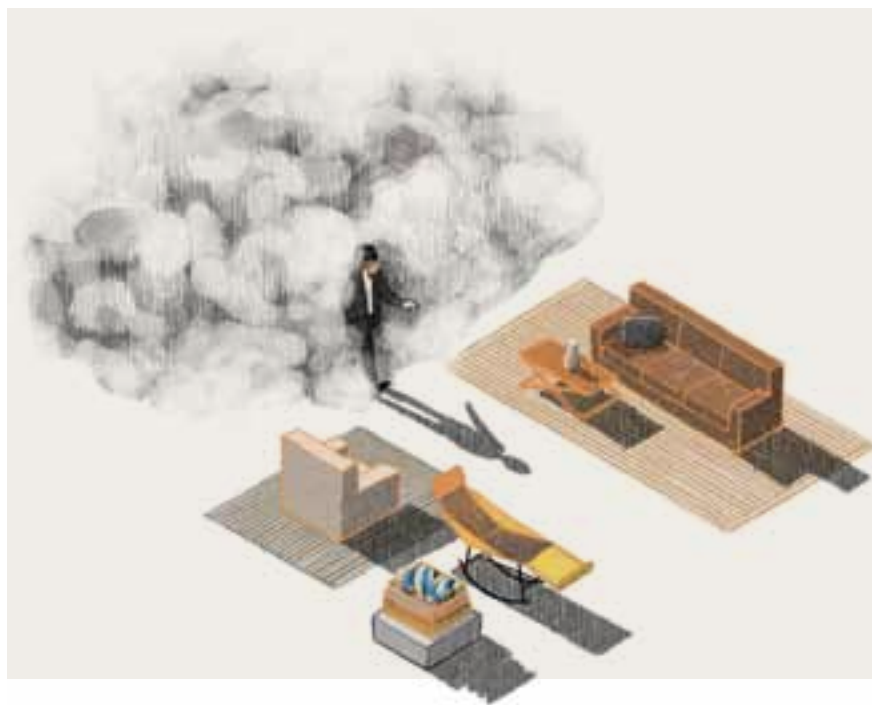


THE VINSON VIEW

Quality maniac and master shopper Nick Vinson on the who, what, when, where and why



FASHION BRANDS' HOME HIGHLIGHTS ON OFFER AT SALONE 2014

Loro Piana for carpets and textiles for fellow quality maniacs, by appointment at the showroom, via Bigli 19

Bottega Veneta, which only shows every two years, at its Milan HQ, via Privata Ercole Marelli 6. Its offer includes collaborations with Poltrona Frau and KPM

Hermès, which presents new lighting by Michele De Lucchi and Yann Kersalé, alongside pieces by Rena Dumas and Jean-Michel Frank re-editions, at Palazzo Serbelloni, Corso Venezia 16

Emilio Pucci's tie-up with Bisazza, at via Senato 2, and the latest from its ongoing collaboration with Cappellini, which began in 2001 with the 'Rive Droite' armchair by Patrick Norguet, at the Rho fairground

Kvadrat and Raf Simons' upholstery textile collection (W*180), which gets its second showing, at Spotti boutique, viale Piave 27

New versions of Verner Panton's 1969 'CloverLeaf' seating, reproduced expressly for Prada in tones of velvet, which are on show (but sadly not for sale) at the Prada store at via Montenapoleone 8

01 Milan's breath of fresh air

There's a right way for fashion brands to do furniture

For me, this month's Salone del Mobile, 8-13 April, means six full days of pounding the cobbled streets and courtyards of Milan and the carpeted pavilions of the Rho exhibition centre. My packed schedule will include around 20 stops that fill me with a mix of dread and delight, possibly in equal measure: appointments to preview furniture and home collections from fashion houses.

In some cases, when arriving at a stand or in a showroom, the first thing that hits you is semi-asphyxiation thanks to the heady chemical odours of layers of lacquer atop MDF, synthetic coatings on 'leather' furniture and all sorts of other added-on gloss. The shiny, logo-embossed creations on show are brimming with rather obvious 'signature' brand touches. A sofa, say, can be reduced down to a mere commodity by exploiting brands' house codes. Such products are perhaps attractive to entry-level tastes and, one assumes, focused a little too much towards emerging markets.

But it's far from all bad. Visit me at home and you'll find a 'Pippa' folding console by Rena Dumas for Hermès; a bed covered in Loro Piana vicuña; piles of alpaca blankets from Agnona; towels from Pucci and Hermès; cushions from Bottega Veneta; and a unique and rather naïf garden rocking chair from Marni. Each and every piece

is first class and proves that excellence in interiors is possible from the fashion industry.

Textiles made from noble fibres form the backbone to Loro Piana's business in both fashion and interiors, as is the case for Agnona, which produces few but arguably some of the best blankets around. Etro and Missoni's rich pattern heritages translate very well into the home environment, while Hermès uses the very same leathers and skins for its famed bags as it does to cover a sofa by Jean-Michel Frank, whose pieces are re-edited in the brand's home collection.

Some have all the cross-disciplinary skills they need, as is the case for Raf Simons, couturier at Christian Dior and of his own namesake label. His new collection of textiles for Kvadrat is exemplary and, although previewed in London (and in W*180), it gets a Milan outing this month.

Where the house know-how does not extend into the home category, the wise join forces. Bottega Veneta teamed up with Poltrona Frau to produce its seating and with Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur for its porcelain. Meanwhile, Emilio Pucci will present act three of its collaboration with furniture maker Cappellini this year. Such cross-fertilisation with experts serves to validate entrée into the world of interiors. My manifesto when it come to Milan's fashion and furniture: do it well or not at all. ★

02

Steely stuff

Also in Milan, see Georg Jensen vessels for water, oil, sugar and salt get the Aldo Bakker treatment in stainless steel at Spazio Rossana Orlandi, via Matteo Bandello.



03

Open doors

Vincenzo De Cotiis' new Galleria De Cotiis opens during Salone, at Carlo de Cristoforis 14, Milan, where he will present new works under his Progetto Domestico label.

