

# The New Criterion

## The Media

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### Getting it

by [James Bowman](#)

On being part of the small exclusive circle of people who "get it."

On my occasional visits to Starbucks, the ubiquitous coffee merchants, I try to refuse to use the private language the company has thoughtfully provided for the convenience of its patrons. Sometimes I forget and ask for Tall, Grande, or Venti, but usually I ask, defiantly but with some embarrassment, for small, medium, or large, because I resent being forced into a greater intimacy than I desire with the Starbucks corporate culture. I want to be a customer, not a member of the Starbucks Club who validates his membership along with his entry on the premises by speaking the Starbucks idiolect. Doubtless the marketing department in Seattle has tested it to a fare-thee-well and found that most people are not like me; most people are happy to use the special, European-sounding jargon—the Stargot, as we might call it—because it flatters them into the belief that, along with their coffee, they have purchased at a very reasonable price admission to ...

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