

THE SECRET OF  
**CHANEL**  
**No.5**



# JASMINE

**F**or the first time, a couturier revolutionizes the insular world of perfume by creating in 1921 her own fragrance, the first of its kind. Coco Chanel seeks, in her own words, “a woman’s perfume with a woman’s scent.” Her scent should be as important as her style of dress. Coco Chanel calls upon Ernest Beaux, perfumer to the Czars. In search of inspiration, Ernest Beaux ventures as far as the Arctic circle, finding his muse in the exhilarating air issuing from the northern lakes under the midnight sun. The couturier encourages him to be ever more audacious, demanding still more jasmine, the most precious of essences.



**H**e composes a bouquet of over 80 scents for her. An abstract, mysterious perfume radiating an extravagance floral richness. For the first time, No5 transforms the alchemy of scent, through Ernest Beaux's innovative use of aldehydes, synthetic components which exalt perfumes, like lemon which accentuates the taste of strawberry. Aldehydes add layers of complexity, making No5 even more mysterious and impossible to decipher. No5, a code, an identification number, makes the sentimental names for the perfumes of the day seem instantly out of date. It receives its name because Mademoiselle Chanel prefers the fifth sample Ernest Beaux presents to her. For the first time, a perfume is presented in a simple laboratory flask. From the United States to Japan, the fragrance's fame spreads, it soon becomes the best-selling perfume in the world.



**No5** pioneers a new form of advertising in the world of fragrance. For the first time, fragrance is advertised at the Super Bowl finals. No5 enjoys dizzying success. Jacques Helleu, artistic director of Chanel between 1965 and 2007, features celebrities and incarnations of the iconic perfume. A perfume created in 1921 is still the best-selling and most famous fragrance in the world. No5 resists the whims of fashion and the passage of time, as if Mademoiselle Chanel had found the formula for the feminine eternal.



1921

1924

1950

1970

Pure, austere, as bare as a vial, the minimal lines of the No5 bottle distinguishes it from the mannered bottles of the 1920s. Its sobriety ensures its timelessness. By some accounts, its stopper, cut like a diamond, is inspired by the geometry of the place vendome. The original bottle adapts imperceptibly to its time. No5 become an icon of the 20th century.



Since Chanel has long made a variety of numbered perfumes, No5 was always been usefully specific. No5 was all you needed to say - not even Chanel

the simple white label with its sans serif lettering is largely unchanged from 1924. It remains a potent visual cue for the brand because it reinforces an ethos of sleek functionality.

While Coco changed the bottle in 1924 to the square profile with faceted corners, the critical addition was the "invisibility" afforded by its large, flat surface. These behaved as windows onto the juice itself.

A drop of N°5, and nothing else - CHANEL



“A woman who doesn’t wear perfume has no future.” - Coco Chanel

