



Chemises de dentelles, cache-corset brodé et pantalons de dessous de la Belle-Epoque

*« Prou-frou & dentelles » One hundred years of lingerie
(1880-1980) at Le Château de Louvignies*

Château de Louvignies

Open : Sundays September & October from 12h till 18h

Entrance : château+ parc +expo ; 8 €

Information : Florence de Moreau

Tel 0477/ 45 40 27

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Château de Louvignies



Chambre des marquises : Crinoline Ball Gown, laced up in the back, in silk and gold thread together with glass pearl beading ; ceremonial petticoat with lace frill ; silk stockings, brocade of gilt pearls ; whale bone corset, laced in the back with satin and embroidered roses.

This autumn, the château de Louvignies invites you for their exhibition on a light, seductive and very interesting theme:

« *Prou-frou et dentelles* »

The history of women through their lingerie, from the Belle-Epoque to the 1980's !

A hundred years of lingerie in the private chambers of the château,
a true tonic of gaiety !

From the white drawing room to the private chambers of the marquise, you will discover fineries of elegance, darlings of the night, embroidered satin corsets, rustling petticoats, silk stocking adorned with pearls, to dancers of Charleston wearing reducing breast bras of the roaring 20's all the way to waist-clinchers and breast basques from de film d'Emmanuelle at the end of the 70's.

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La Belle Epoque, star of the show



Toilettes Diner dresses and evening gowns, appearing in La Mode Illustrée de 1883

Did you Know ?

The principle behind how to dress at the end of the XIXth Century, is the necessity to dress for every occasion and circumstance :

Ladies would change their clothing numerous times a day, the chamber maids would sew or un-sew the sleeves from dresses so as to vary their appearance throughout the day. Which resulted in the expression. « c'est une autre paire de manches », "something quite different".

The Ball Gown

At the end of the XIXth century, a very strict and proper era. The prudish bourgeoisie, buttoned up their dresses all the way up to their chins. Notwithstanding the fact that as we can see from the illustration of La Mode Illustrée 1883 together with the picture in the Press revue, the décolleté flourished in evening dress, which are classified as being Dressed for the occasion. To such an extent that its presence was indispensable for the opera for fear of not being allowed entry

And Underneath ???



Chambre des marquises. Ball Gown, silk shawl embroidered with large chrysanthemum on both sides, ostrich feather fan, pearly evening bag and wide frilly skirt, demonstrating the perfection of elegance of the « Belle-Epoque ».

Did you know ?

« Dressing up was a more complex matter as compared to arming a ship ? »



The silhouette must be accentuated through the use of a corset notwithstanding numerous layers of lingerie that go with it: firstly slipping on a chemise close to the skin, then a corset appropriate to the time of day and activity, a corset cover, garters, safety garters, stockings made of cotton lisle thread for the day, silk for the evening, lace pantalons, short under petticoat, in wool for winter and Egyptian cotton for the summer, an over petticoat with layered frills, often in taffeta silk, which require up to 16 meters of cloth, particularly serving the purpose of making a sound when in motion similar to a very pleasant wushing sound frou-frou in French ...on enfilait sa toilette ou sa robe !!!



La Belle-Epoque is the golden age of lingerie



Cambric ceremonial petticoat with two lace panels ; silk stockings adorned with chinese silk encrusted with gilded pearls ; whale bone corset, laced up the back with satin roses, coll : JP Rigault, casket of cristal flasks of smelling salts... to regain consciousness , from fainting due to being laced up too tight



The ladies of the Belle-Epoque, adore lingerie, It is the golden age of rustling swishing lingerie.

Between 1909 and 1914, wives would abandon respectable bustier white cotton and linen for the fashion worn by the « demimonde » of the time, such as Liane de Pougy who's every move was avidly followed by the press.

Women no longer wished to leave the business of seduction only to the professionals.....

An adorned mistress

They have dared and adopted silk and colour, but not too bright, black remained an exclusivity to the mistress.



