Wallpaper*

JUNE 2017

*THE STUFF THAT REFINES YOU

**LIMITED EDITION COVER
BY WILLIAM KLEIN**
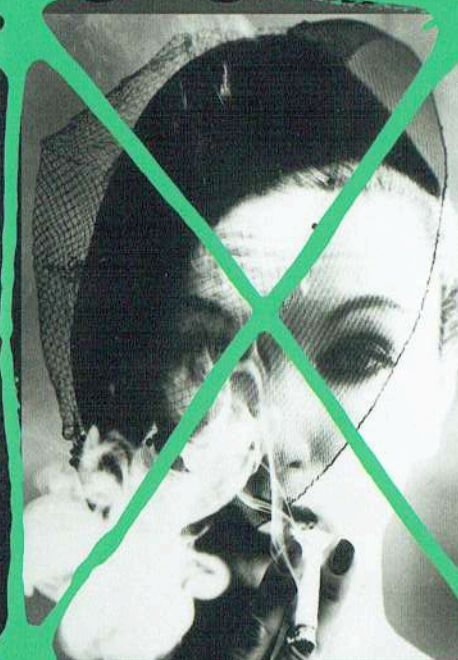
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EAST MAN 17

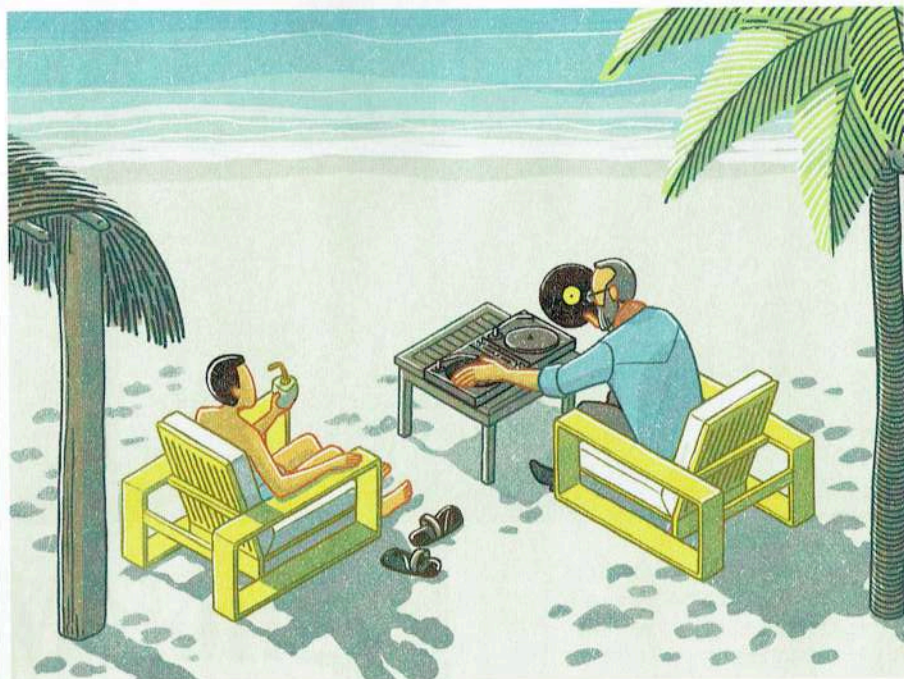# THE VINSON VIEW

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

01 Ear defender

Michel Gaubert saves Picky Nicky from aural atrocities

I recently spent some days in Cabo San Lucas in Mexico, at Thompson's Cape hotel. To say it has acoustic issues would be an understatement. Poolside or beachside, guests are hit with competing audio from the terrace and the open-air bar. The 'fine dining' restaurant was insufferable, too – even well inside, seated some distance from the door, we were battered with noise from speakers above and a performer in the bar outside. In our room, the balcony doors had to be kept shut to avoid aural bombardment from below. It was a case of too much, too loud and too bad.

Picky Nicky often moans about pianists tapping out popular tunes (or, worse, singing at the same time) in hotels such as the Four Seasons or Villa San Michele in Florence, or the Splendido in Portofino, because it is inescapable even if you are as far as possible from the source. But I will never return to a restaurant, no matter how good the food, if the music is too loud and the acoustics bad. Guests end up shouting just to hear themselves over the noise.

It's not that I don't like music. It's just that I'm spoilt rotten thanks to the maniacal attention that goes into sound at fashion shows and events today (see my memorable music moments, above). For help I turned to Michel Gaubert, the Paris-based maestro dubbed a 'sound stylist'

by Karl Lagerfeld (see W*144). Gaubert is responsible for the music at my favourite shows, including Chanel, Fendi, Valentino and Raf Simons. He told me he likes to stay at New York's Bowery Hotel, where there is no music at all, as in his view the music is wrong 99 per cent of the time in US hotels. Like me, he finds it tacky, intrusive and annoying. For Gaubert, there is a distinction between passing through a hotel and waking up and staying all day in a resort – where the right kind of music has a place.

Gaubert works almost exclusively on shows, helping designers to amplify their message by translating their vision into audio; he does not create soundtracks for restaurants or hotels, except his favourite, Hotel Esencia on Mexico's Mayan Riviera. He keeps going back because he has the feeling he is staying in someone's house – the mood is mellow, the staff are great and once or twice he has not left the property during his entire stay. Gaubert made the sounds for the rooms, main restaurant, beach bar and garden restaurant. It's neo-disco at the beach, which he describes as pleasant but not too pumpy, while the pool has a lush 1960s Latin vibe that he calls 'yacht rock'. To me, this sounds familiar with a twist, unaggressive, and I'm certain it feels just right. Now I know which coast of Mexico I'll be heading for next time. ✱

02 Sound and vision

Presented in Milan in April, this turntable by Ermenegildo Zegna and Master & Dynamic is finished in Zegna's woven-leather Pelle Tessuta fabric. *zegna.com*
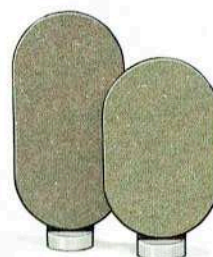
03 Perfect peace

A rising star at Salone Satellite, Tanya Repina of Aotta Studio has made sound-absorbing panels from pine needles and biodegradable polyester. *aotta.com*