actually quite simple. Ask for detailed information covering **each** of their processes: The ins and outs. The hows and whys.

Bet you come up empty handed. As empty as their platitudes.

Before you choose
a true quality cleaner...

So your'e looking for a new "quality" dry cleaner. You've done your homework. And you've narrowed down your choice of two or three candidates.

Before you walk through any of their doors, it's important to keep 7 things in mind....

- There are no "secrets" or "secret processes" in garment care.

While knowledge, expertise, skill and time is critical to delivering true quality cleaning, there are no "secrets" or "secret processes" in garment care. And any cleaner who implies that there are should be viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism. And then challenged.

You see, **cleaners hate disclosure**. So they provide little or no information. Often citing "trade secrets" or "proprietary processes" as an excuse for not providing their clients with detailed information about the "ins" and "outs" and "hows" and "whys" of their processes.

Consider this description of their dry cleaning, pressing and inspection process from the website of an Arizona cleaner:

DRY CLEANING

You'd expect any place with "Cleaners" in their name to do a decent job in Dry Cleaning, wouldn't you? If we didn't know better, so would we. We wouldn't use a cleaner who doesn't distill their cleaning solutions, hand inspect and hand spot-clean each garment. You shouldn't either.

It's equivalent to opening the quick start guide that comes with every new car today and finding that the guide consists of a single paragraph: Inert the key in the ignition, turn the key, place the car in gear and step on the gas.

I've always been curious as to why so few cleaners are willing to disclose detailed information about their processes. Either verbally, or better still, in writing.

I'd suggest that there's only one reason: **they simply don't want you to know.**

Because, if you did, you'd be better positioned to evaluate the relative quality of the product they say they deliver.

You'd realize that their product doesn't meet their verbal assurances, the hype in their glitzy promotional materials or the bluster of their public relations professionals. You'd figure out that their "exceptional", "exquisite" and "award winning" cleaning — minus the fancy packaging — is no different from the "bang and hang" cleaning offered by any other above average cleaner across the street or across town. And, you'd understand that you may not be getting the quality you thought you were paying for.

Fabricare specialists or true quality cleaners, on the other hand, have nothing to hide.

Quite the contrary.

They believe that the more you understand about their processes the better. So they distribute position papers, white papers and ebooks. They provide content heavy websites. They conduct educational seminars for clients, retail store employees and custom clothiers. They invite you to tour their facility so that you can learn as much as possible — or as much as you ever want to know — about their processes. Before you turn over your fine garments to them.

- Talk is cheap. Execution is time consuming and extremely difficult.

It's been said that talk is cheap because supply way exceeds the demand.

There's a huge difference between a cleaner talking about the "ins" and "outs" and "hows" and "whys" of their processes and a cleaner actually executing all those detailed process tasks. Every day. On every garment they handle.

Sure, there are cleaners who **claim** to perform at a high level. After all, they swear it's so. Their public relations professionals reinforce that claim. And they repeat it in their promotional materials and on their websites. So it must be true!

Right? Wrong!

Dig a little deeper and you'll probably find that their product – minus the fancy packaging – is probably just average. At best.

- Educating the client and answering questions is the price paid for your custom.

If a fabricare specialist or true quality cleaner didn't provide you with detailed information about their knowledge, expertise and skills, their stain removal, cleaning and restoration processes, or their specialized equipment, technologies and facilities, you'd have no reason to entrust your fine garments to them. Or to any other cleaner for that matter.

Detailed information about the "ins" and "outs" and "hows" and "whys" of a cleaner's processes and craftsmanship is the service equivalent of the extended test drive. After all, you wouldn't buy a new vehicle without first "kicking the tires" would you? So why would you entrust your fine garments to a cleaner without first asking the probing questions?

Truth is, detailed information about processes and craftsmanship is the exact opposite of the tired, meaningless cliches you're accustomed to hearing from almost every cleaner: we meet or exceed the industry's highest standards; we focus on the details; we provide great cleaning, fabulous service and quick turnaround; each and every day we work hard to earn compliments from our customers; we treat

your everyday wear as if they were fine couture pieces; we give your garments the care that only we can provide; our packaging is the talk of the town. Etc. Etc. Ad nauseam.

You'll also notice that, consistent with these meaningless platitudes, their testimonials tend to focus on the friendliness of their staff and the broadness of their smiles. Not a whisper about their processes or craftsmanship.

It's enough to make one throw up!

- True quality is about the combination of hundreds of details.

There are over 26,000 cleaners in the USA. And every single one will tell you that they "focus on the details."

Your intuition and experience should tell you that the vast majority of these claims are, at best, nothing more than puffery. So couple your intuition and experience with this thought: true quality cleaning is not about a few details. **It's about hundreds of details.** And, specifically, it's the combination of those hundreds of details (coupled with time) that produces true quality. It's the difference between a bespoke suit from Rubinacci and a knockoff from Shanghai Custom Tailors.

Here's another key point: how can a cleaner ever claim that he "focuses on the details" when his entire operation is geared to same or next day service? How can a cleaner claim that he "focuses on the details" when your garments are in by 9:00 and out by 5:00; or picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3?

Go figure!

- True quality can't be delivered in a day or two (or even three).

Your cleaner tells you that they "meet or exceed the highest industry standards" (even if they have no idea what those standards are and they're not in writing). That they "focus on the details" (even if they have no idea what those details are and

they're not in writing). And that they have "detailed quality standards" (even if they can't identify those standards and they're not in writing).

Then they tell you that they routinely offer same and next day in-store service and 3 day pickup and delivery service?

How do you spell CONTRADICTION?

A fabricare specialist or true quality cleaner doesn't offer same or next day in-store service or 3 day pickup and delivery service. Not as a matter of routine. Not unless it's an emergency and the client is well-known to them.

And here's why.

Every major city has numerous "cleaners". And almost every single one would be delighted to accommodate your request for same or next day service. And every single one who offers pickup and delivery service will be delighted to pickup your cleaning on day 1 and deliver on day 3. That's because their entire modus operandi is geared to getting your garments into a machine, onto a press and into a bag. ASAP.

At ordinary cleaners, same or next day in-store service and 3 day pick up and delivery service is standard operating procedure.

Fact is, they're so proud of their same or next day in-store service and their 3 day pickup and delivery service that they constantly promote it – right next to their claim that their "exceptional", "exquisite" and "award winning" dry cleaning and shirt laundry service is a direct result of their "attention to detail"!

Truth is, you can't have it both ways: true quality in garment care is simply not compatible with speed. Period. End of story. No ifs, ands or buts (If you're a dry cleaner and you disagree with this specific statement, please contact me. I'd love to hear how you're able to produce a true quality product in a day or two. Please be as specific as possible. I'm a slow learner!)

On the other hand, a fabricare specialist or true quality cleaner takes an entirely different approach to garment care. They focus all their resources on consistently producing the finest in garment care. There are no compromises. No shortcuts. No ordinary cleaning. No “bang and hang” work. No same or next day service work. No pickup-on-day-1-and-deliver-on-day-3 service work.

Fact is, same or next day in-store service and 3 day pickup and delivery service is the very antithesis of true quality cleaning.

When you provide same or next day in-store service or 3 day pickup and delivery service, it really doesn't matter if you think Attolini is a brand of microwave pizza, if you believe that Oxxford is a community college in California, if you've been told that Lagerfelt is a new micro beer, and if you're convinced that Hermes is a contagious social disease.

In a hectic world of same day and next day in-store service and 3 day pickup and delivery service, you can take comfort in the fact that a fabricare specialist or true quality cleaner takes the time to do it right.

Because when it comes to caring for your fine garments, faster isn't better.

Never has been. Never will be.

- True quality is not inexpensive.

Fabricare specialists or true quality cleaners are not “value priced” or “competitively priced.” There are no volume discounts, coupons, specials and loyalty programs. Their prices are set at a level which affords them the opportunity to concentrate solely on the quality of their work.

By contrast, the focus of the vast majority of ordinary cleaners can be summed up in two words: quantity and speed. Essentially, this means pushing more and more garments (quantity) faster and faster (speed) through their “production system.” They're in by 11:00 and out by 5:00; picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.

By the way, cleaners that glue bar codes onto your fine garments as if they were uniform rental garments exhibit this production mentality.

At ordinary cleaners, production efficiency is the holy grail of their entire operation.

Of course, no ordinary cleaner will admit to this. Every cleaner will tell you that they produce “top quality at a competitive price” or “exceptional quality at a fair price”. But given their consistently lower price structure, it’s clear that the long-term economic viability of their business depends on quantity and speed. Not on the quality of their work.

Which is fine if you’re manufacturing standardized widgets. But absolute heresy when you’ve been entrusted with the custom cleaning and hand finishing of a client’s fine garments.

You see, garment care at the bespoke, made-to-measure, designer, high-fashion, specialty and couture level involves lots and lots of technically skilled labor. Coupled with expensive, specialized equipment. So if you encounter low to moderate prices at this level of garment care, you can be absolutely assured they’re cutting costs by cutting corners. In every facet of their operation – from cleaning and hand finishing to inspection and packaging.

When it comes to fine cleaning, it’s important to know WHAT YOU’RE PAYING. But it’s even more important to know WHAT YOU’RE PAYING **FOR** – knowledge, expertise and skills; stain removal, cleaning and restoration processes; hand ironing; and specialized equipment, technologies and facilities.

At a fabricare specialist or true quality cleaner setting prices is the easy part. Consistently delivering on their commitment to extraordinary care – every item, every order – now that’s the complicated part. And that’s the difference between a fabricare specialist or true quality cleaner and an ordinary, bang and hang cleaner.

- Myths, misrepresentations, distortions and, even, outright lies are common.

There are over 26,000 cleaners in the USA. And they all believe that they are above average and that they produce “top quality work”. Obviously, they **can’t all** be above

average and **very few** can claim to produce “top quality work.”

But that doesn't stop them from claiming that they are. So they're forced to misrepresent, distort and even lie about the quality of the product they produce in general, and the processes they employ to produce that product in particular.

Take dry cleaning for example. They claim that they:

- pre-spot every garment **when in fact**, they no-spot or post-spot.
- clean your garments in a gentle dry cleaning solvent or fluid **when, in fact**, it's relatively aggressive and dye-stripping.
- don't inject moisture, sizing or fragrance into their dry cleaning solvent, **when, in fact**, 85% of dry cleaners do.
- dry clean your cottons and linens as you requested **when, in fact**, they're washed or wet cleaned.
- hand iron your garments **when, in fact**, they're steamed out on a steamer, machine pressed and then “squirted” with steam from a hand iron in an attempt to conceal the evidence of machine pressing.
- conduct detailed inspections of your garments – inside and out, top to bottom – **when, in fact**, they just get a cursory look over (maybe, if you're really lucky).
- move your garments around their plant – gently by hand – **when, in fact**, they're shuttled around on a roller-coaster-like automated system.
- utilize the finest packaging materials **when, in fact**, those materials – although they may look pretty – are not technically aligned with and supportive of your garments over the short or long term.
- operate an “environmentally friendly” dry clean operation **when, in fact**, they're heavily regulated at the federal, state and local level.

The list is endless.

We could go on and on but we won't. We'll leave that up to you to discover by questioning your cleaner.

Remember that fine garments are valuable assets as well as beautiful works of art. To keep those garments looking, feeling and smelling great and lasting much, much longer, you'll need to locate a skilled cleaner. And to successfully do that, you'll need to ask questions. Insist on straight, jargon-free answers. And invest some time assessing the "truthfulness" of those responses.



Pieces Per Hour: the curse of true quality cleaning

130 years ago Frederick Taylor introduced the business world to the concept of Scientific Management.

Scientific Management is the idea that factories would measure precisely what their workers were doing. Use a stopwatch. Watch every movement. Adjust the movements until productivity goes up. Re-organize the assembly line for more efficiency. Pay workers by the piece. Get rid of the people who can't keep up. Make the assembly line go faster.

About 120 years later, dry cleaners woke up to the “productivity implications” of Frederick Taylor’s Scientific Management principles. So they started gluing bar codes onto all their garments and household textiles, justifying their actions by telling you that bar codes will enable them to “better track your garments and household textiles through their production system.”

Truth is, few dry cleaners invest in these technologies solely to “better track your garments and household textiles through their production system.” Instead, they do it **because there’s a greater economic payoff**. And that payoff comes from implementing Frederick Taylor’s 130 year old idea. Only now it’s not called Scientific Management. It’s called Pieces Per Hour.

If there’s one statistic that value cleaners (discount cleaners) and ordinary cleaners (middle market cleaners) love to track it’s pieces per hour (PPH).

At it’s most basic, PPH is the number of garments (or pieces) a presser can bang out on a press in a one hour period. Value cleaners and ordinary cleaners typically track PPH by the hour, by the day and by the week.

Here's an example:

A value or ordinary may have a "standard" of 37 pants per presser per hour - irrespective of whether they are wools, silks, cottons or linens, lined or unlined, ceases or no creases, pleated or unpleated, cuffs or no cuffs. And a standard of 23 non-pant garments per presser per hour - again, irrespective of whether they are wool sweaters, silk ties, cotton blouses or linen blazers.

That means that every minute of the day those pressers (actually piece workers) are "under the gun" to achieve the minimum PPH - a situation reminiscent of the sweat shops of old.

If they consistently meet or exceed those minimum standards, they're hailed as heroes. If they consistently fail to meet or exceed those minimum standards, they're out the door - even if they're talented pressers, even if they can hand iron a white cotton blouse with a large collar and extensive ruffles to perfection (If your'e a talented presser who can hand iron a white cotton blouse with a large collar and extensive ruffles to perfection, please call us. We'll create an immediate opening for you).

The key to tracking PPH are those glued on bar codes that value cleaners and ordinary cleaners glue on every garment and household textile they process and bar code scanners that are mounted above each press.

As soon as the presser "completes" a garment (irrespective of the quality of that finish), that piece is recorded.

Now, if you think that the concept of PPH is limited to value cleaners and ordinary cleaners only, you'd be mistaken.

We know of a number of wannabe cleaners, some of whom bill themselves as "couture care specialists", who are fanatical converts to the PPH religion.

One more important point: if a cleaner tracks PPH, you can rest assured that the

pressers **are being paid by the piece** – sweat shop style. The higher their PPH, the more a presser earns; the lower their PPH, the less a presser earns.

It's axiomatic that pressers will give you what gets measured, particularly if their wage - and their job - depends on meeting or exceeding PPH.

In other words, if you measure and pay for PPH, **that's exactly what you'll get.**

Damn the dry cleaning standards (if they even exist). Damn the shirt laundry standards (if they even exist). Damn the client's fine garments. Just move 'em out the door as quickly as possible.

Bottom line: If you employ talented pressers and pay them well, you'll get **quality**. If you measure and pay for PPH, you'll get **quantity**.

It's just that simple. And that complicated.

At RAVE FabriCARE, our attitude towards PPH is completely different: We believe that PPH kills true quality.

Fact is, we wouldn't waste one minute of time debating the merits of PPH, let alone one minute implementing such a system.

We'd sooner lock the doors, throw away the keys and move to the Coast.

Why understanding the difference
between quality of product and
quality of service and conveniences
is important

If you walked into any ordinary cleaner and asked about their quality standards, you'll probably hear all about the *quality of their "service" and "conveniences"*.

Specifically, you'd learn all about their

- Inviting customer service environment
- Friendly, enthusiastic and courteous service representative to greet and serve you
- Commitment to customer service
- Service that will exceed your expectations
- Empathy with your concerns
- Speedy handling of customer issues and problems
- Value for the money you spend
- Dedication to having your clothing ready on time
- Computer record of all your transactions
- Barcodes heat sealed or glued onto your garments to "track your garments through the system"
- Satellite GPS system to track your delivery orders
- Reusable garment bags

- Hanger recycling program
- Community involvement
- Business owner/management involvement.

Notice that all these service and convenience issues have **nothing whatsoever** to do with the **quality of the product** they deliver. You'll hardly ever hear anything about their processes and craftsmanship.

By contrast, a true quality cleaner will focus his discussion primarily on process and craftsmanship and explain how the combination of process and craftsmanship impacts **the quality of the product**. You'll hardly hear anything about their "service" and "convenience".

After all, what's the value of all the service and conveniences if the quality of the product is poor to mediocre?

Misrepresentations, distortions and
outright lies.
Are you getting what you pay for?

Every cleaner claims to be a true quality dry cleaner. Fact is, very few are.

But that doesn't stop them from claiming that they are. So they're forced to misrepresent, distort and even lie about the quality of the product they produce in general, and the processes they employ to produce that product in particular.

Let's get specific ...

Dry cleaning

Their verbal assurances, their promotional materials and their public relations professionals tell you that they gently dry clean and hand iron **all** your fine garments (other than shirt laundry). **As a matter of routine.**

Baloney! Bet they don't.

Truth is you're paying for garments that have been sorted into "lights" and "darks", tossed into a dry clean machine with little or no pre-spotting, cleaned in a relatively aggressive, dye-stripping, toxic solvent (perchloroethylene, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal) that's supplemented with moisture/water, sizing and/or fragrance.

All this before your garments are machine pressed and then "squirted" with steam from a hand iron in an attempt to conceal any evidence of machine pressing.

What's more, many of your cottons and linens may not have been dry cleaned at all. They've probably been washed or wet cleaned, tossed into a dryer, machine pressed and then "squirted" with steam.

Shirt Laundry

Their verbal assurances, their promotional materials and their public relations professionals tell you that they gently clean and hand iron **all** your laundered shirts. **As a matter of routine.**

Hogwash! Bet they don't.

Truth is, you're paying \$8 to \$10 for a \$2 to \$3 shirt that's been boiled, bleached, baked and machine pressed. Then "strategically touched up" by hand (if deemed necessary, if you're lucky) and creased down the sleeve.

Many cleaners call this machine pressed/touched up/ceased sleeve shirt a "hand finished shirt," hoping that you'll never understand the difference between a "hand ironed shirt" (\$8 to \$10) and a "machine pressed/touched up/ceased sleeve shirt" (\$2 to \$3).

Fine Bed and Table Linens

Their verbal assurances, their promotional materials and their public relations professionals tell you that they gently clean and perfectly finish all your fine bed and table linens. **As a matter of routine.**

They also tell you that they do all their work **in-house**.

Poppycock! Bet they don't.

Truth is, you're probably paying for bed and table linens that are subcontracted to some cheap, unknown, local wholesale laundry. Where they're boiled and bleached before being run through a Mangle ironer (yes, it's pronounced "mangler") like bathroom tissue through a Charmin factory.

Summary

At RAVE FabriCARE, you won't find information that sounds vaguely impressive in an attempt to sound good while hiding what's really going on.

Why? Because clients can see through the smoke screen. And clients can spot misrepresentations, distortions and lies a mile away.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we tell you exactly what we do, why we do it that way and why we don't do what ordinary cleaners do. In plain English. We provide you with accurate information about our processes and craftsmanship. And with a degree of specificity that's unheard of in the dry cleaning industry.

And why do we provide this information? Because the more you know about our processes and craftsmanship, the better you'll be able to differentiate between true quality cleaning and ordinary, bang and hang cleaning.

So there you have it. The truth about cleaners who present themselves as true quality cleaners but whose product – minus the fancy packaging – is, for the most part, no better than any average, ordinary cleaner.

Are you getting what you pay for?

It's not what ordinary cleaners say they do.
It's what they actually do.

TALK IS CHEAP BECAUSE SUPPLY ALWAYS EXCEEDS THE DEMAND

Most ordinary cleaners say one thing, but do something completely different. So they're forced to make things up in an attempt to sound good while hiding what's really going on.

The only way to explain this statement is to juxtapose true quality cleaning against ordinary or "bang and hang" cleaning.

Here's a start to that list.....

- **They say** they pre-spot every garment, **but they** just load all garments into a dry cleaning machine and maybe post-spot them. (Pre-spotting is targeted stain removal by a skilled technician prior to cleaning the garment in a dry cleaning machine).
- **They say** they clean your garments in an odorless, fabric-gentle, dermatologically-friendly dry cleaning fluid, **but they** still use fabric aggressive, dye stripping, toxic solvents like perchloroethylene (aka perc), synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal.
- **They say** they purify their dry cleaning solvent after every load, **but they** only do so a few times a week.
- **They say** they dry clean your cottons and linens as you requested or as specified by the care label, **but they** wet clean or wash them and toss them in a dryer.
- **They say** they operate their dry clean machines with zero moisture, zero sizing and zero fragrance, **but they** add or inject moisture, sizing and fragrance into their dry cleaning solvent.

- **They say** they gently hand iron your garments, **but they** machine press them at a rate of 20 to 40 per hour per presser.
- **They say** they offer alterations, **but they** have no skilled tailor or alterationist on premises.
- **They say** they employ a tailor or alterationist to make all necessary repairs, **but they** often assign the task to a customer service representative with some free time on their hands.
- **They say** they soak your laundered shirts in a gentle dry cleaning fluid (to dissolve oil-based stains) and then in a water-based solution (to eliminate water-based stains), **but they** scrub your collars and cuffs with hard-bristled brushes and “collar/cuff solution” in an (often futile) attempt to get them reasonably clean.
- **They say** they gently wet clean your shirts in cool or warm water, **but they** wash your shirts in hot water in an (often futile) attempt to dissolve the oil-based stains.
- **They say** they use a gentle enzyme detergent, **but they** use a harsh, caustic, industrial grade detergents in an attempt to eliminate the water-based stains.
- **They say** they use no bleach, **but they** add fabric-destroying bleaches in an attempt to get your whites really white.
- **They say** they use a premium, natural wheat starch, **but they** starch your shirts with cheap synthetic glue that adheres to your shirt’s fibers like multiple coats of paint.
- **They say** they hand iron your shirts, **but they** machine press them at a rate of 40 to 50 per hour per presser, which leaves your shirts with puckered seams, wrinkled collars, cuffs, underarms, sleeve pleats, sleeve plackets and front plackets, and wrinkled cuff/sleeve and sleeve/body joins.
- **They say** they crease the sleeves of your shirts for that “professional look”, **but they** only crease the sleeves to cover up evidence of machine pressing.

- **They say** they conduct detailed inspections of every garment prior to packaging, **but they** only do a cursory look over (maybe, if you're lucky).
- **They say** they care about the manner in which your garments are cleaned and pressed, **but they** then stuff multiple garments into a single, narrow poly bag and cram them onto a conveyor.
- **They say** they package your garments using premium packaging materials, **but they** use cheap packaging materials that may "look pretty" but aren't technically aligned with and supportive of the shape and drape of your garments over the short and long term.
- **They say** that they charge a price that reflects the "high quality" of the product they deliver, **but they** still charge relatively low prices (the reality is that no service provider can consistently deliver a true quality product at a low to moderate price, notwithstanding anything your cleaner might tell you).
- **They say** they take the time to do the job right, **but they** routinely offer same and next day service or 3 day pickup and delivery service (the reality is that true quality in the garment care business is incompatible with speed, notwithstanding anything your cleaner might tell you).

The contradictions are endless.

This probably explains why clients are amazed when a cleaner actually does what they say they do.

Why ordinary cleaners are quite happy
to settle for “good enough”

Mainstream is the road to mediocrity.

Ordinary cleaners (middle market cleaners) are quite content to produce a quality of product that's poor to mediocre. They call it "good enough".

And they justify good enough by rationalizing that their customers won't pay for true quality cleaning.

This is the same reasoning employed by wannabe cleaners (illusion cleaners) who offer **a three tier pricing structure** – sometimes called their "everyday", "expert" and "couture" service" Or their diamond, platinum and gold service, or their classic, deluxe and signature service, or basic, classic and artisan service.

Truth is, there are a number of reasons why ordinary cleaners settle for good enough **other than** the belief that their customers won't pay for true quality cleaning.....

Good enough is risk free

Good enough is the largest segment of the market, the vast middle ground between the value cleaner (discount cleaner) at the low end and the extraordinary cleaner (true quality cleaner) at the high end.

Good enough doesn't require a significant investment in skills, processes, equipment and facilities. You don't have to worry about who does what and how. Almost every position is interchangeable. Like cooks and servers in a cheap diner.

There's little risk in good enough. (Except in a recessionary environment where the vast middle market tends to trade down to the value cleaners, delay their cleaning altogether, or re-establish their relationship with their home washer).

Ordinary cleaners **couldn't handle the risk** of true quality cleaning.

So they settle for good enough.

Good enough is comfortable

Good enough doesn't obligate you to exercise a high degree of care or to concern yourself with the hundreds of details that constitutes true quality cleaning. All you need to focus on is pushing the garments through the system and out the door. They're in by 9:00 and out by 5:00; picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.

Good enough doesn't require you to constantly learn and improve, thereby raising the bar on everything you do. All you need to focus on is pushing the garments through the system and out the door. They're in by 9:00 and out by 5:00; picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.

Good enough doesn't require that you stand for something and open yourself up for criticism from ordinary dry cleaners. All you need to focus on is pushing the garments through the system and out the door. They're in by 9:00 and out by 5:00; picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.

Ordinary cleaners **couldn't handle the daily stress** of true quality cleaning.

So they settle for good enough.

Good enough is relatively stable

Good enough doesn't require that you turn your back on the vast majority of your existing customers and build a new customer base consisting of clients who demand and respect true quality cleaning.

Good enough doesn't require that you forego all income while you transform your cleaner from an ordinary, bang and hang cleaner to a true quality cleaner.

Good enough doesn't require that you invest 50 to 70 hours a week ensuring that the quality standards you have set are being faithfully implemented and, hence, give up your twice a week golf outings.

Ordinary cleaners **couldn't handle the challenge of starting over** as a true quality cleaner.

So they settle for good enough.

Good enough is Zeno's Paradox in action

If you seek to serve 90% of all possible consumers in the market, all you need to offer is ordinary cleaning.

To please half of the remaining 10% of the market, you'll need to work twice as hard and offer a quality of product that's twice as good.

