

Coco Chanel “LBD”

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Coco Chanel was born as Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel in Saumur, Paris on August 19, 1883 (Britannica). It was said that she got her name “Coco” from her brief career as a singer: “Some say that the name comes from one of the songs she used to sing, and Chanel herself said that it was a ‘shortened version of cocotte, the French word for 'kept woman, 'according to an article in The Atlantic” (Biography, 2018). Coco Chanel did not have an easy life, her mother died when she was only 12 and she was sent to live in an orphanage with nuns by her father (Biography, 2018). Some might have seen this as a hindrance but while she was at this orphanage she learned how to sew. This act was probably the reason why she wanted to pursue fashion and was so successful it. After many years of trials and tribulations Coco Chanel influenced the world with her elegance and admirable style. She died: “January 10, 1971 at 88 in Paris, France” (Britannica, n.d). Her brand has lived on and has been reshaped while always keeping its core value and style by Karl Lagerfeld until his death on February 19, 2019 (Biography, 2014).

Coco Chanel has been known to have her career financed by the men she has been involved with. Her first shop was in 1910 where she focused on selling hats (Biography, 2019). She slowly began to get into clothing, this is where her career began to take off and turn heads. Throughout her clothing there was a heavy usage of "jersey knit" creating the "poor girl" aesthetic. It caught the eyes of the wealthier women who wanted a change from their uptight wardrobe (Britannica). She was creating an iconic legacy and style for herself and her brand.

Coco Chanel introduced what she was most famous for the “Little Black Dress”. She was the first person to create a dress with this look. The “LBD” made its first appearance in: “1926: The month was October. The Roaring Twenties were in full swing when *Vogue* featured on its

cover the first ‘little black dress’ designed by Coco Chanel (Figure 1) and ushered in the long reign of a fashion staple” (Eschner, 2017). This iconic dress was highly praised and talked about: “*Vogue* also said it would become ‘a sort of uniform for all women of taste’. Well, that was one spot-on prediction for sure” (Goldstone 2017). This dress was simple and elegant yet held power, something that many women weren't used to. This was the dress for women who finally wanted to speak up for themselves and ditch the long gowns and corsets. It turns out that not only her designs but: “her timing was of course, perfect. Because the dress was released in the Great Depression era, where simple and affordable was key. Later, during the war, textiles and fabrics were rationed, and the simple black dress remained the outfit of choice, as you could be elegant without breaking the bank” (Goldstone, 2017). This dress was iconic for its time and was a much-needed cultural change.

Not only did Coco Chanel influence women of all classes, but she inspired generations. Designers during and after her were inspired: “Another famous designer came along after the war and firmly cemented the little black dress in fashion history. I’m talking of course about Christian Dior, who truly changed women’s fashion with his New Look” (Goldstone, 2017). Designers didn’t keep the same exact black dress instead they added their own touches: “Full skirts and cinched waists gave the LBD a sexier update, and it wasn’t long before Hollywood stars adopted the style on and off screen.” (Goldstone, 2017). There is an iconic movie that most thought was the beginning of the “LBD”: while I’m on the topic of movies, let’s go back to the previously mentioned *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* in 1961. There’s no arguing it’s one of the most famous dresses in cinematic history. Come on, is there a more iconic scene than the one of Audrey munching on a croissant and sipping coffee while admiring Tiffany’s jewelry, all the while wearing her Givenchy dress from the previous night’s party? (Goldstone, 2017). This

movie is still one of many people's favorite movies, especially when it comes to fashion (Figure 2). This also shows how the media and technology has a big role in what is fashionable and for how long. The "LBD" is a classic, can be worn in any weather by anyone of any age. This dress was really a pivotal part in fashion history.

Coco Chanel is admired by many for her ability to do and create whatever she saw fit. She went against society norms and created an iconic look that lives on to this day. Most if not all women have a little black dress in their closet. Its elegant, charm allows it to be worn to almost any occasion. She was able to get women of all classes to wear the same thing, this rarely happens. Especially for the time she created the LBD, in the 1930's. During this time, it was important for women to dress to identify their social class. Her chilled and poised look was iconic then and still is to this day.

Images

Figure 1:



Description: Coco Chanel in "LBD"

Url :

https://www.google.com/search?q=coco+chanel+little+black+dress+vogue+1926&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS869US869&sxsrf=ALeKk02rZm-cHKjpo_kcoprrjaSdb4Tkpw:1615358990478&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=EQpNBy493hitKM%252CeJQYNEdQlsewNM%252C_&vet=1&usg=AI4_kRCJbnBtjo2XfKURn28izsx4fveug&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj-jr-WkaXvAhXYXc0KHSbOCjgQ9QF6BAgJEA&biw=1366&bih=625#imgrc=EQpNBy493hitK

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Figure 2:



Description: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" LBD

Url:

https://www.google.com/search?q=breakfast+at+tiffany%27s+lbd&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS869US869&sxsrf=ALeKk01axOa_fa9vgkCeHbYKbQJZ0n3HnA:1615359067177&source=lnms&tbnisch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjxuYi7kaXvAhVCU80KHd0gBsgQ_AUoAnoECAEQBA&biw=1366&bih=625#imgrc=fQK88H_ege4-wM

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