

THE VINSON VIEW

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



THE BEST OF A/W 2015 COUTURE WEEK

A new start for Schiaparelli
Bertrand Guyon's well-received debut for Schiaparelli, the house founded by Elsa Schiaparelli in Paris, 1927. schiaparelli.com

Giambattista Valli's anniversary
It's ten years since Giambattista Valli set up on his own, his independence as rare as his brand's youth in this arena. Valli's talent lies in exquisite, customer-focused collections that are winners with the media too. giambattistavalli.com

Maison Margiela's Artisanal collection
It was great to see John Galiano back, doing what he does best and getting the right kind of attention for his craft. maisonmargiela.com

A Miu Miu takeover
Miu Miu hijacked the start of the week with its cruise collection show, the launch of its fancily packaged first perfume and a one-night-only AMO-designed Miu Miu Club - absolutely not couture but certainly high impact. miumiui.com

Lesage lessons
Invited to take embroidery lessons at the École Lesage one morning. I managed to get the pearls to stay on - but let's just say I won't be working on any Chanel orders quite yet. ecolelesage.fr

01 Some like it haute

Picky Nicky finds perfection in couture creativity

My personal passion for all things fine and refined means I am naturally very drawn to haute couture. Perfection in construction, flawlessness in fit, precious and unique raw materials, unparalleled workmanship, extraordinary handwork – and, above all, the skills required of tailors and seamstresses in couture workshops to execute the artistic gestures of the designers. It's this relationship that was so well illustrated in this year's movie *Dior and I*, directed by Frédéric Tcheng (see W*192).

So off I went to Paris this July, to see the highest of high fashion, and what the really fortunate get to wear this season (unlike everything else in this fashion issue, couture is on a see, order and wear as-soon-as-the-last-hand-stitch-is-done kind of timing).

My first show was Dior, held in a purpose-built 'cathedral to couture' in the grounds of the Rodin Museum. Used for less than one day, the decadent construction (illustrated above) featured 356 glass panels, hand-painted with pointillist brush strokes and suspended on metal scaffolding above a lilac astroturf floor. Executed by Dior's virtuoso craftsmen, the breathtakingly beautiful dresses and coats were inspired by the paintings of Flemish old masters, as well as impressionists and pointillists. Despite the historical references, you don't get much more modern than Raf Simons,

who just has a knack of starting in the past and arriving the day after tomorrow.

Another modernist with an encyclopaedic knowledge of history is Karl Lagerfeld, who not only presented Chanel couture, but also Fendi's first Haute Fourrure collection. Shown on stage at the splendid Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the show's 36 looks were later displayed on mannequins in the lobby, so the entire audience could get up close and inspect the work. Mink, sable, lynx, fox and Persian lamb fur was reshaped and adorned with feathers and embroidery in a manner that's never been seen before. I enjoyed the Roman one-upmanship over Paris.

In a way, shopping for couture is like furnishing your home with gallery editions (pieces like the 'Swatch' coffee table by Hella Jongerius from Galerie Kreo, crafted from walnut and resin mosaics). There is the same fetish-like approach to zero-compromise creativity and the opportunity to acquire work that can't be industrially replicated.

And just as some of the best limited-edition furniture ends up collected like trophies, competing and clashing with everything else in the room, some couture clients, sadly, end up rather overdressed. But creativity always wins in the end: some of the most exquisite details at Dior were the hand-pleated linings inside the great coats, made for the private pleasure of their wearers only.★



02

House of fur

This cape from Fendi's new Haute Fourrure collection is made from individually cut tiles of black and white mink that have been hand-sewn together. fendi.com



03

Rule the roost

Sargadelos' fine ceramics have rarely been available outside Spain. WallpaperSTORE* now stocks a great selection, including this 'Cock GG1'. £211. store.wallpaper.com