



Playing for Time

DESIGN

More hours in the day might be top of our wish list, but we need to learn how to enjoy them – with the latest luxury offerings that are made to be lingered over. Easy does it...

Words Henrietta Thompson
Illustrations Nabil Nezzar

Time is the new luxury – we've all been peddled that cliché. And yes it's true, increasingly so, as our busy multi-tasking lives make spare minutes ever rarer, and therefore ever more precious. But what does it really mean to buy time?

As the bling bling of flashy luxe ebbs quietly out of fashion, the 'new' luxury taking its place is defined by the far more sophisticated qualities of craftsmanship, detail and design. We are continuously inundated with romantic stories of craftspeople (many of whom have surrendered the rat race for a quieter life) whittling away hours in their studios making beautiful things. But while time spent at that end of the manufacturing spectrum is all very well for the maker – and the results might be lovely to look at, commission and own – the consumer is not buying time for their own pocket.

Mobile technology's major appeal is that it saves us time by enabling us to do more and more things simultaneously. If we can work on the way home, we will free up more time for our families; if we can be more flexible with our diaries we will have richer personal lives. But the reality is the opposite. Multi-tasking has been scientifically proven to compromise our results in all areas – constant distractions are destroying our ability to concentrate. While we might be getting more done, we are actually doing those things less well – whether that's preparing a report, pitching a proposal, or parenting.

In fact, there are only two ways in which time really becomes a luxury in my mind. The first, of course, is to delegate all manner of tasks and responsibilities, so that lifestyle necessities can be made more effective overall, leaving a

luxurious glut of free time in their wake. The danger of this method, however, is what you then choose to do with the excess hours. Because time wasted isn't luxurious.

The second way is to invest in tools that can help us to slow down, rather than those that help us to cram more in. Products that – by using them – encourage us to live more mindfully, more happily, slower. These products, to be used liberally, at leisure (which you've already bought as per the first time-buying method) exist not to save us time, but to help us relish it.

Take, for example, old-fashioned stationery. Investing extra care and minutes in writing a note by hand is mindful and rewarding. Use a spun brass Ajoto pen to be further reminded as you unpackage it from its box that 'Making a mark represents the first step on the journey from a great idea to great endeavor'. An email doesn't have the same sense of action, does it?

Choosing a set of fine stationery is an art in itself, but one well worth cultivating. From a notebook (I love the gilded pages from Astier de Villatte or a technical sketchbook by Archimetric complete with T-square) to a PAP Fiffi Pencase, to be carefully unwrapped each time you sit down to write. These are the tools that will make the task a thing of beauty, to be savoured. Ettinger, Smythson and Bespoke & Bound are also brands worth investigating.

Analogue and old-fashioned are often the way forward when looking for a slower pace of life. Swap the playlist and the autoshuffle for a vinyl collection and a beautiful record player, and (even just once) listen to an album from start to finish.

Though we might be widening our networks online, many is the report that lets us know we're becoming less social in real life as a result. We're simply too tired, too anxious, and more likely to avoid people. It's a vicious circle – with less energy to engage in conversations it's easier to seek refuge online. The couple in the romantic restaurant both subsumed in their

– *'Swap the autoshuffle for a vinyl collection and a record player, and listen to an album from start to finish'* –

Above, clockwise from left, notebooks from a selection at Astier de Villatte, astierdevillatte.com; Ajoto spun brass pen, £155, ajoto.com; Jasper Morrison's MPO1 mobile phone, punkt.ch



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Top, from left: Klong's Patina oil lamp, from £113; skandium.com; Kaikado tea set, from a selection; kaikado.jp; Alexandra Llewellyn's bespoke backgammon set, from £3,400; alexandralldesign.com. Left: Fritz Hansen's PK80 daybed, £11,318; fritzhenzen.com, and *Circadian Physiology* by Roberto Refinetti, £107, CRC Press; crcpress.com

phones? They're just tired. But it doesn't make it any less heartbreaking to watch. Instead of fobbing off a real friend to gain yourself a night 'off' to only find yourself hours later scrolling through tedious social media feeds (we've all done it), meet them and challenge them to a game of backgammon on a bespoke board by Alexandra Llewellyn. Better still? Boules – using a beautiful antique set – a game of real precision and patience.

Take the time too, to set the scene. Candles will always evoke contemplation, or a Patina oil lamp will add a further sense of ritual to the occasion. Make tea, ceremoniously, with a set from Kaikado, or cocktails, mixing every ingredient with true care and attention (the first time at least) using herbs you have diligently grown yourself, of course.

At Clerkenwell London, the newly opened concept store near Exmouth Market, an appreciation of slow living has informed the entire collection, and is a perfect first port of call for slow luxe shoppers. Curator Tatjana von Stein explains: 'We choose authentic, original and carefully designed pieces that provoke awareness, the first step to truly being in the present. By evoking appreciation of sincere craftsmanship and a considered purpose, slow design, both in its form and in its experience, is at the forefront of redefining the true meaning and understanding of the biggest luxury of life - time.'

The luxury of extra time can be very rewardingly spent preparing food. It was for this (not so) express purpose that Brazilian designer Brunno Jahara designed the Tuju collection for *Wallpaper** Handmade earlier this year: a collection of tools and accessories for the leisurely chef-gardener in golden steel. For serving ware that encourages mindful eating, try Aldo Bakker's beauty-defining pieces for Puiforcat, or for a less serious

approach the extended plates and the L'Art de la Table series by Seletti.

Or if cooking and writing aren't your style, there's always reading. Take a copy of Roberto Refinetti's *Circadian Physiology* (which adjusts the viewer to a day's cycle of time from cover to cover) and peruse it in the sunshine from a Hästens hammock, or in the rain on a delectable daybed. Fritz Hansen has just launched a limited edition of 25 pieces of the PK80 daybed and PK91 stool from the Kvadrat/Raf Simons collection, while SCP has a Rachel Whiteread lounge, and the Yard Daybed by Francesco Rota for Lema might also support an hour or two's page turning.

Perhaps before reading this article, an advisory warning should have been issued to turn off your phone. Being 'always on' is exhausting. Even better, buy a Jasper Morrison-designed Punkt MP01 mobile phone, which will allow you freedom from the internet until you really need it. It's for the safety of your inner peace, says Punkt's Petter Neby. He makes a valid point when he says his concern is not about Artificial Intelligence so much as humans – real intelligence – becoming more artificial.

'Every time we disrupt the nearness of those around us, whether that is the barman, or the woman that you pass when you walk your dog, if we stop talking to these people, we become more and more introvert and less able to handle information that comes to us that is not programmed to come to us. We are sitting here with a big panel of instruments that manages our relationship with the outside world. That's not how we are supposed to be. Our intelligence, our instincts, are the glue of society, and they are being compromised.'

And relax... safe in the knowledge that your time has been well earned, and well spent. If Neby is right, time isn't just a luxury, it's the glue of society. Let's all do our best to save it. ■