To please the remaining 5% of the market, you'll need to work twice as hard again and offer a quality of product that's twice as good again.

This is a phenomenon known as Zeno's Paradox.

And Zeno's Paradox is why 90% of dry cleaners settle for offering a quality of product that's merely "good enough."

The case against quick turnaround

Your cleaner has assured you that they're a true quality cleaner.

They've also told you that they routinely provide "great cleaning, fabulous service and quick turnaround."

How do you spell CONTRADICTION?

We get asked many questions at RAVE FabriCARE. Many of those questions involve turnaround time

Why can't I drop off my cleaning on a Monday by 9:00 and pick it up that same day at 5:00? Or at the latest by 5:00 on the following day?

Why can't you pick up my cleaning on day 1 (say a Monday) and deliver it on day 3 (say a Thursday)? And pick up my cleaning on day 1 (say a Thursday) and deliver on day 4 (say a Monday)?

Our stock answer is that we don't - and won't - produce what dry cleaning industry experts call "bang and hang cleaning" or and what we call "ordinary cleaning."

You see, bang and hang cleaning or ordinary cleaning essentially involves tossing your cleaning into a machine, banging it out on a press, stuffing it in a bag, and cramming it onto a conveyor or shuttling it out the door. Believe it or not, this is **standard** operating procedure at the vast majority of ordinary cleaners, including those offering pickup and delivery service. It's a service available at most of the 26,000 cleaners in the USA.

If you don't believe this scenario, consider, for example, what happens to your cleaning that's picked up on a Thursday and delivered on a Monday by ordinary cleaners. In all probability, those articles are "tagged" on Thursday evening or Friday morning. "Cleaned", "pressed" and "bagged" on Friday. This way they're "right and ready" to be delivered on Monday. (The same principle applies to cleaning picked up on a Friday and delivered on a Tuesday.)

Just think about that for a second. That's nothing less than **same day**, or at the very best, **next day service!**

Given this scenario, would you knowingly subject your fine garments - especially your bespoke, made-to-measure, designer, high fashion, specialty and couture garments - to same day or next day service cleaning?

Of course not!

So here's our dilemma: We can either focus all our resources on consistently producing cleaning that's considered by many non-compensated, independent, authoritative third parties to be among the finest in the USA, or we can deliver the same bang and hang cleaning offered by over 400 ordinary cleaners in the metro Phoenix area and over 26,000 ordinary cleaners in the USA.

In a hectic world of same day and next day service and 3 day pickup and delivery service, **you can take comfort in the fact that a true quality cleaner takes the time to do it right.**

Because when it comes to caring for your fine garments, fine shirts and fine household textiles, faster isn't better.

Never has been. Never will be.

Dry cleaner gobbledegook.
How to separate the wheat from the
chaff.

The internet is wash with dry cleaners whose websites spew superlative-laden, jargon-sprinkled gobbledygook.

It's the perfect way to communicate absolutely nothing while appearing to say something.

Here are a few of our favorites:

- We focus on the details.
- We deliver top quality at a competitive price.
- We deliver the quality our customers demand.

Let's examine each of these morsels of gobbledygook in some detail....

“We focus on the details”

There are over 26,000 cleaners in the USA and over 400 in the metro Phoenix area. And every single one will tell you that they “focus on the details.”

Your intuition and experience should tell you that the vast majority of these claims are, at best, nothing more than puffery. So couple your intuition and experience with this

thought: true quality cleaning is not about a few details. **It's about hundreds of details.** And, specifically, it's the **combination of those hundreds of details** that produces true quality dry cleaning and true quality shirt laundry.

The difference between true quality cleaning and ordinary cleaning is akin to the difference between a little black dress by Armani® and a sixty nine dollar knockoff by Candie's Creations.

Here's another key point:

How can a cleaner claim that he "focuses on the details" when his entire operation is geared to same or next day service?

How can a cleaner claim that he "focuses on the details" when your garments are in by 9:00 and out by 5:00; or picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3?

How can a cleaner claim that he "focuses on the details" when he charges \$12.50 or \$20.00 for a two piece suit and \$2.25 or \$3.00 for a laundered shirt?

"We deliver top quality at a competitive price"

Is there's a **strong correlation** between the **quality of the product** your cleaner delivers and the **price they charge** for that product?

You bet there is.

So if your cleaner that tells you that they can **consistently** deliver a **high quality garment at a low or competitive price** they're being disingenuous. Many would call it bluffing.

Just like any other service, there are poor quality cleaners that charge a low price;

average quality cleaners that charge an average price; and true quality cleaners that charge a high price.

The problem for you, as a consumer of cleaning services, is that it's sometimes difficult to assess whether you're paying an average price for a poor quality product or a high price for a product that's merely average.

That's why it's important to investigate your cleaner's position on the quality-price spectrum.

RAVE FabriCARE, for example, is not a "value-priced" cleaner or a "competitively priced" cleaner.

We don't offer discounts, coupons, specials and loyalty programs.

Nor do we offer a three tier quality and pricing system, one level of quality and price for your "less fancy" garments, one level of quality and price for your "fancier" garments, and one one level of quality and price for your "most fancy" garments.

To anyone who knows anything about fine garment care, **the entire concept is absurd.**

Why? **Because it's impossible to implement.**

Employees get frustrated because they can't understand what quality of the product they need to deliver to different clients. Clients get confused about the quality of the product they believe they're paying for. And the management has no idea how to allocate their resources to serve three very different sets of clients who have three very different positions along the quality-price spectrum.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we deliver one level of quality: extraordinary care for fine garments and household textiles. And we price our services accordingly.

As the leader in quality care for fine garments, household textiles and accessories in

Arizona for over 25 years, our prices are set at a level which affords us the opportunity to concentrate **solely on the quality of our work.**

By contrast, the focus of the vast majority of ordinary cleaners can be summed up in two words: **quantity and speed.** Essentially, this means pushing *more and more* garments (quantity) *faster and faster* (speed) through their “production system”. They’re in by 9:00 and out by 5:00; picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.

At ordinary cleaners, production efficiency is the holy grail of their entire operation.

Of course, no ordinary cleaner will admit to this. Every cleaner will tell you that they produce “top quality at a competitive price” or “exceptional quality at a fair price”. But given their consistently lower price structure it’s clear that, despite their claims to the contrary, **the long-term economic viability of their enterprise depends on quantity and speed. Not on the quality of their work.**

Which is fine if you’re manufacturing **standardized** widgets. But absolute heresy when you’ve been entrusted with the custom cleaning and finishing of a client’s fine garments, household textiles and accessories.

It’s for this reason that we always tell our clients that while it’s important to know **what you’re paying**, it’s even more important to know **what you’re paying FOR** – as defined by the “ins” and “outs” and “hows” and “whys” of the processes and craftsmanship that produce the end product.

This begs the question: if you don’t have detailed, written information about your cleaner’s processes, craftsmanship and product quality standards, how do you know what you’re paying for?

At RAVE FabriCARE, setting prices **is the easy part.** Consistently delivering on our commitment to extraordinary care – every item, every order – now **that’s the complicated part.** And that’s the difference between true quality cleaning and ordinary cleaning.

“We deliver the quality our customers demand”

What utter nonsense!

Who sets the dry cleaning quality standards and the shirt laundry quality standards at your dry cleaning facility, Mr. Cleaner?

The **once-a-week customer** who wants his garments back the same day? The **once-a-month** customer who drops off her cleaning with the comment that she'll be back in a week? Or the **once-a-year** customer who needs his shirt, tie and suit “cleaned and pressed” for an upcoming event in one month?

What about the **price sensitive customer** who wants to know the price of every garment before he leaves your facility? Or the **quality oriented customer** who meticulously details her requirements for every garment she drops off?

And what about the customer with a **minimal investment in their wardrobe** who believes that the garments sold at The Mens Wearhouse and Jos. A Bank are way overpriced? Or the customer with a **significant investment in their wardrobe** who favors bespoke tailors, custom clothiers and upscale department stores and clothing boutiques?

No, Mr. Cleaner, **your customers don't set your product quality standards.**

You do.

After all, how can you possibly staff your plant with the right mix of technical skills if you haven't set the product quality standards?

How can you equip your plant with the right mix of equipment if **you** haven't set the product quality standards?

How can you establish a pricing structure if **you** haven't set the product quality standards?

How can you market your services if **you** haven't set the product quality standards?

How can you clean, finish (aka press), inspect, repair and package your customers' garments and household textiles if **you** haven't set the product quality standards?

We could go on and on but we won't. You get the drift.

No, Mr. Cleaner, **your customers don't set your product quality standards.**

You do.

Lewis & Wayne, one of London's long established cleaners, has a great slogan: "**We Clean To A Standard. Not To A Price.**"

True quality cleaners clean to a standard, not to a price. Ordinary cleaners clean to a price, not to a standard.

Ordinary cleaners who claim that they clean to a standard are being disingenuous.

What are the standards? Are those standards in writing? Are those standards posted for all clients and employees to see?

If they're not in writing, **then they don't exist.** And if they're not posted on a website or in the lobby of your facility, **then they don't exist.**

What does your dry cleaner stand for?
Something? Or nothing at all?

Dry cleaners can generally be divided into four categories:

- **Value cleaners (discount cleaners)** – poor quality at a discount price
- **Ordinary cleaners (middle market cleaners)** – mediocre quality at a moderate price
- **Wannabe cleaners (illusion cleaners)** – slightly better-than-average quality at an inflated price
- **Extraordinary cleaners (true quality cleaners)** – extraordinary quality at a high price.

At the low end of the spectrum are the **value cleaners**.

Value cleaners (or discount cleaners) know that they have to **extract every penny of cost** from their operations, primarily by minimizing their investment in skilled labor, processes and equipment. They know that saving a few nickles per garment can mean the difference between failure and survival.

At the high end of the spectrum are the **extraordinary cleaners**.

By contrast, extraordinary cleaners know that they have to **invest significant resources** in skilled labor, processes and equipment over many years in order to develop the institutional capability necessary to produce extraordinary cleaning on a consistent basis. On every garment. On every order.

Both value cleaners and extraordinary cleaners **know** exactly who their clients are and focus solely on serving the needs of those very different clients.

It's really quite simple. And quite complicated. All at the same time.

That leaves the **ordinary cleaners** who are figuratively and literally "stuck in the middle" (between the value cleaners and the extraordinary cleaners).

Just like Kmart and Sears, ordinary cleaners have no idea who their customers are, what their needs are and how to serve them.

All they know is that they must somehow survive and, in order to survive, they must become "all things to all people".

They believe that they can simultaneously care for garments that you're **really fussy** about, garments that you're **less fussy** about, and garments that you're **least fussy** about. And that they can do all this using the **exact same** personnel, procedures, processes, technologies, equipment and facilities and the **exact same** pricing structure.

In these days of limited resources, growing competition and increasing specialization, that's a rather quaint and possibly doomed notion.

Just ask Kmart and Sears how they're doing!

This brings us to our favorite category of dry cleaner – **the wannabe cleaners**.

Wannabe cleaners are ordinary cleaners who have **convinced themselves** that they are extraordinary cleaners.

They talk the talk but can't walk the walk.

Typically, wannabe cleaners deliver a quality of product that is only marginally above average but at an inflated price. Then use glitz and the illusion of quality to convince

their clients that their above average cleaning is somehow “exceptional” or “exquisite” and, therefore, worth that inflated price.

As these wannabe cleaners work to transform themselves into extraordinary cleaners, they, nonetheless, don’t want to alienate their existing clients who just want ordinary, bang and hang cleaning. They need to somehow retain those clients in order to survive financially.

So they **offer three different levels of quality at three different price levels**. They’ll typically refer to these three quality-price levels as their “everyday service”, their “expert service” and their “couture” service. Or their diamond, platinum and gold service. Or their classic, deluxe and signature service. Or their basic, classic and artisan service.

The notion is absurd.

Their employees get confused about the quality of the product they need to deliver. The clients get confused about the quality of the product they’re paying for. And the management has no idea how to allocate their limited resources to serve three very different types of clients with very different needs.

By contrast, a true quality cleaner would never offer three levels of care.

A true quality cleaner offers one level of quality extraordinary care.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we know who our clients are and we understand their needs. There’s no confusion. And, as a result, there are no compromises, no short cuts, no half measures and no trade offs.

We know where we stand. Our craftspeople know where we stand. And our clients know where we stand.

We do it right or we won’t do it at all.

It's a philosophy that's served us well for over 25 years. As a net result ...

- we're Arizona's leader in true quality cleaning
- we're used and recommended by more upscale department stores, clothing boutiques and custom clothiers than all other cleaners in Arizona combined
- we're recognized as one of the nation's premier cleaners by more non-compensated, independent, authoritative third parties than all other cleaners in Arizona combined.

So what does your dry cleaner stand for?

Something? Or nothing at all?

We are not responsible

Welcome to Alibi Fine Drycleaning & Shirt Laundry, Anytown's finest cleaner, where we are not responsible for anything.

- We are not responsible for garments with unusual combinations of fabrics
- We are not responsible for garments with unusual textures
- We are not responsible for garments with trims and embellishments
- We are not responsible for buttons that get scratched, chipped, broken or lost
- We are not responsible for buttons that get loose
- We are not responsible for buckles and other hardware that get scratched, chipped, broken or lost
- We are not responsible for zippers that break or don't slide
- We are not responsible for elastic that stretches or disintegrates
- We are not responsible for garments with inaccurate or incomplete care labels
- We are not responsible for debris or personal effects left in your pockets
- We are not responsible for gluing bar codes onto all your garments
- We are not responsible for removing the bar codes that we glue onto all your garments

- We are not responsible for removing or minimizing the intensity of any spots and stains.
- We are not responsible for using aggressive, dye-stripping dry cleaning solvents
- We are not responsible for using cheap dry cleaning detergents or for not using any detergents
- We are not responsible for misclassifying your garments by color or fragility
- We are not responsible for cleaning your garments in dirty dry cleaning solvents or fluids.
- We are not responsible for whites that turn grey, yellow or dingy
- We are not responsible for colors that fade or dull
- We are not responsible for dyes that bleed
- We are not responsible for garments that smell of “dry cleaning solvent”
- We are not responsible for garments that feel stiff and scratchy
- We are not responsible for garments that are returned with a fragrance or perfume smell
- We are not responsible for machine pressing your garments
- We are not responsible for garments that exhibit shine, flap or button impressions, or wrinkled seams and linings
- We are not responsible for rippled collars on coats, sport coats and jackets
- We are not responsible for lapels that are improperly pressed
- We are not responsible for garments that are returned with creased sleeves
- We are not responsible for knits that shrink, stretch or otherwise change dimension
- We are not responsible for laundering your shirts in hot (even boiling) water

- We are not responsible for using harsh, caustic, industrial grade laundry detergents and bleaches
- We are not responsible for starching your shirts with cheap synthetic glues
- We are not responsible for replacing missing or bent collar stays
- We are not responsible for replacing missing or cracked buttons.
- We are not responsible for shirt collar stay impressions from our machine pressing
- We are not responsible for machine folding shirts that require folding
- We are not responsible for open seams and loose hems
- We are not responsible for missing or loose snaps, hooks and eyes
- We are not responsible for wrinkling your garments when cramming multiple garments into a single, narrow poly bag

We could go on and on. But we won't. You get the drift.

Does this listing resonate with you? If you're looking for a responsible cleaner, consult a true quality cleaner.

Shirts and blouses: dry clean or launder?

Together with sweaters and slacks/trousers, shirts and blouses probably constitute the bulk of many wardrobes.

Without doubt, the most common question we're asked is how to care for these garments: dry clean or launder?

There's no simple answer. **It all depends...**

That's because there are a number of factors that go into the decision whether to dry clean or launder a shirt or blouse. In many cases, the decision is a judgement call on the part of the client and/or the cleaner.

The primary factors that should be considered in the dry clean vs. launder decision are:

Care label

Shirts or blouses with care labels that state "dry clean only", "machine washable, for best results dry clean," "hand wash, line dry and press at low temperatures" are examples of shirts and blouses that should be dry cleaned and hand ironed.

A word of caution is in order.

Just because a shirt or blouse has a care label identifying the manufacturer's **recommended** cleaning instructions **doesn't mean** that the care label is technically

accurate and complete. We'd estimate that 20% of all garments we receive contain care labels that are technically inaccurate or incomplete to some degree or another.

The bottom line is that nothing beats informed judgement when it comes to making the dry clean vs. launder decision.

Stains

The nature of the stains – oil-based or water-based or both – will dictate whether the shirt or blouse should be

- dry cleaned,
- wet cleaned or laundered,
- dry cleaned and then wet cleaned or laundered, or
- wet cleaned or laundered and then dry cleaned.

Texture

Textured fabrics that are embossed or ribbed and fabrics with a raised feel or nap should be dry cleaned and hand ironed to protect the texture of the fabric.

Ultra fine cottons (such as shirts by Stefano Ricci) should be dry cleaned and hand ironed for that “butter soft” feel.

Buttons

Garments with “non-standard” buttons should be dry cleaned and hand ironed.

Examples of “non-standard” buttons include colored shell buttons; concave shell buttons with a thin, raised rim; shell buttons with a thickness greater than standard; shell buttons with a diameter greater than standard; brand signature/monogrammed buttons; metal buttons; plastic buttons with metal rims; glass buttons; painted buttons; buttons with metal or plastic shanks; and the like.

In many cases, these types of buttons should also be removed prior to cleaning and replaced after finishing using the original button sewing technique (usually the “cross stitch” or “parallel stitch”) or protected by an appropriate covering.

Trim

As a general rule, garments with trim and embellishments should be dry cleaned and hand ironed.

A true quality cleaner should be able to clean almost any shirt or blouse with trim or embellishments. Expertly. Safely. And effectively. Whether it’s beads, sequins, rhinestones or paillettes, plastic, vinyl or rubber; paint, glitter or silk screen; appliques or embroidery, suede, leather or fur; multi-media comprising fabrics and skins; feathers; or high-tech fabrics.

Color

Dark colored shirts and blouses should be dry cleaned and hand ironed to protect the intensity of the colors.

Dark colored shirts and blouses that are wet cleaned or laundered tend to fade over time, especially along the seams of the collar, cuffs and front plackets – even if wet cleaned or laundered in cold water on a short cycle.

Fabric

Many shirts and blouses contain silk, linen, rayon (aka lynocell or tencel), nylon and/or polyester (including cotton/polyester blends that are 60% polyester or greater). These shirts and blouses should be dry cleaned and hand ironed.

Elasticity

Many shirts and blouses contain varying amounts of spandex (also known as lycra) - anything from 2% to 20%. These shirts and blouses should be dry cleaned and hand ironed.

Brand

Consideration should be given to the brand when making the decision to dryclean or launder.

Off the rack shirts and blouses such as Armani (black label), Battistoni, Borelli, Brioni, Chavet, Corneliani, Escada, Ford, Gucci, Isaia, Kiton, Lorenzini, Loro Piana, Prada, Ralph Lauren (purple and black label), Ricci and Zegna are examples of off the rack brands that should be dry cleaned and hand ironed.

Bespoke shirts and blouses such as Attolini, Bugelli, Carvet, Finolla, Kabbaz, Kiton, Liverano, Loro Piana, Maffeis, Matuozzo, Napoli Su Misura, Siniscalchi, Siviglia and Ypsilon are examples of bespoke brands that should be dry cleaned and hand ironed.

Preference

Personal preference plays a role in the dry clean vs. launder decision.

Some clients want all their shirts and blouses – casual, dress and formal; white, pastel and colored – dry cleaned and hand ironed.

A true quality cleaner will be happy to honor such requests. They'll even guarantee that your white cotton shirts and blouses that **are dry cleaned** will be spectacularly bright. As bright as your white cotton shirts and blouses that are laundered in hot water with caustic, industrial grade detergents and bleaches by ordinary cleaners.

Fit

Shirts and blouses **with a classic fit** may be suitable for professional laundering and pressing (by hand or by machine) provided, of course, that none of the factors described above apply.

However, **fitted and semi-fitted** shirts and blouses that have a contoured body should be dry cleaned and hand ironed.

Price

Price can be a consideration when it comes to the dry clean vs launder decision. As a general rule, dry cleaning is more expensive than laundering. Many clients take a just-do-what's-best for the shirt or blouse approach; others are insistent that the shirt or blouse be handled in a particular way.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we follow the client's instructions. In most cases. But not always.

If we believe that a client's instructions will be detrimental to the look and/or life of the garment, we often refuse to process that garment and just return it to the client uncleaned (Aside: In most cases, that same garment comes back to us a few weeks later with new instructions: Try to fix the "damage" wrought by another cleaner, except, this time, do whatever you feel is right).

Summary

We're pretty sure many ordinary cleaners will disagree with these general guidelines. We have no problem with that. It's their decision to treat your fine garments in any way they please in their never ending quest to deliver garments at the lowest possible cost and in the fastest possible time.

They'll continue to produce ordinary, bang and hang cleaning; we'll continue to focus on true quality cleaning.

Unsure how a specific shirt or blouse should be processed? Consult a true quality cleaner. They'll be happy to advise and help.

Spot cleaning: The myths debunked

We're frequently asked to spot clean a garment. A client will tell us that they only wore the garment for a short time and got a little food, beverage or makeup on it.

Our typical reaction is that, yes, it's possible to spot clean a garment. But, in most cases, we'd prefer to clean the garment completely.

And here's why.

Spot cleaning is essentially an attempt to remove a visible stain without subjecting the garment to any dry cleaning, wet cleaning, hand washing and/or restoration process.

Spot cleaning is accomplished by a stain removal technician on a spotting board (a piece of equipment shaped like a home ironing board), using a combination of steam, specialty cleaning agents, vacuum (to extract the moisture created by the steam), and compressed air (to dry the fabric).

The problem with spot cleaning, and the reason we generally prefer to clean the garment **completely**, is that it's almost impossible to completely remove (or "flush out") the residue of any chemical agent that might have been used in spot cleaning – residue that would normally be flushed out of the textile by the dry cleaning solvent or fluid.

This means that some chemical residue might remain in the fabric - with unpredictable long-term results.

What's more, many of these spots are oil-based stains, and oil-based stains cannot

always be completely flushed out with steam. So when that garment is pressed, the heat from the iron could oxidize the stain and yellow the fabric.

Of course, there may be unique situations where a garment either cannot or should not be completely cleaned due to its fragility, finish, embellishment or trim. But, typically, these situations are few and far between – even if the garment is labeled “Do not dry clean. Do not wet clean. Spot clean only.”

Looking for an opinion?

Discuss the garment with a true quality cleaner. They’d welcome the opportunity to discuss your options, advise you as to any risks associated with each option, and identify the results you can or cannot expect from each option.

Stain mishaps:
The do's. And, especially, the don'ts.

Picture yourself in a restaurant, in the office, on a flight, or at a social event. And oh no! Something just spilt, splashed or splattered on your favorite outfit or suit.

Before you can say “Where’s the club soda,” everyone around you is volunteering an opinion on a quick-fix miracle cure.

Here’s a word of caution: Before you take the “advice” of those around you, or before you do something you’ll later regret, consider this...

Family members, friends, business associates, restaurant waiters and airline personnel are not skilled stain removal technicians. Specifically, they know absolutely nothing about how to treat your specific combination of

- stain (e.g., steak sauce, mustard or red wine)
- stain type (e.g., oil-based, water-based or combination)
- fabric color (e.g., black, tan or white)
- fabric type (e.g., silk, wool or linen)
- dye type (e.g., solvent soluble dye, water soluble dye, solvent fast dye, water fast dye, or some combination thereof)

Their “advice” may sound plausible because it often involves “stuff” you’ve heard about: ammonia, baby wipes, baking soda, club soda, coca cola, dishwashing liquid, hairspray,

hand soap, hydrogen peroxide, hot or cold water, laundry detergent, lemon juice, lighter fluid, meat tenderizer, salt, vinegar, WD-40 ® or white wine.

Or commercial products such as Oxiclean ®, Urine Gone ® and Wine Away ®.

And let's not forget those "guaranteed" spot removers promoted on late night TV, at supermarket check outs, and in TV guides and tabloid newspapers.

Truth is, their "advice" is probably nothing more than a mixture of folklore, old wives tales, home remedies, and hazy memories about something they'd heard from someone a few years back.

So what do you do?

Here's our best advice ...

Ignore the "advice" of those around you.

Clearly, those around you are just trying to be helpful in an awkward situation. Unfortunately, they're not skilled stain removal technicians, and don't have the technical knowledge, tools, chemical agents, and specialized equipment necessary to "treat" the garment.

Count to 30. Slowly.

Hopefully, this "cool off" period will

- Refresh your memory on our advice for stain emergencies (including "Ignore the advice of those around you")

- Prevent you from doing something impulsive (“I’ve got to do something. Anything. Now!”)
- Delay your search for a quick-fix miracle cure (“Get me some water or club soda. Quick!”)

Here’s a sobering thought: By attempting to “treat” the stain yourself, you’ve got a 50:50 chance of ruining the garment.

In other words, if the quick-fix miracle cure works, you’re just plain lucky. If it doesn’t work, you’ve possibly ruined the garment.

Don’t apply any quick-fix miracle cure.

Most of these quick-fix miracle cures just spread the stain, result in the formation of rings, bleed the dyes, and “pull” the color out of the fabric. Furthermore, they make future removal or restoration by a skilled stain removal technician a difficult (and occasionally) impossible task.

Here’s another thought: Many of these spills, splashes or splatters are **oil-based stains**. The indiscriminate application of a handy **water-based solution** (such as club soda) to an oil-based stain is futile. Most water-based solution won’t dissolve an oil-based stain. It’ll merely spread the stain around and make the stain more difficult to remove.

We can’t begin to recall the number of ruined garments we’ve seen accompanied by the comment: “I know I should have heeded your advise but my friend’s sister suggested.....”

Gently blot the spill, splash or splatter with a white cotton napkin or towel. Never wipe. Never rub. Never scrub.

