

A style does not go out of style as long as it adapts itself to its period. When there is an incompatibility between the style and a certain state of mind, it is never the style that triumphs.

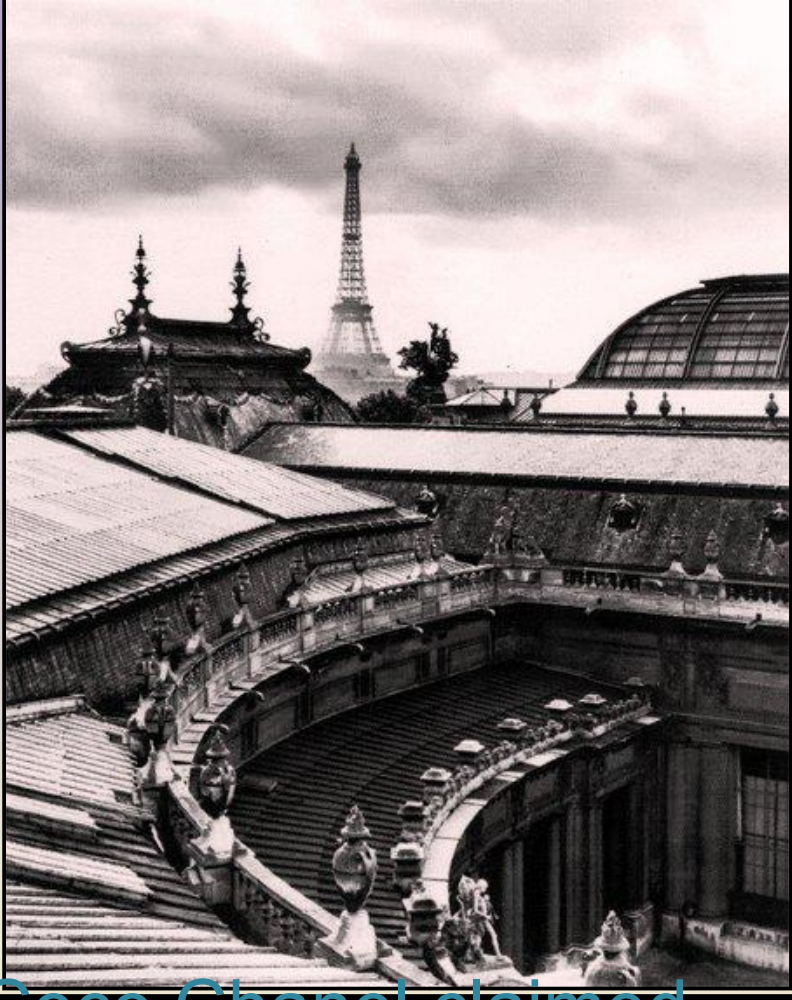
Coco Chanel



From her first millinery shop, opened in 1912, to the 1920s, Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel rose to become one of the premier fashion designers in Paris, France.

Replacing the corset with comfort and casual elegance, her fashion themes included simple suits and dresses, women's trousers, costume jewelry, perfume and





Coco Chanel claimed a birthdate of 1893 and a birthplace of Auvergne; she was actually born in 1883



According to her version of her life story, her mother worked in the poorhouse where Gabrielle was born, and died when Gabrielle was only six, leaving her father with five children whom he promptly abandoned to the care of relatives

She adopted the name
Coco during a brief
career as a cafe and
concert singer
1905-1908. First a
mistress of a wealthy





Coco Chanel drew on the resources of these patrons in setting up a millinery shop in Paris in 1910, expanding to Deauville and Biarritz. The two men also helped her find customers among women of society, and her simple hats became popular.

Soon Coco Chanel was expanding to couture, working in jersey, a first in the French fashion world. By the 1920s, her fashion house had expanded considerably, and her chemise set a fashion trend with its "little boy" look. Her relaxed fashions, short skirts, and casual look were in sharp contrast to the corset fashions popular in the previous decades.



Chanel herself dressed in mannish clothes, and adapted these more comfortable fashions which other women also.





In 1922 Coco Chanel introduced a perfume, Chanel No. 5, which became and remained popular, and remains a profitable product of Chanel's company.

