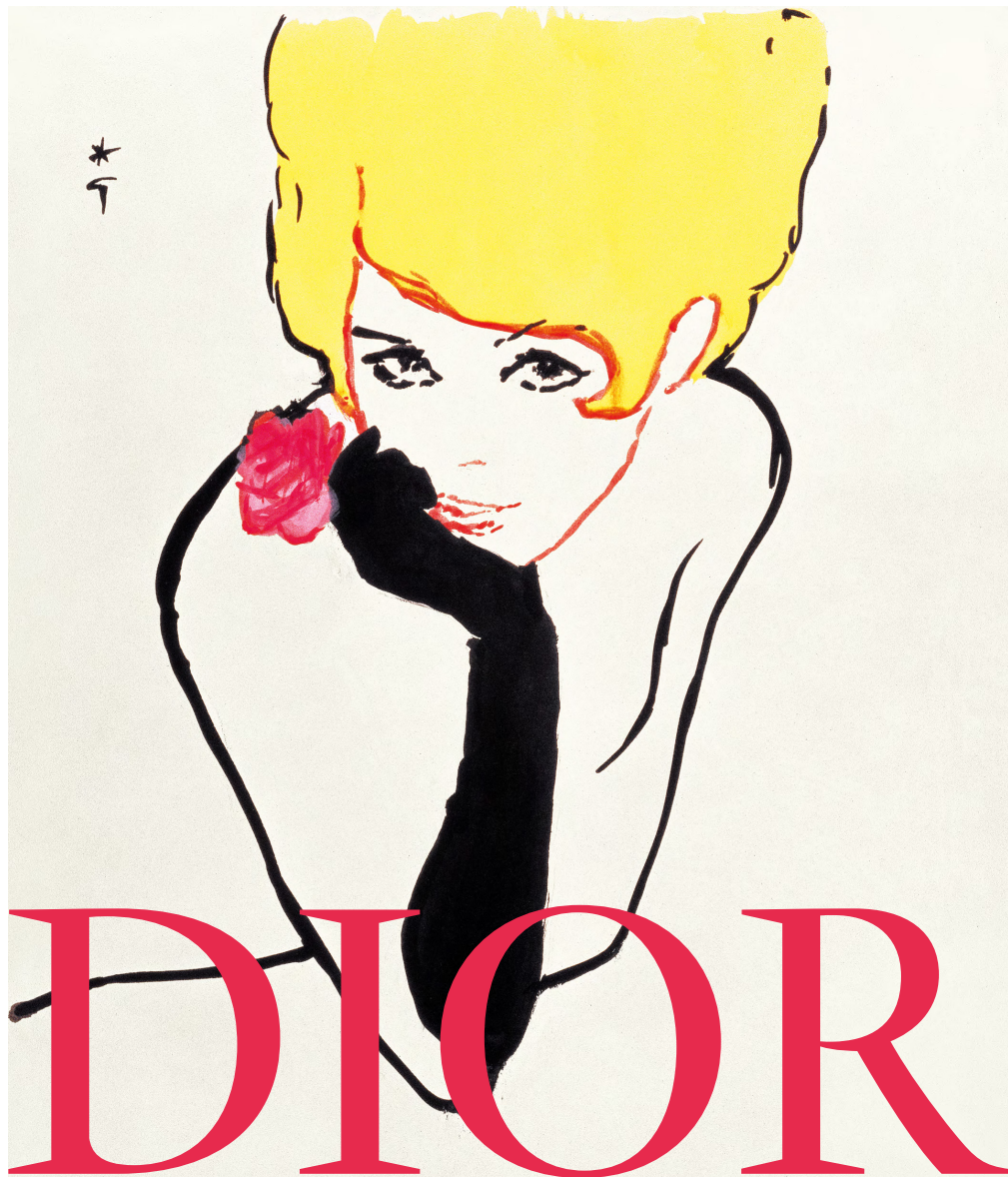


MUSÉE CHRISTIAN DIOR – GRANVILLE



DIOR EN ROSES

5 JUIN – 31 OCTOBRE 2021

Dedicated to the most glorious of flowers, which was also one of Christian Dior's favourites, the *Dior and Roses* exhibition can be seen in his childhood home, the *Les Rhumbs* villa in Granville. The rose inspired the flower-woman silhouette, initially imagined in the garden in Granville, before it bloomed in 1947 at the Dior fashion house's first show. Its scent also features in the many perfumes created from 1947, including the first fragrance, *Miss Dior*.