Let’s repeat that: Never wipe. Never rub. Never scrub. Just gently blot the fabric to

absorb as much of the spill, splash or splatter as possible.

Then leave it alone.

Take or send the garment to a reputable dry cleaner.

- Select a true quality dry cleaner who is recognized for their stain removal and restoration skills.
- Take or send in the garment within 24 to 48 hours.
- Give the dry cleaner enough time – at least a week – to achieve the best possible result (true quality cleaning cannot be accomplished in 1 or 2 hours or in 1 or 2 days).
- Point out the location of the spill, splash or splatter, especially if the spill, splash or splatter has dried clear.
- Inform the dry cleaner of the nature of the spill, splash or splatter, if known.
- And, if you didn't heed our advise to refrain from using any quick-fix miracle cures, the DIY miracle cure you applied.

So the next time a spill, splash or splatter occurs remember our advice: ignore the advice of others, and do nothing you'll later regret.

You could say that knowing **what not to** do is more important than knowing **what to do**.

Those spots and stains weren't on my garment before dry cleaning!

You don't remember seeing a stain before you took that garment to the cleaner. Or before you put it away in your closet.

It couldn't have been there. You'd have surely seen it. Right?

The more likely scenario is that **the stain was there but it just wasn't visible** when you took it to the cleaner or when you put it away in your closet.

The transformation from an invisible to a visible stain can be best explained by 2 examples:

- Think about an apple. If an apple is cut in half and left on a plate, the oxygen in the air and/or heat causes the sugars in the apple to **caramelize and turn brown or yellow**.
- Think about any oily substance such as cooking oil or moisturizing cream. If you wash a blouse or shirt with an oil-based stain and then you hand iron that garment, the heat from the hand iron causes that oil stain to **oxidize and turn brown or yellow**.

How stains and spills can transform from invisible to visible at the dry cleaner

Many stains and spills are colorless when they first come into contact with your

garment. Fact is, you may not have even been aware of the problem at the time the stain or spill occurred.

On the other hand, if you were aware that a stain or spill occurred and tried to blot the stain or spill with a napkin or towel, some residue of the stain or spill will always be left behind.

Although the garment looks clean and you might have only worn it for a few hours, you, nonetheless, decide to have it cleaned. So off to the cleaner it goes.

The dry cleaner then loads his dry cleaning machine and presses the magical start button. The garment then goes through the wash, extract and dry cycle. Unfortunately, when the garment is removed from the dry cleaning machine, the stain or spill has **transformed from an invisible to a visible stain**. In this case, the **heat** from the dry cleaning machine's dry cycle acted as a catalyst to highlight the stain.

Now, let's assume that, instead of asking the cleaner to clean the garment, you asked your cleaner for a press only. When the garment is pressed by machine or with a hand iron, the heat from the press or the hand iron **transforms the stain or spill from an invisible to a visible stain**. In this case, the **heat** from the pressing machine or hand iron acted as a catalyst to highlight the stain.

When a stain suddenly appears, it means that the stain has caramelized or oxidized. Heat, oxygen and time can caramelize or oxidize the stain.

A skilled stain removal technician can often remove a stain that appears to have "set".

How stains and spills can transform from invisible to visible in your closet

Many stains and spills are colorless when they first come into contact with your

garment. Fact is, you may not have even been aware of the problem at the time the stain or spill occurred.

On the other hand, if you were aware that a stain or spill occurred and tried to blot the stain or spill with a napkin or a towel, some residue of the stain or spill will always be left behind.

As the garment looks clean and you only wore it for a few hours, you decide to hang it in your closet.

The problem is that, over a period of time, these stains and spills combine with oxygen in the air and/or heat and **transform from an invisible to a visible stain**.

So just because you couldn't see a stain or spill or you thought you'd removed all traces of the stain or spill through blotting, doesn't mean a stain or spill wasn't lurking in the fibers of your garment.

When a stain suddenly appears, it means that the stain has caramelized or oxidized. Heat, oxygen and time can oxidize the stain.

A skilled stain removal technician can often remove a stain that appears to have "set".

Common stains and spills that transform from invisible to visible

Some common liquids that can transform from an invisible to a visible stain include:

- Sugar stains such as champagne and soft drinks.
- Oil stains such as linseed, peanut, coconut, soy bean and salad oils.

- Tannin stains such as liquor, tea, soft drinks and medicines.
- Albumin stains such as egg, milk, perspiration, blood and urine.

What can you do?

The best way to prevent a hidden problem from popping out into the open is to

- inform your cleaner of the location and nature of the stain or spill.
- avoid putting garments into your closet that have water- and oil-based stains or spills.

A caveat is in order: If you do inform your cleaner about the stain or spill, there's a strong likelihood that the cleaner will not act on that information. That's because most cleaners don't have a skilled stain removal technician on premises. They might say they do, but in most cleaners, their "experienced dry cleaner" is merely someone who loads and unloads the dry cleaning machine.

If the stain or spill miraculously comes out you're in luck. And if it doesn't, well, that's **your** problem. Many ordinary cleaners will actually tell you that it's your fault. After all, **you** were the one who created the stain or spill in the first place!

Go figure.

The unvarnished truth behind bar coding your fine garments

So you've been told that your cleaner is a true quality cleaner.

But have you ever noticed that their definition of true quality cleaning has very little to do with the quality of the product they produce?

And that their definition revolves mostly around their **service** and **conveniences**? Such as their friendly service representatives, same day service, their 3 day pickup and delivery service, their 24/7 bag drop off system, their 24/7 order retrieval system, their drive through service, etc..

No doubt they also touted the bar coded labels they heat seal or glue onto all your garments and household textiles as an indicator of true quality cleaning.

Really?

The real question here is not whether they glue bar coded labels onto your fine garments and household textiles. You know they do. You've seen those bar coded labels glued onto the care labels, brand labels, waistbands, linings, side seams, and inside hems of your fine garments.

The real question is why they do it?

And the answer to that question will give you great insight into the cleaner's overall philosophy to garment care.

One word of caution: when evaluating that answer make sure to distinguish between the disclosed motivation (the spin) and the hidden motivation (the reality).

Here's our take on bar codes: a true quality cleaner would **never** glue bar coded labels anywhere on your fine garments and household textiles.

Why?

- Because they're your garments and household textiles. They don't belong to us. You entrusted them to us for restoration to as close to like new condition as possible. Not to have bar coded labels glued onto them without your permission.
- Because bar coded labels are typically used by high volume/low price, highly automated cleaners where the operational focus is on getting your garments into a machine, onto a press and into a bag. ASAP. At lowest possible cost. They're in by 9:00 and out by 5:00; or picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.
- Because a true quality cleaner moves and assembles your fine garments and household textiles by hand. Not by automated machine.

To understand exactly what we mean, visualize, for a moment, a Fedex or UPS sorting facility with a web of conveyor belts and bar code scanners strategically mounted above those conveyor belts. Further, visualize letters and boxes of all shapes and sizes, all imprinted with a bar code, shuttling along a conveyor belt from point to point.

Now, instead of letters and boxes, visualize your fine garments and household textiles, suspended on hangers, being roller-coasted around a dry cleaning plant from point to point on an automated moving and assembly system.

Bar coded labels are the foundation of such an automated system.

It's a concept borrowed directly from the uniform rental industry.

Here's some background ...

We're all familiar with the uniform rental industry. We see their products on every USPS,

FedEx and UPS driver. To ensure that those uniforms are “cleaned, steamed/pressed, assembled and delivered” at the lowest possible cost, the cleaner must, among other things, bar code all garments and utilize a highly automated moving and assembly system to shuttle their garments from point to point.

Along comes the value cleaners, the ordinary cleaners and even some wannabe cleaners. They figured that if the system works for the uniform rental industry, it’ll work for them too.

But does it work for you?

Can you picture your fine garments and household textiles being shuttled around a dry cleaning plant from cleaning to steaming/pressing to assembly to bagging?

Can you imagine your easily wrinkled, delicate and/or fragile garments such as your silk, linen and cotton blouses and shirts being crushed between heavier coats, sport coats, blazers, trousers, slacks and sweaters?

All in the name of maximizing efficiency and minimizing costs.

So, next time you see bar coded labels glued onto your fine garments and household textiles consider this: Do you want your fine garments and household textiles to be treated like uniform rental garments?

Don’t think so.

Careful handling of your fine garments and household textiles through the entire garment care process is just one sign of true quality cleaning. Bar code labels glued onto your fine garments and household textiles points to ordinary, “bang and hang” cleaning.

If you wanted to ride a roller coaster,
you'd visit an amusement park.
Not the cleaners.

Visualize, for a moment, a FedEx or UPS sorting facility with a web of conveyor belts and bar code scanners strategically mounted above those conveyor belts.

Further visualize letters and boxes of all shapes and sizes, all imprinted with a bar-code, shuttling along a conveyor belt from point to point.

Now, instead of letters and boxes, visualize your fine garments and household textiles, suspended on hangers, being roller-coasted around a dry cleaning plant from point to point on an automated distribution and assembly conveyor.

The automated movement of garments is the latest ‘technological break-through’ to hit the dry cleaning industry. This technology has been embraced by many cleaners – primarily by volume-oriented cleaners who operate at the low end of the quality-price spectrum and whose business model is based on maximizing efficiency and minimizing costs.

And the foundation for such a system? Bar coded labels that are heat-sealed or glued onto your garments and household textiles.

It’s a concept borrowed directly from the uniform rental industry.

Here’s some background.

We’re all familiar with the uniform rental industry. We see their products on every FedEx, UPS or Post Office driver. To ensure that those uniforms are “cleaned, steamed/pressed, assembled and delivered” at the lowest possible cost, the cleaner must,

among other things, bar code all garments and utilize a highly automated distribution and assembly system to shuttle those uniforms from point to point.

Along comes the value cleaners, the ordinary cleaners and the wannabe cleaners. They figured that if the system works for the uniform rental industry, it'll work for them too.

But does it work for you?

Can you picture your fine garments being shuttled around a dry cleaning plant from cleaning to steaming/pressing to assembly to bagging to storage? Can you imagine your delicate silk, linen and cotton blouses and shirts being crushed between heavy wool coats and sweaters?

All in the name of maximizing efficiency and minimizing costs.

So, next time you see bar coded labels glued onto your fine garments and household textiles consider this: Do you want your fine garments and household textiles to be treated like uniform rental garments?

We don't think so.

Which is why we move your fine garments and household textiles around our facility – from cleaning to finishing to inspection to assembly to packaging to storage/delivery – by hand.

All by hand.

All very gently.

Careful handling of your fine garments and household textiles through the entire garment care process is just one sign of true quality cleaning.

Bar code labels glued onto your fine garments and household textiles points to ordinary, “bang and hang” cleaning.

Protecting your fine wools
against the female moth and her larvae

Year after year you follow the same ritual: as the weather transitions from summer to fall, you dig out your wool sweaters, slacks/trousers, blazers/sport coats, suits, coats and scarves and carefully examine them for any evidence of “moth damage”.

And all the while you're thinking: here we go again. That vicious cycle of storage, reweaving and wearing, storage, reweaving and wearing.

So what can you do to break the cycle?

As with most issues, **before you can formulate a solution, you need to first understand the problem.**

Here's what you need to know.....

The female adult moth can lay up to 200 eggs in a cycle, up to 5 cycles a year. When the female adult moth is searching for the “ideal” egg laying location, **she's looking for a source of nutrition for the larvae to feed on when they hatch.** Those larvae must feed in order to survive and grow. Otherwise they die.

Unfortunately, garments stored **without first being cleaned** contain all the nutrients necessary to sustain life for those larvae. These nutrients include proteins, mineral salts, vitamin B complex and cholesterol that accumulate on your garments from perspiration, body oil, food or beverage **simply by virtue of the fact that the garment has been worn.**

The problem is complicated by the fact that the larvae will often feast on the inside of a garment, on the surface of a garment, or on certain threads in a garment. This reduces the thickness or strength of the fibers in those places. So when the garment is next worn, hand washed or dry cleaned, the possibility exists that holes that were not previously visible to the naked eye could open up.

Here's the key: Contrary to conventional wisdom, the larvae don't "eat your wools." The wool, itself, is not a food source. Instead, they eat what's embedded in and on the wool, and, in the process, damage those wool fibers. "Moth damage" is technically inaccurate; "moth larvae damage" is a more accurate term.

So you need to look at two areas

- where the cloth has **been eaten through** (the fabric will show a hole with the fibers around the edge of the hole partially eaten away).
- Where the cloth has **been eaten on the surface** (the fabric will appear to be "cratered" with the cloth partially eaten away).

Lighter colors are easier to detect; darker colors more difficult to detect. But, with careful examination, such as holding up the garment to the light, you should be able to see moth damage with the naked eye.

Now that you know what the problem is, the solution is really quite simple:

The only way to guarantee that you don't have a "moth problem" is to remove the nutrition from your fine wools before you store your garments. And the only way to remove those nutrients is by hand washing and/or dry cleaning your fine wools before you store.

Even if you think your items are clean, you ought to clean them anyway. Why? Because there are many different kinds of stains that you may not have seen and that will leave a layer of organic material for the moth larvae to feed on.

Riffs, rants and ruminations on the shocking state of garment care

Remember the mantra: **clean before you store because clean means no nutrition. And no nutrition means no more “moth damage”.**

Notice that we’ve said nothing about cedar blocks, cedar chests, cedar lined closets, herbal sachets, moth balls, non-polypropylene plastic boxes, cardboard boxes, zip lock bags, nylon zip up bags, and vinyl zip up bags.

Why? Because these solutions don’t **eliminate** the problem, they only **contain** the problem. And containment may not solve the problem anyway.

That having been said, you can enhance the protection of your fine wools while in storage in 3 ways:

- Clean all your wool garments before you store them for the summer.
- Store your washed and/or dry cleaned wools in storage bags made of cotton or [breathable, man-made polypropylene fibers](#).
- Keep your closets clean and organized. Vacuum regularly.

Protecting your fine clothes with cedar: the double edged sword

Every few weeks or so a client drops off an armful of sweaters and knits that developed “moth holes”.

The client is often perplexed. How could those wools and knits have developed moth holes when they’d been faithfully stored over the summer in the cedar chest she’s had for years?

Almost on cue, we ask “why cedar?”

Typically, the response is that cedar chests are the ideal place to store fine wools and knits for the summer, thereby protecting them against the possibility of moth damage.

The follow up question is obvious: so how did those fine wools and knits develop moth holes when they had been carefully stored over the summer in a cedar chest that’s supposed to be the “ideal” place to store fine wools and knits for the summer?

Here’s the explanation.....

Many believe that cedar is the ideal moth repellant. **But that’s only true in certain circumstances.**

That’s because cedar itself does not kill insects. It’s the aroma of the oils in the wood that’s highly irritating to insects and it’s the aroma in the oils that makes those insects less likely to stay in that vicinity for a prolonged period of time.

But the cedar **looses its positive attributes when it dries out after a year or two,** leaving the cedar chest **functionally useless.**

Not only is dried out cedar wood functionally useless, but **dried out cedar wood offers negative protection.**

Why negative protection?

Because cedar wood (and many other wood products for that matter) is highly acidic. As the wood ages, it off gasses acids. And when those acids come into physical contact with your garments, the acids could possibly yellow your garments and deteriorate the fibers.

So what to do?

- Make sure the interior of your cedar chests and closets is sanded every few years. Sanding the wood will bring out the aroma of the oils below the surface of the wood. If the wood is really dry, consider sanding and applying some cedar oil.
- Line the inside of your cedar chest or the outside of your cedar closets with an archival, chemically inert barrier film (such as Mylar D or Mellinex 516). You can use thumb tacks to attach the barrier film to the wood. This will provide a barrier between your garments and the wood. You get the positive protection of the aroma of the oils in the cedar and avoid the negative issues associated with physical contact between the wood and your fine garments.
- Never allow any of your garments to come into physical contact with cedar blocks, cedar rings or cedar chips. Avoid cedar hangers entirely. If you have them, consider storing them in your garage or in your recycling bin!

By the way, here's another reason to avoid cedar (or moth balls or herbal sachets): The aroma of cedar is difficult to remove even after multiple dry cleanings.

There is, of course, **a far better way to protect your fine wools** during short or long term storage: every wool garment should be hand washed and/or dry cleaned prior to storage, even if you only wore the garment for a few hours prior to storage.

Here's why....

The female adult moth can lay up to 200 eggs in a cycle, up to 5 cycles a year. When the female adult moth is searching for the “ideal” egg laying location, she’s looking for a source of nutrition for the larvae to feed on when they hatch. Those larvae must feed in order to survive and grow. Otherwise they die.

Unfortunately, garments stored **without first being cleaned** contain all the nutrients necessary to sustain life for those larvae. These nutrients include proteins, mineral salts, vitamin B complex and cholesterol that accumulate on your garments from perspiration, body oil, food or beverage **simply by virtue of the fact that the garment has been worn.**

**If you clean your fine wools before you store, you’ll never have “moth damage”.
Because clean means no nutrition. And no nutrition means no more “moth damage”.**

Now, the only thing that’s left for you to do is to gather up all those pseudo moth protecting devices (cedar blocks, cedar chests, herbal sachets, moth balls, polypropylene boxes, zip lock bags, nylon and vinyl zip up garment bags) and store them in your garage or in your recycling bin.

The top 21 reasons not to choose a True Quality Cleaner (SHORT VERSION)

- You're mesmerized by the "sizzle" (the glitzy brochures, technological gizmos and fancy packaging) and have no interest in the "steak" (the quality of the product).
- You're willing to accept tired, superlative-laden and jargon-sprinkled cliches as a substitute for specific technical information about processes and craftsmanship employed.
- You're delighted that your cleaner heat seals or glues bar coded labels onto all your fine garments and household textiles.
- You don't own any designer, hi fashion, specialty (garments with trims or embellishments) or couture garments. So you're not particularly concerned with the process and craftsmanship used to care for your garments.
- You're happy to turn a blind eye to the fact that your fine garments are being tossed into a cleaning machine with little or no pre-spotting.
- You appreciate the fact that your fine garments are being cleaned in a relatively aggressive, dye-stripping dry cleaning solvent such as perchloroethylene (aka perc), synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal.
- You don't care that your fine garments are being cleaned in a dry cleaning solvent that, in all likelihood, has not been both continuously filtered and purified.
- You insist that your fine garments be cleaned in a dry cleaning solvent that's not dermatologically friendly.
- You're not averse to wearing garments that smell of dry cleaning solvent and/or other soluble impurities such as food oils, food fats, body oils, creams and lotions.

- You favor the “washed out look.” So you want your fine garments to fade. The sooner the better.
- You love the feeling of stiff, scratchy garments against your skin.
- You prefer fragranced or perfumed garments over odorless garments.
- You don’t care that your fine garments are machine pressed at a rate of 20 to 40 per hour per presser and not hand ironed as promised.
- You believe the verbal claim that your sweaters and knits are measured before cleaning and blocked to those measurements after cleaning. And you insist that they provide no proof that the garment was, in fact, blocked.
- You’re unconcerned that your laundered shirts are brushed, bleached, boiled and baked in 4 to 6 hours.
- You don’t care that your laundered shirts are machine pressed at a rate of 40 to 50 per hour per presser and not hand ironed as promised.
- You like your laundered shirts “starched” with cheap synthetic glues.
- You don’t believe that creases in the sleeves of your laundered shirts is a sign of poor craftsmanship and display an “I pressed this shirt myself at home while watching TV” look.
- You’re satisfied with a cleaner who stuffs multiple laundered shirts into a single bag (hangered shirts) and who machine folds your laundered shirts into a rumpled mess (folded shirts).
- You require all your fine garments and household textiles returned in 1 to 3 days. Always. Even if that means compromising and short cutting the quality of care.
- You believe that quality has no inherent value and that garment care, like sugar and salt, is nothing more than a commodity: all cleaners are the same, the only difference is price.

The top 21 reasons not to choose a True Quality Cleaner (EXTENDED VERSION)

True Quality Cleaners aren't for everyone.

At RAVE FabriCARE, for example, we've developed a particular viewpoint as to what constitutes true quality cleaning. We've even detailed those viewpoints in two ebooks on [Professional Dry Cleaning](#) and [Professional Shirt Laundry](#).

We make no apologies for the viewpoint espoused in these ebooks. This is who we are and what we stand for.

With this in mind, here are the top 21 reasons not to choose a True Quality Cleaner...

1. You're mesmerized by the "sizzle" (the glitzy brochures, technological gizmos and fancy packaging) and have no interest in the "steak" (the quality of the product).
2. You're willing to accept tired, superlative-laden and jargon-sprinkled cliches as a substitute for specific technical information about processes and craftsmanship employed.
3. You're delighted that your cleaner heat seals or glues bar coded labels onto all your fine garments and household textiles.
4. You don't own any fine garments or garments with trims or embellishments. So you're not particularly concerned with the process or craftsmanship used to care for your garments.
5. You're happy to turn a blind eye to the fact that your fine garments are being tossed into a cleaning machine with little or no pre-spotting.
6. You appreciate the fact that your fine garments are being cleaned in a relatively aggressive, dye-stripping dry cleaning solvent such as perchloroethylene (aka perc), synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal.
7. You don't care that your fine garments are being cleaned in a dry cleaning solvent that, in all likelihood, has not been continuously filtered and purified.

8. You insist that your fine garments be cleaned in a dry cleaning solvent that's not dermatologically friendly.
9. You're not averse to wearing garments that smell of dry cleaning solvent and/or other soluble impurities such as food oils, food fats, body oils, creams and lotions.
10. You favor the "washed out look." So you want your fine garments to fade. The sooner the better.
11. You love the feeling of stiff, scratchy garments against your skin.
12. You prefer fragranced or perfumed garments over odorless garments.
13. You don't care that your fine garments are machine pressed at a rate of 20 to 40 per hour per presser and not hand ironed as promised.
14. You believe the verbal claim that your sweaters and knits are measured before cleaning and blocked to those measurements after cleaning. And you insist that they provide no proof that the garment was, in fact, blocked.
15. You're unconcerned that your laundered shirts are brushed, bleached, boiled and baked in 4 to 6 hours.
16. You don't care that your laundered shirts are machine pressed at a rate of 40 to 50 per hour per presser and not hand ironed as promised.
17. You like your laundered shirts "starched" with cheap synthetic glues.
18. You don't believe that creases in the sleeves of your laundered shirts is a sign of poor craftsmanship and display a "I pressed this shirt myself at home while watching TV" look.
19. You're satisfied with a cleaner who stuffs multiple laundered shirts into a single bag (hangered shirts) and who machine folds your laundered shirts into a rumpled mess (folded shirts).
20. You require all your fine garments to be returned in 1 to 3 days. Always. Even if that means compromising and short cutting the quality of care.
21. You believe that quality has no inherent value and that garment care, like sugar and salt, is nothing more than a commodity.

Here's the detail...

1. You're mesmerized by the "sizzle" (the glitzy brochures, technological gizmos and fancy packaging) and have no interest in the "steak".

Many cleaners pass themselves off as true quality cleaners by diverting their customers' attention to the **"sizzle"** (slick, multicolor brochures; technological gizmos; fancy packaging such as logo printed tissue and poly, and wood and chrome hangers; granite countertops and recessed lighting; etc.). And away from the **"steak"** (the quality of the product they produce).

Truth is, you'll find that their product (the "steak"), when stripped of the fancy packaging, is typically only average or slightly above average, at best.

On the other hand, if you're looking for the **"steak"** and the **"sizzle"**, put a true quality cleaner to work for you.

2. You're willing to accept tired, superlative-laden and jargon-sprinkled cliches as a substitute for specific technical information about processes and craftsmanship employed.

Cleaners love to hide behind nebulous buzzwords and gobbledygook such as

- "we meet or exceed the industry's highest standards"
- "we focus on the details"
- "we work hard to earn your compliments"
- "we provide great cleaning, fabulous service and quick turnaround"
- "we treat your everyday wear as if they were fine couture pieces".

So ennobling. So professional sounding. **And so utterly meaningless.**

Of course, your intuition and experience should tell you that these cliches are, at best, nothing more than puffery. So couple your intuition and experience with this thought: **true quality** is not about a few details. **It's about hundreds of details.** And, specifically, it's the **combination of those hundreds of details** that produces true quality cleaning.

Truth is, notwithstanding all these claims, the entire modus operandi of the vast majority of cleaners is geared to getting your garments into a machine, onto a press, and into a bag. ASAP. They're in by 9:00 and out by 5:00; or picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, we don't hide behind cliches. And we don't blather in industry jargon that sounds vaguely impressive in an attempt to sound good while hiding what's really going on.

You know why?

Because informed clients can see through the smoke screen. Informed clients can spot hypocrisy a mile away.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we tell you exactly what we do, why we don't do what the vast majority of cleaners do. In plain English. We provide you with accurate information about our processes and craftsmanship. **And with a degree of specificity that's unheard of in the dry cleaning industry.**

And why do we provide this information?

Because the more you know about our processes and craftsmanship, the better you'll be able to differentiate between true quality cleaning and ordinary, bang and hang cleaning.

3. You're delighted that your cleaner heat seals or glues bar coded labels onto all your fine garments and household textiles.

Visualize, for a moment, a Fedex or UPS sorting facility with a web of conveyor belts and bar code scanners strategically mounted above those conveyor belts. Further, visualize letters and boxes of all shapes and sizes, all imprinted with a bar code, shuttling along a conveyor belt from point to point.

Now, instead of letters and boxes, visualize your fine garments and household textiles, suspended on hangers, being roller-coasted around a dry cleaning plant from point to point on an automated distribution and assembly conveyor.

The automated movement of garments is the latest “technological breakthrough” to hit the dry cleaning industry. This technology has been embraced by many cleaners. Primarily by **volume-oriented cleaners** who operate at the **low end of the quality/price spectrum** and whose business model is based on maximizing efficiency and minimizing costs.

And the foundation for such a system? Bar coded labels that are heat sealed or glued onto your garments and household textiles.

