

# THE VINSON VIEW

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



## A FEW PERSONAL PREFERENCES - OR HOW TO KEEP PICKY NICKY HAPPY

- I detest food served on square plates.
- I hate nylon tea bags, and strong tea so please bring the leaves and the hot water.
- Print-at-home tickets should be advert-free.
- Give me a real receipt, not an email.
- I don't want to do your printing for you.
- Don't interrupt my online visit with a survey.
- If I come back for the third time, I like the place so treat me well.
- I hate air conditioning, so seat me away from it and keep it off in my room.
- I value peace and quiet more than anything, so give me a quiet room.
- It's highly unlikely anyone knows what I like more than I do, so bear that in mind.
- Only Hermès' Véronique Nichanian and Berluti's Alessandro Sartori know how to dress me better than I do.
- I am impossible to please with gifts, so just go to [store.wallpaper.com](http://store.wallpaper.com) - I chose everything there.

## 01 Just the way I like it

Picky Nicky takes control of his preferences

If you think about it, 'managing your preferences' is a slightly odd concept, full of potential, but in reality a big disappointment and just a tool for brands to send you marketing emails and sell your data to other parties, whose products or services you are unlikely to be interested in.

I use British Airways at least twice a month and always choose to sit in the same seat, yet I am consistently allocated one nearby and have to reselect it myself, a sign of preferences ignored. I once asked the purser in charge of my cabin what her iPad said about me; all she could see was that I am a gold executive club member, my points status, plus my last and next flight - bare and basic information, which was not much use to the crew or me.

If I walk into Fischer's in London's Marylebone, Marchesi in Milan or Pasticceria Stefania in Florence - three of my usual breakfast haunts - they all know how I like my coffee. Sure, it's easy enough for me to order it, but my preference has been noted and my repeat custom is clearly valued. When I check into the Hotel Thoumieux in Paris or the Park Hyatt Milan, they have cleared the room of robes, brought in extra hangers, added a blanket and turned off the TV and the AC for me. However, when I visited the new Park Hyatt New York for the first time, they knew none

of this, nor the rest of my preferences that have been picked up and noted by the Milan team over the past 12 years. The good news is that Hyatt is in the process of implementing a new guest experience management system that will allow better sharing of local information about good clients from one property to another.

Oddly enough, things are not much more evolved online, although they should be - all the information is there if you know how to read it. The first advertisement that popped up on my Instagram feed was for McDonald's - needless to say, Picky Nicky does not do Big Macs, yet everything about my tastes and interests is right there in my feed and posts. Thread.com, a new men's shopping site, promises: 'With the help of Thread's algorithm, your stylist is going to choose from thousands of items to find clothes you'll love'. After setting up my profile, I was allocated a stylist. Her very prominent nose ring made me nervous as to what she might suggest, perhaps a sign that I am not quite their target age group, but the concept seems interesting.

For those brands I use that simply won't take note of my preferences, perhaps it's time I took charge. I need to volunteer my likes, dislikes and choices (I've made a start above), proactively offering them up. My preferences, not theirs. ✱



## 02

### Utilitarian luxe

Designer Lorenza Bozzoli takes the classic jar, upgrades glass for Carrara and Marquina marble and adds a swanky brass closure. *'Miss Marble' jar, €225, [store.wallpaper.com](http://store.wallpaper.com)*



## 03

### First class

Moynat's 'Mosaïque' notebooks and travel accessories come with charming renders of automobiles crafted in a marquetry technique. *Notebook, £450, [moynat.com](http://moynat.com)*