

The Valet Club



The Origins of Valet Parking

Valet parking goes back to when people used to ride horses as their main means of transportation. The word valet has its roots in the mid-14th century and means 'personal man servant', typically a valet or valet de chambre who served as personal attendant to their master. Taking guests' horses or carriages to the stables were additional responsibilities. The tradition of parking continued in the beginning of the twentieth century, when servants began to park guests' cars¹.

¹ <https://www.myparkingsign.com/blog/evolution-valet-parking/>

The Father of Present Day Valet Parking

Herb Citrin (photo), known as the father of valet parking, is credited for modern day valet services. He began his valet parking company in Los Angeles in 1946, bringing professionalism to a business that had not previously been as valued².

Before he even had his driver's license, Citrin began parking cars after school for his father. He inherited the business when he came back from World War II. He hired two men to work for him and outfitted them in military-style uniforms (later, he dressed them in the familiar red tuxedo-style vests and black tie). In those days, a good tip was 50 cents and a really good tip was a dollar. According to Citrin, the best tipper was Frank Sinatra, who would come out of a restaurant and say *'how many valets are working tonight?'* And if there were five, he would give a hundred-dollar bill and say *'split it up'*³.

Citrin expanded to restaurants, clubs, hotels and private parties across the country. He provided valet services for the Academy Awards for more than 30 years, including the Emmys, Golden Globes and other major Hollywood events, and supplied a permanent staff to Hugh Hefner's Playboy mansion.

What makes a great valet? Citrin says: *'Enthusiasm, grace under pressure and attention to detail. Knowing the names of your regular customers is one thing. Knowing the names of their grandkids, now THAT'S service.'*⁴

Demographics

There are over 77,900 valet parkers currently employed in the United States.

- 88.6% are men
- On average, 43 years old
- Most are white (48%), followed by Hispanic or Latino (25%), Black (12%) and Asian (9%).
- The most common foreign language among valet parkers is Spanish (at 70%)
- In 2021, women valets earned 91% of what men earned.

Fun Facts^{5,6}

- Some people think that Valet parkers can do anything for them 😊, for instance:

² <https://www.gatsbyvalet.com/where-did-valet-parking-originate/>

³ <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=194523215>

⁴ <https://www.sd2k.com/mr-valet>

⁵ <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20110201006814/en/10-Things-You-Didn%E2%80%99t-Know-About-Valet-Parking>

⁶ <https://www.thrillist.com/eat/nation/valet-parking-service-stories>

- *'One girl pulled up with her dog in the car, cracked the window -- it was temperate enough, so this was not a big deal. But then she asked me if I would mind walking the dog once or twice while she went on her date. I did mind. But I did it anyways because I love dogs.'*
- *'When one woman picked her car up, she got in and would not leave. She just sat there trying to make small talk, and when that didn't work she just straight-up goes, 'So, do you want to go home with me?' I told her I'd love to, but I was working all night. She drove away disappointed. But I got a big tip.'*

Men tip better than women by far. However, women valets get better tips.

To get hired at AmeriPark, valets have to pass a rigorous fitness test including running around a building in two minutes and dashing up and down stairs!

As I mentioned in my other blogs people are less and less likely to carry cash. As a result, hotel valet parkers are getting fewer tips (if any). That is why offering an electronic tipping solution like **Tip&Go**, which increases employees' earnings by up to 30%, is a win-win solution!

Francis Léonard, CEO



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