Dior’s full court press: Unveils uber luxe spa, fetes Cordelia de Castellane

By Godfrey Deeny - September 30, 2021

Talk about using brand power. Dior went into full court press in the first 48 hours of Paris Fashion Week – unveiling its new Cheval Blanc spa, feting its Dior Home and Kids creator Cordelia de Castellane, and unveiling a Miss Dior pop-up floral rose fantasy front on Avenue, the restaurant of the fashion industry on Avenue Montaigne.

Even before all those events, the house had also invited a gang of art critics and editors Tuesday morning to discover the impressive Jean-Michel Othoniel retrospective inside the Petit Palais, underwritten by Christian Dior Parfums.

Oh, in between all that, the house staged the latest vital runway show by its women’s wear designer and couturier Maria Grazia Chiuri, reviewed separately by FashionNetwork.com.

Five different events in two days, doubly impressive when you consider that Dior’s historic flagship boutique, studio and ateliers on Avenue Montaigne are in the midst of a major overhaul; and its new headquarters on the Champs-Élysées is being completed.

Dior Spa Cheval Blanc

No question about the wow-factor at the plush and pristine Dior Spa Cheval Blanc, located in the basement of LVMH’s new five-star hotel located on the banks of the Seine.
Like the rest of the hotel, which affords remarkable views of the Seine, Notre Dame and the Eiffel Tower, the spa was designed by Peter Marino, the preferred architect of LVMH chairman Bernard Arnault, and his wife Helene.

“I wanted maximum luxury, but fresh and unexpected,” explained Marino, dressed in his traditional after-hours naughty black leather biker look.

One brilliant solution: the splendid underground pool which ingeniously has elongated video screens along one wall reproducing the exact same view of the Seine, boats and bridges seen from the ground-floor. Subtly using the low ceiling to advantage to make the space seem twice as grand.

Unlike, so many big city spas, Dior Spa Cheval Blanc never feels claustrophobic – the light gold and ecru very easy on the eye. Plus, there are plenty of innovations – from the brown graphite bed to drain toxins; to the double treatment room for loving couples.

Every bed and massage table finished with Dior toile de jouy blue throws and the crispest linen sheets, embroidered with Monsieur Dior’s bon mots – *Au fond de chaque coeur sommeille un rêve*, meaning - 'At the bottom of your heart a dream is always dozing'.

All told, Dior’s new spa is probably the swishest and smartest urban enclave of its sort in any major city.

Ma Maison de Campagne

Cordelia de Castellane is more like an 'It Mum' than an 'It Gal'. She's a mum of four, and the designer of Dior’s kids, babies and objects departments. And she is only 40. Talk about overachieving.

This summer she designed and decorated the restaurant of the moment, Café Lapérouse on Place de la Concorde. On Monday, she had the great and the good at her book signing in Lapérouse of 'Ma Maison de Campagne'.

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Joining her for a meal of smoke salmon and fish with lemongrass sauce were the great and good of Paris. From Galeries Lafayette Nicolas Houzé to Nicolas Bazire, the 'Nurse Ratched' of LVMH; a score of top fashion and magazine editors; Antoine Arnault, an investor in Lapérouse, and Natalia Vodianova, who wrote the book’s forward.

"With a genealogical tree that includes the most illustrious aristocratic families in Europe, and an education among the Paris fashion elite, it's not so surprising that Cordelia incarnates good taste," writes Vodianova.

Ma Maison de Campagne, tag-lined as The Art of Living with the Colors of the Season, is a sumptuous record of de Castellane’s maximalist style in her cut-stone country house. Illustrated with photos of her throughout the year, with beautifully laid tables capturing her haute-eclectic taste that includes, bien sur, multiple examples of refined Dior glassware, ceramics and fabrics.

As one guest remarked, it's the sort of book that one’s wife looks at and responds by saying 'I hope we get an invitation for a weekend'.

Jean-Michel Othoniel’s Narcissus Theorem

The exhibition 'Narcissus Theorem' by Jean-Michel Othoniel in the Petit Palais that opened this week is the latest expression of Christian Dior Parfums truly laudable project – Jardins Culturels, which has seen it renovate and restore important gardens in France.
“The show means an enormous amount to me. It was vital during the lockdown as it allowed me to imagine the future. And I’d really like to thank Christian Dior Parfums for being such a generous patron of the arts and this show,” Othoniel told FashionNetwork.com.

All told, 70 works, all but one created site-specific for the exhibition. From his brilliant blue gleaming river of bricks that runs up the stairs of the Petit Palais and golden pearl necklaces hanging in the museum’s garden to the gray steel grotto in the ground floor, ideal for meditation, to the marvelous Murano glass chandelier hanging in an Art Nouveau stairway, the first new installation in the building in almost a century.

“I wanted a joyful, optimistic and enchanting vision,” added Othoniel. He is possibly best known for his millennium glass bubble entrance way to Palais Royal’s metro station opposite the Louvre, beloved by thousands of tourists.

Next week, he receives the ultimate accolade in France, he will enter the Institut de France, as an academician. Or as they say popularly, he will become an *Immortal*.

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