Can you picture your fine garments being shuttled around a dry cleaning plant from cleaning to steaming/pressing to assembly to bagging to storage? Can you imagine your delicate silk, linen and cotton blouses and shirts being crushed between heavy wool coats and sweaters? All in the name of maximizing efficiency and minimizing costs.

So, next time you see bar coded labels glued onto your fine garments and household textiles consider this: **Do you want your fine garments and household textiles** being shuttled around like slabs of meat in a slaughter house?

We don't think so.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, we move your fine garments and household textiles around our facility by hand. Gently. From cleaning to finishing to inspection to assembly to packaging to storage/delivery.

All by hand.

All very gently.

Careful handling of your fine garments and household textiles through the entire garment care process is just one sign of true quality cleaning. Bar code labels glued onto your fine garments and household textiles points to ordinary, bang and hang cleaning.

4. You don't own any designer, hi fashion, specialty (garments with trims or embellishments) or couture garments. So you're not particularly concerned with the process or craftsmanship used to care for your garments.

You've heard the claim from the vast majority of cleaners before: We know how to handle your fine designer garments, high fashion garments, specialty garments (garments with trims or embellishments) and couture garments.

And even though our **bread and butter** is regular garments – shirts, blouses, polo shirts, trousers, slacks and jeans – we treat **all your regular garments** as if each one were a fine couture piece.

Sure they do. And donkey's fly and jaybirds wear derby hats!

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, **our bread and butter is designer, high fashion, specialty and couture garments and gowns**. This has allowed us to become highly skilled in cleaning and finishing these garments and gowns.

More specifically, we can expertly, safely and effectively clean almost any garment or gown with trim or embellishments. Whether it's beads, sequins or rhinestones; plastic, vinyl or rubber; paint, glitter or silkscreen; appliques or embroidery; suede, leather or fur. Or a St. John Knit blazer heavily embellished with paillettes and/or rhinestones.

At RAVE FabriCARE, **we actually do treat your regular garments with the same extraordinary care** that we lavish on your fine designer, high fashion, specialty and couture garments.

And that's a statement of fact. Not an unsubstantiated claim.

5. You're happy to turn a blind eye to the fact that your fine garments are being tossed into a cleaning machine with little or no pre-spotting.

At the vast majority of cleaners, **the stain removal process** (known as pre-spotting) is skipped entirely.

At these cleaners, their "stain removal technician" merely loads and unloads a machine and hopes that the stains will miraculously disappear based on a combination of the dry cleaning solvent (the more aggressive the better), the dry cleaning detergent (the cheaper the better), the addition or injection of moisture into the dry cleaning machine (a reckless undertaking), and the dry cleaning machine's tumbling action (the faster the better).

At best, they'll post-spot your garments **after** they've been cleaned. The problem, of course, is that post-spotting is often too late. The heat of the dry cleaning machine's dry cycle may have already set any stains and spills.

At the vast majority of cleaners, even simple stains and spills receive one of those sorry-we-tried-but-we-couldn't tags.

There are many cleaners who'll try to convince you that they **do**, in fact, invest time and resources in the pre-spotting process. As "proof", they'll often cite the number of "stain removal technicians" they employ and the cumulative years of their "experience" – even though there is zero correlation between "experience" and skills.

Yet, in the very next sentence, they'll boast about their fabulous in-by-9:00-out-by-5:00, picked-up-on-day-1-delivered-in-day-3-service.

The inherent contradiction in these 2 statements should be obvious...

It takes time to professionally clean your garments (i.e., to pre-spot the garments; hang dry the garments prior to dry cleaning; employ a multi-stage cleaning process that might involve dry cleaning, wet cleaning, hand washing and/or garment restoration techniques; etc.). And **it takes time** to professionally hand finish, inspect, repair and package your garments.

Given all these time-dependent tasks, **how likely is it that all these tasks can be completed** in 1 to 3 days?

So where does the truth lie?

With the **actual performance** of all these time-consuming tasks? Or with the **promotional claims** that all these tasks are actually performed?

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, **you'll never have to worry about promotional claims of actual performance**. We invest the time necessary to do the job right.

We perform extensive stain removal and cleaning procedures on every garment and household textile. Often using a multi-stage process, involving dry cleaning, wet cleaning, hand washing and/or restoration techniques, to protect your investment. Even if that means taking the time to treat the same garment or household textile multiple times until the stain has been removed or minimized.

6. You appreciate the fact that your fine garments are being cleaned in a relatively aggressive, dye-stripping dry cleaning solvent such as perchloroethylene (aka perc), synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal.

95% of all cleaners will clean your fine garments in one of three relatively aggressive dry cleaning solvents: perchloroethylene aka “perc” (a by-product of the manufacture of chlorine), synthetic petroleum (a by-product of the manufacture of gasoline) or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal (_____).

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, we use siloxane, a dry cleaning fluid that’s used by fewer than 5% of all cleaners.

It’s completely odorless and dermatologically friendly. No dry cleaning solvent smell. No fragrance or perfume smell. Ever.

It’s extremely gentle. So gentle it’s used as a base ingredient in many personal care products you apply to your skin on a daily basis.

And it’s chemically inert. Which means that our dry cleaning fluid won’t “bleed” or “fade” your colors.

Odorless and dermatologically friendly. Extremely gentle. Chemically inert. Just three reasons why our dry cleaning fluid **is perfectly compatible with the delicate nature** of designer, high fashion, specialty and couture garments. As well as your fine business and casual apparel.

7. You don’t care that your fine garments are being cleaned in a dry cleaning solvent that, in all likelihood, has not been continuously filtered and purified.

Very few cleaners **continuously purify** (or “distill”) **every single drop** of their dry cleaning solvent before and after each load. And **filter every single drop** of their dry cleaning solvent during each load.

Nonetheless, that **won’t stop them from claiming that their dry cleaning solvent is “clean and pure.”**

Cleaning your fine garments in a dry cleaning solvent that has not been continuously purified and filtered is just like washing your clothes in a home washer and reusing the same dirty water over and over again.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, we both **continuously purify** (or “distill”) and **continuously filter** our dry cleaning fluid. **Every single drop.** As a result every garment and household textile is cleaned in crystal clear, freshly purified and freshly filtered dry cleaning fluid. As clear as bottled mountain spring water.

It’s your only guarantee against greyish and dingy whites, creams and pastels; dull and faded colors; and that all-to-familiar “dry cleaning solvent smell.”

8. You insist that your fine garments be cleaned in a dry cleaning solvent that’s not dermatologically friendly.

Many individuals have skin sensitivities to one or more of the following:

- **SENSITIVITY TO THE VIRGIN DRY CLEANING SOLVENT ITSELF**

95% of all cleaners will clean your fine garments in one of three dry cleaning solvents: perchloroethylene aka perc (a by-product of the manufacture of chlorine), synthetic petroleum (a by-product of the manufacture of gasoline) or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal.

- **SENSITIVITY TO ALL THE ACCUMULATED SOLUBLE IMPURITIES IN THE DRY CLEANING SOLVENT.**

These impurities include bacteria, food oils, food fats, body oils, creams and lotions that are deposited on and absorbed by your garments and household textiles when cleaned in “dirty dry cleaning solvent”, i.e., dry cleaning solvent that has not been continuously purified.

- **SENSITIVITY TO THE FRAGRANCE OR PERFUME IN THE DRY CLEANING SOLVENT.**

Many cleaners add or inject fragrance or perfume to their dry cleaning solvent to “disguise” or “neutralize” the odor associated with cleaning in dry cleaning solvent that has not been continuously purified.

The research suggests that most individuals are not sensitive to the virgin dry cleaning solvent per se. But they are sensitive to the impurities in the dry cleaning fluid and/or to the fragrance or perfume added to “disguise” or “neutralize” those impurities.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, **you’ll never have to worry about any of these issues.**

That’s because our dry cleaning fluid is non-chlorinated, non-hydrocarbon, non-formaldehyde, fragrance-free, perfume-free and completely odorless. We call it Free & Clear Dry Cleaning.®

It’s ideal for the chemically-sensitive who are **unable to tolerate** dry cleaning solvents like perchloroethylene, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal, the dry cleaning solvents used by more than 95% of all dry cleaners. Or who are **unable to tolerate** the fragrances or perfumes that are part of a cleaner’s bag of tricks.

9. You are not averse to wearing garments that smell of dry cleaning solvent and/or other soluble impurities such as food oils, food fats, body oils, creams and lotions.

Your clothes will only **smell of dry cleaning solvent** if your cleaner shortens the dry and deodorize cycle of his dry cleaning machine. This often happens in cleaners where the pressure to “get the garments out” (i.e., into a machine, onto a press, into a bag and onto a conveyor or truck) is constant and hectic.

But, more likely than not, **you’re not smelling dry cleaning solvent at all**. Instead, **you’re smelling all the contaminants** in the dry cleaning solvent.

That’s because few cleaners **both** continuously purify **every single drop** of their dry cleaning solvent **before and after** each load, and continuously filter **every single drop** of their dry cleaning solvent **during** each load.

Continuous purification is much like boiling your tap water at home to obtain pure water; continuous filtration is much like filtering your tap water to remove any additional impurities.

As a result, **soluble impurities**, such as bacteria, food fats, food oils, body oils, creams and lotions, accumulate in the dry cleaning solvent. And **insoluble impurities**, such as sand, dander and hair, float around in the dry cleaning solvent.

The soluble impurities are then absorbed by the fibers of your garments and household textiles during the dry cleaning “wash” cycle. In particular, **natural fibers, such as silk, wool, linen and cotton, absorb these impurities like a sponge absorbs liquid**.

Instead of your cleaner continuously purifying and continuously filtering his dry cleaning solvent, **your** garments and household textiles are functioning as your cleaner’s “cleaning filter.”

So you're probably not smelling dry cleaning solvent at all. Instead, you're smelling the **accumulated contaminants in your garments and household textiles** – contaminants **deposited on your** garments and household textiles and contaminants **absorbed by** your garments and household textiles from your cleaner's "dirty dry cleaning solvent."

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, your garments and household textiles are **always** cleaned in dry cleaning fluid that's **both** continuously purified and continuously filtered. **Every single drop.** So our dry cleaning fluid is absolutely crystal clear. **As clear as bottled mountain spring water.**

Fact is, crystal clear, freshly purified and filtered dry cleaning fluid is **your only guarantee** against greyish and dingy whites, creams and pastels; dull and faded colors; and that all-to-familiar "dry cleaning solvent smell."

10. You favor the "washed out look." So you want your fine garments to fade. The sooner the better.

Ordinary cleaning has a tendency to dull and fade your darker colored garments.

For 3 reasons:

- Dry cleaning your dark colored garments in "**dirty dry cleaning solvent**" will tend to dull your colors.
- Perchloroethylene (aka "perc"), petroleum, synthetic petroleum and formaldehyde dibutyl acetal – the dry cleaning solvents used by 95% of all cleaners – **are not chemically inert.** This means that these dry cleaning solvents react chemically with the dyes in your garments.

The result? "Bleeding", "pulling" or "fading" of dyes.

- Cleaners often elect to wash as many of your cotton and linen garment as possible. Even if you specified dry clean only. Even if the care label said “dry clean only”. This way you won’t smell of dry cleaning solvent and/or soluble impurities from the dry cleaning solvent.

For the cleaner, it often comes down to a simple choice: **do we stink ‘em or do we fade ‘em.** And most cleaners would rather fade ‘em than stink ‘em.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast,

- Our dry cleaning fluid is always **crystal clear.** As clear as bottled mountain spring water. So cleaning your fine garments and household textiles in our dry cleaning fluid won’t dull your colors.
- Our dry cleaning fluid **is chemically inert.** This means that our dry cleaning fluid does not react chemically with the dyes in your fabrics. The result? No “bleeding”, “pulling” or “fading” of dyes.
- Our dry cleaning fluid is **very gentle** on fabrics. So gentle, it’s in many of the personal care products you use on a daily basis. Such as shampoos, antiperspirants, deodorants and moisturizing creams.
- Our dry cleaning fluid is **completely odorless.** So we can confidently dry clean all your cottons and linens, leaving them clean, bright and soft as butter. We **never** have to choose between stinking ‘em or fading ‘em.

AT RAVE FabriCARE, **we’ll always dry clean all your cottons and linens,** leaving them clean, bright and soft as butter.

11. You love the feeling of stiff, scratchy garments against your skin.

Sizing is to dry cleaning what starch is to shirt laundry.

And cleaners *love* sizing.

So they add or inject sizing into their dry cleaning machines during the dry cleaning “wash cycle”. In much the same way that you might add detergent or softener to your home washer.

Their stated reason? According to one Arizona cleaner’s literature, to “keep each garment feeling new and crisp”. And to “retain your garment’s original shape, weight and feel” (and no, we didn’t make that last statement up!).

And the true reason? The more sizing they add, the quicker and easier it is for their operators to bang out your garments on a press.

What gets sized? **Everything in the load.** Cottons. Linens. Silks. Rayons. Wools such as alpaca, angora, camelhair, cashmere, escorial, marino, mohair and vicuna. Super 100s, 120s, 150s and 160s.

Is it any wonder your fine wools and silks feel and drape like cardboard when you get them back from the cleaner.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, we **never** add or inject sizing into our dry cleaning machines. We want your fine wools and silks to feel like butter, not like cardboard.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we believe that sizing should **never** be applied to an entire load of dry cleaning. We believe that sizing should be applied to cottons and linens only and only by a skilled hand finisher. **During the hand finishing stage only.** And only in accordance with your **stated personal preferences.**

12. You prefer fragranced or perfumed garments over odorless garments.

Garments should **always** be cleaned in a dry cleaning solvent or fluid that's **both continuously purified and continuously filtered. Every single drop.** This way your garments are cleaned in a dry cleaning solvent or fluid that's absolutely crystal clear. As clear as bottled mountain spring water.

Continuous purification is much like boiling your tap water at home to obtain pure water; continuous filtration is much like filtering your tap water to remove any additional impurities.

Fact is, crystal clear, freshly purified and filtered dry cleaning solvent or fluid **is your only guarantee** against greyish and dingy whites, creams and pastels; dull and faded colors; and that all-to-familiar "dry cleaning smell."

Unfortunately, very few cleaners **both** continuously purify **every single drop** of their dry cleaning solvent **before and after** each load, and continuously filter **every single drop** of their dry cleaning solvent **during** each load.

So **soluble impurities**, such as bacteria, food oils, food fats, body oils creams and lotions, accumulate in the dry cleaning solvent. **And insoluble impurities**, such as sand, dander and hair, float around in the dry cleaning solvent.

The soluble impurities are then absorbed by the fibers of your garments during the dry cleaning "wash" cycle. In particular, natural fibers, such as silk, wool, linen and cotton, absorb these impurities like a sponge absorbs liquid.

Instead of your cleaner both continuously purifying and continuously filtering his dry cleaning solvent, **your** garments are functioning as your cleaner's "cleaning filter".

So you're probably not smelling dry cleaning solvent at all. Instead, you're smelling the **accumulated contaminants in your garments and household**

textiles – contaminants deposited on your garments and household textiles and contaminants absorbed by your garments and household textiles from your cleaner's "dirty dry cleaning solvent."

And how do cleaners deal with the resultant odor?

They simply add or inject fragrance or perfume into their dry cleaning solvent.

Many cleaners will tell you they do this to impart a "breath of fresh air" into your garments. Truth is, these fragrances and perfumes are added **solely** to "disguise" or "neutralize" the odor associated with cleaning in dry cleaning solvent that has not been both continuously purified and continuously filtered.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, we **never** add fragrance or perfume to our dry cleaning fluid.

And the reason? We clean in dry cleaning fluid that's crystal clear. As clear as bottled mountain spring water. Pure dry cleaning fluid means zero odor. And zero odor means no need for fragrance or perfume.

13. You don't care that your fine garments are machine pressed at a rate of 20 to 40 garments per hour per presser and not hand ironed as promised.

At the vast majority of cleaners, your fine garments are pressed by machine. Typically, with way too much pressure, using way too much steam, at way too high a temperature, for way too long.

So they exhibit those common "bang and hang" **machine pressing** practices found at ordinary cleaners: crushed nap; shine; seam, flap and button impressions; moire-

like press pad impressions; double creases; wrinkled seams and linings; and other “crimes of fashion”.

Of course, **every cleaner will vehemently deny** that they machine press your fine garments. Yet, at the same time, they boast about their quick, 1 to 3 day turnaround time – an inherent contradiction in claims.

You can’t have it both ways: Speed of production is incompatible with quality of product. In the garment care business, you’re either in the speed business or the quality business. **It’s not possible to be in both businesses – simultaneously.**

At RAVE FabriCARE by contrast, your fine garments are delicately finished. The old-fashioned way. **By hand.** Using a hand iron. Both inside and out. **No matter how long it might take.** By a skilled garment finisher who specializes in only one particular category of garment. Not by some semi-skilled jack of all trades who skips from slacks/trousers to ties to blouses/shirts to blazers/sport coats to sweaters depending on the needs of the cleaner.

“Pressing”, as practiced by the vast majority of cleaners, is such a poor descriptor of the art of finishing. Of course, a skilled finisher must know how to apply pressure to achieve a smooth finish on a linen or cotton. But a smooth, soft, hand-finish, that minimizes the possibility of shine or seam, flap or button impressions, best defines the finest professional finishing.

If you’re looking for validation of this point of view, broach the subject of “pressing by dry cleaners” with any bespoke tailor and watch their blood pressure rise. And make sure you bring a portable defibrillator with you. Your tailor may need it.

14. You believe the verbal claim that your sweaters and knits are measured before cleaning and blocked to those measurements after cleaning. And you insist that they provide no proof that the garment was, in fact, blocked.

For a variety of reasons, the dimensions of some sweaters and knits may change during the cleaning and finishing process.

For this reason, every sweater and knit garment should be measured **prior to cleaning**, and then depilled, delinted and blocked to their original measurements **after cleaning**.

Blocking involves:

- Measuring all dimensions of a garment prior to cleaning.
- Maintaining a record of all those dimensions.
- Shaping the garment to those original measurements, using hands and steam.
- Applying a vacuum to “dry” the steam and “lock” the shape into place.
- Returning the garment with proof of blocking.

If you asked any cleaner whether they measured **all** their sweaters and knits prior to cleaning, and then blocked those sweaters and knits to their original measurements, **you’d probably receive a “lukewarm assurance” that they do.**

The real question is this:

Can you believe those assurances in the absence of any proof of blocking?

At RAVE FabriCARE, we say no.

Our experience tells us that these assurances are bogus.

Which is why, at RAVE FabriCARE, every sweater and knit garment is carefully measured (up to 12 separate dimensions) prior to cleaning. These dimensions are then noted on one of four custom printed blocking tags – for sweaters/blouses, slacks/trousers, dresses and skirts.

The blocking tag accompanies your garment through the entire cleaning, finishing, inspection and packaging process. At the packaging stage, we hang the blocking tag on your garment hanger or place it in your breathable sweater bag.

While almost every cleaner **claims** that they block their sweaters and knits, RAVE FabriCARE **puts the proof of blocking** right in your hands.

Because claims without proof are just hallucinations.

15. You're unconcerned that your laundered shirts are brushed, bleached, boiled and baked in 4 to 6 hours.

By way of background, here's what happens to your laundered shirts – even at so-called “better cleaners” and self-styled “couture care specialists”.

Your shirt is laundered using conventional washing techniques – scrubbing with nylon brushes, hot water, harsh caustic industrial grade detergents, and bleaches.

Then it's **pressed on a series of machines** that have all the precision of a sledgehammer: one for the body, one for the sleeves and one for the collar and cuffs. Typically, at the rate of 40 to 50 an hour per presser.

Next, your shirt is **“strategically touched up”** by hand on the sleeves and underarms.

If deemed necessary. If you're lucky.

Finally, **the sleeves are creased from shoulder to cuff** – often all the way to the end of the cuff.

This is the shirt that's **passed off to customers** as a “hand ironed laundered shirt” or a “hand finished laundered shirt.”

At the vast majority of cleaners, **these shirt travesties are called “standard operating procedures”**.

And the results? A machine mangled, dishwater dingy, cardboard crusty shirt. That'll last 25 to 35 cleanings, at best (that's the “industry insurance standard”). Before you're forced to throw them out or consign them to the charity bin.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we're different.

First, **we soak your fine shirts** in our odorless, dermatologically friendly, fabric gentle dry cleaning fluid.

This is the **only way to safely and gently dissolve oil-based stains** – such as body oil, creams and lotions, and other grease deposits – without scrubbing your collars and cuffs with nylon brushes.

This is also the only way to ensure that, when your shirt is finally hand ironed, those body oils and grease deposits don't transform or oxidize through heat into difficult-to-remove yellow or brown stains.

Next, **we soak your fine shirts** in special water-based solutions to relax the fibers. And **release soil and water-based stains**. For a minimum of 8 hours (12 hours for shirts with french cuffs).

Why is soaking critical to the care of fine shirts?

Because **soaking reduces the wear and tear** that would result from the use of conventional washing techniques (aka the scrubbing/hot water/industrial detergent/bleach method).

After soaking, we **gently launder your fine shirts for about 5 minutes**. In cold to cool water. Using only the finest pH balanced, fragrance free, phosphate free enzyme detergents manufactured by Sanitone ®. Using specialized, computer-controlled wet cleaning machines, where microprocessors control water temperature, cylinder speeds, mechanical action and moisture removal to exacting specifications.

Finally, every laundered shirt is **steamed out and hand ironed**.

You read that correctly: steamed out and hand pressed. **As a matter of routine**. Not machine pressed and then “strategically touched up”. If deemed necessary. If you’re lucky.

Truth is, any cleaner can “clean and press” a shirt in 4 to 6 hours.

But only RAVE FabriCARE crafts an extraordinary shirt.

16. You don’t care that your laundered shirts are machine pressed at the rate of 40 to 50 per hour per presser and not hand ironed as promised.

By way of background, here’s what happens to your laundered shirts – even at the so-called “better cleaners” and self-styled “couture care specialists”.

Your shirt is **laundered using conventional washing techniques** – scrubbing, hot water, harsh caustic industrial grade detergents, and bleaches.

Then it’s **pressed on a series of machines** that have all the precision of a sledgehammer: one for the body, one for the sleeves and one for the collar and

cuffs. Typically, at the rate of 40 to 50 an hour per presser.

Next, your shirt is **“strategically touched up”** by hand on the sleeves and underarms. If deemed necessary. If you’re lucky.

Finally, the **sleeves are creased** from shoulder to cuff – often all the way to the end of the cuff.

This is the shirt that’s **passed off to the public** as a “hand ironed laundered shirt” or a “hand finished laundered shirt.”

Unfortunately, a 2 to 3 minute **touched up shirt** is not an 8 to 12 minute **hand ironed shirt**.

To qualify as a hand-ironed laundered shirt, the shirt must be **PARTIALLY steamed by machine and then COMPLETELY pressed by hand** (that’s a “hand ironed laundered shirt”).

Not COMPLETELY pressed by machine and then PARTIALLY touched up by hand (that’s a “hand touched up laundered shirt”).

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, every laundered shirt is hand ironed. As a matter of routine.

We’d never pass off a machine pressed laundered shirt as a hand ironed laundered shirt in the hope that you’d never know the difference between a \$2 or \$3 machine pressed laundered shirt and a \$8 to \$10 hand ironed laundered shirt.

Note to metro Phoenix area residents:

- If your cleaner automatically creased sleeves the sleeves of your shirts, the likelihood that your shirt was machine pressed is almost guaranteed.

Why do we say that? **Because no cleaner who hand irons their shirts would ever consider destroying that hand work by creasing the sleeves of your shirts.**

- If your cleaner charges you \$8 to \$10 for a hand ironed laundered shirt, make sure that you're getting a hand ironed laundered shirt and not a machine pressed laundered shirt that's been strategically touched up with a hand iron.

Why do we say that? **Because we know of no cleaner in the metro Phoenix area – other than RAVE FabriCARE – that hand irons your laundered shirts.**

(Aside: if you know of a cleaner in the metro Phoenix area that hand irons your shirts as a matter of routine, please let us know).

17. You like your laundered shirts “starched” with cheap synthetic glues

There are basically 2 types of starch – synthetic and natural.

Most cleaners starch their shirts with a cheap synthetic glue that adheres to your shirt's fibers like a coat of paint (it's poly vinyl chloride aka PVC).

Every time your shirts are starched another “coat” is added. The build-up continues in this fashion because synthetic starch does not dissolve easily when it comes into contact with water in the washer wheel.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, we only use the finest, natural wheat starch which dissolves immediately on contact with water.

One more thing about synthetic starch. The continuous build-up on each starching also abrades the fibers of your shirts rather quickly.

That's because, instead of "collapsing" when it comes into contact with water in the washer wheel, the shirt maintains its rigidity. It's just like throwing an ultra-thin piece of plywood into the washer wheel and tumbling that piece of wood for 20 plus minutes.

18. You don't believe that creases in the sleeves of your laundered shirts is a sign of poor craftsmanship and displays a I-pressed-this-shirt-myself-at-home-while-watching-TV look.

For reasons that we are still trying to understand, some individuals actually like creases in the sleeves of their shirts.

We're not referring to those shirts. Instead, we're referring to the 99% of individuals who have never expressed a preference for "creased sleeves."

Fact is, the vast majority of cleaners automatically crease your sleeves for one reason and one reason only: it quickly covers up a whole host of telltale signs that the shirt has been machine pressed by a semi-skilled machine operator.

Creasing the sleeves of a shirt is just like painting over rusty metal. And hoping that no one will notice all the other signs that the metal is in poor condition.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, we prefer an uncreased or rolled sleeve.

In our opinion, a rolled sleeve is the first sign, amongst many others, of a professionally hand ironed shirt; a creased sleeve is the first sign of a machine pressed shirt and displays all the professionalism of a pressed-at-home look.

19. You're satisfied with a cleaner who stuffs multiple laundered shirts into a single bag (hangered shirts) and who machine folds your laundered shirts into a rumpled mess (folded shirts).

