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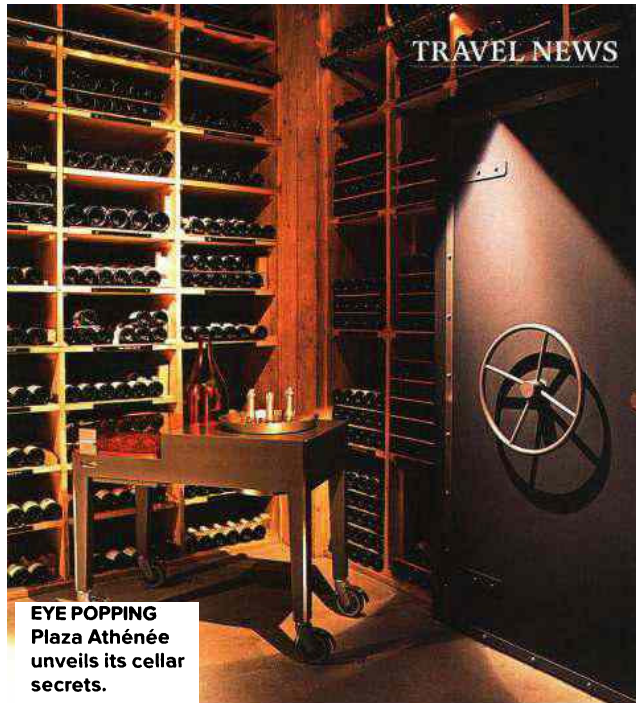


A PERSONAL PORTER

On a typical Monday morning at Sydney International Airport, between six and nine, 45 passengers will find that their luggage has been delayed. Another seven will have had their bags tampered with, while two will simply never see their possessions again.*

With increasing congestion, tighter turnarounds and tougher security measures at airports, incidences of mishandled baggage are on the rise. And more bags passing through airports means check-in queues are lengthening, costs are rising, and delays mounting. The answer, says new service Personal Porter, is to separate the traveller from his or her luggage. Personal Porter is Australia's first global door-to-door luggage delivery service, which picks up your bags from your home or office and delivers them to your destination before you get there – a nice option in light of major airlines moving towards lowering baggage allowances and increasing excess baggage fees (Qantas currently charges \$48 a kilo for excess baggage on a long-haul flight, while BA last month introduced a standard fee of about \$300 per extra bag long-haul). Personal Porter charges about \$278 to send a small bag from Australia to the UK. To find out more, check out www.personalporter.com.au.

* Calculations based on luggage mishandling statistics provided by airline service provider SITA.



EYE POPPING
Plaza Athénée unveils its cellar secrets.

Athénée's best cellar

Tour a grand hotel's hidden gem under the guidance of Alain Ducasse's head sommelier, and try a few very special drops.

PARIS The sumptuous Plaza Athénée – a Parisian institution since 1911 – is unveiling a long-held secret. For the first time, guests have been invited to visit the grand hotel's cellar where they can sample a selection of the 35,000 wines stored there.

Among the coveted bottles in La Cave du Plaza Athénée Paris are Château Cheval Blanc, Château Latour, Château Margaux, Pétrus and Montrachet – and some wines will be available to buy in wooden cases of one, three or six bottles. Private cellar visits can be arranged on request, from 3pm daily, for groups of six or 12, and will be

conducted by Alain Ducasse's head sommelier at Plaza Athénée, Gerard Margeon. Born in Burgundy, in the Hospices de Beaune, Margeon is an expert on his region's wines and also oversees the wine lists from the various Groupe Alain Ducasse restaurants.

Prices range from \$250 per person, which includes six wines and one surprise wine, to \$840 per person for 10 wines and one surprise wine. Guests will also receive an engraved tasting glass to take away.

Hôtel Plaza Athénée Paris, 25 Avenue Montaigne, 75008 Paris. +33 153 676 665; www.plaza-athenee-paris.com.

BEAN THERE, DONE THAT: There are coffee addictions and then there are coffee addictions. So besotted by the humble bean were Melbourne's Andrew Hoyne, a designer, and photographer Rob Blackburn, that they set off around Europe to trace the history of Australia's obsession with coffee. The result is *Café Amore*, a photographic journey through some of the world's most famous cafés. The perfect coffee table book? We think so. It's \$49.95, from www.cafeamore.net.au.

