

The BEAUTY



Marilyn Monroe – arguably the fragrance's biggest fan – poses with a bottle of Chanel No.5 on March 24, 1955 at the Ambassador Hotel in New York

PHOTO BOB BEERMANN, SUPPLIED BY CHANEL

THESE ICONIC BEAUTY HEROES DEFINED A GENERATION

Some products are so beloved they become cult classics in their own right. Here's our pick of those that are the stuff of beauty legend...

Words by FIONA EMBLETON



CHANEL N°5
EAU DE PARFUM

Like everything credited to the genius of Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel, her first fragrance re-wrote the olfactive blueprint. In 1921, 'soliflore' fragrances – those that smelt of a single flower – were all the rage. But Coco Chanel wanted to push creative boundaries with a scent that couldn't be attributed to any one thing in nature. Of all the samples created by perfumer Ernest Beaux, it was the fifth that captured her imagination, with over 80 ingredients, made up of notes such as sandalwood, vetiver, May rose, jasmine and aldehydes to add a champagne-like fizz – a first at the time. She called it, simply, No. 5, the epitome of low-key elegance and an ode to her lucky number. The fact that it side-steps smelling of any known flower, but is still instantly recognisable, only adds to its universal appeal. Now celebrating its centennial, Chanel No.5 redefines the word 'iconic'. ►