The word "rose" refers not only to a flower, but also to a colour: pink. It is the colour of the family home, with its "*pastel pink roughcast walls*" (as Dior himself described them). It echoes the delicate shade of the fragrant flowers that he admired in the rose garden added by his mother, Madeleine. It is the colour of childhood, that of *Les Petites Filles Modèles* ("Good Little Girls"), the famous novel by the Countess of Ségur published as part of the *Bibliothèque Rose* collection. In 1939, this book inspired a dress by Christian Dior, who at the time was a pattern cutter for fashion designer Robert Piguet.

The evocation of childhood and the garden in Granville is followed by an exploration of Christian Dior's "other" gardens, which were inspired by the first: the garden in Milly-la-Forêt, south of Paris, then his last garden in Montauroux (Provence), which allowed him to "*find, in another climate, the enclosed garden that protected my childhood.*" Roses were present there, just as they were in the creations of his artist and poet friends: Raoul Dufy, Salvador Dali, Léonor Fini, Christian Bérard and Jean Cocteau also adopted the rose and its pink colour, both so versatile in the worlds of poetry, art and fashion, which in this case were closely connected.

From pale pink to redder shades, sometimes associated with the world of little girls, sometimes with that of the femme fatale, pink was constantly used by Christian Dior and his successors in the Haute Couture designs and accessories selected for the exhibition: jewellery, scarves, bags, shoes... There are many variations from different periods and different designers: Yves Saint Laurent, Marc Bohan, Gianfranco Ferré, John Galliano and Raf Simons in the past, and Maria Grazia Chiuri today, have adapted them skilfully for their times.

Finally, the exhibition closely links the designer's family history and his career, highlighting the exceptional character of his beloved younger sister, Catherine, who worked with flowers, and who supported and inspired her brother.



La villa Les Rhumbs © Benoît Croisy; coll. ville de Granville / La pergola du jardin Christian Dior © Ambroise Tézénas / Jardin de la falaise du jardin Christian Dior © Ambroise Tézénas

Ground floor



ROSE BUDS: A CHILHOOD IN THE GARDEN - «*I drew flower-women: blossomed full busts, slender waists like vines and wide skirts blooming like corollas*».

Pink, the colour of the rose, is also the colour of childhood, that of *Les Petites Filles Modèles* (“Good Little Girls”), the famous novel by the Countess of Ségur published as part of the *Bibliothèque Rose* collection. In 1939, this book inspired Christian Dior’s first creation to gain the interest of the press. At the time, he was a pattern cutter for fashion designer Robert Piguet. This design, with its swirling skirt, prefigured Christian Dior’s *New Look*, the line that launched the Dior fashion house and its style in 1947, based on the corolla silhouette resembling a circle of flower petals. The success of the “flower-woman” shows the importance of the couturier’s childhood garden in inspiring his creations, illustrated by a selection of floral and flower-inspired designs.

The family photographs show that life was lived as much outdoors as inside the house, where the main lounge was decorated with artwork and objets d’art chosen by Madeleine Dior: “*Behind the glass, marquesses were squeezed in alongside shepherdesses: Meissen porcelain figurines, their skirts decorated with roses and lace (...)*.”

A set of four paintings by painter Paul César Helleu (1859-1927) reminds us that in Granville, the garden is closely connected with the sea, as Dior remembered: “*the property directly overlooked the sea, which was visible behind the railings, and it was exposed to all the storms, just like my life, which has not been one of tranquillity*”.



Arthes, 11C, printemps-été 1953 © Benoit Coisy, coll. ville de Granville



ROSES IN THE GARDEN - “*Having inherited my mother’s passion for flowers, I was happiest in the company of plants and gardeners. This attraction even influenced my reading choices, and more than anything, I loved learning by heart the names and descriptions of flowers in the Vilmorin-Andrieux colour catalogues.*”

This winter garden, which Madeleine Dior added to the house in 1907, offers a panoramic view of the landscaped areas of the garden.

A bed of *Jardin de Granville* roses adorns the edge of the large lawn. The botanical origins of these flowers come from the *pimpinellifolia* rose, which grows in the wild on the coast around



Granville. Created by Jérôme Rateau for the company André Eve and known for its exceptional flowers, the *Jardin de Granville* rose is now grown for Parfums Christian Dior in La Haye-Pesnel, in the heart of the Granville area, just a few kilometres from the museum. In the Christian Dior garden, this new rose bed complements the original rose garden, located not far from the pergola designed by Christian Dior.

