

the aesthete

Jacques Garcia has designed opulent, baroque interiors for La Mamounia hotel and the Sultan of Brunei, and is celebrated for his restorations at the Louvre and Versailles



My personal style signifiers are dark navy Ralph Lauren suits and bright red Berluti socks – a simple but sharp “uniform” that serves me well in a variety of situations. www.berluti.com. www.ralphlauren.com.

The last things I bought and loved were two huge antique ceramic armchairs that look like tree trunks, from Ann-Morris in New York. Their peculiarity is that one often sees them made of wood but never ceramic. This pair received a gold medallion in the Universal Exhibition at the end of the 19th century. I love their timelessness, elegance and technical prowess. 239 E 60th St, New York, NY 10022 (+1212-755 3308; www.ann-morris.com).

And the thing I'm eyeing next is a painting by young French artist Claire Tabouret. I like her slightly haunting figurative images and her strong link to the past. www.clairatabouret.com.

An unforgettable place I've travelled to in the past year is Sicily, specifically the beautifully preserved areas between Catania, Syracuse, Noto and Ragusa. In this part of Italy time stops, and I feel very close to ancient civilisations. The mid-17th-century Duomo in Noto – with its glorious cupola – was a particular highlight, as was the Via Cavour in Noto with its wonderful succession of baroque buildings, including the impressive Palazzo Impellizzeri and Palazzo Trigona.

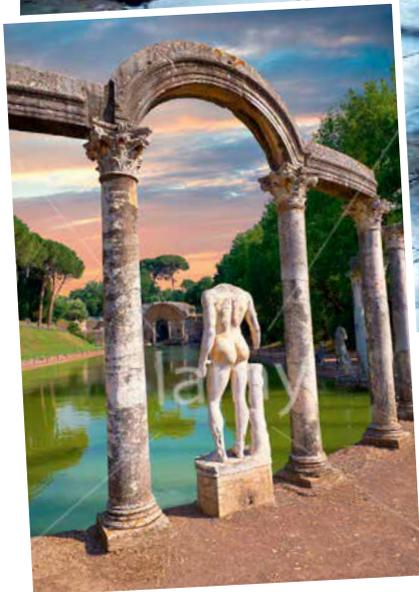
And the best souvenir I've brought home is my dreams. I travel very lightly and don't like to accumulate things on any journey.

The last accessory I added to my wardrobe was a pair of simple black leather loafers from JM Weston. I love this iconic, elegant French brand and these are exceptionally comfortable. www.jmweston.fr.

A recent “find” is Ganesh Handicrafts in Jodhpur, which sells the most beautiful ethical textiles. I love shopping for decorative pieces in India; it's a journey of thrilling discovery. 84-85 Nai Sarak, Girdikot, Kandoi Bazar, Jodhpur, Rajasthan 342001 (+91291-262 4165).

The last music I downloaded was *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* by Georges Bizet. Performed by French tenor Alain Vanzo, it features a beautiful mix of opera and orchestral music.

The beauty staple I'm never without is a light fragrance called Habit Rouge by Guerlain. I love its combination of citrus with something



Top: Guerlain Habit Rouge, £68 for 100ml EDT. From far left: The Serapaeum at Hadrian's Villa, in Tivoli. Garcia's EB Meyrowitz tortoiseshell glasses. *Les Débutantes (vert émeraude)* by Claire Tabouret

“Shopping in India is a journey of thrilling discovery”

leathery. £68 for 100ml EDT; www.guerlain.com.

The site that inspires me is Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli. The beautiful ruins and collection of sculpture, marble statuary and mosaics is incomparable.

I love the design of the extensive gardens, as well as the sheer exuberant, Italian feel of the place.

An object I would never part with is my bespoke tortoiseshell EB Meyrowitz glasses. I am entirely dependent on them and have worn this style for many years. 5 Rue de Castiglione, 75001 Paris (+331-4260 6364; www.meyrowitz.com).

If I didn't live in Paris, the place I would live is Normandy, at my château in Bataille; I have spent 20 years restoring the house and gardens and dream of spending more time here. I'd like to escape city mayhem – and all the flying and travelling – and simply relax and enjoy the countryside. The hunting salon is my refuge, and I love the architectural contrasts of the château, the Jaipur-inspired Moghul house and the greenhouse – moving between them, I make a magical discovery every time.

An indulgence I would never forgo is buying 18th-century antiques, particularly books about fine art from Librairie Galignani on the Rue de Rivoli. This elegant

bookstore is always full of surprises. 224 Rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris (+331-4260 7607; www.galignani.fr).

My favourite websites are few and far between. It is my goal to unlock the secrets of the web one day, but in the meantime I stick to auction sites such as Interencheres and Auction FR for interesting pieces of furniture, and Sotheby's and Christie's for *objets d'art*. www.auction.fr. www.christies.com. www.interencheres.com. www.sothebys.com.

AS TOLD TO CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS

JACQUES GARCIA TALKS MORE AESTHETICS ON WWW.HOWTOSPENDIT.COM