

THE VINSON VIEW

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



EDITION'S PLASTIC-FREE INITIATIVE

The Edition hotel group is already 90 per cent single-use plastic-free. Aiming to be 100 per cent single-use plastic-free by the end of 2018, it has taken the following measures:

Straws & lids

All plastic straws are being replaced with sustainable paper ones, while takeaway cups will soon come with a Naeco compostable lid.

Bathroom accessories

Toothbrushes are being switched from plastic to bamboo, and the group is now working on a solution to replace plastic amenities containers.

Water bottles

All plastic bottles in minibars will be removed this spring; water will be stored in Just Water paper cartons with sugarcane caps instead. Staff have been given reusable stainless steel bottles and access to water fountains.

Coasters

Also this spring, coasters at the London Edition will be made from recycled ocean plastic waste.

Food containers

Disposable food containers at the Miami Edition are shortly to be made from bamboo.

01 On the bottle

There's nothing fantastic about plastic, says Picky Nicky

Single-use plastic is just dumb. Since the 1950s, we've produced around 8.3bn tonnes of virgin plastic, according to a recent US survey, and of that, 6.3bn tonnes has been discarded as waste. We all got conned into believing it was recyclable, but in fact, less than ten per cent of that waste has been recycled, so instead it ends up floating in the sea or digested by marine life.

I have never been a fan of drinking water from a plastic bottle anyway; I much prefer a Lobmeyr muslin glass. Even more stupid is buying branded tap water in a plastic bottle; being served Evian or San Pellegrino water outside France or Italy (I have refused that as far away as Bali); or, most preposterous of all, buying water from Fiji exported in plastic bottles to more than 60 countries.

My husband Álvaro and I managed a plastic-free two-week road trip in Spain thanks to Sigg aluminium bottles that we refilled twice a day. When checking in to the Four Seasons' Surf Club in Miami in December, I had all the plastic bottles in the room replaced with glass jugs of filtered water replenished daily. They did the same at the Esencia in Mexico over Christmas, and served water in glasses on the beach (although I spotted my glass of 'fresh' *alo vera* juice was served from a plastic bottle, so I didn't order it again). I also take my water bottle on trains and, when flying,

fill it up in the lounge before boarding. It's actually easy to just say no.

There is also a worrying trend for polyamide teabags packed in individual plastic bags. I have spotted ugly Twinings packaging in the British Airways First Class lounge at Heathrow; some by Dammann Frères at the Park Hyatt Milan; and teabags by Betjeman & Barton at Marchesi. The Park Hyatt took note of my comments and within an hour I had fresh leaf tea and a pot in the room, while Marchesi promised to take my 'comments into consideration and forward them to our supplier'. I'm not sure how helpful that will be, as both Betjeman & Barton and Dammann Frères confirmed they use nylon and plastic, and then didn't reply to my subsequent messages for this piece. Why anyone would want to drink tea wrapped in a pair of tights is beyond me anyway. Løv Organic uses corn starch bags but seals them in 'metallised plastic', and Clipper's paper teabags are, for now, sealed with a polymer fibre (basically plastic). Opt for Robert Wilson's Ceylon Tea; it is single estate and plastic-free even when bagged.

The UK government has just pledged to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by 2042. That's 24 long years away, so let's hope bold businesses such as Edition Hotels (see above) and picky consumers can bring about change much quicker. ★



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Glass act

Drinking from plastic is incomparable with the pleasure of using an ultra-thin muslin glass such as the 'Alpha' tumbler, designed by Hans Harald Rath in 1952. lobmeyr.com



03

New leaves

This Yorkshire Grey tea with bergamot, mandarin oil and lavender was created by Lyn Harris of Perfumer H in collaboration with Postcard Teas. £15, perfumerh.com