Demi-mondaine parée

A taste of the exhibition

Short History of the corset and lingerie



Coll.JP Rigaut - © Christian MATHIEU

1880 the triumph of the corset

At the end of the XIXth century after three centuries of dictatorship, the corset reaches its climax : it suffocates more than ever the waists of women who can no longer bend down ... Auguste Rodin wrote « Without contest, the corset tyrannises the body, but nature, that never loses sight of beauty, adapts all the same ».

To be expected, men of the Belle-Epoque worshiped women with « hourglass silhouettes » strangled by their elegant satin corsets, wrote Béatrice Fontanel in his book « Corsets et Soutien-gorge ».

In 1870 it was understood that wearing them was beneficial to health, by keeping all internal organs in their rightful place, thus not deforming the abdomen.

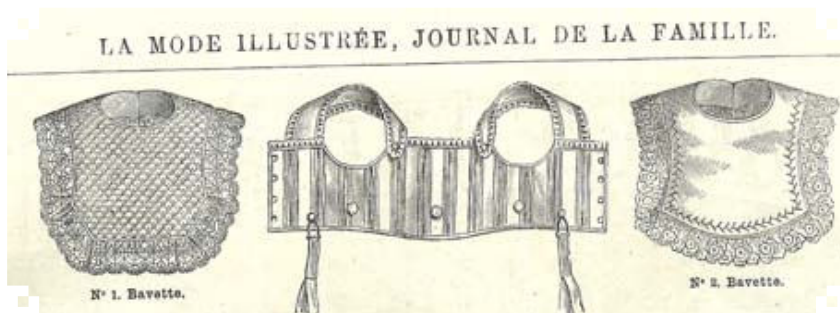
Corset without stomach

Furthermore, it was advised by doctors, that small girls as young as six should use them to keep their posture straight as it



was esteemed that their musculature was insufficient.

The « Juvenile » corset as written by a publicist said « propitious for the nurturing of a beautiful human being, a young woman will feel herself supported and toned for more comfort and less stress ... » Paradoxically, it was not un-common to read in the press about young girls, with wasp like waists strangled to death , on their way home from a ball , sometimes with burst livers. Displaced organs and miss-carriages where common place! It was only in 1910 with the creation of a « league of mothers against mutilation of the waist caused by corsets » that it was no longer recognised that they had any medical benefits.



In the center a breast feeding corset (La mode illustrée de 1883)



Coll.JP Rigaut - © Christian MATHIEU



As time progresses to the end of the century, more seductive than ever, corsets proliferate depending on the activity: very refined ball gown corset of white lace, the morning corset with less whale bone, the night corset with no whale bone, corset for breast feeding with gussets, corsets for singing, for dancing...made of soft sued adorned with pearls, cooler ones for the summer, made of silk net...

Come 1910, the perfect « S » silhouette so elegant and Parisian

is no longer in favour. Nicknamed « L'appareil Maudit » Paul Poiret makes the abandon of the corset his main stay, as he wrote in his memoirs : « the last of these damned contraption would be called "le Gaches-Sarraute". Clearly, I have always known women to be proud of their assets and at the same time obstructing them by camouflaging them and even altering their very appearance. The corset creates just two main parts to the body, on the one hand the bust, the neck, the breasts, and on the other, the complete train and bustle behind them; in such a manner as two large lobes, pulling a cart» .

Through Paul Poiret and the fashion stylist, Madeleine Vionnet, and also the influence of les « costumes orientaux » designed by Léon Bakste , and seen through the performances of the "Ballets Russes" by Serge Diaghilev in Paris, that the corset no longer sings with the swan any more. The celebrated American dancer, Isadora Duncan, bare foot and wearing just a simple tunic , brings into fashion the « Greek style » and frees the body from any constraints. Multi layered skirts and corsets slowly but surely retire to the back of the dressing cupboard.

The 1914-18 war obliges women to take men's jobs in the fields and factories.

A totally new style of clothing is indispensable: the bomb girls work 13 hour days, including Sundays to maintain munition supplies needed on the front.

