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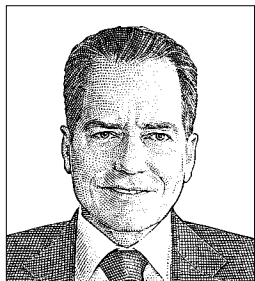


ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

THE ELECTRIFYING
STEPHEN CURRY

THE COLUMNISTS

WSJ. asks six luminaries to weigh in on a single topic. This month: Manners.



**CHARLES
MASSON**

“When I was a child, my parents used to take me out to a restaurant once a week, even though they didn’t necessarily have the means. Restaurants are a wonderful space for a child to learn the value of good behavior because, in dining, the rules of etiquette are built on respect. But the trouble with rules is that once you establish them you may find yourself bending to the breaking point. If someone is speaking loudly on their cellphone and there are other guests trying to have quiet conversation, you might approach the guest and ask them to take the call outside. But you have to be casual, because if you enact a policy that forbids cellphone use in this day and age, your restaurant will be empty. It’s also bad form to make a reservation for six and arrive alone without calling in advance. In those situations, you don’t say anything to the guest; you just remember!”

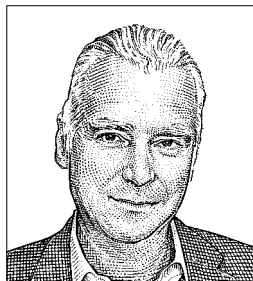
Masson is a restaurateur. His latest project, Majorelle, opens in December at the Lowell Hotel in New York City.



**LYNN
WYATT**

“My husband and I have four sons and two grown grandchildren. Good manners were as important to their education as their schooling. When our grandchildren came to our house, their parents would say, ‘Mind your Mimi’s manners!’ It’s all about treating people with courtesy and kindness. For instance, it’s impolite to call someone after 10 in the evening unless it’s an emergency. And I think it’s always best to converse with someone in person, eyeball to eyeball, when possible—the inflection of someone’s voice is missing in an email, and a text message can be very misleading. If ever I’m asked an ill-mannered question, I just say, ‘I’ll forgive you for asking me that question if you’ll forgive me for not answering it.’ Oh, and the absolute worst thing is spitting! To have good manners means simply to be considerate of others—it’s what allows us to all get along.”

Wyatt is a philanthropist and socialite.



**PATRICK
SEGUIN**

“I’ve been running my gallery for 27 years. Prior to that, I had a nightclub and a restaurant in the south of France and Paris. These are jobs in which you must interact with a diverse clientele, and naturally you must be polite to the different people you meet. It comes down to respect, whether you’re dealing with a concierge or a collector. The art world is quite sophisticated and subtle—unless it’s about business and competition, in which case it’s not so subtle! But there are rules. One speaks quietly in a gallery, for example. Often, I take the train for business, and sometimes you see people talking on their phones like it’s their office. That’s so rude. Generally I won’t say anything if someone is being rude, though I can get angry if it’s something particularly aggressive. But I’m not spending my days correcting others.”

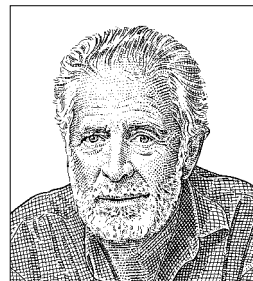
Seguin is an art and furniture dealer and the founder of Galerie Patrick Seguin.



**FRAN
LEBOWITZ**

“When you speak to people of my generation, you’ll find that our parents didn’t talk to us about things; they just told us what to do. From morning until night, you were issued instructions. Seventy-five percent of those instructions had to do with manners—don’t reach in front of another person, elbows off the table. As a result, you had a certain way of seeing the world. I went to the Nobel Prize ceremony with Toni Morrison the year she won. I got up at one point during the dinner to talk with the wife of an editor at Knopf. But when I got to her, she practically shoved me to the ground and said, ‘Don’t you know you can’t stand up when the king is sitting down?’ Well, no, I didn’t know that. How would I know that? Of all the things my mother told me, that is one thing she missed. But other than that I pretty much know everything!”

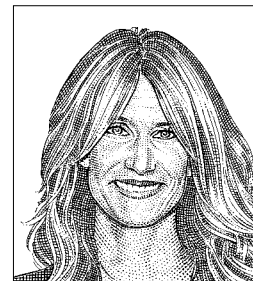
Lebowitz is a writer and social commentator.



**CHRIS
BLACKWELL**

“I’ve conducted lots of negotiations in the music business at different levels during different periods—at times when I had one foot in the grave and one on a banana skin—where it was important how the negotiation came through. In all those cases, I always believed in exhibiting good manners. Musicians have a special license, as they should. Yes, they can be a total pain in the ass, but I don’t necessarily put that down to bad manners. They’re artists! It all comes down to ideas instilled in me from a very young age. We’re talking a long time ago, like 70 years. It’s changed over the last century. So many of those manners have been dropped. A letter used to always contain some flourishing element at the end, but now it’s just a name. It’s a matter of the speed with which people live their lives today.”

Blackwell is founder and CEO of Island Outpost and Blackwell Rum and the founder of Island Records.



**LAURA
DERN**

“It’s always thrilling when I meet people, particularly men, whose manners are beautiful. My earliest education in manners came from my Southern grandmother and Southern mother. I was raised to believe that a man opened the door for a lady; he walked down the stairs in front of her so that should she trip and fall he could catch her. A properly raised gentleman considered how he could support a woman, not because she’s more delicate, but because it was the right thing to do. So the presidential election has been a true education about manners for me and for my daughter as well. The most offensive quality is the quality of a bully. My grandmother taught me that even when you’re angry, you must treat others with respect. You must learn how to rise above.”

Dern is an actress. She appears in the film The Founder, out in January, and Big Little Lies, a miniseries that begins airing on HBO in February.