

THE VINSON VIEW

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



WHEN PICKY NICKY JUDGED TOO SOON, ALMOST

Instagram

Despite the fact that I am presently obsessed with Instagram, the first time I was shown it, on a train from Milan to Florence, I failed to hook up. I was a little perplexed by the filters (which I never use), which were too gimmicky for me. My early adopter status was almost cancelled.

Azucena

The first time I went to check out the furniture brand, in its original Milan showroom, I peered through gaps in the opaque glass, could hardly see a thing and could not locate the hidden entrance. Luckily, I made myself return - the back catalogue really is treasure.

Hyatt Hotels

After staying in a large Hyatt property in Taipei, I vowed never to stay again. Until the company opened its first Park Hyatt, that is.

Wallpaper*

As a client, I bought pages in the very first Wallpaper*, earning my full early adopter stars. But when the founding editor left, I assumed it was doomed. Months later I joined the team as a Milan stringer; this year marks my 14th and we celebrate 20 years at the top of our game.

01 Picky Nicky's footwear epiphanies

It's not always love at first sight for our man and his loafers

In 1989, I went into Gucci to look at a pair of loafers - at the time a very cool shoe, from a majorly uncool brand. I seem to remember thinking all the rest of the merchandise and the store interior was laughably outdated and beyond hideous (although I would love to get my hands on that so-wrong-it's-right homeware now).

That was five full years before Tom Ford began shaking things up, making the brand sexy and the product desirable. After a recent lull, Gucci today is really hot once again with a major popularity surge under Alessandro Michelle's creative leadership, and I am back buying loafers.

Similarly, I used to dread appointments at Berluti - I just could not get my head around the tattooed and painted shoes. I had no idea then that Berluti would blossom into one of my Paris fashion show must-sees and to boot, a staple in my wardrobe. Picky Nicky is always right, but knows when he judged too soon.

I never really paid proper attention to Anya Hindmarch, despite one of her stores being next to my Sunday post-Pilates breakfast stop, Ottolenghi in London's Ledbury Road. I thought it was a perfectly good product, but I just wasn't bothered. Then I spotted a video on Instagram, at the time of Hindmarch's A/W14 show, called Counter Culture, where models pushed

supermarket trolleys to a soundtrack of a scanner's ping on a set built as a giant barcode. This was the launch of her 'Crisp Packet' handbag, all polished shiny metal like a portable Jeff Koons, and I really felt I had missed something. I had to learn more. By the A/W15 Diversion show, with its motorway set, catering by Little Chef and a finale that included the 100-strong London Gay Men's Chorus belting out *Pilgrims Chorus* by Wagner in high-visibility jackets, I was properly hooked. Flawless fashion theatre at its very best, yet a proper focus on product.

A visit to the Paris showroom to see the collection up close, plus the special windows at Antonia in Milan and Colette in Paris confirmed this was more than just catwalk antics. I think I may have smiled the most and applauded the loudest at Hindmarch's latest show (above), over the mink fried eggs, pixelated leather marquetry, winking smiley face pockets and the illuminated moving Rubik's Cube set.

I never dreamt I would pine over a pair of Berluti tattooed lace-ups, nor did I ever expect to consider a white sneaker with Hindmarch's yellow winking emoji on the back tab. But then, I never thought I'd be sporting Alessandro Michelle's shaggy kangaroo-lined Gucci snaffle loafers either. Footwear as a conversation starter has never felt quite so fun. *



02

Berluti thinks ink

Designer Alessandro Sartori worked with tattoo artist Scott Campbell to create five designs, inked on the house's signature Venezia leather with a laser. berluti.com



03

Hindmarch gives a wink

This white nappa tennis shoe is classic from the front until you spot the cheeky addition of the smiley emoji on the back tab. Wink as you walk. anyahindmarch.com