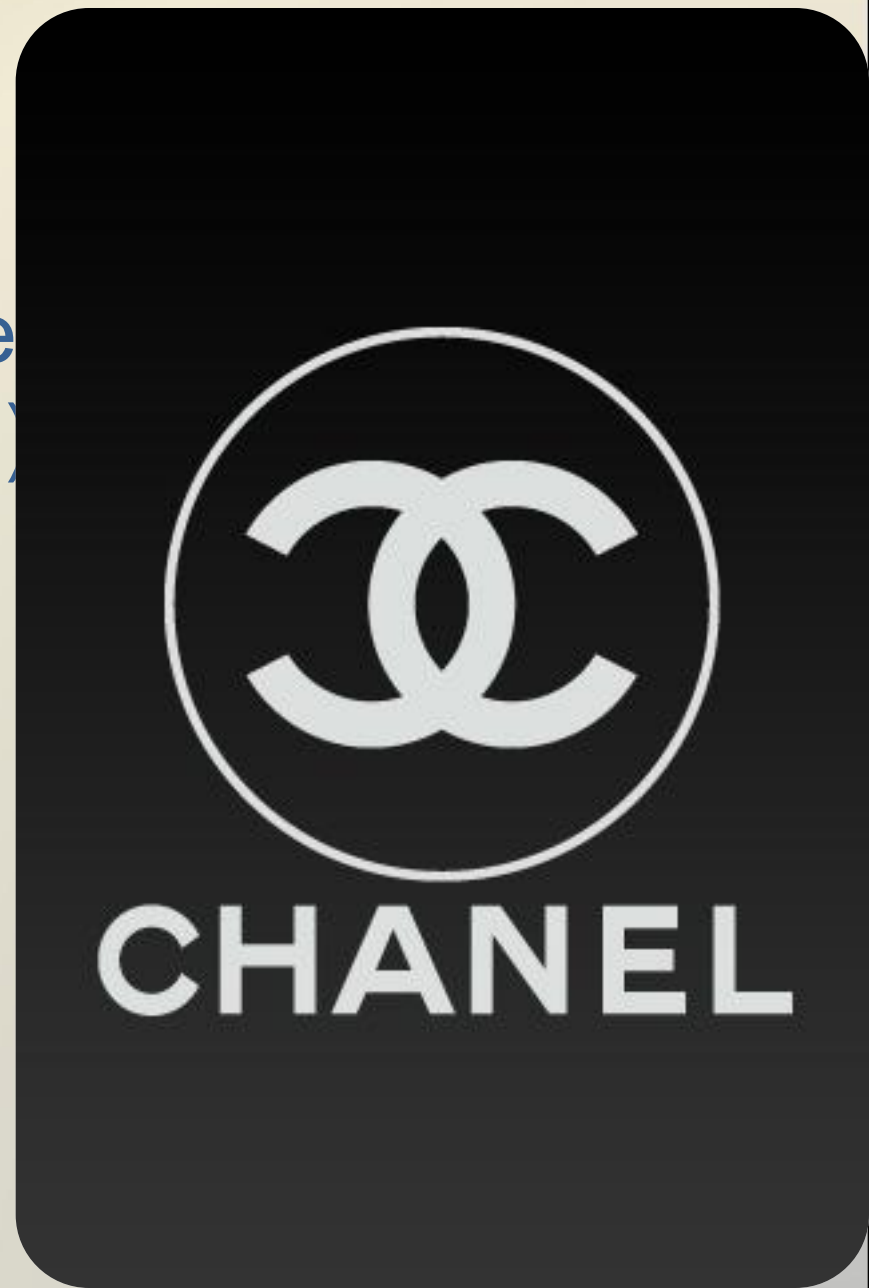


Pierre Wertheimer became her partner in the perfume business in 1924, and perhaps also her lover.



Wertheimer owned 70% of the company, Coco Chanel received 10% and her friend Bader the company, Wertheimers continue to control the perfume company today.

The signature Chanel logotype is an interlocking double-C (one facing forwards the other facing backwards.) Originally it was not a logo that Coco Chanel came up with. The logo was given to her by the Chateau de Cremat in Nice. The logotype was not trademarked until the opening of the first Chanel stores.





Coco had affairs with some of the most influential men of the time, but she never married. The reason may be found in her answer, when asked why she did not marry the Duke of Westminster: "There have been several Duchesses of Westminster. There is only one Chanel."

signature cardigan jacket in 1925 and signature "little black dress" in 1926. Most of her fashions had a staying power, and didn't change much from year to year -- or even generation to



The little black dress was created in a memory about her dead sweetheart. Before that moment black colour, associated with mourning, did not use the success, but then the little black dress became popular.



Her

Cardigan jacket





Coco Chanel briefly served as a nurse in World War I. Nazi occupation meant the fashion business in Paris was cut off for some years; Chanel's affair during World War II with a Nazi officer also resulted in some years of diminished popularity and an exile of sorts to

In 1954 her comeback restored her to the first ranks of haute co



Her natural, casual clothing including the Chanel suit once again caught the eye -- and purses -- of women. She introduced pea jackets and bell bottom pants for women. She was still working in 1971 when she died. Karl Lagerfeld has been chief designer of Chanel's fashion house since 1983.

In addition to her work with high fashion, Coco Chanel also designed stage costumes for such plays as Cocteau's *Antigone* (1923) and *Oedipus Rex* (1937) and film costumes for several movies, including Renoir's *La Regle de Jeu*.

Katharine Hepburn starred in

the 1969 film

Coco based

on the life of

Coco Chanel.



Coco Chanel died on January 10, 1971, at her apartment in the Hotel Ritz.



She never married, having once said "I never wanted to weigh more heavily on a man than a bird." Chanel was buried in Switzerland.



*The work
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