

THE VINSON VIEW

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



NICK'S MILANESE MUST-DOS

Eat *pappardella al telefono*, a creamy tomato sauce and melted cheese pasta dish, at Bice.

Sip an Aperol Spritz at the Armani Hotel's rooftop bar and take in the view.

Visit the Studio Achille Castiglioni on Piazza Castello, to see where the master worked.

Browse Massimo Alba's store in via Brera - understatement has never looked so good.

Shop for the best wooden furniture Italy can produce, at Ceccotti Collezioni.

Take a wet shave at a traditional barber, worth it for the piles of steaming hot towels alone.

Step back in time into the Afra and Tobia Scarpa-designed San Lorenzo silversmith's, and admire the masterpieces on display.

Try a *caffè shakerato* (iced espresso) from Pasticceria Cucchi, Cova or Sant'Ambroeus for a cheery and frothy mid-afternoon pick up.

Visit the post-war part of the Cimitero Monumentale to see tombs and monuments by BBPR, Lucio Fontana and other masters.

Stock up on a kilo or two of *pecorino sardo*, shrink-wrapped for taking home, from Peck.

01 Milan on a mission

As it hosts the Universal Expo, Italy's second city is first rate

Milan is generally considered less of a draw than, say Rome, Florence or Venice and, yes, superficially it may not be quite so breathtaking. But it's a city full of richness and plenty of post-war gorgeousness. As a lot of its treasures are hidden from view, you must step inside its courtyards and go through its lobbies for the full reveal. Those who call it home are super hospitable, and I can't fault my favourite haunts, including the Park Hyatt hotel, Pasticceria Marchesi and Bice restaurant. Dominated by single-brand stores, Milan's retail scene boasts the best stock around, while the lesser-known, multi-brand shops, such as Antonia, Milan's number-one tastemaker, are exceptional.

This May the Universal Exhibition comes to town. While the collections of downmarket 'design' souvenirs I've noticed and my memories of crowds and queues at Shanghai 2010 put me off, overall, the Expo effect is positive and will keep Milan thriving even after it ends in October.

Notable launches in the city during May include the 11,000 sq m Fondazione Prada, located in a 1910 distillery transformed by Rem Koolhaas' AMO. With a permanent collection, temporary exhibitions, a store, a cinema and a Wes Anderson-designed bar, it is set to become a world-class arts centre. Giorgio Armani, meanwhile, will unveil his 4,500 sq m Armani Silos in the Tortona

area. The 1950s grain store, originally built for Nestlé, will house a museum, archives, an auditorium, a library, a bookstore and a café. Opening next door, the Città delle Culture by David Chipperfield will be the new home of the Centre for Advanced Studies of Visual Art, the Centre of Non-European Cultures and the New Archaeological Museum.

On the retail front, Richard Ginori, the Florentine porcelain maker, opens in mid-April in Piazza San Marco, while Bottega Veneta has recently launched its very first boutique dedicated to homeware and furniture, in a palazzo complete with fading frescoes in via Borgospesso. Later in April, Marchesi, recently acquired by Prada, is to open a *pasticceria* in via Montenapoleone, as well as a restaurant above the Prada store in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, currently looking its best thanks to the 35,000 hours that have been spent buffing the Baveno granite and Viggiù and Vicenza stone.

Where else can you fly into an airport, get through it in five minutes, hop into a cab and be checked in at your hotel 15 minutes later, get a table at a top restaurant without booking weeks or months in advance, drink excellent coffee for €1, eat gelato for €1.50, have your purchases delivered to your hotel free of charge (a sort of pre e-commerce service) and practically walk everywhere? Expo or no Expo, I love Milan. ★



02

Furry friend

This autumn, look out for Fur 4 Fans, a new line of fun, affordable furs from Marni's producer, Ciwifurs. This parka is lined in checkered Kalgan lambskin. ciwifurs.com



03

Prime mover

Tomas Maier's eponymous fashion label is soon to open a second New York store, on Bleecker Street, and another in Miami's Bal Harbour. tomasmaier.com