CHRISTIAN DIOR'S GARDENS - *"That was the start of my quest to find a house for myself. What I wanted was neither a château nor a weekend villa for Parisians, but a real rural home, born of the land, made for life in the fields, with a stream nearby if possible."*

Even as a *Grand Couturier* (Paris-based haute couture designer), Christian Dior wanted his countryside homes to feel like rustic, traditional rural dwellings, pursuing the *"ideal of a Rousseau-style cottage"*. Once again, his romantic inspiration came from his memories of the house and garden in Granville. He liked the *Moulin du Coudret* in Milly-la-Forêt, south of Paris, because it was undeniably reminiscent of the *Les Rhumbs* villa, being *"isolated and surrounded by water"*. Around it was a garden which he wanted to be *"as simple, as modest as the little gardens of peasant homes along the roads in my beloved Normandy (...). With just the sight of my flowers, my channels and my little pond, I can hear the sound of the Milly-la-Forêt bells in peace"*. The garden of La Colle Noire in Provence, a property that he acquired in 1950 a few years before his death in 1957, allowed him to *"find, in another climate, the enclosed garden that protected my childhood"*.



Christian Dior dans la cour du Moulin du Coudret, à Milly-la-Forêt © Droits réservés

"(...) my house in Provence is in Montauroux, near to Callian, where fifteen years ago a lucky star allowed me to find tranquillity and prepare a new existence. It is simple, sturdy and noble, and its serenity is suited to the period of my life that I will have to face in a few years."

LA COLLE NOIRE: A DREAM OF NATURE

- When renovating and improving *La Colle Noire*, Christian Dior sought an elegant, neoclassical feel. The entrance hall is paved with pebbles in the

pattern of a wind rose, in memory of the *Les Rhumbs* villa (this pattern appears in the tiles of the bow window adjacent to the office of Christian Dior's father). Inside, he furnished *La Colle Noire* with 18th-century furniture, such as this screen decorated with flower vase and potpourri motifs.

In the haute couture collections, cascades, garlands and festoons of roses, along with long, rose-coloured dresses, evoke fairytale princesses and rococo shepherdesses. Christian Dior's successors would also draw greatly on this historical inspiration.



Robe en tulle brodé, Christian Dior par Maria Grazia Chiuri P.A.V. printemps-été 2020 © Lazizi Humani

First floor

ROSE DE PARIS

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artistic scene. Around “*Jean Cocteau, who towered over all avant-garde endeavours like a lighthouse, illuminated everything, explained everything,*” a constellation of artists, musicians, writers and poets gravitated. This group, who became Dior’s close friends, included the composer Henri Sauguet, the poet Max Jacob, the set designer Christian Bérard, and the painters Raoul Dufy and Léonor Fini. Thus acquainted with all the forms of artistic expression, Dior chose to open a gallery in the late 1920s and passionately promoted the creations of his artist friends: “*Our ambition was to exhibit, alongside the masters we admired the most (Picasso, Braque, Matisse, Dufy), the painters who we knew personally and already held in high esteem (Christian Bérard, Salvador Dali, Max Jacob, the Berman brothers...).*” In Dior’s time as a fashion designer, these works were a major source of inspiration for him. A favourite theme in both couture and decor during the Roaring Twenties, roses were also the flower of poets.



Ensemble *Marbled Wood*, H.C. printemps-été 1998 © Laziz Hamani

CATHERINE DIOR, POUR L'AMOUR DES ROSES

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DIOR EN ROSES

at 30 Avenue Montaigne.

Catherine lived an exceptional life, and she both supported and inspired Christian as his muse-confidante. Her career working with flowers is evoked by the monochrome “bouquet of dresses” presented in this room. She also inspired composer Henri Sauguet’s “impromptu waltz, *Miss Dior*”. The *Miss Dior* perfume bottles in blue, white and red Baccarat crystal evoke Catherine’s involvement in the French Resistance. It was because of this that she later became a flower trader then a flower farmer: a career attributed to her when she returned from her deportation. “*My younger sister, with whom I had shared months of gardening and hardship in Callian, had been arrested, then deported in June 1944*”, the designer remembers. It was to this region of Callian, in Var, around twenty kilometres from Grasse, that the Diors withdrew in 1940. After the war, it was also here that Catherine farmed roses for fragrance production. In 1950, Christian Dior acquired *La Colle Noire*, a few kilometres from his sister’s house, with the same plan to plant and cultivate flowers there, in the Grasse tradition.

CATHERINE DIOR: FOR THE LOVE OF ROSES - The *Miss Dior* dress and the perfume of the same name were dedicated to Catherine Dior, the couturier’s sister.

