

THE VINSON VIEW

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



01 All change

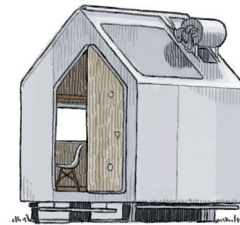
Checking out Aman Resorts' recent openings

I first visited Amanpuri in Phuket in 1995 as a guest of a guest. Some time passed before I could afford more than an Aman meal, but after checking in at Amangiri, Utah, as a paying guest, there was no turning back – nothing else would do. Soon after, I popped into Aman New Delhi, Amankora in Bhutan, and Amanpulo in the Philippines. I guess I'm far from being a fully fledged Aman-junkie, but kind of heading that way.

Amanpuri is a magical place, all the more desirable as it's almost impossible to book over Christmas, as villa owners generally tend to visit then. Rumour has it that, of the original 32 private villas, set apart from the main resort, only one has changed hands in 25 years. Those 31 seem to be attached to their share of paradise and, no doubt, to the exceptional returns from the rental pool. Recently, an additional 14 villas were built on adjoining land, surely a good thing? Well, the thing about an Aman resort is that even during 100 per cent occupancy, it never feels full, yet at New Year the modestly sized beach was packed with loungers side by side, three or four rows deep, with barely an inch of

pristine white sand between them. The new villas have between six and ten bedrooms and range from 3,500 to 8,000 sq m. It seems that the unique selling point is size and size alone. The master bedroom of the one I visited was so vast that it was charmless; the courtyard pool was exquisite but overlooked by another villa on the hill above, so hardly private.

Over in Venice, during the Biennale, I visited the new Aman Canal Grande, in the 16th-century Palazzo Papadopoli. An 18-month restoration has returned the sparkle, yet less time and thought has gone into the furnishings. These were almost entirely Maxalto, which is one of the best suppliers of contract furniture for hotels, such as that for the Bulgari Milan and London, designed by Antonio Citterio, and the Barcelona Mandarin Oriental, designed by Patricia Urquiola. But while Citterio and Urquiola custom-designed the Maxalto furniture for these hotels, in Venice, the black-stained oak veneer of the tabletops, and chrome shine of the chair legs were standard catalogue. It just didn't quite seem special enough for this brand or its new Italian casa. www.amanresorts.com



02

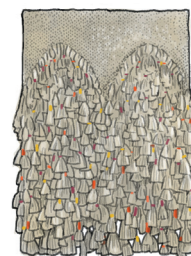
Small world

During Art Basel, Vitra presented the Diogene, a mini minimalist house by Renzo Piano. It can be transported by truck or helicopter to all sorts of far away locations; is entirely self-sufficient in terms of water and energy; and is so well planned and fitted out, it shows that size is far from everything. www.vitra.com

03

Show time

Giorgio Armani has opened up his Tadao Ando-designed Teatro Armani in Milan to a new generation of young Italian talent. First to make use of the world-class facilities this June was Andrea Pompilio, the promising Milan-based menswear designer, who had the privilege to hold his S/S 2014 show there. www.armani.com; www.andreapompilio.it



04

Finding the thread

Three outstanding wall hangings by leading textile artist Sheila Hicks (W*145) made an appearance at New York gallery Demisch Danant's stand at Design Miami/Basel. This one, *Double Prayer Rug*, 1970, made of silk, linen, cotton and gold thread, was the stand-out. www.demischdanant.com

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS FROM DESIGN MIAMI/BASEL

Christopher Côme's 'Yellow Lava' cabinet at Cristina Grajales Gallery

Giò Ponti's papier-maché mirrors at Nilufar

Hella Jongerius' 'Niebla' and 'Dragon Fly' tables at Galerie Kreo

The breakfast at the Krafft Basel Hotel

Anton Alvarez's 'Thread Wrapping Machine' lamps, benches and chairs at Gallery Libby Sellers

Philippe Malouin's table lamp, crafted from layers of black MDF, at Project B Gallery

Kanye West's impromptu listening party for his upcoming album *Yeezus*, complete with Rick Owens furniture