Carine Roitfeld: "I think black is very Parisian"

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What is it about Parisian women? How do they look so effortlessly chic in just a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, so understated and cool?

To find out, CNN Style’s host Derek Blasberg went to meet his friend Carine Roitfeld during Paris Fashion Week. The former editor of French Vogue is a consummate style icon who continues to influence fashion trends around the world.

In an intimate interview, republished here in FashionMag, she gives her view on Parisian style and opens up about her own relationship with fashion.

WHAT STYLE MEANS TO HER

"This is a very difficult question. Is it the way you dress, or the way you’re moving with your dress? It’s elegance, but where does elegance start, where does elegance finish? It’s very difficult, it’s like what is sexy what is not sexy - between sexy and vulgar there is a very fine line. I’m a bit like Coco Chanel, elegance is always, when you’re leaving you look in the mirror, you always have to take off something."

THE FIRST THINGS THAT COME HER MIND WHEN SHE THINKS OF PARIS?

"I think black is very Parisian, you know why, because French ladies don’t want to take risks and funnily dressing all in black is very easy. We learn this from mother and grandmother, a lot a lot of black, when you bought a coat you bought a black coat, maybe because it’s more classic."

ON FRENCH WOMEN BEING CLASSIC

"French ladies are quite classic, classic with an edge. That’s something I heard, we’re a fantasy for a lot of people, “the French girl”. I don’t exactly know what this fantasy is about, I think you all see Catherine Deneuve in Belle du jour and this is the reason you have this fantasy about French girls but we’re not all like Catherine Deneuve."

ON LINGERIE

"French ladies love lingerie, so as a French girl I love lingerie. This is our secret part, you’re not supposed to see but it is very important for us. So I love a good bra, knickers, I love slip dresses, tights, we love to have protection,}
it is something very particular but it is very French."

**ON HOW MANY FASHION SHOWS SHE HAS ATTENDED**

"I totally forgot. Some people keep all the invitations, me I don't keep anything. I don't keep the clothes, people think I have a huge wardrobe, I don't, I have a small wardrobe."

**ON HER STYLE**

"Funnily I think after all these years I know I'm a bit of a grandma, I know my style, my style is always the same, this is not new I have had it many years but it still suits me."

**ON FRENCH GIRLS' STYLE**

"We are not causal but I think there is something about cool, cool attitude, we are not always with a perfect nail, perfect blow dry, some American girls mostly are. We are not just for the perfection, perfection is not very sexy."

**ON FLIRTING**

"French girl doesn't only imply a way of dressing, it's a way of talking, it's a way of sitting, flirting also, flirting is very important in France. We always try to flirt. It keeps you in a good mood, for you it keeps your attention. For French people the eyes of the other one are very important."