This name was given by Mitzah Bricard, the designer’s muse, who cried out “*Look, here’s Miss Dior!*” when she saw Catherine arriving



Portrait de Catherine Dior avant guerre © Droits réservés



Robe *Mamouza*, H.C. printemps-été 1979 © Laziz Hamani



SWEET SHADES OF ROSES - “Every woman should have pink in her wardrobe. It is the colour of happiness and femininity. I like it for scarves and blouses, as well as for little girls’ dresses. It is a delightful colour for suits and coats, and marvellous for evening dresses.”



Robe: Météore, H.C. automne-hiver 1961
© Benoit Croissant, ville de Granville

dresses.”

From the simplest daytime outfits to the most sophisticated evening wear, Christian Dior used shades of rose extensively. Today, pink (which shares the name “rose” with the flower in French) is also heavily used in the collections created by Kim Jones, creative director of *Dior Homme*.



THE SAND ROSE AND SURREALISM - Steeped in artistic references, Christian Dior approached the theme of the rose in his couture creations similarly to the Surrealists, for whom the queen of flowers was also an inexhaustible source of inspiration, as were marine elements such as beaches, sand, cliffs and rocks, which were strongly present in Christian Dior’s childhood. Dresses

were his “chimeras” and his flower-women were cousins of Salvador Dalí’s *Women with Heads of Flowers* in enigmatic landscapes, “desolate expanses” that undoubtedly reminded Christian of the beaches of his childhood. Christian Dior was among the first gallery owners to exhibit Dalí’s work in France between 1931 and 1934, in association with Jacques Bonjean then Pierre Colle. For Dalí, the flower-woman was connected to the sea and to his mythological references, like the goddess Venus. Dalí’s compatriot, the Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí, built a house inspired by the shapes of the sea, representing a wave on a stormy day, which would be remembered by Emilio Terry, an architect and a friend of Christian Dior. Architecture, surrealism and haute couture were finally united when Christian Dior stated that he wanted “*my dresses to be ‘constructed’, moulded to the curves of the female body whose contours they will stylise*”.



POP ROSES - In 1960s fashion, roses seemed to be dethroned by a profusion of other flowers: camellias, hibiscus, daisies, chrysanthemums, wisteria, dahlias, peonies, water lilies, moonflowers and palmettes. Of folk, exotic or abstract inspiration, these



Illustration de René Gruau pour *Miss Dior*, 1983
© René Gruau - www.renegrchau.com

flower patterns appeared in popular prints and embroidery. The Flower Power years brought the launch of the *Miss Dior* ready-to-wear line by Philippe Guibourgé, giving rise to scarves printed with illustrations by René Gruau in which pink, in its brightest shades, was a prevalent colour.

For the Parfums Christian Dior publicity campaigns, Gruau made skilful use of all the graphic possibilities offered by bright pink and vivid rose shades. In the 1980s, Marc Bohan, Dior’s creative director from 1961 to 1989, took inspiration from American painter Jackson Pollock’s drip paintings, to create a pure pink colour explosion. A few decades later, John Galliano paid tribute to René Gruau, evoking the dynamism of his pictorial style.

LA ROSE D'OR

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THE GOLDEN ROSES - Roses and rose windows are traditionally associated with a mystical meaning. The rose motif in gold lamé, in or nué goldwork or in silver embroidery evokes the verse of writer Robert de Montesquiou (1855-1921) recalling the age-old custom in which “*To the most deserving Queen of the year / The Supreme Pontiff gives the Golden Rose*”.

Sacred art was part of Christian Dior's upbringing, and in 1933, at Jacques Bonjean's gallery, he saw Giuseppe Capogrossi's *Annunciation*, presented in this room. This image was just one of his spiritual references. Its colours, pale tinted grey and subtle lilac, feature in several designs given the name Saadi. This name evokes the lines (inspired by the Persian poet who wrote *The Rose Garden* in the 13th century) of the poetess Marceline Desbordes-Valmore (1786-1859): “*This evening, my dress is still perfumed with them... / Breathe in their fragrant memory that lingers on me.*” Diorissimo, Christian Dior's first posthumous perfume, was decorated with golden roses prefiguring Gianfranco Ferré's baroque “*flower-woman*”.