Functional day time working cloths are replaced with more feminine attire for the evening, a reaction to the uncertain future of life as we know it, peppered with effervescence !

Thus in 1917 women emancipated . In England we see the appearance of female Police-men, in France it is female tram conductors wearing caps and tunics, while the Americans arrive on the front to look after the wounded wearing short permed hair and...smoking !

In order to assist the War industry Board, they no longer wear wire in their corsets which collectively reaps 28,000 tons of metal, enough to make two battleships.



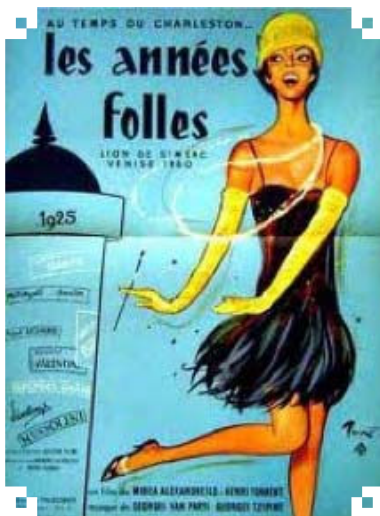
Liberation 1918

Having assumed so many responsibilities and a taste of independence, women are then kindly asked to return to household chores and make children ! Naturally a demographic crisis erupts ! But the consequence of those sad times provided them with a taste of independence that they were not about to let go.

Women cut their hair, smoke, wear trousers ... and adopt the « Tom Boy Look ». Fashion goes for narrow hips and a flat chests.

To conform to this fashion « Bandage bras » reduce bust proportions. Chinese silk cloth seduce in white, black, cream and pink.

The roaring 20's : the tube look



Euphoria is abundant: bars and night clubs make these modern women dance to the rhythm of Jazz, their Charleston dresses, short and revealing bears there legs, their backs, their shoulders ...and for the first time they start shaving their body hair!

The perfect role model was Greta Garbo with her slim shape, her soft satin like skin, her masculine hair cuts, her deep sensual voice all this made a world of difference for 1920's womanhood : more and more women do exercises, play tennis, straddle their bicycles, climb aboard their splendid motor cars and they travel more and more frequently.

They therefore require under garments that allow them freedom of movement :



*To learn morevisit the
exhibition « Prou-frou et dentelles »
at Château de Louvignies*

Quick insight of 100 years of lingerie

1880-1900

The corset rules, with whale bone reinforcements, boxwood and steel strangle the waist to a wasp like figure.

They come in all shapes and sizes, for nuptials, balls, the morning, riding....

1889 : Herminie Cadoll patents the 1st Brassiere (like two wicker tea strainers !) It was not a great success and the name only made its appearance in the dictionary in 1920.

1914-18 : The 1st World War

Women take the place of men in the fields and factories : they liberate themselves from the corset that impedes their movement, no longer do they have chamber maids to help them dress.

They participate in more and more sport: tennis and cycling require a fundamental change. Long split knickers are replaced with shorter closed ones.

They use their lingerie to tatters.



Coll. JP Rigaut (corset Caudry)



Coll. JP Rigaut

1920 : The roaring 20's

Women become emancipated, more masculine, cut their hair, restrict their bosom and wear trousers : the Tom Boy

The bandage Bra reduces the bosom.

The development of co-ordinated underwear, bras and knickers are on display . Colours abound !

Fin des années 1930

Mae West defies the Hays code in American films where long kisses are frowned upon and visible cleavage is measured in mm.

The girdle replaces the corset.



1938 : Dupont of Nemours announce the discovery of Nylon : it's resistant, light, shiny, dries quickly.....and does not need ironing !

After having been used for lingerie, it is rapidly deployed in the military, for making ropes and parachutes for soldiers.

1940-1945

Due to restriction, women have to adapt to the harsh conditions of the second world war : undergarment made of crochet, fake stockings made with a pencil line.

1943 : Howard Hughes launches the reinforced concentric circle bra : The bullet Bra.

