

# THE VINSON VIEW

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



## BED FELLOWS

**Billerbeck**  
Pillows, cushions and duvets filled with Siberian, Icelandic or Arctic goose down and feathers.  
[billerbeck.info](http://billerbeck.info)

**Bettenrid**  
Custom-made pillows, duvets and cushions, filled with cashmere, camel hair, merino wool and down, as well as rare Icelandic eiderdown.  
[bettenrid.de](http://bettenrid.de)

**Hästens**  
The renowned handmade-bed firm uses the very best goose down to make duvets and pillows.  
[haestens.com](http://haestens.com)

**Frette**  
A bespoke service includes bed, bath and table linens. Look for Giza 1,000 thread count.  
[frette.com](http://frette.com)

**Peter Reed**  
A Lancashire-based company that has been making fine bedding since 1861.  
[peterreed.com](http://peterreed.com)

**Telerie Ghidoli**  
The place that insiders head to in Milan for custom-made sheets, duvets and pillows.  
[ghidoli.it](http://ghidoli.it)

## 01 Pillow talk

The only way is down for Picky Nicky

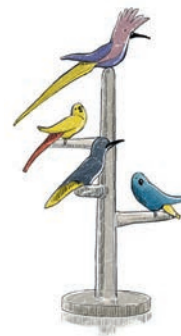
Necessity, not choice, led me to custom-made bedding. When I moved to Milan, I found that sizing in British and Italian beds and bedding was not standard, so I headed to Frette on via Manzoni, which had its own workshop on the premises, to make up my order. I was less bothered about trims, colours and monograms, the usual offer for bespoke bedding, instead focusing on fit and feel. Later, when my husband and I renovated our house in Florence and had a custom-built bed, I headed to Telerie Ghidoli. Despite being around since 1879, it's a Milanese secret (mainly due to its relocation away from the city centre), but the range of high thread count Egyptian cotton on offer in its workshop blew me away.

During a visit to Hotel Schloss-Elmau in the Bavarian Alps, I started getting serious about pillows. Its pillows were particularly large and dreamily soft, filled with Siberian, Icelandic or Arctic goose down and feathers from Billerbeck, a German company that has been making pillows and duvets for almost a century. My feather fascination was furthered at Bettenrid, in Munich, where a small team of smartly uniformed seamstresses produces duvets and pillows to order. Clients select the casings as well as the fillings, including cashmere, camel hair, merino wool and down, and the very

rare and elite eiderdown from Iceland. You can also choose the shape and size of your pillow or duvet, what filling or combination you want, and the density in grams, depending on your preference for firmness, softness or warmth.

The yucky bit is that some down and feathers are harvested from dead geese and ducks that have been raised and used for eggs, meat and foie gras. The materials can also be collected without harm during the moulting season, but birds are still live plucked, a cruel practice that is thankfully outlawed in Europe. So shop with care and ask questions.

When it comes to filling, nothing comes close to eiderdown. Only 2,500 kilos are produced each year in Iceland compared to the 8,000 kilos of vicuña flock, the noblest of all fibres, or the ten million or so kilos of, rather common, cashmere. Eiderdown regulates temperature and moisture better than anything else, and it's sustainable. Each June, the wild Arctic eider duck lines its nest with the down shed naturally from its underbelly (a bare belly, it seems, is better for keeping the eggs warm). Only once the ducklings are hatched and the ducks have returned to the sea, is the precious down, just 17g per nest, collected. When you consider that around 500g is required for one duvet, you'll understand why this appeals to Picky Nicky's quality maniacal tendencies. ★



## 02

### Birds of paradise

Matteo Thun's Birds of Eden collection, which comprises Murano glass birds on spherical bases or in a tree, makes delightful table centrepieces. [matteothun.com/atelier](http://matteothun.com/atelier)



## 03

### Beauty sleep

Tobia Scarpa's sublime 'Vanessa' bed, with its twisted lacquered metal frame, is now easier to come by since its manufacturer Simon was acquired by Cassina. [cassina.com](http://cassina.com)