

THE VINSON VIEW

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



WHERE TO GET HELP FOR YOUR HELP

Louis Vuitton

The brand offers training in the art of packing - to maximise space and ensure everything comes out crease-free and ready to wear - by appointment from its stores. louisvuitton.com

John Lobb

In store and by appointment at home, John Lobb provides lessons in how to look after your shoes (including how a little chilled water makes all the difference to a deep shine). johnlobb.com

Your favourite hotel

Like the way your shirts are returned sharp and flat in all the right places? For a regular client, hotels can address all sorts of pressing matters.

Christie's

Specialists from Christie's can offer informal, tailored advice on cleaning, maintaining and storing your purchase. christies.com

Moshe Tabibnia

The leading dealer in antique textiles will provide tips on care, plus museum-quality restoration and conservation facilities. moshetabibnia.com

Galerie Kreo

All purchases come with maintenance sheets for clients and their staff. galeriekreo.fr

01 Help for the help

Why butler boot camp is the key to domestic bliss

As regular readers of this column can probably tell, I like really good stuff – so it will be no surprise to know I am rather fussy when it comes to other people taking care of it. Call me Picky Nicky, and call these first-world problems, but entrusting your home, its contents and your wardrobe to someone else to clean and maintain is a constant worry.

That is, until I met Annalisa Gabrieli Falcone in Milan, a trained *maggiordomo*, or butler, and a member of the Italian Butlers' Association. Aside from her role in managing an important Milanese household, she trains domestic staff in how to launder, iron, set the table, cook, take care of collectable furniture, and clean art, couture gowns and bespoke suits – basically, high-end housekeeping. Off she goes, with a flock under her wing, to meet the masters of art-world cleaning and conservation and be taught what and what not to do. Our house is hardly wall-to-wall Pistoletto and Picasso, but this was music to my ears.

For the lucky household that gets to hire her full time, Falcone typically spends 15 full immersion days on site, observing and auditing, before producing a 'book of standards' for the property and beginning the serious training. Having spent some of the past 15 years being entertained at the Italian homes of leading architects,

designers and entrepreneurs, I now know why everything is so perfectly arranged.

As a Wallpaper* reader, you too are likely to surround yourself with refined stuff, and you probably want to keep it in the best possible order. How do you stop someone damaging your Galerie Kreo-made Pierre Charpin mirror, or your museum-quality console picked up at Design Miami? What about changing the bulb in your custom-made Vincenzo De Cotiis lamp? And it's not just about the high-ticket items – sometimes those €10 vintage finds need as much care, as they are just as irreplaceable. All this can be and must be taught. Love your Lobb shoes? Then your maid-cleaner-housekeeper can be trained, as mine was by John Lobb, in the correct way to clean and nourish your shoes. Travel every other week for work and need to look good? Someone can learn, at Louis Vuitton, the art of packing (Monsieur Vuitton himself was a professional packer for 16 years before moving into making trunks in 1854). Never underestimate the difference a well-packed bag means for arriving and staying smart.

Enquiring around, it seems you only have to ask and someone is there to give advice – most often informally. It may sound overly grand, but for Picky Nicky, help for the help is a no-brainer. ★ www.maggiordomi.it



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Milan gallery watch

OMA's Fondazione Prada exhibition space (above) opens in April in Largo Isarco, while Armani Silos, a museum/archive, opens in a via Bergognone former grain store in June.



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Air space

Etihad Airways' Residences, on its new fleet of Airbus A380s, feature a living room, double bedroom, ensuite shower and a dedicated butler. www.etihad.com