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FEBRUARY 2014

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Donald Judd des

Play away in Marseille and  
get frisky in San Francisco



# BEST RIDE

Lift, by Gwenaël Nicolas,  
for Louis Vuitton

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAN LEHNER  
FASHION: NOBUKO TANNAWA WRITER: NICK VINSON

Louis Vuitton's new 'Townhouse' in London's Selfridges department store boasts 700 sq m over three floors. Connecting the three levels – accessories on ground, men's on one, women's on two – is a rather fantastic elevator that delivers much more than your usual ride. Once you're inside, and the radial doors are closed, it begins by moving straight up, but at around 60cm off the ground, it starts to spin in a clockwise direction, spiralling up the 6.5m to the first floor (the men's 'universe'). The glass and chrome cylinder then takes off again and spins upwards at 9.48 degrees a second to reach the second floor. Adding to the novelty, you get on and off at completely different points on each floor, turning first 211 degrees, then another 180.

The mastermind behind the design of the lift and the architecture of the Townhouse is French-born, Tokyo-based architect Gwenaël Nicolas. After persuading Selfridges to let him cut two massive holes in the middle of its store (to this day he is still delighted no one stopped him), he then had to find a manufacturer brave enough to make it happen. His journey took him all the way to a small Bavarian village, where Rupert Huber, executive director of GBH Design, was the first person 'not to say no'. A non-sceptical, passionate German, with his own family-run lift-manufacturing business, was Nicolas' ticket to ride, so to speak.

The lift's hydraulic motor has a three-stage, central telescopic piston, different speeds (it's set to 1.58 rotations a minute, but can go up to a dizzying 1.87) and is made up of around 30 pieces. Holding the white glass exterior cylinder in place is a double ribbon of steel that snakes and criss-crosses up the 12m shaft. The steel has been decked out in seamless oak marquetry, Jean-Michel Frank style, by a ship fitter rather than a shop fitter. This is one class elevator. ★

[www.louisvuitton.com](http://www.louisvuitton.com), [www.selfridges.com](http://www.selfridges.com)

CAPE, £2,030; TROUSERS,  
£930; BAG, £1,680,  
ALL BY LOUIS VUITTON

Model: Gaby Loader at  
Next Models London  
Hair: Yumi Nakada-Dingle  
using Aveda  
Make-up: Nobuko Maekawa  
using Chanel Le Lift and S2014

