

Chanel bottles rebellious spirit of founder in Gabrielle fragrance

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Chanel's Gabrielle fragrance is featured in Inside Chanel's Chapter 21. Image credit: Chanel

By JEN KING

French atelier Chanel is exploring its founder's transformation from Gabrielle to Coco to introduce its latest fragrance, Gabrielle.

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Chanel's marketing keeps its founder's legacy close, often investigating aspects of Ms. Chanel's personal life, interests and passion points that have come to define her namesake fashion house. For brands with deep-rooted heritage, it is important to maintain what differentiated the brand from its beginnings, which Chanel has done consistently, especially through its docu-series, Inside Chanel.

"The heritage is a significant part of a brand's equity," said Gil Eyal, CEO of [HYPRBrands](#), New York.

"With consumers being bombarded with new brands and options on a daily basis, the ability to build an emotional connection that goes beyond a specific fragrance and into the way the brand makes you feel is immense," he said. "Staying true to your heritage helps maintain relationships with current customers and introduce new ones to what feels like a familiar and trustworthy environment."

Mr. Eyal is not affiliated with Chanel, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Chanel](#) was reached for comment.

Breaking through

Earlier this year, Chanel shared "Gabrielle, a rebel at heart," the first in a series of four films that touch on the designer's rebellion, freedom, passion and allure. The films are meant to demonstrate how Ms. Chanel's progressive spirit still rings true today ([see story](#)).

As of press time three of the four in the series have debuted on Chanel's channels. The May release focused on the three verbs that Ms. Chanel applied to every aspect of her life: conquer, master and love ([see story](#)) while the most recent, from August, explores the late designer's philosophy for life ([see story](#)).



Still from "Gabrielle, a rebel at heart". Image credit: Chanel

Along with this content, Gabrielle Chanel, known more commonly by her nickname Coco, has been honored by the brand this year with a fragrance inspired by her personality.

Bringing the Gabrielle fragrance to life is frequent band collaborator Kristen Stewart.

Chanel often opts to work with the actress due to her "strong and determined personality, her career studded with bold artistic choices and the life she leads with full freedom." Ms. Stewart, in many ways, echoes Ms. Chanel's pioneering and empowering qualities.

In a Ringan Ledwidge-directed campaign video, Ms. Stewart is shown in a hibernating state, surrounded by and tied up with silk fabrics, before her eyes open and she begins to emerge from her cocoon.

As Ms. Stewart breaks through the cocoon casing, singer Beyonce's "Runnin' (Lose It All)" begins to play, accompanying Ms. Stewart as she runs free of her silken chains. Still bound by the silks, Ms. Stewart runs at full speed toward an unseen objective, but as the soundtrack's pace picks up, the actress begins to pull at what bounds her with determination.

Soon Ms. Stewart is dressed in silks that form a tube top and skirt, with strands of silk flowing behind her, as she approaches a curtain of gold pyrotechnics.

Next, Ms. Stewart is shown taking a running leap, fist ready to break down a brick wall, made of Chanel Gabrielle fragrance bottles. The minute-long video ends with Ms. Stewart successfully getting to the other side of the wall and staring out at the sun as it hovers above the horizon line.

"There are multiple elements of empowerment in the video," HYPRBrands' Mr. Eyal said. "The tasteful nudity symbolizes freedom, and the calmness amidst the storm signals independence and strength.

"The overall theme of the video sends the viewer the emotion that you get when something makes you really excited," he said. "The identity of the actress inserts a well-known face that is associated with strength, independence and empowerment, a symbol of the qualities that Chanel's customers will identify with."

The fragrance Gabrielle Chanel | The film

Chanel's Gabrielle fragrance has a floral composition and its elegant square bottle is made of ultra-thin, bevel-cut glass to let light reflect off the falcon and the fragrance.

Rebels remain

In addition to Chanel's namesake Gabrielle fragrance launch this year, the house has released a handbag style also named for its founder.

For the handbag campaigns, of which there have been a number, Chanel took a different approach to its marketing, but the rebellious spirit of Coco remains prevalent.

For example, Chanel took a rebellious stance on gender norms by selecting music producer Pharrell Williams as the face of the new Gabrielle handbag style.

Pharrell has worked with the brand before, but this was the first time Chanel has made him an ambassador for a handbag. In doing so, Chanel is expanding the notions of how luxury brands can market traditionally gendered products such as handbags to consumers outside the expected demographic ([see story](#)).

An important aspect of any campaign is that consumers can relate and identify with a brand's content.

"I think Chanel's customers will love this campaign," HYPRBrands' Mr. Eyal said. "It's a rare decision not to focus on a plot, and Chanel have instead chosen to invoke that exhilarated sensation we feel when we get excited or 'pumped.'

"This fits well with Chanel's empowering message, and leverages a celebrity that has a strong rapport with the type of audiences Chanel would like to reach with this campaign – younger generations that don't want to feel limited or held behind," he said.

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