

## PRESS RELEASE

### "Dandyisms 1808-2008, from Barbey d'Aurevilly to Christian Dior"

#### at the Christian Dior museum in Granville in 2008

Christian Dior's childhood home is situated in a remarkable cliff-top garden overlooking the sea, facing the Channel Islands. Laid out between 1906 and 1930 by Madeleine Dior and her son Christian, it offers a rare example of an artist's garden. The villa Les Rhumbs, a treasure trove of memories restored in its original 1920s style, is today a fashion museum, and the only museum in France to be devoted to a couturier. Every summer since 1997, it has hosted a temporary exhibition focusing on an aspect of the heritage of Christian Dior and his fashion house.

To mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly (1808-1889), who in 1845 proposed the first definition of dandyism in his work *Du dandysme et de Georges Brummel*, the Christian Dior museum presents the exhibition ***Dandyisms 1808-2008, from Barbey d'Aurevilly to Christian Dior***, from **1<sup>st</sup> May to 21<sup>st</sup> September 2008**. The exhibition brings together literature, art and fashion in an original interpretation of the influence of the "dandy attitude", a social and fashion trend that originated in England in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and combined sartorial refinement with an impertinent, tongue-in-cheek spirit.

The exhibition is presented over three levels.

The ground floor is devoted to a historical retrospective of dandyism, and juxtaposes portraits and documents with accessories (ties, fans, walking sticks, top hats, shoes) and garments (waistcoats, suits and frock coats) that are emblematic of this form of masculine elegance. Also presented are outfits belonging to iconic dandies from Barbey d'Aurevilly to David Bowie, via Honoré de Balzac, Charles Baudelaire, Sacha Guitry, Jean Cocteau and Alexis de Redé.

A parallel is established between the haughty, studied attitudes of the dandy and the poses struck by Christian Dior's models as they were captured by leading fashion photographers, notably Cecil Beaton. The grand costume balls attended by Christian Dior and his dandy friends are richly illustrated with exhibits including fancy dress and ball gowns, on the first floor.

The evolution of the spirit of the dandy in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by the rise of an "androgynous dandyism" - a trend revisited by the House of Dior, with men's fashions (from Dior Monsieur to Dior Homme) sometimes being referenced by women's designs, which are exhibited around the Bar jacket. John Galliano, meanwhile, reinterprets masculine courtly elegance from the Renaissance to the 18<sup>th</sup> century - a new reading of men's dress that gives women a dandy-like allure.

These spectacular designs are presented on the top floor so as to highlight the masculine/feminine exchange over the centuries, and in particular on both sides of the English Channel.

The elegant attitude of the dandy was also expressed in meticulous personal grooming, and notably fragrance. For the first time, the exhibition presents a retrospective over 200 years of men's grooming, from the eau de Cologne worn by Napoleon to Vol de Nuit, Guerlain's fragrant homage to Saint-Exupéry, from Penhaligon's Blenheim Bouquet favoured by Sir Winston Churchill to Eau Sauvage by Christian Dior, which revolutionized men's fragrance in 1968.

#### Curators

Jean-Luc Dufresne, principal curator  
Barbara Jeauffroy-Mairet and Vincent Leret, associate curators

#### Useful information

**Opening times:** 10 am – 6:30 pm every day

#### Admission

Admission: 6€, free for children under 12; Concessions: 4€ (disabled visitors, job-seekers, students); Groups: 3€ (one free admission per group of 20 people).

#### Publication

Catalogue of the exhibition

#### Press contact

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