Second floor

FEMME-FLEUR, FEMME-ROSE

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DIOR EN ROSES

FLOWER-WOMAN, ROSE-WOMAN - A comparison of the *Chérie* dress (spring-summer 1947) and the *Gruau* dress (autumn-winter 1989) reveals the ambiguity of roses. With its pale colour, pleated skirt and sober silhouette, the *Chérie* dress, worn by actress Dominique Blanchard, evokes the world of childhood, whereas the *Gruau* sheath dress in flamboyant pink is

the embodiment of the *femme fatale*.

STARS EN ROSE

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DIOR EN ROSES

ROSES FOR THE STARS - Drawing on Christian Dior's theatrical and cinematographic influences, the “*flower-woman*” aspired to the dramatic passion of the great heroines. Inspired by dance, she was dressed for the ball. Therefore, this femininity was embodied not only by models, but also by dancers, singers and actresses. Ingrid Bergman, Gina Lollobrigida, Jean Seberg

and Maria Callas magnified the beauty of the rose-coloured, rose-shaped and rose-embellished designs they wore on or off stage.

BOUQUET DE ROSES

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DIOR EN ROSES

BOUQUET OF ROSES - From pale rose to redder shades, pink has been constantly used by Christian Dior and his successors in haute couture designs and accessories. Roses might inspire a collection or a silhouette, or they might simply appear on scarves, bags,

hats, gloves, jewellery, make-up, nail varnishes or lipsticks, which along with perfumes, make up the palette of the “*flower-woman*”.



Escarpins 1954 © Benoit Crispy coll. ville de Granville

AUX NOMS DE LA ROSE

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DIOR EN ROSES

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME - Roses and the associated shades of pink (a colour that shares the name “*rose*” with the flower in French) have been constantly used by Christian Dior and his successors, including in the names of designs.

From the Dior home to Christian Dior Museum

Built at the end of the 19th century, the *Les Rhumbs* villa was bought by Christian Dior's parents in 1906, a few months after the birth of their son the preceding year. His father, Maurice Dior, managed the prosperous family fertiliser production business in Granville. His mother, Madeleine, supervised the transformation of their home and took charge of landscaping the garden, where Christian Dior spent a safe and happy childhood. In his adolescence, Christian Dior saw himself as an architect, and was already showing his creativity alongside his mother by designing the fishpond, the pergola and the modernist-style garden furniture. In 1911, the Dior family moved to Paris, but would spend their summers in Granville. The 1929 crisis ruined Maurice Dior, forcing him to sell Les Rhumbs, which was bought in 1938 by the Granville town authorities.

Much later, during the 1980s, the idea of making *Les Rhumbs* into a site dedicated to the memory of Christian Dior emerged, on the initiative of curator Jean-Luc Dufresne (1949-2010), a distant cousin of the fashion designer. Thanks to the creation of the *Présence de Christian Dior* association in 1987, the family house was adapted to display the collections of the museum (under development at the time).

The museum opened to the public in 1997. All the spaces in the family home are devoted to its scientific and cultural programme. Every year, an exhibition on a different theme sheds new light on the life of Christian Dior and the creations of his fashion house, from 1946 when it was founded on Avenue Montaigne in Paris to the present day.

Christian Dior

Christian Dior was born on 21 January 1905 in Granville, Normandy, into a family that had made its fortune in fertiliser production. His parents envisaged him becoming a diplomat: he abandoned his dream of a career as an architect and started further studies at the Institut d'Etudes Supérieures in Paris. In 1928, he opened an art gallery, together with Jacques Bonjean. In 1931, Christian Dior lost his mother and his father was ruined. He joined Pierre Colle's gallery in 1932. The hard years that followed were marked by illness and financial difficulties. Encouraged by his friends, Christian Dior, who had a talent for drawing, learned fashion illustration and sold his sketches to milliners, couturiers, and newspapers including *Le Figaro*. He became a pattern cutter for Robert Piguet in 1938, then for Lucien Lelong in 1941.

In 1946, he joined forces with industrialist Marcel Boussac to create the Christian Dior fashion house. On 12 February 1947, the first collection was a huge success. It caused a revolution in fashion, baptised the New Look, because the silhouette with its flared skirts and cinched waists transformed the codes of fashion and femininity. The international press made Dior a world-famous name in just a few days. The couturier quickly expanded his fashion house by launching perfumes and accessories, and by conquering the international market, starting with the United States from 1948. When Christian Dior died in 1957, he was the most famous fashion designer of his time.

Support the Christian Dior Museum: join the *Présence de Christian Dior* association
www.museechristiandior.fr

All quotations are our own translations of extracts from Dior's autobiographical work: *Christian Dior et moi* (1956) and from *Dictionnaire de la mode* (1954).