At the Normandy landing the GI's bring with them the first « Nylons » created by Du Pont de Nemours (1942), but also chewing-gum !

1947 : Nylon reinvents lingerie : Marcel Rochas develops a new basque for his fetish actress Mae West.

1950 : The « New look Style » by Christian Dior exalts the luxuriousness of womanhood.

1939/1945 : Succès de la pin-up

Sees the success of the Pin-up with her ample bosoms perched high and thin waist: Marilyn Monroe, Sophia Loren, Jane Mansfield make men lust.



Coll. JP Rigaut
© Christian MATHIEU

It's soldier's and men's need of comfort that reintroduces the desire for large maternal breasts, is how the psycho-analysts explain it. With this comes the "bullet bra" that comes to the rescue of large ample breasts.

1956 : LeJaby invents the cheating « up-lifting » bra.



1960 *The swinging sixties*

A consumer society : House hold's have seen their revenues triple since 1945. There is the emergence of a new consumer with money in their pocket : Adolescents, become a new target market for the manufacturers.

1962 : The company « Dimanche » launch their first seamless stocking . In 1965, the name of the company is shortened to: DIM

The Mary Quant Mini dress take the fashion scene by storm and places the suspender-belt firmly in the back of the cupboard : Tights are all the rage.

Introduction of the contraceptive pill, which alters the woman's silhouette especially the bosom which rapidly increases in size (in 1970 the average bra size was 85 cm, by 1997 it has increased to between 90-95 !)

In May 68, burn their bras , breasts are liberated and point out from underneath Red Indian Tunics.

Flat chested women with long legs are at the height of fashion, sociologists record that the more society develops and is over fed, the more thin women are admired such as Jane Birkin and Twiggy.

Playtex create the Cross your heart bra, the first non metallic reinforced bra.(1969)



1970

Lingerie, when it exists, continues in the style of May 68 : it's natural, transparent, light; it's veiled, very thin, and hardly hugging.

This fashion of liberated breasts causes many closures of lingerie companies in France : At the end of the 60's, there were 200 companies which dramatically drops to 15 by the 90 's ! DIM dares to use all colours for tights.

1974 :The Film « Emmanuelle » with Sylvia Christel, in her sexy underwear, reignites the interest in fine seductive lingerie all over again.

1977 : AUBADE clearly demonstrates its objectives : seduce men !

1978 : the creation of the caraco camisole, light and sensual.

1980

The Lycra era by du Pont de Nemours , who manage to combine numerous natural fibres, which allow the cloth to stretch 5 fold and then return to its natural state when allowed: a sort of second skin !

A thankful return to girls with firm breasts, thin waists , and wide shoulders. Thanks to aerobics , women start sculpting their bodies.

1984, the designer Chantal Thomass is « the high priestess of breasts enshrined in lace » writes the admirable Béatrice Fontanel in her book "Corset et Soutien-gorge .1"

She re-introduces the beauty and pride of place of the seductive basque.



Parure de lingerie de Chantal Thomass



A white basque similar to the one worn by Brigitte Bardot in « Et Dieu créa la femme » by Roger Vadim.

Coll.JP Rigaut - © Christian MATHIEU



Photo G.Morleghe

Guêpière bustier en guipure à balconnets, guêpière en tulle brodé, caraco en dentelle et porte-jarretelles en tulle brodé (1975-1980)

1986, DIM discovers the solution to the slightly complicated suspender belt : the DIM UP, with its wide lace tops.

There are two distinctive tendencies for women : on the one hand soft comfortable cocoon like lingerie, and on the other the femme fatale, the seductress in black lace.

There is an explosion of lingerie: more and more women are wearing fine lingerie with an extraordinary choice of fabrics, and colourful patterns...

*In the Belle-Epoque, the corset lingerie style
would artificially sculpt a woman's body
to make them more desirable to men.*

*Since the 1980's, thanks to sport and the development of fitness,
women have taken consciousness of their shape
and model it to their own taste
and allows it to be discovered through their lingerie.*

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