

JEWELRY

Chanel unveils ode to founder with high jewelry collection

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A scene from Chanel's N5 Fine Jewelry Collection campaign video. Image credit: Chanel

By AMIAH TAYLOR

French fashion house Chanel is paying homage to its founder, Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel, with a new high jewelry collection that immortalizes her favorite number in white diamonds.

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The latest campaign from the French maison transforms the iconic N 5 into a jeweled emblem. Inside its dream-like campaign film which debuted on July 22, Chanel offers snapshots of the new collection, drawing on the continued legacy of the N 5 being inextricably linked with luck.

"I think it is great that Chanel is creating a link between their different business divisions, such as beauty, and jewelry in this case," said Diana Verde Nieto, cofounder and CEO of [Positive Luxury](#), London.

"I think that consumers will find it appealing as Chanel N 5 is an iconic perfume that crosses generations and is synonymous with the Chanel brand," she said.

Good luck charms: wearing the No. 5

The ethereal campaign is aesthetically simple, beginning with a close-up shot of a female model wearing a single Eternal N 5 transformable earring. A butterfly delicately rests on her hands, drawing attention to her Eternal N 5 ring.

The focus on hands, which have five digits, is expanded when the model unclasps all five of her fingers to reveal a single Eternal N 5 necklace. The butterfly perches on the model's temple with wordless resonance.

Chanel's N 5 Fine Jewelry Collection campaign video

The image perhaps alludes to Ms. Chanel's past comparisons to fashion and its symbolic connection to caterpillars and butterflies.

"There is nothing more comfortable than a caterpillar and nothing more made for love than a butterfly," Ms. Chanel previously said. "We need dresses that crawl and dresses that fly."

"Fashion is at once a caterpillar and a butterfly, caterpillar by day, butterfly by night."

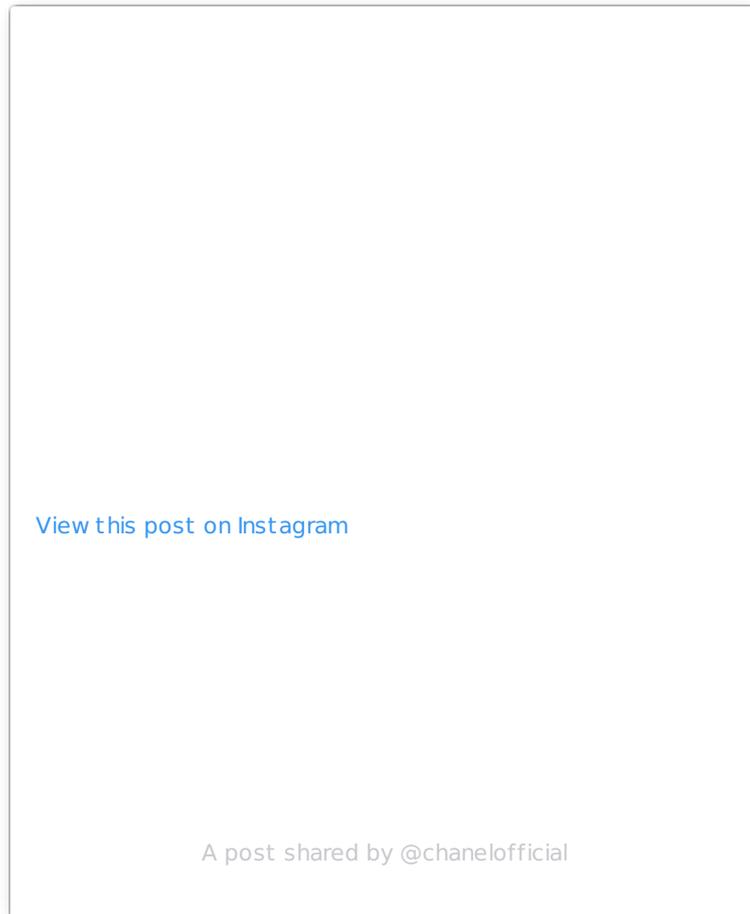
Amidst the gentle harmonious background music, a female voice whispers, "What is luck?"

The model reveals that "Chanel" has been written in bold lettering across her eyelids.

The butterfly flutters away and a tranquil female voice whispers "lucky N 5."

N 5 is cemented into Chanel's branding ideology because of the many connections to its house founder. This latest collection elevates the numeral to an even higher tier of decadence.

Ms. Chanel's birthday fell under the fifth sign of the zodiac and the fifth was also the day of the month she'd typically release her couture collections. Further, Chanel N 5 perfume has gained a cult following since its May 5, 1921 launch.



A model wearing a single Eternal N 5 transformable earring

The continued conversation around sustainability

Chanel's ostentatious high jewelry collection, Bijoux de Diamants, debuted in 1932.

However, after ninety years of brand evolution, the French maison has not shifted away from natural diamonds. White diamonds have been a sign of affluence, luxury, and status for centuries ([see story](#)).

Despite Chanel being a shareholder in the French laboratory-grown diamond brand, Courbet, its sparkling new N 5 collection exclusively features mined white diamonds.

But, environmentalists are beginning to question the place of mined diamonds in modern high jewelry. Citing a 2015 report from the Diamond Council of America (DCA), a minimum of 1,200 pounds of rock and iron ore must be unearthed to gain a single carat ([see story](#)).

As Chanel continues to unveil high jewelry collections, imbued with glittering natural diamonds, doubts about the brand's environmental consciousness will continue to be raised.

"I think that one of the areas that Chanel has not addressed is sustainability," Ms. Verde Nieto said.

"Consumers today crave more information about what brands care about, whether the gold is recycled, what is the provenance of the diamonds used and what is the overall sustainability story, not just at the product level but at brand level too," she said.

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