

FINANCIAL TIMES

How to Spend it

A camel is the central focus of the background image, standing in a gallery space. It is viewed through a window frame that is part of a larger wall of art. The camel is positioned in the center, facing left. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights, suggesting a museum or gallery setting.

AVANT-GUARDIANS
COLLECTORS AT THE
CUTTING EDGE OF DESIGN

THE FRIDAY EDITION DECEMBER 7 2012

the aesthete

Founder of his eponymous London restaurant, **Mr Chow** has overseen a global expansion that includes outposts in New York, Miami and LA

My personal style signifier is my pair of Mr Chow Spectacles by Cutler and Gross. They are based on the style worn by architects such as IM Pei, and I have worn them for more than 15 years now. From £299; www.cutlerandgross.com.

The last thing I bought and loved was a miniature oil portrait by Peter Blake, a canvas depicting a young girl, which I bought at Christie's. It has a very special place in my collection. www.christies.com.

And the thing I'm eyeing next is a new tape measure by Hermès, to replace my old one. I carry this small, beautifully made leather measure with me wherever I go. £285; www.hermes.com.

A recent "find" is the tiny Japanese restaurant Nishimura in Los Angeles. It is located in a serene little garden near the Pacific Design Center and was a completely unexpected surprise. They only serve sushi there, and it is delicious. 8684 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90069 (+1310-659 4770).

The site that inspires me is Louis Kahn's National Assembly Building in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This majestic parliamentary building is set on the water, and the scale is breathtaking. Also inspirational to me are the chapel of Notre Dame du Haut – or "Ronchamp" – by Le Corbusier, and Gaudi's Casa Milà in Barcelona.

The best gift I've given recently is a 1920s Cla-Cla reading table by Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann, which I bought at DeLorenzo Gallery for my wife, Eva. I consider Ruhlmann to be the greatest furniture designer of all time and I used to collect his work extensively. 956 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10021 (+1212-249 7575; www.delorenzogallery.com).

And the best one I've received is a felt and leather Hermès throw that was given to me by my daughter, China, as a birthday gift. It fits beautifully over the top of a Jean Dunand lacquered table in my sitting room. www.hermes.com.

"I do think that the shape and size of a bar of soap matters"

In my fridge you'll always find assorted crudités, as well as a bottle of Krug champagne, which I regard as a great luxury. There is also a selection of ingredients for making breakfast, including eggs and Cheddar cheese for the egg-white omelettes I eat every day. www.krug.com.

The books on my bedside table are primarily about art. I am currently reading *Lucio Fontana: The Artist's*



Materials, about the work of this Argentine artist, and several books about Yves Klein, including *Yves Klein: With the Void, Full Powers*.

The last music I bought was the CD *Yo-Yo Ma Plays Ennio Morricone*. Morricone wrote the scores for nearly all of Sergio Leone's movies, and I'm a big fan of his work. www.enniomorricone.it. www.yo-yo-ma.com.

An object I would never part with is an ink painting by the man I consider to be the greatest artist of the 20th century, Qi Baishi. My father was a Beijing opera actor and Qi Baishi created this "six

fishes" work as a celebration of his 50 years on stage. This artwork and its inscription are incredibly special to me.

An unforgettable place I've travelled to in the past year is Basel, a wonderful city that mixes historical architecture with contemporary culture. I loved everything from its grand hotels to the efficient tram system, which reminds me of Shanghai. Among my highlights was the Renzo Piano-designed Beyeler Foundation that's just outside the city, looking out over rolling hills. It features an incredible collection of works by Calder, Klee and Monet. Most of all, though, I like that this is a city best explored on foot, which makes for a nice change from life in



From top: 1920s Cla-Cla reading table by Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann. Chow's ink painting by Qi Baishi. *Yo-Yo Ma Plays Ennio Morricone*. Hermès tape measure, £285. The National Assembly Building in Dhaka



Los Angeles. Baselstrasse 101, CH-4125 Riehen, Basel (+4161-645 9700; www.fondationbeyeler.ch).

The grooming staples I'm never without are Sulwhasoo's Essential Skin Refiner and Moisturizing Fluid. I am not particular about shampoos or soaps, although I do think that the shape and size of a bar of soap matters. Aesthetics are very important to me. *Essential Skin Refiner*, \$60, and *Moisturizing Fluid*, \$50; us.sulwhasoo.com.

AS TOLD TO CHRISTINA ONLY EVANS

MR CHOW TALKS MORE AESTHETICS ON THE NEW, FASTER, SLEEKER WWW.HOWTOSPENDIT.COM