

# THE VINSON VIEW

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



## THE ART OF COMPLAINING WELL

Don't waste your time talking to the wrong people. I picked up the 'go away and bring me someone who knows' mantra from Wallpaper\* Italy editor-at-large JJ Martin.

Never shout, never swear and always be polite. Rudeness won't help at all.

Don't complain while you're wound up. It's way better to be calm so you can be concise and clear in your message.

E-mail is efficient; you avoid being put on hold, plus you won't have to explain everything slowly to someone on the other end of the phone.

If you must call, take advantage of the fact that almost all calls are now recorded.

Never complete a customer service survey unless you really care about the business or brand, or they're paying you.

Remember service improvement is the goal.

Don't waste too much time. If it's a dead loss, give up, move on and take your money somewhere else.

If you don't get anywhere take to Twitter. Big global businesses monitor any negative tweets 24 hours a day.

## 01 Now that's good service

How to ensure you never need to complain again

Arriving at the fairground for this year's Salone del Mobile, armed with my brand new Red Card – giving fast-track access for VIPs and selected press – I was thrilled to find dedicated turnstiles and check-in desks. Flying through the entry process gave me more time with the exhibitors. While I can't take total credit for this improvement, my dinner date some six months earlier was Claudio Luti, president of Cosmit, who runs the fair. I told him how painful it had been to get into the fair in 2013, when I arrived at the east door, with no press desk in sight and around one kilometre to walk to the south door to get help.

Of course, you won't always have the ear of the boss, but there's a fine art to complaining. It's essential to think about why you are doing it. Do you really care or are you just pissed off? It's so much easier just to walk away, save your breath and take your business elsewhere. Complaining well is time consuming and almost like giving out free advice. I won't bother unless the business in question is one that I want to (or must) return to. I've had issues at Chateau Marmont in LA, the Park Hyatt in Milan and the Standard in New York, yet they listen and learn, so I go back and we all win.

Twitter is a new tool for some pretty swift action. Brands like to protect their

reputation, and a complaint tweeted is a complaint dealt with. I learnt this having suffered tedious and tacky piano playing spoiling an otherwise perfect evening in the garden at the Four Seasons in Florence. My tweet was replied to within minutes and the hotel was soon in touch. The same happened with Singapore Airlines. When I boarded one of their 'vintage' jets in Auckland there wasn't a single flat bed in sight. But they were falling over themselves for the rest of the journey to make up for letting their reputation down.

Constructive criticism gets you much more than angry ranting, and it's so satisfying when things improve. When I returned to London from Milan recently, my luggage failed to arrive. Before I even left the airport, British Airways help-desk messages started to ping on my mobile with the first of many updates – arriving all day – until I had a call from a driver who was happy to be diverted to a local restaurant that same night, and deliver me my bags, all without my making a single phone call or being put on hold even once. On another occasion, I arrived without bags in a Beijing hotel for a long weekend. There I was contacted by a woman who introduced herself and said: 'My job today is to make sure you fly with British Airways again.' Needless to say, she did and I do. ★



## 02

### Home comforts

A year after being rescued by Gucci, Richard Ginori, the Florentine porcelain manufacturer established in 1735, reopens the doors of its flagship store in Florence's via Rondinelli 17r. If all goes to plan we could see some Gucci tableware in 2015.



## 03

### Top flock

The crowd pleaser at Milan's Salone was Marni's Animal House, a mix of collectable Columbian-made donkeys, giraffes, ostriches, rabbits, ducks and flamingoes.