At the vast majority of cleaners, your hangered laundered shirts are stuffed into a narrow poly bag. Often 5 or 6 to a bag.

It's easy to understand why. After all, why bother with quality packaging if the shirts on the inside are mediocre at best.

And why do your folded laundered shirts look like a mess? Because they're:

- machine pressed
- machine folded
- stuffed into a thin poly bag.

We like to call this the "slept in" look. It's a look that's available at over 26,000 ordinary cleaners throughout North America.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, we do things differently.

As regards your hangered shirts, we bag our laundered shirts using extra wide, extra thick poly bags. One shirt to a bag.

And your folded laundered shirt?

- We carefully **fold your shirt in half**. Not in thirds, like almost every other cleaner. We carefully **fold by hand**. Never by machine, like almost every other cleaner.

- We carefully **cushion the folds with sheets of unbuffered, acid-free tissue**. Not with regular tissue or no tissue, like almost every other cleaner.
- We carefully **support the body and collar with a thick, long shirt board and a bubble collar support**. Not with a flimsy, short board and no collar support, like almost every other cleaner.
- We **seal the shirt in a heavy gauge, wide shirt bag with a “built in” cushion of air**. Not in a thin, narrow poly bag that crushes your shirt, like almost every other cleaner.

We also offer a “short fold” shirt tailored to the depth of your storage cabinetry. Just specify the maximum length of the poly bag and we’ll accommodate your needs. Same folding process; shorter poly bag.

So go ahead. Manhandle our folded shirts. Stuff ‘em in that suitcase. You’ll find that the RAVE FabriCARE folded shirt travels beautifully. With practically no wrinkles or creases.

Fact is, if you’re traveling, our folded shirts will arrive at their destination in far better condition than the hangered shirts you might have personally carried by hand. Upon arrival, there’ll be absolutely no need to send your shirts to the hotel valet for “pressing”.

20. You require all your fine garments to be returned in 1 to 3 days. Always. Even if that means compromising and shortcutting the quality of care.

There are over 400 cleaners in the metro Phoenix area.

And **every single one** would be delighted to accommodate your request for same or next day service. **And every single** one who offers pickup and delivery service will be

delighted to pickup your cleaning on day 1 and deliver on day 3.

That's because their entire modus operandi is geared to getting your garments into a machine, onto a press and into a bag. ASAP.

Same or next day in-store service and 3 day pickup and delivery service is standard operating procedure at almost every cleaner in the metro Phoenix area (and probably in the US as well).

Yet, at the same time, they'll tell you that their "exceptional dry cleaning and laundry service" is the result of their "attention to detail."

Truth is, **you can't have it both ways**: true quality, in garment care, is simply not compatible with speed (on a consistent, routine basis).

It's the same reason Morton's ® or Ruth's Chris ® cannot prepare their fine steaks at the speed of a Denny's ®. And the same reason Vidal Sassoon's ® or Rolf's ® cannot execute their styles at the speed of a Super Cuts ®.

At RAVE FabriCARE, by contrast, we take about 5 days to return your fine garments. That's because **we actually perform** all the time consuming tasks necessary to professionally clean, hand finish, inspect, repair and package your fine garments.

At RAVE FabriCARE, **we actually perform** all these time consuming tasks. **We don't just claim that we perform** all these time consuming tasks.

21. You believe that quality has no inherent value and that garment care, like sugar and salt, is nothing more than a commodity: all cleaners are the same, the only difference is speed and price.

The vast majority of cleaners are quite ordinary. **They'll all produce a garment that's "good enough, fast enough and cheap enough".**

In much the same way that Denny's ® serves steaks, Fantastic Sams ® cuts hair, 7-Eleven ® brews coffee, Sunny Delight ® prepares orange juice and Motel 6 ® provides accommodations.

The real question is this: **are you looking for extraordinary or are you satisfied with good enough, fast enough and cheap enough?**

At RAVE FabriCARE, we believe that good is never good enough, that true quality has inherent value, and that, without true quality, nothing else matters.

So we acquired the specialized equipment, technologies and facilities. We refined the stain removal, cleaning and restoration processes. We accumulated the knowledge, expertise and skills. We developed the internal operating procedures. And we established each service we offer as "best of class".

All, so you'll never have to worry about your bespoke, made-to-measure, designer, high fashion, specialty and couture garments and household textiles. Or even think about the hundreds of technical details that go into true quality cleaning.

POSITION PAPERS

Dry Cleaning

Your Dry Cleaning Bill Of Rights. Exercise Those Rights!

You've invested time and money in a quality wardrobe or in a few prized bespoke, made-to-measure, designer, specialty and couture garments. And you want to maintain that wardrobe and those garments in pristine condition. Looking, feeling and smelling great. And lasting much longer.

Like most, you'll probably turn to a "professional dry cleaner" for help.

And what happens there?

They take 50 to 60 "dry clean only" garments. Sort them into "lights" and "darks". Load them into a dry cleaning machine with little or no pre-spotting (pre-spotting is the removal of stains prior to loading them in a dry cleaning machine).

They add detergent (the cheapest one), moisture or water (to "remove" any water-based stains), fragrance (to disguise the smell of the emulsified oils, fats, creams and lotions in the solvent) and sizing (to stiffen your garments and render them quicker to machine press).

They toss them about in a relatively aggressive, dye-stripping, toxic solvent such as perchloroethylene, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal for 20 to 30 minutes.

They extract at a high RPM and dry at a high temperature to further minimize the total wash/extract/dry cycle time.

Then, they machine press the garments and “squirt” them with steam from a hand iron in an (often futile) attempt to conceal any evidence of machine pressing. At a rate of 30 to 40 pants per hour per presser and 20 to 30 non-pant garments per hour per presser. About 1½ to 3 minutes per garment.

Finally, they stuff the finished garments into narrow poly bags and cram them onto a holding rack or conveyor.

What’s more, many of your dry clean only cottons and linens may, in fact, not have been dry cleaned at all. They’ve probably been washed or wet cleaned, tossed into a dryer, machine pressed, and then “squirted” with steam. Even if you specifically requested “dry clean only”. Even if the care label said “dry clean only”.

Voila, they’re done! With almost no investment of time or skill. They’re in by 9:00 and out by 5:00. Picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.

Welcome to the world of “professional dry cleaning”. Where every cleaner claims to be a true quality cleaner.

So what are your dry cleaning rights? And what you should expect from a dry cleaner?

- The right to garments that are exceptionally clean and free of both oil-based stains (such as body oil, creams, lotions, salad dressing, steak sauce, etc.) and water-based stains (such as perspiration, soda, juice, wine, etc.)
- The right to spectacularly bright whites, creams and pastels.
- The right to colors that are rich and lustrous, without that “washed out”, faded look.
- The right to renewed, revitalized fabric textures that feel butter soft.
- The right to cottons and linens that have been dry cleaned as you requested or as specified by the care label. Not washed and dried in a dryer.

- The right to garments with absolutely no dry cleaning solvent smell. Ever.
- The right to garments with absolutely no fragrance or perfume smell.
- The right to garments that are meticulously finished. Inside and out. By hand. Not by machine.
- The right to garments that are carefully and thoroughly inspected. From inside to outside. From top to bottom.
- The right to garments that are professionally repaired whenever feasible.
- The right to a complete set of matching buttons that are secure and not scratched, chipped or cracked.
- The right to garments that are individually and elegantly packaged using hangers and other packaging materials that support the drape and integrity of those garments.

And how can your dry cleaner achieve the results?

- By pre-spotting every garment **instead of** just loading all garments into a dry cleaning machine and maybe post-spotting them. Pre-spotting is targeted stain removal by a skilled technician prior to cleaning the garment in a dry cleaning machine.
- By cleaning your garments in an odorless, crystal clear, dermatologically-friendly, fabric-gentle dry cleaning fluid **instead of** a fabric aggressive, dye stripping, toxic solvent like perchloroethylene (aka perc), synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal, the solvents used by 95% of all cleaners.
- By dry cleaning your cottons and linens as you requested or as specified by the care label **instead of** wet cleaning or washing them and tossing them in a drier.
- By operating their dry cleaning machines with zero moisture, zero sizing and zero fragrance **instead of** injecting moisture, sizing and fragrance into their dry cleaning solvent.

- By gently hand ironing all your garments **instead of** machine pressing them.
- By conducting a detailed inspection of every garment – inside and out – prior to packaging **instead of** a cursory look over, if any.
- By employing skilled, on-site tailors and alterationists to make all necessary repairs **instead of** assigning the task to the first customer service representative with nothing to do.
- By packaging your garments individually and using premium packaging materials **instead of** stuffing them in a bag and using materials that “look pretty” but aren’t technically aligned with and supportive of your garments over the short and long term.
- By taking the time to do the job right (5 days in most cases) **instead of** routinely offering same and next day service or 3 day pickup and delivery service.

Unfortunately, for the vast majority of cleaners, fine garment care – true quality cleaning – requires more than just a knowledge of loading and unloading a shirt washer or dry clean machine. More than just banging those garments out on a press. And more than just an assembly-line cleaning and pressing operation where every garment is barcoded and treated as interchangeable irrespective of brand and/or original cost.

Based on this definition, we could teach any supermarket stock room employee to be a dry cleaner or presser in 2 weeks (no, 2 days).

Truth is, fine garment care – true quality cleaning – requires

- an extensive knowledge of and commitment to the art and science of textiles, garment construction, cleaning and hand ironing,
- a never-ending commitment to process improvement (no matter how marginal),
- a stubbornness to reject labor saving technologies that negatively impacts true quality,

- an unyielding commitment to invest in true quality rather than extract every last penny out of the cleaning, hand ironing and packaging process,
- a sense of pride in one's work, a passion for perfection (to the extent that perfection is achievable),
- the time necessary to “do the job right,” and, most importantly,
- a personal philosophy that says that true quality cleaning has inherent meaning and value – for the cleaner, his employees and his clients.



Why would you pay \$40 or \$55
for a \$10 or \$15 ladies or men's suit?

You've heard the claim before: "We gently dry clean and delicately hand iron all your fine garments."

But is there any truth to this claim?

Is there a dry cleaner in Arizona - other than RAVE FabriCARE - that gently dry cleans and delicately hand irons all your fine garments as a matter of routine?

We don't believe there is. But we could be wrong...

That's because there are a number of cleaners in Arizona claiming that "we're just as good as RAVE", "our cleaning process is just like RAVE", "we hand iron all your garments just like RAVE" and "we do everything that RAVE does but at half or quarter the price".

Quite frankly, we've lost count of all the spurious claims, distortions, trickery and fabrications.

After all, you know that most dry cleaners will say and print anything. Even if there's no truth to the claim. **Even when there's no evidence to support the claim. Even when the evidence – your "cleaned and pressed" garments – directly contradicts the claim.**

And why do they make these claims? All in the hope that you won't understand or recognize the difference between

- a garment that's dry cleaned in dermatologically friendly, fabric gentle, non-dye stripping, crystal clear, odorless, moisture free, sizing free and fragrance free siloxane fluid and then hand ironed inside and out,

and

- a garment either laundered or wet cleaned, tossed into a dryer and machine pressed or dry cleaned in a toxic, aggressive, dye stripping solvent (such as perchloroethylene, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal) and then machine pressed.

It's the service equivalent of the old bait and switch. They promise you one thing, but actually deliver something completely different.

By the way, if you know of any dry cleaner in Arizona – other than RAVE FabriCARE – that gently dry cleans and then delicately hand irons **all** your fine garments as a matter of routine, please share the news with us. Needless to say, we'd be interested in the details.

Just to make sure we're comparing apples to apples, you should know that we:

- pre-spot all your garments for both oil-based and water-based stains before they ever enter our dry cleaning machines,
- clean your garments in dermatologically friendly, fabric gentle, non-dye stripping, crystal clear, odorless, moisture free, sizing free and fragrance free dry cleaning fluid, and
- hand iron your garments, inside and out.

At ordinary cleaners – even the so-called “better cleaners” or self-styled “couture care specialists” – your garments are **either** laundered or wet cleaned, tossed into a dryer and machine pressed, **or** dry cleaned in aggressive, dye stripping solvents and then machine pressed. Followed by a quick hand “touch up” and a spray of steam...if deemed necessary...if you're lucky.

And the difference?'

Brilliant whites, creams and pastels. Intense colors. Buttery soft feel. Zero sizing. Zero fragrance. Zero odor. Perfect smoothness. No hard press. No shine. No seam or button impressions. And much, much longer life.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we'd never pass off a \$10 or \$15 suit as a \$40 or \$55 suit in the hope that you'll never know the difference.

At RAVE FabriCARE, our dry cleaning process is exactly what we say it is. And, unlike any other cleaner in Arizona (and possibly in the USA), we spell out our [quality standards](#) – in writing – for everyone to see.

There are no spurious claims. No distortions. No trickery. No fabrications. No bait and switch.



Does your dry cleaner
no-spot, pre-spot or post-spot?

Most ordinary cleaners either no-spot or post-spot (maybe). They don't pre-spot.

In other words, ordinary cleaners skip the stain removal process (known as pre-spotting) entirely and their "stain removal technician" (we use this term very loosely) merely loads and unloads a machine.

Truth is, ordinary cleaners operate on a hope and a prayer. They hope and pray that the stains will miraculously disappear based on a combination of

- the dry cleaning solvent or fluid (the more aggressive the better),
- the dry cleaning detergent (the cheaper the better),
- the addition or injection of moisture into the dry cleaning machine (a reckless undertaking),
- and the dry cleaning machine's tumbling action (the faster the better).

At these cleaners, even simple stains receive one of those sorry-we-tried-but-we-couldn't tags.

Of course, ordinary cleaners will swear that they don't follow this approach. "We'd never do that at Tip Top Peerless Professional Quality Cleaners!"

And to reinforce that "fact", they'll highlight the number of "cleaners" they employ and the cumulative years of their "experience" (since when does the number of cleaners and the number of years of their experience equate to skill?).

Yet, at the same time that they tell you that their stain removal process is best of class, they'll also tell you all about their fabulous in-by-9:00-out-by-5:00 in-store service and their outstanding pick-up-on-day-1-deliver-on-day-3 valet service.

The ***inherent contradiction*** in these 2 positions should be obvious to anyone...

It takes time to professionally clean your garments (i.e., to pre-spot the garments; completely hang dry the garments prior to dry cleaning; utilize wet cleaning, hand washing and/or garment restoration techniques; dry clean the garments; etc.). And it takes time to professionally hand iron, inspect, repair and package your garments.

Given these time-dependent tasks, it's unlikely that they can be completed in 1 to 3 days, even with multiple shifts.

So where does the truth lie?

With the actual performance of all these time-consuming tasks? Or with the promotional claim that all these tasks are actually performed?

At a true quality cleaner, you'll never have to worry about promotional claims of actual performance. A true quality cleaner will invest the time necessary to do the job right.

A true quality cleaner will perform extensive stain removal and cleaning procedures on every garment and household textile. Often using a multi-stage process, involving dry cleaning, wet cleaning, hand washing and/or restoration techniques, to protect your investment. Even if that means taking the time to treat the same garment or household textile multiple times until the stain has been removed or minimized.

A brief guide to understanding dry cleaning solvents and fluids

Very briefly, there are 5 major components to a dry cleaner's service: cleaning, finishing (aka pressing), inspecting, repairing and packaging.

The dry cleaning solvent or fluid used in the cleaning process is probably the most critical part of the cleaning component.

There are primarily 6 dry cleaning solvents or fluids in use today:

Perchloroethylene

Perchloroethylene (aka perc), a chlorinated solvent, is the most common dry cleaning solvent in use today. Used by approximately 70% of the 26,000 cleaners in the USA, perc (brand name: Dowper from Dow Chemical and PerSec from Occidental Chemical) is valued for its grease-cutting properties.

Any uniform rental operation specializing in auto repair shops, would definitely want to clean in perc.

In recent years, perc has been attacked by governmental agencies, scientific bodies and environmentalists as a potential human carcinogen as well as a ground water and air pollutant. Perc has been scheduled for phase out in California by the year 2023.

By contrast, advocates for perc have argued that perc, used in accordance with existing environmental laws and regulations, is perfectly safe.

The debate over perc is on-going and contentious with a wealth of scientific and anecdotal evidence supporting both sides of the debate.

But health and environmental safety is not our beef with perc. Our concern is that perc is a **relatively fabric aggressive, dye stripping solvent**. Way too damaging for the bespoke, made-to-measure, designer, high fashion, specialty and couture garments in which we specialize.

Synthetic petroleum

About 20% of cleaners use synthetic petroleum, a hydrocarbon solvent that's a byproduct of the manufacture of gasoline (brand name: DF 2000 from Exxon Mobil Chemical or EcoSolv from Conoco Phillips Chemical).

Synthetic petroleum is often **falsely marketed** as an "organic, green, non-toxic and environmentally friendly **alternative to perc**".

Here's why synthetic petroleum should never be considered organic, green, non-toxic and environmentally friendly: While synthetic petroleum is relatively more gentle on your fine garments and household textiles than perc, it is, nonetheless, subject to the same federal, state and local environmental laws and regulations as perc, both in how it's used and how it's disposed of.

From a health and environmental point of view, hydrocarbon dry cleaning solvents are volatile organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs contribute to the formation of ozone, which, in turn, has been linked to various respiratory complications.

Many cleaners that use synthetic petroleum like to refer to themselves as "organic cleaners".

They argue that synthetic petroleum is technically organic because it contains carbon. But nuclear waste and coal slurry is also technically "organic because it contains carbon and no rational individual would argue that nuclear waste and coal slurry is "organic".

There is a whole lot of irony here as well.

Many cleaners who have converted from perc to synthetic petroleum in the past 15 years love to malign perc: “We use synthetic petroleum, the good cleaning solvent, not perc, the bad cleaning solvent.

Really?

Here’s what the users of synthetic petroleum don’t want you to know: If synthetic petroleum can be called “organic” just because it contains carbon, then perc can also be called “organic” **because it too contains carbon**.

And here’s what the users of synthetic petroleum can’t answer: If synthetic petroleum is “organic, why is it subject to the **same** federal, state and local environmental laws and regulations as **perc** in terms of how it’s used and how it’s disposed of?

To suggest that synthetic petroleum is organic in the same way that a fruit or vegetable is organic is deceptive and misleading. Actually, it’s more than that. **It’s a scam and a hoax.**

Formaldehyde dibutyl acetal

5%

Siloxane

Fewer than 5% of all cleaners use siloxane (brand name: Green Earth from General Electric Silicones, Dow Corning Silicones and Shin Etsu Silicones).

Siloxane is completely odorless and dermatologically friendly. You can even (legally) wash your face and hands in it.

It’s **extremely gentle**. So gentle, in fact, that it’s been used for decades as a base

ingredient in many personal care products you drip into your eyes and rub into your skin on a daily basis. Such as shampoos, antiperspirants, deodorants and moisturizing creams.

It's also **chemically inert**. Which means that siloxane won't "bleed" or "fade" your colors.

From an environmental point of view, siloxane is **non-toxic**. Actually, it's much more than just environmentally friendly. It's biodegradable. And it's environmentally benign. In the event of a major spill, siloxane degrades quickly in the environment into silica and trace amounts of water and carbon dioxide.

Contrast this to perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal. In the event of a major spill, a cleaner using siloxane will need a bucket and a mop. In the event of a major spill, a cleaner using perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal will need to summon your Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Unit.

From a health point of view, first aid measures for siloxane state that no action is required when siloxane **comes into contact with skin or is inhaled or ingested**. This differs markedly from first aid measures for perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal solvents (typically, wash, flush and consult a physician).

Pure liquid carbon dioxide

At room temperature and normal atmospheric conditions, carbon dioxide (CO₂) is a colorless and odorless gas. When subjected to high pressure in a closed vessel such as a high pressure dry cleaning machine, CO₂ transforms into a liquid. This is the principle behind CO₂ cleaning.

Although CO₂ is a naturally occurring and generally benign substance, there are relatively few pure CO₂ installations in North America (less than 50).

That's because

- the acquisition cost of a CO2 machine is relatively high (about 2 to 3 times the cost of a similarly-sized perc, synthetic petroleum, formaldehyde dibutyl acetal or siloxane machine)
- the cleaning performance is relatively poor (CO2 is a good rinse but removes next to no soil or stains)
- the environmental impact is not as advertised (a CO2 machine releases 6 to 10 pounds of CO2 into the atmosphere at the end of each cleaning cycle).

From an environmental point of view, pure liquid carbon dioxide is a volatile organic compound (VOC) that contributes to global warming.

Another problem is that it's cost prohibitive to operate a pure liquid carbon dioxide dry cleaning machine. So much so that Cool Clean Technologies, the only manufacturer of pure liquid carbon dioxide dry cleaning machines (amongst many other products), has been a no show at every dry cleaning trade show for at least the past 6 years.

Hybrid glycol ether/liquid carbon dioxide

Hybrid glycol ether/liquid carbon dioxide is a variation on the pure liquid CO2 dry cleaning process and takes place in a machine manufactured by Solvair.

Instead of being cleaned in pure liquid CO2, your garments and household textiles are first cleaned in Dipropylene Glycol normal Butyl Ether (aka DPnB), what Solvair calls their "biodegradable cleaning liquid".

After being **cleaned** in glycol ether (because pure liquid CO2 is such a poor cleaning agent), your garments and household textiles are **rinsed** in pure liquid CO2 and dried when the liquid CO2 converts to a gas and the gas is extracted from the system.

According to the EPA, glycol ether is a suspected neuro-toxin, respiratory-toxin and kidney-toxin.

From an environmental point of view, hybrid glycol ether and pure liquid carbon dioxide are volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that contributes to global warming.

Another problem is that it's cost prohibitive to operate a glycol ether/liquid carbon dioxide dry cleaning machine. So much so that Solvair, the only manufacturer of glycol ether/liquid carbon dioxide dry cleaning machines is long out of business. You cannot buy a new glycol ether/liquid carbon dioxide dry cleaning machine today.

Water

Let's not forget that water is the oldest "solvent". Water is often used in combination with dry cleaning to ensure that both water-based and soils and oil-based stains are removed from garments and household textiles.

Today, this water-based process is often called wet cleaning.

It is important to note, however, that wet cleaning is not "washing".

Even the most technologically advanced home washing machines or professional shirt washers cannot match the capabilities of today's specialized, computer-controlled wet cleaning equipment, where micro-processors control water temperature, cylinder speeds, mechanical action and moisture removal.



What's this all mean for you?

Now that you know the specific solvents or fluids used in dry cleaning today, **it's important to find out three things from your cleaner:**

- **What specific dry cleaning solvent or fluid does your cleaner use?**
- **What are the specific properties of that solvent or fluid?**
- **What is the impact of the specific solvent or fluid on your fine garments and household textiles?**

In answering these questions, forget about popular terms such as natural, sustainable, biodegradable, non-toxic, essentially non-toxic, practically non-toxic, EPA approved, non-regulated, non-ozone depleting, ozone friendly, ozone safe, VOC free, environmentally friendly, environmentally safe, environmentally preferable, environmentally superior, earth friendly, earth safe, eco friendly, eco safe, green, organic, alternative, or any other similar name your cleaner and/or his advertising agency can conjure up.

A ton of words that, in most cases, mean absolutely nothing.

It's important to recognize that **many cleaners use these terms to intentionally confuse or obfuscate, not to educate or enlighten.** That many cleaners are purposely ambiguous about the dry cleaning solvent or fluid they use (they just don't want you to know). And that some clean in perc and claim to clean in synthetic petroleum, while others clean in perc or synthetic petroleum and claim to clean in siloxane.

To discover this for yourself view the website of any cleaner and try to identify the specific solvent or fluid used by that cleaner. We'd bet that 9 times out of 10 it's undisclosed.

Now, ask yourself why?

There's an even better way to identify the actual solvent or fluid used by a dry cleaner.

Every county has an air quality control department that regulates the use of perc, synthetic petroleum and formaldehyde dibutyl acetal solvents by dry cleaners in that county.

Call them and ask for a copy of your dry cleaner's operating permit. The solvent they use will be right there – in black and white. (In the metro Phoenix area, call the Maricopa County Air Quality Department at 602-506-6201).

By the way, you *won't* find *our* permit on file at the Maricopa County Air Quality Department. As a dry cleaner who uses siloxane dry cleaning fluid, **we're exempt from all permitting requirements.**

Knowing the specific solvent or fluid used, its properties and its impact is critical to cutting through the fog of confusing terms in the dry cleaning marketplace.



Are Your Fine Garments Being Cleaned
In Toxic Solvents Derived From Chlorine,
Petroleum or Formaldehyde?
Pick Your Poison.

Almost all cleaners in the metro Phoenix area, clean garments in toxic, fabric aggressive, dye stripping solvents: perchloroethylene (a chlorinated solvent), petroleum (a hydrocarbon solvent) or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal (a formaldehyde solvent).

Perchloroethylene (aka perc)

The overwhelming majority of ordinary cleaners favor perchloroethylene (aka perc), a 1940's dry cleaning technology.

Because perc is a volatile organic compound (VOC), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classifies perc as a Toxic Air Contaminant. That's why it's strictly regulated at the federal, state and local level regarding how it's used and how it's disposed of. And why the State of California has outlawed the installation of any new perc dry cleaning machines starting in 2023.

Ordinary cleaners, on the other hand, love perc.

It's dirt cheap (in most states). It's super aggressive. It's relatively fast in terms of cleaning and drying. And, for garments with oily stains, virtually labor free.

If we specialized in overalls for automotive mechanics, we'd definitely want to clean in perc.

Synthetic petroleum

Some dry cleaners have, in recent years switched from perc to synthetic petroleum. Many of these cleaners now tout their synthetic petroleum as “eco-friendly” and “green”. Even “organic”.

Really?

