

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Chanel gets to heart of brand history with tribute to Gabrielle

February 24, 2017



Still from "Gabrielle, a rebel at heart"

By SARAH JONES

French fashion label Chanel is proving that its founder's progressive spirit still rings true today in its latest chapter of Inside Chanel.

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"Gabrielle, a rebel at heart" is the first in a series of four films that will touch on the designer's rebellion, freedom, passion and allure. Along with this content, Gabrielle Chanel, known more commonly by her nickname Coco, is also being honored by the brand this year with the release of a handbag and fragrance inspired by her personality.

"Gabrielle, even though she is associated with a symbol of timeless elegance, was a rebellious women at heart," said Anna Szubrycht, founder and president of **Chic Being**, a Santa Monica, CA-based luxury brand consultancy. "Relentless, invincible rebel who is brave enough to challenge the world and stand against well accepted standards.

"The latest episode of Inside Chanel reinforces this fact and that the brand is build on paradoxes and contradictions," she said.

"Even though Chanel has an outstanding history and heritage, it doesn't stay in the past. It is progressive, constantly evolving and reinventing itself to accompany modern luxury consumers."

Ms. Szubrycht is not affiliated with Chanel, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Chanel** was reached for comment.

Gabrielle before Coco

Chanel's film premiered on Feb. 22 on its Inside Chanel microsite and social channels.

The video opens as a female narrator takes on the role of Ms. Chanel, saying, "I decided who I wanted to be, and that is who I am."



Video still from Chanel's film

From here, the voice introduces the way that the designer lived her life, which can be summed up with the verbs, "choose," "desire" and "be."

For instance, she chose simplicity over excess and comfort over appearance, leading to designs such as the little black dress and her easy suiting. She also freed up women's hands with the addition of a shoulder chain on handbags.

The film also talks about women being liberated to cut their hair, cross their legs and bask in the sun, with animations of a woman surfing or lounging by a pool. A revolutionary in the fashion industry, Ms. Chanel set trends that are still relevant today.

This latest look from Inside Chanel is designed to make viewers reconsider previous episodes in a new light. Topics in earlier films include Marilyn Monroe's connection to Chanel N 5, the little black jacket and codes such as the lion and Ms. Chanel's favored color palette.

Gabrielle, A Rebel at Heart - Inside Chanel

Chanel also used this film launch to tease its upcoming homages to Ms. Chanel in product design.

Current Chanel creative director Karl Lagerfeld created a Gabrielle handbag last October as part of the spring/summer 2017 collection. This design will debut on April 3.

Gabrielle is also the inspiration for a namesake fragrance, which will launch in September. Through a link on the Inside Chanel site, consumers can register their interest in both of these releases.

"Chanel N 5, Coco Mademoiselle or the 2.55 handbag are the most desired items in fashion and brand history, a real 'must have' for all advocates of Maison de Chanel," Ms. Szubrycht said. "Building Inside Chanel teasing campaign upon key brand values and these emblematic products seamlessly merges Chanel tradition with the exciting future that the brand will reveal soon.

"This way Chanel creates curiosity and expectation before the upcoming launch of new fashion icons."

Biographical content

While Chanel has been in other hands, it frequently draws on Ms. Chanel's personal history for collections.

For instance, the French atelier paid homage to its founder's soul mate in a new scent named for his nickname.

Gabrielle Coco Chanel's lover Arthur "Boy" Capel has inspired many of her namesake brand's wares, especially in the fragrance and beauty category. The scent was inspired by their love and is a "balanced scent that challenges tradition and transcends gender" ([see story](#)).

The brand also explores difference aspects of Ms. Chanel's life in frequent retrospectives, allowing its fans to gain a better understanding of the woman behind the fashion empire.

Chanel took consumers inside the literary world of its founder through a recent Venice exhibit.

Being held from Sept. 17, 2016 to Jan. 8, 2017, "Culture Chanel: The Woman Who Reads" looked at Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel's relationship to books, making a connection between volumes and the woman they helped shape. This was

the seventh in a series of Culture Chanel exhibits, which allow visitors to become more acquainted with the house and its original designer ([see story](#)).

"Regardless the time and the continent, Chanel's message has been always resonating with women because it stayed constant and relevant over the time, motivating brave women since ages to create and recreate themselves every single day," Ms. Szubrycht said. "It promoted women who are decisive and active, women who desire to achieve their dreams.

"In the new luxury era, where passion, audacity and intuition, are more prevailing values than ever, Chanel's message resonates extremely well with modern consumers, especially ,illennials, because it inspires them to be authentic and live their lives to the fullest."

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