

A suitcase for dreams

MARC NEWSON'S NEW TRUNK IS THE ULTIMATE SHOWCASE FOR SOUVENIRS – EVEN THE SECRET ONES. BY NICK VINSON

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL BODIAM

MARC NEWSON KNEW exactly what he wanted to do when Louis Vuitton asked him to create a modern-day collectors' trunk: he would make something that he would like to use to display his own curiosities. Some spaces he would fill with mementos he wanted to show off. Others would be for "things I'd hide" – hence the concealed compartments he has created behind secret doors, for "objects that mean something to me personally".

The Cabinet of Curiosities, revealed at the Salone del Mobile furniture and design fair in Milan last month, is a tribute to Newson's ability to give a much-loved piece a fresh spin. "I was immediately attracted to the idea that the trunk would read the same as one from a hundred years ago but have a contemporary interior," he says. Which is why, from the outside, nothing appears to have changed: the trunk's skin of monogrammed canvas still hangs on a skeleton of gaboon, poplar and beech, and is adorned with brass studs and locks. Inside, though, the cavities have been converted into mini museums, filled with 19 softly curved, leather modules in three sizes.

Like other modular furniture he has created – the latest with Quobus in enamelled steel for Galerie kreio – the configuration and final look of each trunk will be determined by its owner, "so its personality will only increase when it is used and filled with objects that reflect one's interests and idiosyncrasies".

Unlike the Horizon 55 suitcase Newson designed for Louis Vuitton in 2016, weighing 3.2kg, this was not built to be carry-on luggage: it weighs 100kg. But then, that's not the point. Rather, this is a personalised space in which to keep things you love, things that make you dream, souvenirs from your travels: Langlands & Bell's crystal glass cube with the world's principal airline routes etched at its core; Jaeger-LeCoultre's Atmos 568 clock (also designed by Newson), whose mechanism, in a Baccarat case, is powered by the contraction and expansion of gases; a portable chess set designed in 1972 by Cy Endfield.

Newson's intention, he says, was to create "a fun and sculptural piece that would pay homage to the history of the trunk". Job done.

Cabinet of Curiosities trunk, POA, Marc Newson for Louis Vuitton, louisvuitton.com

Top to bottom, from left:

Sterling silver sandwich box (early 20th century), £1,950, abask.com

Www laser-etched optical glass cube, 2000 (edition of 100 plus 10 artist's proofs), POA, langlandsandbell.com

Bell lamp, £3,750, Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby for Louis Vuitton, louisvuitton.com

Roman alabaster Serapis head (2nd century), POA, davidaaaron.com

Sterling silver diamonds dish, £350, Jarosinski & Vaugoin at abask.com

Giobagnara Structura playing card holder in walnut and leather, £510, abask.com

Playing cards, £340 including pouch, louisvuitton.com

Antique wooden bull in king's yellow, from a selection, connollyengland.com

Atmos 568 clock, £30,200, Marc Newson for Jaeger-LeCoultre, jaeger-lecoultre.com

The Trunk short stories, published by Gallimard, £42, louisvuitton.com

Langlands & Bell: Degrees of Truth, published by Sir John Soane's Museum, £19, shop.soane.org

Montblanc M fountain pen, £630, Marc Newson for Montblanc, montblanc.com

Gustave MM notebooks, £175 each, louisvuitton.com

Cy Endfield travel chess set 1972, £580, abask.com

DIGITAL ASSISTANT: MAX CATTERALL. SET DESIGN: ALFIED TROLIO

