

THE INSIDERS | HISTORIC MELBOURNE



MAREE COOTE
ARTIST AND AUTHOR

MANCHESTER UNITY BUILDING

The foyer of Marcus Barlow's art deco masterpiece is filled with incredible detail — pressed-copper lift doors, mosaic floors, a gracious escalator to the mezzanine and monogrammed wrought-iron balustrades. Furniture was custom-made for the 1932 building, as were lights, cabinets and carpets; manchesterunitybuilding.com.au.

CITY HATTERS

Below Flinders Street Station, this basement shop, opened in 1910, is filled with fedoras, trilbies, bowlers and berets amid arcane logos and mysterious accessories; 100 years of gilt signage and urbane window displays evoke a well-mannered world of dapper door-openers and hat-tippers; cityhatters.com.au.

THE GOTHIC BANK AND STOCK EXCHANGE

The extravagant detailing of this 1883-built property includes a forest of columns sweeping up to a glass ceiling like a mercantile greenhouse — the leadlight and painted-glass skylight was added in 1920. Behind the bank is the pale colonnaded interior of the stock exchange; beneath it is a fascinating banking memorabilia museum; 382-392 Collins Street.

NEWSPAPER HOUSE

A magnificent mosaic by Melbourne's art deco master Mervyn Napier Waller depicts figures drawn in the handsome jazz-age style; 247-249 Collins Street.

PARLIAMENT LIBRARY

Soak up the scholarly atmosphere; politicians do their research here amid claw-footed oak reading tables and colonial finery. Look up at crystal chandeliers or down plush spiral staircases. There are ladders, book stands, pressed-brass fireplaces and huge oak doors to quieter reading rooms; parliament.vic.gov.au.

MYER MURAL HALL

Aside from the facade, the Mural Hall is possibly the last remnant of "old Myer" since the loss of the Ladies Lounge, the Cafeteria and the Roof Top Carnival; it features eight Napier Waller murals of women through the ages; muralhall.net.au.

PELEGRINI'S

This restaurant has had the same counter, stools, mirror, illegible menu, shopfront and signage for six decades; 66 Bourke Street.

Maree Coote is the author of *The Melbourne Book: A History of Now* (Melbournestyle, \$55)



BOOK a Tauck river cruise in April through Belgium and The Netherlands by December 20 for a free hotel night valued at \$US500; supplements waived for solo travellers in Category 1 cabins. From \$US3990 a person. More: 1300.857.437.



FOUR Seasons Resort Maldives at Landaa Giraavaru has a coral frame propagation project involving artificial structures to which coral polyps can cling and build reefs; guests can "adopt" a pod and track its progress online. More: fourseasons.com.



THERE are scores of flight-tracking apps, but the handy FlightAware Flight Tracker, aside from real-time arrivals and departures status at thousands of airports worldwide, has a GPS facility to track aircraft in your vicinity. Free for all devices.



IT'S free to join the Seniors Holiday Travel Club, which has more than 100,000 members, including many singles. There's a club tour of Morocco and Dubai in March or Russia and China in June or August. More: seniorsholidaytravel.com.au.

HOME AND AWAY



AFTER exploring the boutiques of Toorak Road in Melbourne's fashionable South Yarra neighbourhood, there could be few more welcome opportunities than relaxing poolside, cocktail in hand. But where to find such an oasis in the bustling metropolis? Taking its cues from chic properties in New York, Hollywood and London, The Olsen, flagship of the Art Series boutique hotel group, has launched The Pool Club. Every Sunday until the end of February, sun worshippers can spend the afternoon lazing on The Olsen's roof terrace or beside its 25m glass-bottomed pool overlooking Chapel Street. The on-site Spoonbill Restaurant & Bar will deliver refreshments — a Billabong cocktail made with gin, elderflower liquor and cucumber accompanied by a dozen oysters, perhaps? — while a DJ promises to keep things upbeat. The 229-suite Olsen is one of three Melbourne Art Series hotels featuring the works of leading Australian artists. Sister properties The Cullen and The Blackman are a stone's-throw away; The Watson is now under construction beside the River Torrens at Adelaide's Walkerville. More: theolsen.com.au.

MICHELLE I...

T&I LOVES

SYDNEY weather has been either unseasonably wet or searingly hot so far this spring-summer, so perhaps picnic necessities for the holiday season are going to be a combo of parasols and plastic macs. Either way, for a delicious alfresco nosh the Surry Hills-based Sydney Picnic Co packages up food to go with a sense of chic French style. My choice of the signature Sydney spread (\$155 for two) comes in a hessian bag with a sprig of fresh flowers; there are checked paper napkins, disposable plates and cutlery. The menu? In chic, string-tied cartons sit Ligurian Taggiasche marinated olives; king prawns with lime and Sichuan salt and pepper; fregola with free-range roast chicken, cherry tomatoes, sugar snaps, preserved lemon, harissa, mint and toasted pepitas; Sonoma sourdough baguette (oddly salty) and double-cream cheese with baby figs. Slight variations to standard menus are possible (Valrhona chocolate brownies are whipped out and replaced for me with lemon posset and marinated blueberries). From \$145-\$185; gift vouchers available. More: sydneypicnic.com.au.



SUSAN KUROSAWA

ON THE BENCH

Black + Blum Sandwich on Board, \$49.95

SAY goodbye to sandwiches with a sandwich box from a container has an airtight seal with silicone seals. Sandwiches then want to eat. The lunch is available in pink, blue and white. More: until.com.au.

ON THE ROAD

iKOU Gusseted Cosmetic Bag (\$24.95)

PRODUCED in the village of Leuven, Belgium, the NSW Blue Mountains in Australia, Cambodia, iKOU soy wax, organic cotton, as well as natural materials with fern leaves (flowers in various colours) and cosmetic pouches (gussets (12cm x 2cm) in various colours) (\$19.95).