

# THE VINSON VIEW

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



## HOTEL ROOM NO-NOS

Hotels should remove plastic-wrapped sewing kits and make a proper sewing box available on request, with a larger selection of buttons and threads.

Replace the plastic-stemmed cotton buds with ones with paper stems and put a few in a ceramic or wooden holder. They don't need to be sealed in plastic.

Yes, occasionally, clients need a toothbrush, but it does not have to be in plastic, and toothpaste can also come in recyclable metal tubes instead of plastic.

Clients can live without plastic showercaps.

Find a better way to serve water in the room – for example, filtered rather than bottled.

## 01 Less plastic, more fantastic

In a lather about hotel amenities, Picky Nicky demands a refill

When I checked into my room at the Park Hyatt Tokyo for the first time, in 2006, I got to sample Aesop skin and haircare products and have been using them ever since. I took the products home and continued to use the 50ml containers for a number of years, refilling them over and over when travelling.

The Four Seasons hotel group claims to have been the first to introduce complimentary in-room shampoo and other toiletries, inventing the hotel amenity as we know it today. The alternative – travelling with carry-on liquids – is challenging, but about the only thing I will use from a hotel's amenities now is a bar of soap or a refillable dispenser. Everything else is packaged in plastic and often disposed of partially used and replaced daily by housekeeping.

Once welcomed as perk for clients, the provision of amenities is now a bit of a headache for the hospitality sector. Hotels want to offer products that fit with their brand positioning. Recycled plastic is considered to lack a premium feel and glass is a health and safety risk, so something like PET (polyethylene terephthalate, a plastic widely used for packaging) is the easy option. It can be recycled, yes, but where reliable recycling infrastructure does not exist (think about the challenges in the Seychelles or the Philippines), the chances

of that happening are slight. In fact, only a quarter of the 8.3bn tonnes of virgin plastic produced since the 1950s has been recycled, leaving 6.3bn tonnes discarded as waste.

Most Aman properties provide amenities in ceramic containers that are cleaned and refilled and feel right on brand. My regular hotel in Paris, the India Mahdavi-designed Thoumieux, at least uses 500ml bottles by Aesop that are only replaced when empty. But many luxury hotels seem to feel that refillable vessels are contrary to good service; guests are fussy about cleanliness. I'd take that as a design challenge.

The Four Seasons and Aesop declined to speak to me for this piece. But ADA International, a leading maker of hotel amenities, produces for 22 brands, Hermès and Bulgari among them. It can fill around 63 million plastic bottles and dispensers a year (84 per cent made from PET). Consider that in Dubai alone 11.58 million tourists accounted for 21.89 million room nights in the first three quarters of 2018 and you see the problem is off the scale.

While hotels and their suppliers struggle to find a solution, they keep buying plastic. Clients need to take over. We need to reject these products, leave them unopened or, better still, take them down to the general manager and say you won't use them until they can offer something better. ★



## 02

### Pack it in no.1

Reject the plastic-soled hotel slippers and travel with a cashmere-lined, soft-grained leather pair by Alonpi Cashmere from Connolly. £260, [connollyengland.com](http://connollyengland.com)



## 03

### Pack it in no.2

These canvas washbags from Hermès come in three sizes (great for varying trip lengths) and pack flat when not needed. From £140, [hermes.com](http://hermes.com)