

THE VINSON VIEW

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



OTHER UNIQUE BREAKFAST LOCATIONS

Stefania, Florence

The one *pasticceria* that competes with Marchesi for my pastry affections. As at Marchesi, the pastries are made on the premises. *via Guglielmo Marconi 26*

The Oyster Inn, Waiheke Island

Chef Cristian Hossack serves up Kiwi-grown produce, the best savouries and fresh juices. *124 Ocean View Road, Oneroa*

Farmshop at Brentwood Country Mart, LA

Breakfast crafted California-style using the best domestic ingredients, with the added benefit of tables outside under a constant blue sky. *225 26th Street*

Hotel Thoumieux, Paris

In the splendid décor by India Mahdavi and M/M Paris, Jean-François Piège serves up a proper treat. For hotel guests only. *79 rue Saint-Dominique, 7e*

Chiltern Street Firehouse, London

Chef Nuno Mendez's brunch menu ticks all the boxes, providing you are lucky enough to secure a table. *One Chiltern Street, W1*

01 Heritage beverage

The noble Milanese *pasticceria* is going global

If I am in Milan, which is often, chances are any given morning I will visit Marchesi, the *pasticceria cum caffè* in via Santa Maria alla Porta. Founded in 1824, it operates out of a frescoed double-fronted building dating from 1770, in a smart neighbourhood a brisk five-minute walk from the Park Hyatt Hotel. I skip the hotel's well-rounded breakfast offer for the classic Italian caffè and brioche. I've been going to Marchesi for 15 years, as its delicious coffee is served in a cup and saucer of the best possible form, its wide and low bowl the perfect proportion for taste, look and feel. The brioche, which is *produzione propria* (meaning made on the premises) is, in my opinion, among the best in the city, with its caked-on baked sugar or layers filled with sweet fruit.

The interior is unchanged since forever, there's standing room only and the staff come with loads of personality, as do the chic customers, who descend on the café in waves. Yet the baristas still manage to juggle their orders with such speed and skill that I wonder what the point is of the queues for coffee in the UK and US.

Until now I always expected Mr Marchesi senior to pass on the running of the place, whenever he is ready, to the next generation of the Marchesi clan, as is the Italian tradition. But then Prada just announced it has bought 80 per cent of the

business. I am sure, however, that Signora Prada and Signore Bertelli are not going to mess with my breakfast. They'll know the baking must be undertaken on the premises, by a dedicated team that starts work each morning at 5am. I'll expect to see a new branch soon in Milan's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, as Prada recently took the lease on an entire quadrant, where as well as retail it will be providing a restaurant, a café and exhibition spaces for the Fondazione Prada.

Interestingly enough, Marchesi is not the only historic Milanese café or restaurant to expand. Bice, another of my regular haunts in the city (for broccoli rather than brioche), has, in addition to the Milan original, nine locations in the US, four in Mexico, three in Dubai, three in Kuwait, plus outposts in Buenos Aires, Madrid, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Johannesburg and Tokyo. Having sampled the food in Palm Beach, I won't be rushing to the rest. However, this hasn't dampened my enthusiasm for the original. Sant'Ambroeu has five locations in the US, and Cova, which recently became part of LVMH, already has two Tokyo locations, four in Shanghai, ten in Hong Kong and, rather oddly, several cafés aboard Celebrity Cruises liners.

I am slightly puzzled by the 'Oatmeal mousse with Baileys', referred to as 'an Italian classic cake' on the Shanghai menu. Perhaps something got lost in translation. ★

02

Studio lines

Publisher of contemporary design products Thomas Eyck opens his first store in Kerstraat 163, Amsterdam. The 140 sq m unit opens in May with works by Studio Maarten Kolk & Guus Kusters (see above), Dick van Hoff, RaR and Irma Boom.



03

Uomo at the Duomo

In June, Pitti Uomo celebrates 60 years with a line-up of Florence-born brands, like Gucci, Salvatore Ferragamo and Emilio Pucci (see its Duomo print, above), making it a tough call between this event and the concurrent Art Basel and Design Miami/Basel.