

# Lingerie

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE FOR LINGERIE & SWIMWEAR PROFESSIONALS

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# French Connection

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT WOMEN THROUGH THE DECADES WORE UNDER THEIR OUTFITS? A NEW EXHIBITION FROM LINGERIE FRANÇAISE: 'LINGERIE FROM THE 19TH TO THE 21ST CENTURIES', TAKING PLACE THIS OCTOBER, TELLS THE STORY OF 100 YEARS OF FRENCH LINGERIE DESIGN THROUGH AN ARRAY OF MULTI-MEDIA EXPERIENCES. **CATHERINE ORMEN** - WELL-KNOWN FASHION HISTORIAN AND THE EXPO'S CURATOR - TALKS TO **LINGERIE INSIGHT** ABOUT THIS UNIQUELY SEDUCTIVE EXHIBITION AND ABOUT HER LIFE-LONG PASSION FOR LINGERIE.



**I** have always had a passion for lingerie and its fascinating history. This is because lingerie, like no other aspect of fashion, is a window into the private lives of women, as well as a unique marker of social change. Lingerie is like our second skin; it says far more about us in many ways than what we wear on the outside.

If you chart all the major events through history, you will see that there is this incredible fusion between society, fashion and fabric technology that totally revolutionises our lives as women. I think it is amazing to discover how attitudes to our health, sexuality and liberation have gone hand-in-hand with developments such as stretch girdles and the invention of Lycra®.

After studying fashion design at Studio Berçot, I decided to specialise in heritage conservation in France where I created the Fashion Museum of Marseilles, before becoming the 20th century fund manager at the Museum of Fashion and Textiles in Paris. I then became a freelance curator and teacher, writing books on the history of fashion.

I'd written about the history of lingerie in my book 'The History of Lingerie' with Chantal Thomass and I'd

studied the subject through my years in fashion heritage, so I was delighted when I was asked by Lingerie Française to curate this showcase in fashion capitals across the world.

It is an incredible opportunity for visitors to see numerous examples of iconic lingerie, while exploring the whole 100-year retrospective in one arena. We're shining a spotlight on the savoir-faire and creativity of French lingerie, which is famous well beyond French borders and worn by millions of women worldwide.

Following the success of the exhibition in Paris, this July, we're bringing it to the London Film Museum in Covent Garden, before continuing the dazzling spectacle in Dubai and Shanghai. The exhibition is open to everyone: we're expecting to see members of the public, as well as fashion and history professionals from all over the world.

This expo is a celebration of French lingerie over 100 years, focusing on technique and innovation in design, engineering, fabric and manufacture which helped to make new styles possible. The show begins with the boned corsetry of the 1880s, before the stretch fabric revolution at the turn of the century, and follows the evolution of lingerie through the



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pour  
ma ligne  
j'ai  
mon  
LOU!

Depuis que j'ai changé pour un LOU tout le monde me trouve plus élégante et moi, je me sens plus confortable. Chaque femme est sûre de trouver un LOU exactement à ses mesures qui lui procure une parfaite aisance et galbe, redresse, sépare les seins tout en restant strictement invisible sous la robe.

la moitié  
de votre élégance dépend  
de votre soutien-gorge

SATIN simple. 995  
SATIN doublé. 1345  
NYLON. 1345  
LOU dentelle. 1975  
LOU corsette. 1995

5

Une  
jolie poitrine  
\*  
en toutes circonstances!

pour votre ligne vous avez

**LOU**

6

et une nouveauté  
qui vous enchante.

LES SOUTIEN-GORGE  
**Simone PERÈLE**  
idéalisent votre poitrine

decades, finishing with a look ahead to the future.

We're drawing together collections from 11 of the famous labels represented by Promincor-Lingerie Française (the Association for the Promotion of Corsetry Industries): Aubade, Barbara, Chantelle, Empreinte, Lejaby, Lise Charmel, Lou, Passionata, Princesse Tam Tam, Simone Pérèle and Implicite. There are rare and iconic pieces from each era on display – 260 pieces in total – taken from the collections of these lingerie labels, including two very rare, early bras.

Other exhibition highlights include a 'divided' bra: a presentation of different band and cup sizes within one bra, as well as the various stages from design to retail display of a bra – explained through audiovisual media.

A 'tactilodrome' will allow the public to learn about various textures that Lycra® fibres provide, while video installations will bring to life the most iconic pieces with striking advertising imagery, films and photos from each era. The presentation will finish with a spectacular holographic striptease.

This is where a life-sized hologram will magically present a trans-historic striptease: undergarments worn by models will transform to represent the evolution of the feminine silhouette,

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body language and, of course, the lingerie of each era.

Visitors to the exhibition will learn some amazing facts about the history of lingerie. Did you know that the end of boned corsets and the first girdles and bras only came about because of a new scientific understanding of the need for physical activity and hygiene at the turn of the century?

Dramatic changes continued through the age of the flapper girls (garçonnes) in the 1920s, when curves were flattened rather than artificially shaped, with our breasts only being separated and

allowed to be shown in their natural contours in the 1930s. We basically had to wait decades to be allowed to breathe and move freely.

Of course, every era has its own star-

pieces. The 1950s was a really exciting 'golden era' for the French lingerie manufacturers. After the austere war years, women wanted to look healthy and curvy in a celebration of life and sexuality after their men – and peace – returned. Here is where we find these glorious curvaceous shapes, luxurious lingerie sets and beautiful fabrics and decoration.

Since that time, we've continued to see amazing new stretch and tactile fabrics, and a huge variety of shapes, colours and textures – now it is all about individual choice and a kind of lingerie for every occasion, which chimes perfectly with our multi-tasking femininity and the 'having it all' ethos of the new century. ♦

**Lingerie Française: 'Lingerie from the 19th to the 21st Centuries' is open from 2nd to 7th October 2012, at the London Film Museum, Covent Garden.**

### 1, 2, 3 & 7

A range of intimate apparel items, from the past 100 years, will be on display at the exhibition

### 4, 5, 6

Lingerie Française opens its archives of vintage adverts from the past century

