

# THE VINSON VIEW

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



## WHAT TO INSTALL AT HOME

**Sonos**  
The Sonos music system is best installed near your router, out of sight and connected to built-in speakers, zoned throughout the house. You can control music, radio and other digital streaming via your smartphone. [sonos.com](http://sonos.com)

**Nest**  
The Learning Thermostat adapts to your habits and cuts back on wasted energy. Protect is a smoke and carbon monoxide detector that keeps you informed via an app. It also doubles as a motion-sensing night light. [nest.com](http://nest.com)

**Trufig**  
A range of flush-fitted products designed by Patrick McInerney, including sockets, switches, data jacks and speakers, reduces the usual wall and ceiling clutter to a mere whisper. [trufig.com](http://trufig.com)

**Lutron**  
Set up the automated light control system in your out-of-sight data centre, then change the settings by smartphone. [lutron.com](http://lutron.com)

**Siedle**  
With Siedle's Scope video entry phone and app, you can answer the door from anywhere, and control shutters and external lights. [siedle.com](http://siedle.com)

## 01 Wireless without tears

However swish the home tech, it's the support line that counts

The newly completed apartment I share with my husband in London's Marylebone runs on Wi-Fi, thanks to our Chipperfield-trained architect, Patrick McInerney. He is based in San Diego, and introduced us to quite a few Californian gadgets. The Sonos music system (from Santa Barbara) is hidden away in our 'data centre' (we didn't need one till Patrick put it on the plans) and is wirelessly connected to the flush speakers he designed for Trufig (from San Clemente). There are two Nest Learning Thermostats (from Palo Alto; they won a Wallpaper\* Design Award in 2012 after they launched in the US, and are now available in the UK), four Protect smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, also from Nest, and an Apple TV (from Cupertino) fitted behind the Loewe TV (actually from Kronach, Germany). These products all look great and can be controlled from our Apple smartphones at home or away.

It's a shame that all Nest installers aren't Silicon Valley natives. The one the company sent us admitted he couldn't operate his smartphone, then took one look at our underfloor heating and fled. Our electrician took on the job with gusto and, once it was connected, the Learning Thermostat's flawless self-set-up left us in awe. The Protect made us laugh when a woman's voice announced seductively she was 'ready

in the bedroom'; it was only slightly less funny when we moved on to the kitchen.

This state-of-the-art gadgetry is all very well provided you have a great router. Shortly after installation, the Sonos music system failed, followed by all four Nest Protects, then the two Nest Learning Thermostats and the Apple TV, while the Hewlett-Packard printer (also from Palo Alto) refused to connect with the computer (Cupertino). After around 15 phone calls, over a couple of weeks, to the various technical support lines (average length around 30 to 40 minutes), one clever chap from Sonos, called Yvain Barraud, identified that the issue was with our router. Once it was replaced by something superior, all the devices worked fine.

Speed and ease of use are now a given for most contemporary technology. Indeed, our expectations for functionality are so high, we become instantly agitated if something doesn't work first time. When calling technical support, we are already annoyed, frustrated, even angry. When you get the right help fast, admiration for brand and product returns and remains; if you get a not-quite-up-to-the-mark adviser (and, trust me, I have), the pain is severe. In this purchase-online and in-cloud-we-trust era, technical support may be our only real contact with a brand. It must deliver a superior service to match the level of its fantastic products. ★



## 02 On my radar

Gucci releases its new home collection very soon, and I'll be hoping to find tableware in 'Flora' (above), the house's famous pattern introduced in 1996.



## 03 New design dream teams

Look out for ceramics by Scholten & Baijings (top and left) with Emilio Pucci; a Michael Anastassiades (right) project with silversmith Puiforcat; and Aldo Bakker's (front) furniture for Karakter and porcelain for Lyngby.