Synthetic petroleum is a derivative of the manufacture of gasoline and is subject to the exact same restrictions as perc. That’s because, just like perc, synthetic petroleum is a volatile organic compound (VOC) that’s strictly regulated at the federal, state and local level regarding how it’s used and how it’s disposed of.

If you believe that synthetic petroleum is “eco-friendly”, “green” or “organic”, then you’d probably believe that the moon is made of cheese.

Formaldehyde dibutyl acetal

Siloxane

At RAVE FabriCARE, we don’t (and won’t) use perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal.

Since 2001, we’ve been cleaning your fine garments and household textiles in siloxane.

Like most products, siloxane has its drawbacks. It requires a substantial annual licensing fee. The cost per gallon of siloxane is relatively equal to the cost of perc or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal and significantly higher than the cost of synthetic petroleum. And it’s far more labor intensive and time consuming to use.

Nonetheless, we love siloxane. Mostly because it's as different as different can be.

- **DIFFERENT IN THE WAY ITS MADE**

By General Electric. Not Dow Chemical, Exxon Mobil, Conoco Phillips or Kreussler.

- **DIFFERENT IN THE WAY IT CLEANS**

It's chemically inert. That means that it doesn't interact with pigments and dyes. So it doesn't bleed your colors. Your colors will remain vibrant. Instead of bleeding your colors, it just carries the dry cleaning detergent to your garments and then carries away the oils and soils.

- **DIFFERENT IN THE WAY IT FEELS**

Your garments will always have a butter soft feel and silky drape.

- **DIFFERENT IN THE WAY IT SMELLS**

There's no smell. None. It's odorless. So you'll never smell that familiar "dry cleaning solvent odor," even on heavy cotton garments and household textiles.

- **DIFFERENT IN THE WAY IT REACTS WITH YOUR SKIN**

Siloxane is dermatologically friendly. It's suitable for chemically sensitive individuals who, up to now, had only two choices: wear machine washable garments (a practical idea) or air their "dry clean only" garments outdoors before wearing (a nonsensical idea).

- **DIFFERENT IN THE WAY IT IS USED OUTSIDE OF DRY CLEANING**

Siloxane is an ingredient in many personal care products you apply to your skin on a daily basis - products such as shampoos, antiperspirants, deodorants and moisturizing creams.

It's so gentle you can (legally) wash your face and hands in it. Warning: don't try that with perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal. That would be dangerous and illegal.

- **DIFFERENT IN THE WAY IT PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT**

At RAVE FabriCARE, we use no hazardous chemicals. None. So there's nothing to dirty the air, contaminate the soil, or pollute the water. And, unlike perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal, our siloxane fluid can be safely disposed of. It's biodegradable. So it merely breaks down into its three natural components.

You can even water your front lawn, shrubs and trees with siloxane. But don't try that with perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal. That would be illegal. You could end up with fines, probation and/or jail time.

- **DIFFERENT AS DIFFERENT CAN BE**

And that's not just our opinion. It's science.

Organic dry cleaning
is a hoax, a fraud and a scam

Believe it or not, many cleaners in North America proclaim themselves to be “organic cleaners.”

Clearly, these cleaners are attempting to capitalize on the public perception that “organic” equals “safe”. That, in much the same way that organic foods equal “safe for consumption” and “safe for the environment,” organic dry cleaning similarly equals “safe for fine garments” and “safe for the environment.”

Is “organic dry cleaning” a fact or a con?

You be the judge...

What You Need To Know

Almost every cleaner in North America cleans in one of four primary dry cleaning solvents or fluids:

- Perchloroethylene aka perc or PCE (brand name: Dowper). About 70% of the dry cleaners clean in perc.
- Synthetic petroleum (brand name: DF 2000 or EcoSolv). About 20% of the dry cleaners clean in synthetic petroleum.
- Formaldehyde dibutyl acetal (brand name: K4 or SolvOn). About 5% of dry cleaners clean in formaldehyde dibutyl acetal.
- Siloxane (brand name: Green Earth). About 5% of dry cleaners clean in siloxane.

There are a few things you need to know about “organic dry cleaning”

- Perc, synthetic petroleum, formaldehyde dibutyl acetal and siloxane are **all technically organic solvents by virtue of the fact that they all contain the chemical element CARBON**. That’s a basic – and indisputable – fact of chemistry.
- Accordingly, almost every single one of the 400+ cleaners in the metro Phoenix area and 26,000+ cleaners in North America can technically claim to be an “organic dry cleaner”.
- Because perc, synthetic petroleum and formaldehyde dibutyl acetal are volatile organic compounds (VOCs), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classifies them as Toxic Air Contaminants. As such, they are strictly regulated at the federal, state and local level, both in how they’re used and how they’re disposed of.
- Accordingly, “organic dry cleaning” almost never equals both “safe for fine garments” **and** “safe for the environment”.

Siloxane fluid

There is only **one** dry cleaning fluid that is **not** classified as a Toxic Air Contaminant by the the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is not regulated at the federal, state and local level, both in how it’s used and how it’s disposed of.

And that dry cleaning fluid is siloxane.

RAVE FabriCARE has been cleaning fine garments and household textiles in siloxane since 2001.

We love siloxane for a number of reasons:

- **IT'S DERMOTOLOGICALLY FRIENDLY**

That means that siloxane is perfect for the chemically-sensitive. You can (legally) wash your face and hands in it.

- **IT'S FABRIC GENTLE AND NON-DYE STRIPPING**

That means that your whites and pastels will be brilliantly bright. Your colors intense and vibrant. All with the softest, silkiest feel.

- **IT'S ODORLESS AND FRAGRANCE FREE**

That means that the fluid itself has zero odor. And because we continuously purify and distill our dry cleaning fluid before and after every load of cleaning, that also means that we don't have to resort to adding fragrances or perfumes to our dry cleaning fluid to disguise the smell of the accumulated oils and fats in the dry cleaning fluid that comes from not purifying and filtering on a continuous basis.

- **IT'S GREAT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

That means that, unlike perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal, siloxane contains no hazardous chemicals. None.

That means that, unlike perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal, there's nothing to dirty the air, contaminate the soil, or pollute the water.

That means that, unlike perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal, siloxane can be safely disposed of. It's biodegradable. If released into the environment, it merely breaks down into its three natural components.

Fact is, it's so safe, in fact, that you can water your lawn, shrubs and trees with siloxane. It would be perfectly legal.

Warning: don't try that with perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal. That would be illegal. You could end up with fines, probation and/or jail time.

So why “organic cleaning”?

Given that almost every cleaner in North America can proclaim themselves to be an “organic cleaner”, why do many cleaners resort to using the “organic cleaning” hook?

We can only speculate ...

- **COMPETITIVE PRESSURES**

Ordinary cleaning is a highly competitive business. Apart from fast turnaround, competitive prices, discounts, specials, convenient location and broad smiles, most cleaners offer little to separate themselves from their competition down the street or across town.

- **NO DRY CLEANING INDUSTRY STANDARDS**

There are no dry cleaning industry standards governing the use of the term “organic”.

Contrast this to the agricultural and meat products industries. For most of us, organic has come to mean **plant-based foods** grown without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides or **animal foods** that have been fed organic plant-based foods during their lives and are free of growth hormones, antibiotics and irradiation.

In 2002, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) introduced strict standards for labeling food as organic (primarily to stamp out the abuse of the term

“organic” in the marketplace). You can see the impact of these standards for yourself by studying the labels of products in the organic section of your local supermarket.

- **LACK OF TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE**

Organic chemistry, in general, and stain removal chemistry, in particular, is a mystery to many in the dry cleaning industry. After all, why bother with technical knowledge when your entire operation is geared to getting garments into a machine, onto a press, and into a bag. ASAP.

- **SUBSTITUTE FOR “ALTERNATIVE TO PERC”**

It’s quite possible that cleaners using the term “organic cleaning” are merely searching for a catchy phrase to describe the fact that they do not clean in perchloroethylene (aka perc).

There’s only one small problem: **Perc**, the “bad” solvent that their “good solvent” (synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal) supposedly replaced, **also contains carbon**. Which means that 95% of the dry cleaners in the USA, including all perc cleaners, can now **technically** claim to be “organic cleaners”.

By engaging in such distortions, misrepresentations and green washing, “organic dry cleaners” prove one thing: **first**, they have nothing better to offer their customers other than false claims, and, **second**, they’re more interested in the **ego system** than the **eco system**.

One further note on the issue of “organic dry cleaning”. You’ll hardly ever find that an “organic dry cleaner” will tell you the specific type of solvent they use (perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal) and then, **in the same sentence**, tell you that their specific solvent is “organic”.

Instead, they simply claim is that “we’re organic dry cleaners”. They then **leave it up to you to make a connection in your mind** between walking down the organic aisle in a supermarket and walking into an “organic dry cleaners”. That way you can exit the “organic dry cleaner” with a nice – but false – feeling that you’re doing something positive for the environment.

On the positive side, a number of jurisdictions in the USA are finally attacking the “organic dry cleaning” myth.

New York City, for example, now requires dry cleaners to **post a notice** informing consumers of the *specific* type of solvent(s) and/or fluid(s) they use and directs consumers to an authoritative source of additional information on the *specific* type of solvent(s) and/or fluid(s) used.

So, the big question is this:

Are dry cleaners using the term “organic cleaning” because they’re afraid to disclose that they still clean your fine garments in a toxic, environmentally hazardous solvent. Only now it’s manufactured by Exxon Mobil (DF 2000), Conoco Phillips (EcoSolv) or Kreussler (K4 or Solvon) instead of Dow Chemical (Dowper) ?

Or are they using the term simply to pull the wool over the eyes of an uninformed and gullible public?

Is “organic dry cleaning” a fact or a con?

You be the judge.

Garment care, green care or both?

Anyone with any insight into the dry cleaning industry knows that the quality of product delivered by the vast majority of cleaners is mediocre at best.

For years, industry experts, industry consultants and national industry associations have been banging the drum of product quality. They've exhorted (no, they've actually begged) cleaners to refocus on quality of product and the critical ingredients that comprise quality of product – skills, expertise, processes, craftsmanship, equipment and facilities.

All to little or no effect.

So how did the industry land in this pool of mediocrity?

Because cleaners drifted away from **quality of product** (a truly difficult undertaking) and focused instead on **other differentiating factors** (a much easier undertaking).

First, it was **service** – same day service, next day service, smiley-face service, have-a-nice-day service, etc.

Next, it was **conveniences** – 3 day pickup and delivery, 24/7 drop off, 24/7 order retrieval, credit and debit cards, house accounts, etc.

Then came **image** – granite countertops, recessed lighting, glossy fashion posters, coffee bars, aromatic candles, cool jazz, etc.

There's just one problem: as more and more cleaners ramped up their service, conveniences and image, many found that these attributes **ceased to be differentiating factors**.

So now ordinary cleaners spend their time trumpeting their **"greenness"**.

We're "green" they say. Everything about us is green:

- drycleaning solvents and fluids (synthetic petroleum, formaldehyde dibutyl acetal, siloxane, liquid carbon dioxide, hybrid glycol ether/liquid carbon dioxide and/or wet cleaning)
- responsible waste handling
- gas fired boilers
- plant maintenance program
- insulated steam pipes
- mercury free fluorescent bulbs
- dual flush toilets
- cardboard and plastic recycling program
- biodiesel-fueled delivery vans
- biodegradable poly
- hanger recycling program
- energy efficient printers and fax machines
- reusable garment bags.

We could go on and on, but you get the drift.

Fact is, for many cleaners it doesn't even matter whether there's any truth to their green claims.

Just saying you're green is all that counts.

After all, you can experience the service, you can take advantage of the conveniences, and you can see, hear and smell the image and the glitz. But apart from reusable garment bags, **you'll never know the truth about their green claims.**

For example, in the metro Phoenix area we've got a "Green Cleaners" that dry cleans in perchloroethylene (aka perc), a "Natural Cleaners" that cleans in synthetic petroleum and an "Organic Cleaners" that dry cleans in synthetic petroleum and formaldehyde dibutyl acetal.

This is much more than just greenwashing. It's a fraud on the public.

Here's the take home...

The greening of the dry cleaning industry is admirable. But, as usual, the thing that's all the rage is being oversold and overhyped.

What's more, it deflects attention away from **the only matter that really counts**: true quality cleaning.

Of course, **it doesn't have to be an either or situation.** You can have both.

You can be true quality cleaner and be green. RAVE FabriCARE is a case in point.

Why your garments smell of “dry
cleaning solvent” when returned by
your dry cleaner

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Why your whites, creams and pastels
look dingy or gray when returned
by your dry cleaner

Do your white, cream and pastel garments look dingy or gray after you get them back from the cleaners?

In this regard, we're referring to your white, cream and pastel garments that have, indeed, been dry cleaned as recommended by the care label. We're not referring to your "dry clean only" garments that have been washed or wet cleaned. Nor are we referring to your "machine washable" garments that have been washed and not dry cleaned as you specifically requested.

Ever wondered why your whites, creams and pastels turn dingy or gray?

Here's why...

Garments and household textiles should always be cleaned in dry cleaning fluid that's both continuously purified and continuously filtered. Every single drop. This way your garments and household textiles are cleaned in dry cleaning solvent or fluid that's absolutely crystal clear. As clear as bottled mountain spring water.

Continuous purification is much like boiling your tap water at home to obtain pure water; continuous filtration is much like filtering your tap water to remove any additional impurities.

Fact is, crystal clear, freshly purified and filtered dry cleaning fluid is your only guarantee against grayish and dingy whites, creams and pastels; dull and faded colors; and that all-to-familiar "dry cleaning solvent smell".

Unfortunately, very few ordinary cleaners both continuously purify every single drop of their dry cleaning solvent or fluid before and after each load, and continuously filter every single drop of their dry cleaning solvent or fluid during each load.

So **soluble impurities**, such as bacteria, food oils, food fats, body oils, creams and lotions accumulate in the dry cleaning solvent or fluid. And **insoluble impurities**, such as sand, dander and hair, float around in the dry cleaning solvent or fluid.

These **soluble impurities** are then absorbed by the fibers of your garments during the dry cleaning “wash” cycle. In particular, natural fibers, such as silk, wool, linen and cotton, absorb these soluble impurities like a sponge absorbs liquid.

Instead of your cleaner both continuously purifying and continuously filtering his dry cleaning solvent or fluid, your garments are functioning as your cleaner’s “dry cleaning machine filter.”

In effect, your garments are being cleaned in “dirty dry cleaning solvent.” It’s just like washing your clothes at home and reusing the same dirty water over and over again.

Cringe at your leisure.

Why do your dry cleaned garments
still smell of perspiration
when returned by your dry cleaner

New clients often ask us why their dry cleaned garments still smell of perspiration after they're returned by the dry cleaner?

Our answer is quite simple: Your dry cleaned garments still smell of perspiration because **they haven't been professionally cleaned.**

You might have been told that they've been cleaned. They may appear to have been cleaned. But you know that they sure don't smell like they've been cleaned!

Here's why....

First, you have to know a little about dry cleaning – at a very conceptual level.

The vast majority of stains fall into one of two categories: oil-based stains and water-based stains.

Oil-based stains are stains such as butter, salad dressing, steak juice, body oil, creams and lotions. To remove an oil-based stain, the garment must be pre-spotted/flushed with steam and completely hang dried.

Prior to being dry cleaned.

Dry cleaning should emulsify or dissolve the residue of the oil or grease stain that hasn't been flushed out with steam during pre-spotting.

About 10% of all visible stains a cleaner encounters are oil-based stains.

Water-based stains are stains such as soda, juice, champagne and perspiration. To

remove a water-based stain, the garment must be pre-spotted/ flushed with steam and completely hang dried, and/or wet cleaned and completely hang dried.

Prior to being dry cleaned.

About 90% of all visible stains a cleaner encounters are water-based stains.

And here's where the problem arises.

You can dry clean a garment with a water-based stain such as perspiration as many times as you wish. More often than not, that stain won't "move" with dry cleaning alone. Conversely, you can wet clean a garment with a oil-based stain as many times as you wish. More often than not, that stain won't "move" with wet cleaning alone.

Now you know that

- Perspiration – a water-based stain – cannot be removed by merely tossing your garments into a dry cleaning machine.
- Perspiration – a water-based stain – must be removed by a skilled stain removal technician. Prior to being dry cleaned.
- The vast majority of cleaners skip the stain removal process entirely.
- Their "stain removal technician" (a term we use very loosely) merely loads and unloads the dry cleaning machine and hopes that the perspiration will miraculously disappear.

So what's an ordinary cleaner to do?

Employ skilled stain removal technicians to remove the perspiration stains prior to dry cleaning?

No. That's way too expensive.

Take the time, at the very least, to flush and dry the underarm areas and/or crotch areas of each and every garment prior to tossing them into their dry cleaning machine?

No. That'll cripple their in-by-9:00-out-by-5:00, picked-up-on-day-1-delivered-on-day-3 "production system".

Increase their turnaround time so they will have the time "to do the job right"?

No. They're convinced that same day in-store service, next day in-store service and 3 day pickup and delivery service is absolutely critical to their business survival.

Increase their prices to accommodate the labor investment required "to do the job right"?

No. They're petrified their customers will defect to a lower priced cleaner down the street.

So what's an ordinary cleaner to do?

Instead of taking the time to pretreat your garments correctly and to remove all perspiration stains prior to dry cleaning, they resort to twisted logic. It goes something like this ...

We know we need dry cleaning solvent or fluid to emulsify or dissolve oil-based stains, and moisture to remove water-based stains. So why don't we just add or inject moisture into our dry cleaning machine during the "wash" cycle. This way we'll kill two birds with one stone: the dry cleaning solvent or fluid will "take care of the oil-based stains" and the moisture will "take care of the water-based stains".

Voila! Problem solved. With absolutely no investment of time, effort or skill. And absolutely no impact on their sacrosanct in-by-9:00-out-by-5:00, picked-up-on-day-1-delivered-on-day-3 "production system".

But there are problems...

- **It just doesn't work.**

Which, of course, is why your dry cleaned garments still smell of perspiration.

- **It's extremely reckless.**

Because moisture in a dry cleaning machine is the single most important contributor to the shrinking of garments. And to the bleeding of water soluble dyes on "dry clean only" garments.

True quality cleaning involves the application of care, judgment, skill, experience and time. Unfortunately for ordinary cleaners, there are no simple, shortcut solutions.



Why your cottons and linens
feel stiff and crusty
when returned by your dry cleaner

New clients often ask us why their cotton and linen garments feel stiff and crusty when they're returned by a dry cleaner.

Here's why ...

Your cottons and linens feel stiff and crusty for 2 reasons:

- because cleaners love to add sizing to their dry cleaning solvent or fluid, and/or
- because your cottons and linens have probably been "washed" or "wet cleaned".

The **first reason** your cottons and linens feel stiff is that ordinary cleaners love sizing.

Sizing is to dry cleaning what starch is to shirt laundry.

So they add or inject sizing into their dry cleaning machines during the dry cleaning "wash" cycle. In much the same way that you add detergent or softener to your home wash.

And why do they add sizing? According to one Arizona cleaner's literature, to "keep each garment feeling new and crisp" and to "retain your garment's original shape, weight and feel" (we couldn't make up this last statement if we tried!)

That's what ordinary cleaners tell you.

Truth is, there's only reason they add sizing: because it's quicker and easier for their employees to bang out your garments on a press.

What gets sized? Everything in the load. Cottons. Linens. Silks. Rayons. Wools such as alpaca, angora, camelhair, cashmere, escorial, marino, mohair and vicuna. Super 100s, 120s, 150s and 160s.

The **second reason** your cottons and linens feel stiff and crusty is that they were either “washed” or “wet cleaned”.

At worst, your cotton and linen garments have been “washed.” At best, they’ve been “wet cleaned.” But, in all likelihood, they haven’t been dry cleaned as you specified or as specified by the care label.

Here’s what ordinary cleaners typically do to your cotton and linen garments...

They give your cottons and linens a quick “look over” for oil-based stains, such as food oils, food fats, body oil, creams and lotions.

If there are **no visible oil-based stains**, and they determine that your cottons and linens can be washed or wet cleaned, they’re sent directly to the washer (often, regardless of whether the care label says “dry clean” or “machine washable”).

If there **are visible oil-based stains** and it’s your lucky day, your cottons and linens are first tossed into a dry cleaning machine to dissolve the oils before being sent to the washer to be washed or wet cleaned.

After machine washing or wet cleaning, your cotton and linen garments are tossed into a dryer, machine pressed and bagged.

Why do ordinary cleaners subject your cotton and linen garments to this treatment?

Primarily because of the fear of odors and dinginess resulting from the use of perchloroethylene, synthetic petroleum and formaldehyde dibutyl acetal solvents - the dry cleaning solvents used by 95% of all cleaners.

You see, cottons and linens are natural fibers. And, just like sponges, natural fibers

absorb even the slightest odors and emulsified fats and oils from dry cleaning solvent or fluid. So even if the cleaner uses (or claims to use) “pure solvent” or “pure fluid”, your cotton and linen garments will still smell and look dingy when they come out of the dry cleaning machine.

There’s an interesting contradiction here: Many ordinary cleaners will claim that they use “pure” dry cleaning solvent or fluid. This way they can claim their dry cleaned garments are always “odor-free” and “bright”. Yet they won’t risk dry cleaning your cotton and linen garments because they’re afraid they’ll smell and look dingy.

How can the dry cleaning solvent or fluid be “pure” if their dry cleaning produces cotton and linen garments that are smelly and dingy?

So what should a cleaner do to your “machine washable” cotton and linen garments?

They should

- Use wet cleaning and other restoration techniques to remove water-based stains (instead of machine washing).
- Hang or flat dry the garments (instead of tossing them into a dryer).
- Dry clean the garments to remove oil-based stains, enhance the intensity of the color and restore the “soft as butter” texture to the garment.

And what should they be doing with your “dry clean only” cotton and linen garments?

They should

- Pre-spot all water-based stains.
- Hang dry the garments.
- Dry clean the garments to remove oil-based stains, enhance the intensity of the color and restore the “soft as butter” texture to the garment.

And **any** ordinary dry cleaner should be able to do all this while simultaneously producing an odor-free and intensely bright garment.

Which, of course, they can't.

Which is why ordinary cleaners “wash” or “wet clean” as many of your cotton and linen garments as possible. Even if you dislike faded, stiff, fragranced garments.

Even if you specified dry clean only. Even if the care label says “dry clean only”.

A true quality cleaner will take a completely different approach to ensure that your fine cottons and linens are not returned stiff and crusty:

- Sizing will never be applied to an entire load of dry cleaning. Sizing will only be applied to cottons and linens only – by a skilled finisher – during the finishing stage only. And only according to your stated personal preference.
- Your cottons and linens will be dry cleaned even if they were soaked and/or wet cleaned during a prior stage of the cleaning process.

Why the cotton and linen garments
you wanted dry cleaned
look, feel and smell washed
when returned by your dry cleaner

At worst, your cotton and linen garments have been washed. At best, they've been wet cleaned.

But, in all likelihood, they haven't been dry cleaned as you requested. Even if the care label says "dry clean only".

What Ordinary Cleaners Do

Here's what ordinary cleaners typically do to your cotton and linen garments...

They give your cottons and linens a quick "look over" for oil-based stains, such as body oil, creams and salad dressing.

If there are **no visible oil-based stains**, and they determine that your cottons and linens "can be washed or wet cleaned," they're sent directly to the washer (often, regardless of whether the care label says "dry clean" or "machine washable").

If there **are visible oil-based stains**, your cottons and linens are first tossed into a dry cleaning machine to dissolve the oils before being sent to the washer to be washed or wet cleaned and tossed into a dryer.

Now you know why

- your colors fade
- your garments feel stiff
- your garments have that fragranced, laundered smell.

Why do ordinary cleaners subject your cotton and linen garments to this treatment?

Primarily because of the fear of odors and dinginess resulting from the use of perchloroethylene, petroleum, synthetic petroleum and formaldehyde dibutyl acetal solvents – the dry cleaning solvents used by 95% of all dry cleaners.

You see, cottons and linens are natural fibers. And, just like a sponge absorbs liquids, natural fibers absorb even the slightest odors and dinginess from dry cleaning solvent.

So, even if the dry cleaner uses (or claims to use) “pure solvent”, your cotton and linen garments will still smell and look dingy when they come out of the dry cleaning machine.

There’s an interesting contradiction here: Many ordinary cleaners claim that they only use “pure” dry cleaning solvent. This way they claim their dry cleaned garments are always “odor-free” and “bright”. Yet they won’t risk dry cleaning your cotton and linen garments because they’re afraid they’ll smell and look dingy. So how can their dry cleaning solvent be “pure” if their dry cleaning produces cotton and linen garments that are smelly and dingy?

What We Do

What should a dry cleaner do to your “machine washable” cotton and linen garments?

They should...

- Use pre-spotting, wet cleaning and other restoration techniques to remove water-based stains (instead of machine washing).
- Hang or flat dry the garments (instead of machine drying).
- Dry clean the garments to remove any residue of oil-based stains, enhance the intensity of the color and restore the soft texture of the garment.

And **any** dry cleaner should be able to do all this while simultaneously producing an odor-free and intensely bright garment.

Which, of course, they can't.

Which is why ordinary cleaners wash or wet clean as many of your cotton and linen garments as possible.

Even if you dislike faded, stiff, fragranced garments. Even if you specified dry clean only. Even if the care label says "dry clean only".

Why your wools, silks, cottons and
linens feel stiff and crusty
when returned by your dry cleaner

New clients often ask us why their wools, silks, cottons and linens feel stiff and crusty when they're returned by a cleaner.

Our answer is quite simple: Your wools, silks, cottons and linens feel stiff and crusty because of sizing.

Sizing is to dry cleaning what starch is to shirt laundry.

You see, ordinary cleaners love sizing. So they add or inject sizing into their dry cleaning machines during the dry cleaning "wash" cycle. In much the same way that you add detergent or softener to your home washer.

