

From the Concierge



Philadelphia Stories

BY SARAH MUÑOZ

Les Clefs d'Or USA member James Portner, chef concierge at The Ritz-Carlton, Philadelphia, loves the historic landmark where he works. Inside the former bank's hallowed halls, Portner has pulled off many a masterstroke. Here, three highlights.

Adrian!

"A guest named Lucky brought me a bucket-list item: Re-create scenes from the movie 'Rocky' for him to star in. So I arranged a very special private tour. That morning, Lucky got up at 5 a.m. and videotaped himself drinking six raw eggs that had been delivered to his room. Next, we took him to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where he ran up the 'Rocky steps' and had his picture taken, then to Rocky's neighborhood and the pet shop where Adrian worked. Finally, I had the tour guide stop and pick up a T-shirt I had ordered with a picture of Rocky on the front and 'Lucky,' written on the back. The guest had the time of his life."

Fête Flip

"A few years ago we had a wedding party staying with us whose church ceremony and reception were taking place off-property. Then a blizzard hit, the city was paralyzed and their transportation and vendors all canceled. We were supposed to host a bar mitzvah in the hotel that same day. It got canceled as well, but we had all the staff and the food standing by. So the banquet captain and I decided we could help the couple. I called our limo company; they had an SUV that's built like a tank, and we used it to shuttle groups of wedding guests to the church, then back here for a wonderful reception."

Saving the Game

"A National Hockey League team recently stayed with us. Just as they were getting ready to board their bus and head to the stadium, their driver backed into a dumpster. The damage to the engine made the vehicle unusable. I scrambled and managed to find a 52-passenger bus that arrived in 20 minutes to get them to their game on time."

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