

The Vinson view

Inside man and master shopper Nick Vinson on the who, what, when, where and why



02

SIDE SHOW

An obsession of mine is Eric Schmitt, who creates limited-edition pieces with a real decorative arts bent from his atelier on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau. Typical of his style is this cast bronze and glass 'Fuji' side table, which he launched at Art Basel/Miami Beach last year. €16,000, from www.dutko.com

03

ROYAL STANDARD

The revamped Café Royal became a favourite hang-out before it even reopened thanks to pop-up members' club The MiuMiu-London's three-day stay there. You may no longer get the talks, the visiting chefs, the shop or the crowd, but now David Chipperfield's renovation is almost complete, I'll be a regular at its Grill Room and Café 1865. www.hotelcaferoyal.com



04

FINNISHING TOUCH

Despite all the heavyweight talent in Milan during Salone del Mobile, it's still a great platform for the young. Exhibited at the 'Uncovered' group show last year, this mirror, with its oak profile and one corner mitred off and bronze-glazed, is by Milan-based, Finnish designer Elisa Honkanen. Someone should pick it up and produce it for her. Please. www.elisahonkanen.com

DREAM TEAMS

Look out for these recent collaborations

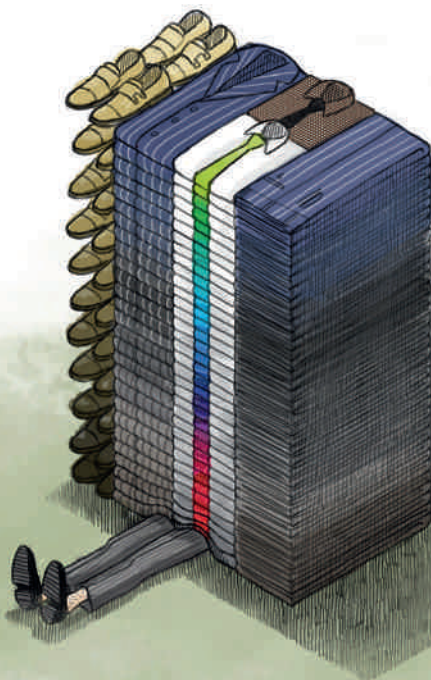
Knoll's new 12-piece range of furniture by Rem Koolhaas' OMA

Fendi Casa's capsule collection by 83-year-old French designer Maria Pergam

The Madrid-based leathersgoods house Loewe with Japanese designer Junya Watanabe

Raf Simons first collection of trainers with Adidas

A concept bathing room by Agape and Japanese architect Kengo Kuma



01

THE BURDEN OF CHOICE

These days made-to-measure has just too much to offer

My bespoke barometer is registering a seismic shift in the quantity and quality of made-to-measure offers across the globe, fine-tuned as they are to resonate with more adventurous men. They firmly place the client in the driving seat and the mantra, when it comes to choice, is more is definitely more. Well, for me, more is actually more stress and trauma, all sheathed in premium packaging.

My Charvet shirt appointment went from pleasure to pain when I was led into an upstairs room in Paris' place Vendôme from which I had to choose just one. Over at Prada, in its made-to-measure room, after deciding the fit, style and collar for my short-sleeved summer shirt, I had to navigate through no fewer than 180 fabrics, including 47 in white alone. Luckily, I was smitten with its 'Re-edition' collection of archive prints and went for a Holliday & Brown patterned silk.

With my Ermenegildo Zegna 'Su Misura' suit, I had selected the cut, done the fitting, but was unable to choose one navy chalk stripe from the next, so numerous were the swatch books. Also in Milan, my Louis Vuitton made-to-order monk-strap shoes required not one but three second opinions from friends and

colleagues, as the total permutations of last, line, styles, sole, colour, hardware, skin, and so on were more than 3,000. That's a lot of choice for someone who likes a one-page menu in a restaurant and suffers order envy when dishes arrive.

When trying out JM Weston's made-to-measure service over a 'creation dinner', a social way to take the edge off designing yourself, I was perturbed by having to choose not only the style, upper colour and lining, but also the laces, punching design and stitching – one, two, or three rows, how should I know? For assistance, I leaned on both E Tautz's Patrick Grant – whom Wallpaper* had introduced to John Lobb for a Handmade commission (W*149), so he knows how to tweak a shoe – and JM Weston's CEO Catherine Sardin.

The thought process behind all this is: clients are increasingly sophisticated and knowledgeable; production and logistics are now in place to make items to order; and a personalised service – along with a riff-raff-free room – is a talking point. I'm all for getting exactly what I want, but do appreciate the design done and dusted by the experts. Give me a good edit any day. Too much choice is just too much and, as Dieter Rams says, less can be better.