Their stated reason? According to one Phoenix cleaner's literature, to "keep each garment feeling new and crisp" and to "retain your garment's original shape, weight and feel" (we couldn't make up this last statement if we tried!).

And the true reason?

The more sizing they add, the quicker and easier it is for their employees to bang out your garments on a press.

This is particularly true in those cases where a dry cleaner glues bar codes onto all your garments and household textiles, where a dry cleaner pays his pressers by the piece and where the pressers must produce a certain minimum number of pieces per hour. Sizing aids the pressers to achieve their goals.

And what gets sized? Everything in the dry cleaning load. Cottons. Linens. Silks. Rayons. Wools such as alpaca, angora, camelhair, cashmere, escorial, marino, mohair and vicuna. Super 100s, 120s, 150s and 160s.

Is it any wonder your fine wools, silks, cottons and linens feel and drape like cardboard when you get them back from an ordinary cleaner?

So what to do?

Ask your cleaner whether he adds sizing to his dry cleaning solvent or fluid, whether he glues bar codes onto all your garments and household textiles, whether he pays his pressers by the piece, and whether his pressers are required to meet specific production quotas.

Why your dark colored garments
look dull and faded when returned
by your dry cleaner

New clients often ask us why their dark colored, “dry clean only” garments looked progressively dull and faded when returned by a dry cleaner.

Here’s why...

Your dark colored, “dry clean only” garments look progressively dull and faded because of one or more of the following reasons:

- because your cleaner is probably dry cleaning your dark colored garments in “dirty dry cleaning solvent”.
- because the dry cleaning solvents being used are not chemically inert.
- because your dry cleaner is washing or wet cleaning your dark colored cotton and linen garments.

The **first reason** your dark colored garments look progressively dull and faded is that they are not being cleaned in dry cleaning fluid that’s crystal clear.

At RAVE FabriCARE, our dry cleaning fluid is always crystal clear. As clear as bottled mountain spring water.

Cleaning your fine garments in crystal clear dry cleaning fluid won’t dull or fade your dark colors.

The **second reason** is that perchloroethylene (aka “perc”), synthetic petroleum and formaldehyde dibutyl acetal – the dry cleaning solvents used by 95% of all cleaners –

are not chemically inert. This means that these dry cleaning solvents react chemically with the dyes in your garments.

The result? “Bleeding”, “pulling” or “fading” of dyes.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we dry clean all your dark colored garments - even your dark colored cottons and linens - in siloxane, a dermatologically friendly, fabric-gentle, non-dye stripping dry cleaning fluid.

This means that our dry cleaning fluid does not react chemically with the dyes in your fabrics.

And the result? No “bleeding”, “pulling” or “fading” of dyes.

For example, if we cleaned a load of brand new black or red garments, **with our filters turned off**, the color of our dry cleaning fluid will be crystal clear. If those same garments were to be cleaned in perc, synthetic petroleum or formaldehyde dibutyl acetal, **with the filters turned off**, the color of the dry cleaning solvent will be slightly to substantially black or red respectively.

Where does the dye come from? You guessed it. Right out of your garments!

The **third reason** your garments look progressively dull and faded is that your cleaner is washing or wet cleaning your dark colored cotton and linen garments. Even if you specified “dry clean”. Even if the care label says “dry clean only”.

So, if your colored garments start to look dull and faded, maybe it’s time to change outfits. Dry cleaning outfits!

Steam is evil

Chris Despos, an acclaimed bespoke tailor based in Chicago, tells his clients that **steam is evil.**

What he means is that the indiscriminate application of steam to a beautifully constructed garment can undo tens of hours of labor invested in the construction of the garment.

The internet is awash with articles promoting the “savings” that can be achieved by “pressing” a garment with a hand steamer or by hanging a garment in a steamy bathroom. Typically, these articles offer mythical advice on the use of steam in the home to produce “perfectly pressed” or “freshly pressed” garments.

Perfectly pressed? Freshly pressed?

What utter nonsense!

Yes, we know, you’ve been using a hand steamer and/or hanging garments in a steamy bathroom for years. And you believe it works.

We don’t think so.

When we see a slacks, trouser, blazer, sport coat or suit jacket that’s been steamed by a hand steamer or steamed in the shower, we don’t see “perfectly pressed” or “freshly pressed”. What we typically see is a garment that’s so puckered it’s unwearable.

What’s more, **the more it’s steamed, the worse it looks.**

So next time you reach to grab that hand held steamer or turn on the hot water in the shower, consider these 5 points:

- Steaming is not pressing. You might be able to remove some of the more obvious crotch, elbow or knee wrinkles with steam, but you can't "press" a garment with steam alone.
- An important ingredient in the construction of a well-made garment (perhaps as important as the quality of the fabric and the quality of the workmanship) is the shaping and molding of the fabric imparted by the manufacturer or bespoke tailor.

Much of this shaping and molding is created using a professional hand iron. The indiscriminate application of steam can undo all that shaping and molding and can easily **wreck** a well-made garment.

- Proper pressing involves a combination of five elements: the skill of the presser, steam, vacuum (suction), a professional hand iron and specialized, contoured equipment.

You may have steamer or a hand iron, but you don't have the skill, vacuum or specialized contoured equipment.

- Proper pressing involves **relaxing the fibers** with steam from a hand iron and, *as you gently hand iron*, **extracting all the moisture** from the fabric with a vacuum (suction) to create a soft, smooth, even look. The application of steam *without the use of a vacuum* merely results in a puckered mess and "burst seams".
- Garments are not flat. They are comprised of many shapes and curves. Your "pressing surface" (a hanging garment) is flat. Trying to press shapes and curves on a flat surface without the aid of a professional hand iron and specialized, contoured equipment is near impossible.

Meet the press

[Value cleaners](#), [ordinary cleaners](#) and even many [wannabe cleaners](#) love their presses.

Why?

Because pressing is where cleaners can achieve the greatest productivity, i.e., where they can move garments through their system with maximum speed.

This is particularly the case at value cleaners (discount cleaners) and ordinary cleaners (middle market cleaners).

And, counterintuitively, it's also the case at **wannabe cleaners that offer a three tier pricing structure** – sometimes called their “everyday”, “expert” and “couture” service” Or their diamond, platinum and gold service, or their classic, deluxe and signature service, or basic, classic and artisan service.

Pressing is where your garments are banged out on a press at a furious rate. Typically, 30 to 40 pants per hour per presser; 20 to 30 non-pant garments per hour per presser; and 40 to 50 laundered shirts per hour on a “single buck” shirt pressing machine (80 to 100 per hour on a “double buck” shirt pressing machine).

That's 1 or 2 minutes per laundered shirt and 2 to 3 minutes per garment for garments other than laundered shirts!

Here's the problem: **“pressing” is also the area of operations where a cleaner can also inflict the greatest damage to a garment.**

“Pressing” is where your garments can be subjected to **way too much pressure, with too much steam, at way too high a temperature, for way too long**. Especially when it comes to wools, silks, rayons, knits, and other non-cotton and non-linen fabrics.

Poor pressing results in shine; seam, flap and button impressions; moire-like press pad impressions; double creases; wrinkled seams and linings; puckered seams; wrinkled collars, cuffs, underarms, sleeve pleats, sleeve plackets and front plackets; wrinkled cuff/sleeve and sleeve/body joins; and other “crimes of fashion”.

By contrast, a true quality cleaner will hand iron your fine garments. A hand iron in the hands of a **skilled finisher** will produce an infinitely superior garment than a press in the hands of a **machine operator**.

We can all understand the need for machine pressing at a value cleaner.

But, at the very least, someone ought to introduce ordinary cleaners and wannabe cleaners to the hand iron.

Hello, hand iron!

Researchers discover
cause of and cure for SSS
(aka Shiny Suit Syndrome)

SSS does not refer to a medical condition – Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, Severe Serotonin Syndrome or even Sick Sinus Syndrome.

Instead, SSS refers to Shiny Suit Syndrome, a garment condition that affects millions of wardrobes.

You're probably familiar with the symptoms of SSS: garments that look shiny and hard pressed when they come back from the cleaners.

So what causes of SSS?

The answer is not complicated ...

Your clothes look shiny and hard pressed because they've been ***pressed by machine, with way too much pressure, using way too much steam, at way too high a temperature, for way too long.***

At a true quality cleaner, you won't find those common "bang and hang" machine pressing practices typically found at ordinary cleaners: shine; seam, flap and button impressions; moire-like press pad impressions; double creases; wrinkled seams and linings; and other "crimes of fashion".

Instead, your fine garments will be delicately finished. By a skilled garment finisher. The old-fashioned way. By hand. Using a hand iron. Both inside and out. No matter how long it might take.

A true quality cleaner even has different finishing stations, equipped with different types of finishing pads, adjusted to different pressures, equipped with hand irons set at different temperatures, and staffed by finishers with different skills, to accommodate different categories of garments and even different types of fabrics within a specific category of garments.

To understand this nuance, you must first recognize that ordinary cleaners typically employ only two types of presses in their dry clean operations: pant presses (slacks, trousers and shorts) and utility presses (blouses, shirts, blazers, sport coats, dresses, skirts, sweaters, etc.).

Moreover, most ordinary cleaners cross train their pressers to be “jacks of all trades”. So a presser may press slacks, trousers and shorts for 5 hours, and blouses, shirts, blazers, sport coats, dresses, skirts and sweaters for the rest of the day. Or their “stain removal technician” will load and unload their dry clean machine, and press slacks, trousers and shorts in between loads.

A true quality cleaner would never permit such cross utilization.

For example, a garment finisher who specializes in slacks, trousers and shorts would never be assigned a sport coat or a dress.

Why?

Because skilled finishing is all about technique. And few finishers - even highly skilled finishers - have developed their technique to the point that would allow them to move seamlessly between different categories of garments. (Please note that “technique” does not equate to “experience”. Many pressers with many years of experience have zero technique.)

Not only that, but a true quality cleaner has different finishing stations to accommodate different fabrics within a specific category of garments.

For example, a garment finisher who specializes in cotton/linen slacks, trousers and

shorts would never be assigned a wool, silk, poly or rayon slacks, trousers or shorts.

Why?

Because cotton/linen pant presses are equipped with a “harder” pad, are adjusted to a higher pressure, are equipped with hand irons set at higher temperatures, and requires a hand finisher with a “stronger arm”.

By contrast, wool, silk, poly and rayon pant presses are equipped with a “soft” pad, are adjusted to a negligible pressure, are equipped with hand irons set at lower temperatures, and requires a hand finisher with a “delicate touch”.

At a true quality cleaner anything less is simply unacceptable.

“Pressing”, as practiced by ordinary cleaners, is such a poor descriptor of the art of finishing. Of course, a skilled finisher must know how to apply pressure to achieve a smooth finish on a linen or cotton. But a smooth, soft, hand-finish, that minimizes the possibility of shine or seam, flap or button impressions, best defines the finest professional finishing.

If you’re looking for validation of this point of view, just broach the subject of “pressing” with any bespoke tailor and watch their blood pressure rise. And make sure you bring along a portable defibrillator. Your tailor may need it.

Does your dry cleaner play
Russian Roulette
with your corozo nut buttons?

Many of the world's finest garment manufacturers and bespoke tailors use corozo nut buttons on their high-end garments.

These manufacturers and tailors love the fact that corozo nut buttons are porous. This allows the button manufacturer to dye their buttons in small quantities, thereby achieving a near exact match of the color of their buttons to the color of the fabric.

The corozo nut (aka Tagua nut) refers to the seed of the Tagua palm tree native to equatorial South America. This tree grows very slowly and bears fibrous nuts after about 15 years. If this fruit falls to the ground when fully ripe, it is harvested and dried under the tropical sun for about 3 months. The gelatin of the nut then ripens and becomes a hard white substance resembling animal ivory. After drying, the nuts are husked by machine and sorted by size and quality. Then they're thinly sliced so that they can be used as raw materials for buttons.

The problem for dry cleaners is that corozo nut buttons can crack or chip when the garments are tumbling in the stainless steel drum of a dry cleaning machine. Even when the buttons are supposedly "protected" with a foil covering.

Furthermore, because these buttons are color-matched to the fabric, it's near impossible to find replacement buttons of exact size, color and design.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we'd never play Russian Roulette with the buttons of your fine garments. Instead, we remove them prior to cleaning and replace them after cleaning. Using the exact same color of thread, type of thread, and sewing technique.

By the way, there's an easy way to determine whether your dry cleaner plays Russian Roulette with your corozo nut buttons: Carefully examine the surface of the buttons. If you see thin, hairline cracks on the surface of your buttons, you have your confirmation.

Does your dry cleaner remove the buttons, including the corozo nut buttons, of your fine garments?

Or have they decided that it's just too much work and that they're willing to play the odds with your fine garments?

This begs the question: If they're playing Russian Roulette with your corozo nut buttons, what else is being compromised in their never ending quest to cut costs by cutting corners.



The importance of hangers

“Nothing makes me crazier than those stupid little wishbone hangers that some stores use to hang their garments. I really, *really* hate them. The way that you store your garment has such an impact on it, the same way a shoe tree is so important to the life of a good shoe. Two of the most delicate parts of a coat are the top of the sleeve and the collar, and they are shaped to contour your body; it would make sense, then, to hang a garment on something that closely resembles the body, no? Then why do department stores insist on those skinny little wishbone hangers which in no way resemble the body, are usually too wide so they poke out the sleeves, do not support the top of the sleeve so the sleeve buckles, and do not support the collar?

Why do the stores use these awful little hangers, then, if they are so bad? Well, space. And space is money. Space in the distribution center, space in the trucks which ship the product to the stores, and space on the selling floors. They can cram more garments into less space using these little hangers, which saves them money. Grrr.”

JEFFREY DIDUCH

Made By Hand - The Great Sartorial Debate

www.tuttofattoamano.blogspot.com

October 2010

You should ask the same questions of your dry cleaner: Why do they use straight, thin,

cheap wire, chrome and wood hangers that are not contoured to support the neck and support the shoulders and that protect the overall drape of the garment?

Here's the answer: They don't care. They're too cheap. They want to maximize the space on their conveyors and trucks.

Whatever the excuse, **your** garments suffer the consequences of **their** decisions.

Grrr.

Tips on caring for St John Knits

Purchasing

- Classic styles almost never age.
- Buy multiple pieces within the season to ensure a perfect color match, especially when it comes to white.
- Ask for extra buttons.
- Solicit the advice of your clothier.
- If you are purchasing a St John Knit with glued on paillettes and/or rhinestones from a consignment or resale store – whether online or locally – always ask for a guarantee that the glues haven't dried out due to improper storage and/or improper prior dry cleaning and that the paillettes and/or rhinestones won't peel off during any subsequent cleaning.

Altering

- Altering knits is more expensive than altering other fabric garments.
- Save the offcuts for future re-knitting or reweaving.

Wearing

- Knits are comfortable, breathable, hydroscopic, relatively wrinkle resistant.
- Exercise care when removing. Do not overstretch.

Cleaning

- Understand the pros and cons of the [4 primary dry cleaning solvents and fluids](#): perchlorethylene (aka perc), synthetic petroleum, formaldehyde dibutyl acetal and siloxane.
- Understand the difference between oil-based stains and water-based stains, and their impact on the cleaning of your knits.
- Inform your dry cleaner of any invisible, sugar-based stains.
- Inform your dry cleaner if you are cleaning one piece of a multi piece white, cream or pastel ensemble.
- Entrust your fine knits to a specialty dry cleaner who pre-spots every garment (and doesn't post-spot or no-spot their garments).
- Entrust your whites, creams and pastels as well as your dark colors with white or cream trim along the edges to a specialty dry cleaner who guarantees that his dry cleaning fluid is crystal clear. As clear as bottled mountain spring water.
- Entrust your fine knits to a specialty dry cleaner who guarantees that his dry cleaning fluid is non-dye stripping and won't fade your colors.
- Entrust your fine knits to a specialty dry cleaner who guarantees that he does not add or inject moisture, sizing or fragrance into his dry cleaning machine's wash cycles.

Excessive moisture can shrink wool garments; sizing can leave wools stiff as cardboard; and fragrances can leave you smelling like you've just walked off the late night shift in a perfume factory.

- Entrust your fine knits to a specialty dry cleaner who guarantees that your trims will not melt, deluster or fall off (for more details, see the sub-section titled "St John Knits With Glued On Paillettes And/Or Rhinestones" in the "St John & Other Knits" [section of our website](#)).

Finishing/Blocking

- Never press a knit on a pressing machine.
- Understand the concept of knit blocking (aka knit reshaping or knit sizing).
- Entrust your knits to a specialty dry cleaner who **measures every knit** prior to cleaning and who blocks every knit to those same measurements after cleaning.
- Insist on physical proof of blocking. Never accept a dry cleaner's **verbal assurance** that they block all knits. If your knit wasn't returned to you with proof of blocking, **you can take it as a given that they didn't pre-measure prior to cleaning and post-measure after cleaning.**
- Blocking can reshape a knit that is misshapen: if a knit has shrunk, blocking can typically increase the size by one or one and a half sizes; if a knit has stretched, blocking can typically reduce the size by one size.
- As a general rule, a sweater or knit can be re-blocked about *a size to a size and a half larger or a size smaller* **but along one dimension only** – length **or** width (for more details, see the sub-section titled “Two Dimensional (Length And Width) Correctional Re-blocking” in the “St John & Other Knits” [section of our website](#)).

Restoration

- Solid whites, creams and pastels can be whitened and/or brightened. You must treat all pieces of an ensemble **at the same time** to stand any chance of achieving a consistent color.

No guarantee can be provided that a multi piece ensemble with an **identical color tone** will result in a perfectly consistent color across all pieces.

- Solid whites, creams and pastels that have existing color variation(s) can also be brightened. You must treat all pieces of an ensemble **at the same time** to stand any chance of achieving a consistent color.

No guarantee can be provided that a multi piece ensemble with a **differing color tone** will result in a perfectly consistent color across all pieces.

- Update a blazer by changing the size of shoulder pads or eliminating them altogether.

Re-knitting

- Darker pieces re-kit or reweave quite well, lighter colored pieces may show.

No guarantee can be provided that a re-kit or reweave will result in a completely invisible repair.

Storage – seasonal

- Always dry clean your wools at the end of the summer **immediately prior** to storage for the season. This is the **only** way to ensure that your wools are protected from damage by feeding moth larvae.
- Never store garments that are damp or moist.
- Never store garments in a hot or damp environment such as a garage, attic or basement.
- Never seal garments in any type of non-breathable bag. All garments must breathe.
- Never store garments in plastic bags, nylon bags or vinyl bags.
- Never hang sweaters and shells on hangers.

For best results, fold knit sweaters and shells in breathable, chemically inert storage bags made of cotton or [polypropylene fibers](#).

- Never hang knit blazers on **thin, straight** or **thin wish-bone** wood, chrome or other hangers.

For best results, hang knit blazers on contoured hangers that have a wide shoulder base or on hangers that are heavily padded. Then hang in breathable, chemically inert storage bags made of cotton or [polypropylene fibers](#).

- Never hang knit slacks lengthwise on some type of clip hanger.

For best results, hang knit slacks over a strut hanger. Then hang in breathable, chemically inert storage bags made of cotton or [polypropylene fibers](#).

- Do not overcrowd your closet.

Storage – long term

- Always dry clean your wools **immediately prior** to long term storage. This is the only way to ensure that your wools are protected from damage by feeding moth larvae.
- Avoid anything cedar – cedar blocks, cedar rings, cedar chests, cedar closets, etc.
- Avoid moth balls and herbal sachets.
- Fold flat or hang in breathable, chemically inert storage bags made of cotton or [polypropylene fibers](#) (see Storage – Seasonal).
- Avoid regular tissue – white or colored, logo-printed or unprinted – used by your local dry cleaner or clothing retailer. Use unbuffered, acid-free tissue only.

Traveling

- Fold sweaters, shells and slacks.
- Do not fold blazers. Stuff sleeves with tissue and double bag in poly.
- Hang as soon as you check in at your destination.
- Never hang knits in a steamy bathroom. The application of moisture without simultaneous drying by vacuum relaxes the fibers and distorts the shape.
- Never entrust your fine garments – knits or otherwise – to the “hotel valet service”. Very few hotels do their own work. Instead, they subcontract their cleaning to the lowest bidder. The quality of the product delivered by these quick turnaround subcontractors is, typically, on a par with your local \$2/piece discount cleaner.

Get \$200 in free dry cleaning.
30 minute service.

The typical advertisement for Dryel, Drycleaners Secret, 15 Minute Drycleaner or Refresh'n suggests that you can clean, revive, freshen and revitalize your wardrobe at home in less than 30 minutes and, in the process, save \$200+.

Then they attempt to close the deal by citing testimonials "proving" that their products actually work.

I understand the allure of these products: save money, save time, and "achieve professional dry cleaning results."

With these claims in mind, let's pose the obvious question....

What do you have after tumbling your dry clean only garments in a dryer for 30 minutes with a scented sheet?

Answer: **Dirty garments with a fragrance smell that are slightly less wrinkled than they were 30 minutes earlier.**

Dirty but fragranced? Absolutely.

Ask yourself what's happened to the acids and salts from your perspiration?

What's happened to the aluminum chlorides from your deodorants and antiperspirants?

What's happened to the water-based stains from perspiration, juices, sodas, coffee, wine and beer?

And what's happened to the oil-based stains from makeup, creams, lotions, butter, salad dressing, steak sauce and pizza drippings?

Did they disappear up the dryer vent? Into the lint trap? Into the waiting arms of the stain fairy?

No, they're still in your garments!

So next time, you "dry clean" with a scented sheet ask yourself whether you'd tumble your t-shirts, underwear and bed linens in a dryer with a scented sheet and ***call them clean.***

Didn't think so.

Thinking about dyeing a garment?
Don't waste your time or your money.

You tried to remove a stain from a “dry clean only” red silk dress that you’d only worn once or twice. Unfortunately, you also removed some of the surrounding color from the fabric.

Can you save the dress by dyeing it, say, black?

Here’s the bad news: You probably couldn’t save the dress by dying it black. Here’s why...

First, garment dyeing is a highly inexact mixture of art and science. There are many variables to be considered and the final result cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty.

Second, your expectation that the red silk dress will be magically transformed into a like-new, black silk dress is unrealistic. More likely than not, you’ll be very disappointed with the results. The garment will probably be unwearable, and you’ve just spent a lot of money to prove it.

Here are some of the problems you’ll encounter:

Shrinkage and Loss of Texture

Dyeing is a water-based process involving heat. Shrinkage is always a risk. And the garment may lose some of the “hand” or feel typically associated with silks.

There's a good reason the garment manufacturer put a "dry clean only" label in that red silk dress.

Inconsistent Color

The overall color of the garment may be inconsistent, blotchy or streaky. Especially in the area of the stain or color loss - the very area you're trying to "fix".

Inexact Color

You cannot select the exact color you want, nor can the dyer predict the final color that might be achieved. For example, if you asked for black, you might get dark gray or navy.

Unmatched Color

Many natural fiber garments, such as your red silk dress, have synthetic fiber components such as polyester or nylon thread and a nylon zipper. These synthetic components will not "take" the dye. So you could end up with a black (or dark gray or navy) silk dress with red seams, red button holes and a red zipper.

What's more, if all the primary components (fabric and thread) were silk, the fabric and thread may end up different shades of the same color.

Summary

So what's our overall advice?

Don't waste your time or your money.

POSITION PAPERS

Shirt Laundry

Your Shirt Laundry Bill Of Rights. Exercise Those Rights!

You pride yourself on your appearance. So you've invested time and money in a range of fine shirts. You may even have a personal clothier who tailors your shirts to your specific measurements. Of course, you want those shirts to look, feel and smell great. And last much longer.

Like most, you'll probably turn to a "professional cleaner" for help.

And what happens there?

They take 50 to 60 "laundry" shirts. Scrub the collars and cuffs with a hard-bristled brush. Sort them into two loads: "lights" and "darks". Subdivide each load into "starch" and "no starch". Stuff a load into a shirt washer, adding hot (even boiling) water, harsh caustic industrial grade detergents and bleach. Starch with cheap synthetic glue.

Next, they remove the damp shirts from the washer and run them through a series of pressing machines that have all the subtlety and precision of a sledgehammer. At a rate of 40 to 50 shirts (or more) per hour per presser. Then, using a hand iron, touch up the underarms (maybe) and crease the sleeves from shoulder to cuff in an attempt to conceal any evidence of machine pressing.

Finally, they cram the finished shirts into thin, narrow poly bags so that they're returned looking only slightly better than the day they were sent in or dropped off. Or machine fold them for that desired "slept in" look.

So what are your shirt laundry rights?

- The right to shirts that are exceptionally clean and free of both oil-based stains (such as food oil, food fats, body oil, creams and lotions) and water-based stains (such as perspiration, soda, juice, wind, etc.).
- The right to spectacularly bright whites, creams and pastels.
- The right to colors that are bright, without that “washed out”, faded look.
- The right to collars and cuffs, including french cuffs, that are pristine clean.
- The right to fabrics that don’t have a crusty, cardboard feel.
- The right to shirts that are meticulously ironed. By hand. Not by machine.
- The right to sleeves without a sharp crease along the entire sleeve length.
- The right to seams that aren’t puckered or wrinkled.
- The right to front and sleeve plackets that aren’t puckered or wrinkled.
- The right to collars and cuffs that are fully rounded. Not flat, creased or triangular.
- The right to collars that are perfectly turned down at the back.
- The right to shirts that are carefully inspected.
- The right to a shirt with no missing or cracked buttons.
- The right to shirts on hangers that are individually bagged. Or folded by hand, not by machine.

And how can your shirt laundry achieve the results?

- By soaking your shirts in a gentle dry cleaning fluid (to dissolve oil-based stains) and then in water-based solutions (to eliminate water-based stains) **instead of** scrubbing your collars and cuffs with hard-bristled brushes and “collar/cuff solution” in an (often futile) attempt to get them reasonably clean.

