

# The Vinson view

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



01

## FAIR SPREAD

Some pruning of the sprawling Salone wouldn't go amiss

There is no doubt that the Salone del Mobile in Milan is the biggest and best furniture fair in the world. Approximately 338,000 people from 159 countries visited the fairgrounds alone last year and global brands choose Milan over all other fairs for their major launches. It's much more than a place for architects, building specifiers and buyers to see new furniture or for the media to report on and edit from, it's a salon in the true sense of the word, where dreams and deals come to life.

I Saloni, held in the Fuksas-designed fairgrounds in Rho, is where 2,580 exhibitors fill 207,577 sq m of space. Among them you'll find leading Italian brands like Molteni, Minotti and Kartell, internationals like the Swiss/German Vitra, ClassiCon and Schönbusch and Salone Satellite, the *padiglione* given over to young designers, run by the marvellous Marva Griffin Wilshire and the launch pad for many a career.

Fuori Saloni, meaning outside of the fair, includes everyone else showing in the city – brands who prefer to show in their own venues, such as B&B Italia, Azucena, and Bisazza, gallery owners like Nilufar's Nina Yashar and Rossana Orlandi, plus international names like Baccarat, Swiss design school ÉCAL and Japan's Karimoku New Standard. Then there are fashion brands such as Hermès, Bottega Veneta or

Armani/Casa showing their homewares or hosting special design events in their showrooms and stores. Our own exhibitions fall into that category, from our first in 1999 at Spazio Fendi (W\*20) through to 2012 when Brioni hosted Wallpaper\* Handmade.

Then there is the *fiera della salsiccia*, or hot dog fair, an unattractive jumble of third-rate brands jostling for space with promotions for cars and booze masquerading as 'design', unchecked and out of control. Its unpruned roots are in Zona Tortona, once an essential stop on the design circuit and now a place to be avoided. It's proof that a greedy hunger for growth leads to a kind of internal combustion. It seems to me these days almost anyone willing to pay a fee for a listing and a banner outside their 'show' can get into the official Interni guide of Fuori Salone (400 listings in 2012) with little or no vetting or editing. Claudio Luti, president of Cosmit, the organisers of the show, insists the heart and motor of the fair is in Rho, everything else is secondary and Cosmit doesn't plan to occupy itself with that. I say the Milan dynamic is made up of both parts, equal or not, and some of the most memorable launches have happened in some of the jewel-like spaces the city opens up during the fair. Someone just has to cut out the crapola and curate it.

02



## HIGH AND MIGHTY

Pierre Hardy is having a bit of a Memphis moment. These sculptural kid suede 'Sottsass' shoes with their major chunk of a heel have black-tipped 'outgrowths' rising up from the upper part and back down the heel. They are a loose homage to Ettore Sottsass – think his 1970s 'Ultrafragola' lamp – and were a highlight during Paris fashion week. Available this autumn, €1,185, [www.pierrehardy.com](http://www.pierrehardy.com)

03

## FASHION FORWARD

My first stop on the Salone circuit this month will be Prada's show space at via Fogazzaro 36 for the unveiling by Rem Koolhaas of the new 12-piece furniture collection by OMA for Knoll. Our appetite was well and truly whetted in January, when maquettes of the line were first teased in OMA's 'ideal house' set for Prada's A/W 2013 menswear show. Check [Wallpaper.com](http://Wallpaper.com) for up-to-date images and original drawings.

04



## TOTEM OFFERING

Crafted from faux tortoiseshell acetate, a material normally used for glasses, Jean-Baptiste Fastrez's 'Totem' console will form part of the OK group show at Galerie Kreo until 11 May. It's hard to believe he only graduated from ENSCI/Les Ateliers de Paris three years ago. €12,000, 31 rue Dauphine, Paris 6e, tel: 33.1 53 10 23 00, [www.galeriekreo.com](http://www.galeriekreo.com)

**MILAN MUST-SEES**  
My essential stops at this year's Salone del Mobile

Aldo Bakker for Particles Gallery at Ventura Lambrate

Azucena's new digs at via Manzoni 23

Ceccotti Collezioni at the Fiera and at via Pisoni 2

ÉCAL's show at via dell'Orso 16

Edit by Design Junction at via Palermo 10

Flos by Michael Anastassiades in Corso Monforte 15

Jean Nouvel's project Office For Living at the Fiera

Minotti by Rodolfo Dordoni at the Fiera

Molteni by Ron Gilad at the Fiera