- By gently wet cleaning your shirts for about 5 minutes in cold or cool water **instead of** tumbling your shirts for anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes in hot water in an (often futile) attempt to dissolve the oil-based stains.
- By using a premium, gentle enzyme detergent **instead of** a harsh, caustic, industrial grade detergent in an attempt to eliminate the water-based stains and remove any soil.
- By using no bleaches **instead of** adding fabric-destroying bleach in an attempt to get your whites really white.
- By using a premium, natural wheat starch **instead of** starching your shirts with cheap synthetic glue that adheres to your shirt's fibers like multiple coats of paint.
- By hand ironing your shirts **instead of** machine pressing them at a rate of 40 to 50 per hour, which leaves your shirts with puckered seams, wrinkled collars, cuffs, underarms, sleeve pleats, sleeve plackets and front plackets, and wrinkled cuff/sleeve and sleeve/body joins.
- By rolling the sleeves of your long sleeve shirts **instead of** creasing them for that distinctive "I pressed this shirt myself at home while watching TV" look.
- By individually packaging each shirt in an extra-wide poly bag **instead of** stuffing multiple shirts into a single, thin, narrow poly bag - like sardines in a tin.
- By hand folding your shirts in a heavy duty poly bag with a built-in cushion of air **instead of** machine folding them in an ultra thin poly bag for that "slept-in" look.
- By taking the time to do the job right (3 to 5 days in most cases) **instead of** routinely offering same and next day service or 3 day pickup and delivery service.

By now you've probably come to the realization that

- your cleaner doesn't come close to delivering on these rights

- your cleaner has never told you – in detail and in writing – what results you should expect from their cleaning (other than in meaningless generalities)
- your cleaner has never told you – in detail and in writing – what they do to achieve those results (other than in meaningless generalities)
- your cleaner has consciously and intentionally withheld that information from you in order to ensure that you don't ask too many awkward questions.

Unfortunately, true quality cleaning requires more than just a knowledge of loading and unloading a dry clean machine or a shirt washer and banging those garments out on a press. And more than just an assembly-line cleaning and pressing operation where every garment is barcoded and treated as interchangeable irrespective of brand and/or original cost.

Truth is, true quality cleaning requires

- an extensive knowledge of and commitment to the art and science of textiles, garment construction, cleaning and hand ironing,
- a never-ending commitment to process improvement (no matter how marginal),
- a stubbornness to reject labor saving technologies that negatively impacts true quality,
- an unyielding commitment to invest in true quality rather than extract every last penny out of the cleaning, pressing and packaging process,
- a sense of pride in one's work; a passion for perfection (to the extent that perfection is achievable),
- the time necessary to "do the job right;" and most importantly,
- a personal philosophy that says that true quality has inherent meaning and value – for the cleaner, his employees and his clients.

Why would you pay \$8 to \$10
for a \$2 to \$3 laundered shirt?

Some cleaners claim that they gently clean and then hand iron **all** their laundered shirts. As a matter of routine.

Can this be true?

Of course it's not true.

Show us a cleaner in the metro Phoenix area – other than RAVE FabriCARE – that gently cleans and then hand irons **all** your laundered shirts **as a matter of routine**, and we'll show you pigs that fly!

By way of background, here's what happens to your laundered shirts – even at the so-called “better cleaners” or self-styled “couture care specialists”.

Your shirt is laundered using conventional washing techniques – scrubbing; hot water; harsh, caustic, industrial grade detergents; and bleaches.

Then it's pressed on a series of machines, one for the body, one for the sleeves and one for for the collar and cuffs. Typically, at a rate of 40 to 50 per hour per presser.

Finally, your shirt is “strategically touched-up” by hand. **If deemed necessary. If you're lucky.** And the, typically, only on the sleeves and underarms.

This is the shirt that's **passed off** to customers as a “hand ironed laundered shirt”.

Unfortunately, a **2 to 3 minute** machine pressed, touched up laundered shirt aka a

“hand finished laundered shirt” is not an **8 to 12 minute** hand ironed laundered shirt.

To qualify as a hand ironed laundered shirt, the shirt must be PARTIALLY steamed by machine and then COMPLETELY pressed by hand (that’s a hand ironed laundered shirt).

Not COMPLETELY pressed by machine and then PARTIALLY touched up by hand (that’s a machine pressed, touched up laundered shirt aka a “hand finished laundered shirt”).

At RAVE FabriCARE, we’re very different.

- We **soak** your fine shirts in our odorless, dermatologically friendly, fabric gentle, chemically-inert, non-fragranced dry cleaning fluid – the some type of fluid we use for “dry clean only” bespoke, made-to-measure, designer, high fashion, specialty and couture garments.

This is **the only way to safely and gently dissolve oil-based stains** – such as food oils, food fats, body oil, creams and lotions, and other grease deposits – without scrubbing your collars and cuffs with nylon brushes.

This is also the only way to ensure that, when your shirt is finally hand ironed, those oils, fats and grease deposits don’t transform or oxidize through heat into difficult-to-remove yellow stains.

- We **soak** your shirts in special water-based solutions to **relax the fibers and release soil and water-based stains**. For a minimum of 8 hours (12 hours for shirts with french cuffs).

Why is soaking critical to the care of fine shirts?

Because soaking reduces the wear and tear that would result from the use of conventional washing techniques (aka the scrubbing/hot water/industrial detergent/bleach method).

- We **gently launder** your fine shirts in specialized, computer-controlled wet cleaning machines, where microprocessors control water temperature, cylinder speeds, mechanical action and moisture removal to exacting specifications.

Using only the finest pH balanced, fragrance free, phosphate free Sanitone® detergent.

And we do all that in **cold to cool water** for **about 5 minutes** (no need for a 30 to 45 minute, hot water wash as all the stains that could possibly be removed have already been **soaked** out).

- Finally, every laundered shirt is **steamed out and hand ironed**. Not machine pressed and then “strategically touched up”... if deemed necessary ... if you’re lucky.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we’d never **pass off a machine pressed, touched up laundered shirt** aka a “hand finished laundered shirt” as a **hand ironed laundered shirt** in the hope that you’d never know the difference between a \$2 to \$3 machine pressed, touched up laundered shirt aka a “hand finished laundered shirt” and a \$8 to \$10 hand ironed laundered shirt.

Any ordinary cleaner can “clean and press” a shirt in 4 to 6 hours.

But only RAVE FabriCARE **crafts an extraordinary shirt**.

10 reasons why cleaners can't produce
a shirt with extraordinarily clean
collars and cuffs

Ever wondered why the collars and cuffs of your white shirts and the white collars and cuffs of your colored shirts look dingy and yellow? Especially after they have been “professionally laundered”?

Consider these 10 reasons:

1. The cleaner just doesn't care (despite his vigorous protestations to the contrary).
2. The cleaner is satisfied with good enough.
3. The cleaner doesn't have the skills.
4. The cleaner isn't prepared to invest the time.
5. The cleaner is afraid to charge for his skills and time (assuming he has the skills and the time in the first place. And that's a major assumption!).
6. The cleaner routinely offers same and next day service.
7. The cleaner routinely offers 3 day pickup and delivery service.
8. His clients are satisfied with good enough.
9. His clients believe that's “just the way cleaners do things.”
10. His clients don't have knowledge of the cleaners actual and alleged processes and, as a result, don't have the ammunition necessary to hold the cleaner accountable.

Why your lightly starched shirts feel stiff

We hear this complaint quite often: even my light starched shirts feel stiff. Why?

The answer typically boils down to the cost savings associated with synthetic vs. natural starch.

You see, there are basically 2 types of starch – synthetic and natural.

Most ordinary cleaners starch their shirts with a cheap synthetic glue (it's poly vinyl chloride aka PVC).

Synthetic starch adheres to your shirt's fibers like a coat of paint. Every time your shirts are starched another "coat" is added. The build-up continues in this fashion because synthetic starch does not dissolve instantly when it comes into contact with water in the washer wheel.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we only use the finest, natural wheat starch. Wheat starch dissolves immediately on contact with water during each laundering.

One more thing about synthetic starch. The continuous build-up on each starching also abrades the fibers of your shirts rather quickly.

That's because, instead of "collapsing" when it comes into contact with water in the washer wheel, the shirt maintains its rigidity. It's just like throwing a thin piece of plywood into the washer wheel and tumbling that piece of wood for 30 plus minutes. Walk down the detergent isle of your local supermarket and you'll find a bottle of synthetic liquid starch. That's very similar to the synthetic starch your ordinary cleaner is using.

Who gave you permission to crease
the sleeves of my laundered shirt?

At RAVE FabriCARE, we'd **never** crease the sleeves of your fine shirts.

Never.

Over the years, a mere handful of clients have requested “creased sleeves” as a personal preference.

If your personal preference is “creased sleeves”, we'd be happy to honor your request. But first, we'll try to convince you otherwise.

That's because a creased sleeve is the first sign of a poorly cleaned and finished shirt and exhibits that distinctive “I pressed this shirt myself at home while watching TV” look.

Fact is, most cleaners automatically crease your sleeves. Even if you didn't ask for creases.

And why do they do it?

For one reason only: it quickly covers up a whole host of telltale signs that the shirt has been machine pressed at a rate of 40 to 50 per hour per presser. Instead of being hand ironed. And they'd rather you didn't know that.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we prefer an uncreased or rolled sleeve. In our opinion, a rolled sleeve is the first sign, amongst many other factors, of a superior shirt.

After all, if sleeves were intended to be creased, wouldn't your shirts have come with creased sleeves from the shirt maker?

So next time your cleaner creases the sleeves of your fine shirts like a discount cleaner, ask your cleaner these questions:

Why did you crease my sleeves?

And who gave you permission to do so?

Ever wonder why
your folded shirts
look like a rumped mess?

Ever wonder why your folded shirts look like a rumpled mess when you unpack the shirt?

Here's the short answer:

- Because they've been machine pressed
- Because they've been machine folded
- Because they've been stuffed into a thin poly bag.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we call this **the “slept in” look**. It's a look that's available at over 26,000 dry cleaners throughout the USA.

We'd submit that dry cleaners machine fold your shirts for one reason only: they just don't care enough to carefully hand fold them. Just like *you* would do at home if you were preparing for a business trip or personal vacation.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we do things differently.

- We carefully fold your shirt in half. Not in thirds, like the vast majority of cleaners.
- We fold by hand. Never by machine, like the vast majority of cleaners.
- We cushion the folds with sheets of unbuffered, acid-free tissue. Not with no tissue or regular tissue, like the vast majority of cleaners.
- We support the body and collar with a thick shirt board and plastic collar band. Not with some flimsy card and no collar band, like the vast majority of cleaners.
- Finally, we seal the shirt in a heavy gauge shirt bag with a “built in” cushion of air. Not in some thin, narrow shirt bag, like the vast majority of cleaners.

We also offer a “short fold” shirt tailored to the depth of your storage cabinetry. Just specify the maximum length of the poly bag and we’ll accommodate your needs. Same folding process; shorter poly bag.

If you’re traveling, our folded shirts will arrive at their destination in far better condition than the hangered shirts you might have personally carried by hand. Upon arrival, there’ll be no need to send your shirts to the hotel valet for “pressing”.

So go ahead. Manhandle our folded shirts. Stuff ‘em in that suitcase. You’ll find that the RAVE FabriCARE folded shirt travels beautifully. With practically no wrinkles or creases. Fact is, our folded shirts will arrive at their destination in far better condition than the hangered shirts you might have personally carried by hand.

By the way, if you ask your dry cleaner to hand fold your shirts and they continue to machine fold your shirts, don’t let them off the hook with answers such as:

- “We’ve always done it that way”
- “All cleaners do it this way.”
- “We don’t have the time to hand fold”
- “We’d have to raise our prices if we hand folded”
- “No customers have ever complained”.

You have rights to a gently cleaned, perfectly hand ironed, non-wrinkled folded shirt.

Exercise those rights.

Are you re-ironing your
“professionally laundered and pressed”
shirts at home?

The reason you're re-ironing your shirts at home is quite simple: Your cleaner is delivering a machine pressed laundered shirt or a hand finished laundered shirt. Whereas you should be insisting on a hand ironed laundered shirt.

Most cleaners bang your shirts out on a pressing machine at a rate of 40 to 50 per hour per presser. They call that a "machine pressed laundered shirt".

Other cleaners **take that same machine pressed shirt** and crease the sleeves with a hand iron. They call that a "hand finished laundered shirt" or, believe it or not, a "premium hand finished laundered shirt".

As far as we're concerned, it doesn't matter if it's a "machine pressed laundered shirt" or a "hand finished laundered shirt" or a "premium hand finished laundered shirt". **It's still bang and hang work.**

How can you tell that you're getting bang and hang work?

Look for

- Wrinkles and ripples on both sides of the collars and cuffs
- Wrinkles and ripples in the pockets, pocket flaps and epaulets
- Wrinkles and ripples in the front and sleeve plackets
- Collars that are not correctly broken at the lower rear (i.e., there is a gap between the lower edge of the collar and the collar/back joining seam)
- Frayed collar points

- Collar stay impressions
- A triangular shaped collar (instead of a perfectly rounded collar)
- Collars and cuffs that are abrading or fraying prematurely
- Puckered side, sleeve and yolk seams
- Puckered joins between the body and sleeves of the shirt
- Puckered joins between the sleeves and cuffs of the shirt
- Wrinkled underarms
- Creased sleeves (often automatically done without the client having been given the option of a rolled sleeve)
- Poor packaging (multiple hangered shirts in a single, thin, narrow poly bag or folded shirts in a thin, narrow poly bag).

So ask for a hand ironed laundered shirt. But be careful: In all probability your cleaner will continue to deliver a machine pressed laundered shirt or a hand finished laundered shirt (\$1 to \$2) and swear it's a hand ironed laundered shirt (\$7 to \$14).

Does your cleaner bait and switch and then pocket the difference?

Here's the takeaway from this ebook: ***True quality cleaning is all about process, craftsmanship and time.***

It's about **what dry cleaners and shirt laundries do.**

It's about **how they do it.**

It's about the **time they take to do it.**

And, even more importantly, it's about **what they don't do.**

Process, craftsmanship and time is what separates the work of skilled technicians from the work of relatively unskilled machine operators.

Truth is, true quality cleaning cannot be crafted at a low or moderate price; ordinary cleaning can be machine processed quite cheaply.

True quality cleaning takes time; ordinary cleaning can be pumped out in 1 to 3 days.

True quality cleaning will leave your fine garments looking, feeling and smelling great and lasting much longer; ordinary cleaning will literally destroy your fine garments in next to no time.

So when your trusted tailor advises you to limit the dry cleaning of your fine garments, he's not necessarily saying never dry clean or only dry clean once or twice a year. When your shirt maker tells you to wash and hand iron your fine shirts yourself, he's not necessarily saying never professionally launder your shirts.

For the most part, he's just trying to protect your fine garments from the abuse that's dished out on a daily basis by well-intentioned but relatively unskilled cleaners.

The websites, brochures and newsletters of many cleaners – especially those wannabe cleaners that claim to be “high-end” or are striving to project themselves as “high end” in order to capture the price differential between ordinary cleaning and extraordinary cleaning – chronicle fanciful, often dubious descriptions of their processes and craftsmanship. They trumpet their “attention to detail”, “pursuit of perfection”, “devotion to the exceptional” and “delivery of the exquisite”.

Yet, they only charge \$10 or \$15 and maybe even \$20 or \$25 for a 2 piece suit that's turned around in one day or even the same day, or picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3.

Or 99 cents, \$1.50, \$2.50, \$3.50 or \$4.50 for a laundered shirt that's turned around in one day or even the same day, or picked up on day 1 and delivered on day 3. Even \$10.00 for a shirt that's no better than a \$3.50 shirt!

I just have one question: **if you're that good, how can you possibly be so cheap and so fast?** How can you possibly deliver the processes and craftsmanship that you allegedly incorporate into your product at that price and in that timeframe? **And still remain in business?**

Is it your mission to render a charitable service to society at large or to subsidize your customers' garment care regimens?

Or is the simple truth that no one will pay a premium for your self-styled couture care craftsmanship?

On the other hand, if you know the secret formula, let me suggest that you might want to consider a new, more lucrative and intellectually satisfying profession: management consulting.

The Four Seasons and The Ritz Carlton would pay dearly to learn how to deliver their

rooms at a Sheraton's price while maintaining their existing quality standards; Morton's and Ruth's Chris would be delighted to learn how to deliver their steaks at a Denny's price while maintaining their existing quality standards; and BMW and Mercedes would be fascinated to learn how to deliver their vehicles at a Kia price while maintaining their existing quality standards.

Luckily, you don't have to settle for ordinary: for a suit that's cleaned in aggressive solvents and machine pressed, for a shirt that's laundered in hot water and machine pressed, for garment care that's **merely good enough**.

With a good eye, an inquisitive mind and a little practice, it's quite easy to separate true quality cleaning from ordinary, bang and hang cleaning and to differentiate, not between good and bad, but between better and best.

Hopefully, this ebook has provided you with some ammunition to do just that.

So learn about the process. Challenge your cleaner. Ask the probing questions. Insist on straight, jargon-free answers. And then invest some time assessing the truthfulness of those responses.

Your image and your fine garments will love you for that.

Thank you for reading.

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Please feel free to share this ebook with whoever you believe might be interested. Such as your bespoke tailor, custom shirt maker, professional clothier, personal shopper, friend, relative or business associate. Even your dry cleaner.

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Comment on this ebook

I welcome your feedback on this ebook.

On the other hand, if you operate a dry cleaner and you believe that the information contained in this ebook will “destroy the dry cleaning industry as you know it” (and, yes, I have received that comment), let me be blunt: No one’s forcing you to change the way you currently do things. So hold the vitriol and the name calling. I’m just not interested in your sensitivities.

Email me at comments@ravefabricare.com

Review this ebook

I welcome your review this ebook – positive or negative – on your blog or on your favorite fashion/style blog or forum.

If you do review this ebook, please provide proper attribution to Stu Bloom and RAVE FabriCARE (accompanied by a link back to www.ravefabricare.com). Also, please let me know of your review by emailing me at stu@ravefabricare.com (accompanied by a link to your review, if possible).

Many thanks.

Ask a question

Now that you've read this ebook, you might have questions pertaining to one or more of your own garments. If so, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Email me at questions@ravefabricare.com

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Follow my blog, True Quality Cleaning, for straight talk about garment, shirt and accessory care from experts who calls it like it is. In plain English.

And the best way to keep up with my blog is to subscribe to receive my blog posts via email. I typically post once or twice a week.

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Book the author

I'm available to speak to groups about fine garment care. Sometimes they listen.

To book me to speak about garment care in general or about any specific garment or shirt care subject in particular, please call me toll free at 1.844.RAVEFABRICARE (1.844.728.3322) or contact me by email.

Email me at speaking@ravefabricare.com

Interview the author

To interview me about garment, shirt and/or accessory care, please call me toll free at 1.844.RAVEFABRICARE (1.844.728.3322) or contact me by email.

Email me at media@ravefabricare.com

You'll find many sample interview questions in our RAVE FabriCARE Media Kit PDF.

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If you are associated with any fashion or style blog or website and you believe that any subject covered in this ebook might appeal to your audience, please contact me. I'll consider any proposal to contribute to your blog or website.

While I can't guarantee a contribution on every occasion, I'll seriously evaluate all requests. You lose nothing by asking.

Email me at guestposts@ravefabricare.com

Born on date

This ebook was created on January 1, 2016 and is based on the best information at that time.

ABOUT
STU BLOOM & RAVE FABRICARE

About Stu Bloom

Stu Bloom is Founder and President of RAVE FabriCARE (www.ravefabricare.com), a full service fabricare specialist based in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Stu is the driving force behind RAVE FabriCARE, a company that specializes in caring for bespoke, made-to-measure, designer, high fashion, specialty, vintage and couture garments and gowns, household textiles (such as fine bed and table linens, draperies, sofa and cushion covers, comforters, bedspreads, blankets and quilts), and accessories (such as handbags, purses, wallets, backpacks, shoes and boots).

Over the years, Stu has developed a following amongst some of the world's foremost bespoke tailors and shirt makers, amongst bloggers who opine on classic styling and fine tailoring as well as fine garment, shirt and accessory care, and amongst members of various forums that cater to individuals who are passionate about fine garments, shirts and accessories.

Stu is the editor of and a contributor to the RAVE FabriCARE blog, True Quality Cleaning, a blog that addresses an array of issues related to fine garment, shirt and accessory care.

He is also the author of various ebooks on those subjects, all of which are available as a free download, without email registration, from www.ravefabricare.com/freestuff

For a more complete biography, see www.expertfile.com/stu.bloom

About RAVE FabriCARE

RAVE FabriCARE delivers extraordinary care by combining outstanding technical knowledge, obsessive attention to detail, unmatched stain removal skills, exceptionally gentle cleaning processes and old-fashioned hand ironing craftsmanship with the most advanced equipment available today.

RAVE FabriCARE serves the needs of clients locally through their in-store service and local pick up and delivery service and throughout the USA and Canada through their Nationwide Clean By Mail service.

RAVE FabriCARE is the only dry cleaner in Arizona and one of the very few dry cleaners in the USA recognized as one of the nation's premier dry cleaners by non-compensated, independent, authoritative third parties.

We earned those endorsements from bespoke tailors, bespoke shirt makers and bloggers who opine on classic garments by serving these clients and delivering, on a consistent basis, extraordinary care for their personal garments, household textiles and accessories.

At RAVE FabriCARE, we don't pay for these endorsements. And, unlike other cleaners, we don't buy our "awards".

That's right, a payment of approximately \$500 per month to a **marketing organization masquerading as a standards organization** will buy you the right to

claim that that you were “voted” or “selected” as “one of America’s best cleaners” for (fill in a number) years running, or as “one of America’s finest cleaners” for (fill in a number) years running, or as “one of America’s (fill in a description) cleaners for (fill in a number) years running.

Membership is available to almost any dry cleaner able to project a little service lobby and garment packaging glitz and willing to write a monthly check – irrespective of the quality and consistency of product they deliver.

These “awards” are very similar to those advertisements you see in airline magazines proclaiming those listed in the advertisement as “America’s Best Doctors”, “America’s Best Lasik Surgeons”, “America’s Best Steak Houses”, “America’s Best Seafood Restaurants”, “America’s Best Bed & Breakfasts” or “America’s Best Boutique Hotels”.

And, if you don’t believe that these organizations are primarily marketing organizations, pay close attention to the composition of their membership – mostly ordinary cleaners and wannabe cleaners who offer relatively cheap prices and quick turnaround, and who are looking for a competitive crutch to differentiate themselves from their local competition.

On the other hand, if you’re looking for a cleaner that has a stronger focus on quality garment care, consider a cleaner that’s a member of Leading Cleaners Internationale.

LCI is the only organization that thoroughly investigates the qualifications and standards of applicants through on-site interviews and inspections. Fact is, the application, interview and inspection process is so rigorous and intimidating that very few of the applicants who apply for membership and, when they do apply, very few are actually invited to join the organization.

We believe that most readers of this ebook are likely to be rational, reasonable and responsible individuals. However, after 25 years in the garment care business, I know that there will always be those – probably no more than a handful of readers – who will look to assign blame to someone else:

“I read your ebook and followed your advice to exercise caution when dealing with ordinary, bang and hang cleaners. So I hand washed my favorite Prada silk blouse myself. And look what happened. The dyes bled and now the blouse is ruined. It’s your fault and you’re going to pay!”

“I dropped off my WW Chan fully canvassed linen suit jacket at a local dry cleaner and told him to read your comments on caring for bespoke garments before he commenced any work. Now the chest has puckered, the lapels are creased and flat, and all the seams have burst. It’s your fault and you’re going to pay.”

“I shipped my Oscar de la Renta silk formal dress to you for cleaning. You probably remember the one – the one with the 10 year old red wine stains all over the front. And when I got it back I was shocked. Shocked. It’s not as perfect as it should be. There’s still a small speck of red wine on the underside of the hem that you could not remove. It’s your fault and you’re going to pay!”

“I read your ebook and followed your advice to exercise care when dealing with ordinary, bang and hang cleaners. That gave me the confidence to drop off my Napoli Su Misura and Charvet shirts at a local cleaner with specific instructions that they be laundered and hand ironed. Now the collars and cuffs are rippled, the collar points are

frayed, the seams are puckered, the french cuffs have a sharp crease instead of a roll, and the sleeves have a knife-edge crease from shoulder to cuff instead of a roll. It's your fault and you're going to pay!"

"I always have my white dress shirts professionally laundered by a cleaner regarded as the best in our city. Over time, the collars have yellowed. So I sent you four of the worst ones for restoration to white. You did a great job on three. However, one still had a faint yellow hue inside the collar band. It's your fault and you're going to pay!"

"I pay \$7.75 for a Nordstrom-branded laundered shirt. My dry cleaner tells me that he charges more *because he hand irons all his shirts*. There's even a display stand on his front desk highlighting this claim. So I dropped off 3 medium blue cotton shirts. And they came back faded, especially along the seams, with numerous small pinch marks in the area where the body joins the sleeves and the sleeves join the cuffs. Furthermore, every shirt has a sharp crease along the sleeve from the shoulder to the cuff. After reading your ebook and carefully examining my shirts after processing, I now believe the claim that he hand irons my shirts to be bogus. It's your fault and you're going to pay!"

So, for those who are litigiously inclined, our legal advisor has insisted – despite our vigorous protestations to the contrary – that we add a few disclaimers to this ebook.

So here it goes...

This ebook is written, published and distributed on an "as is" basis without warranties of any kind, either express or implied.

This ebook is designed to provide you with information you might find useful in guiding your thinking and consequent actions on the best approach to keeping your fine garments looking, feeling and smelling great – over the long term. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this ebook is accurate, current and reliable. Nonetheless, only you and you alone, can assess the information contained in this ebook and relate that information to your own experiences,

objectives, financial resources and other circumstances. When in doubt, seek the advise of a *trusted garment care professional*.

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