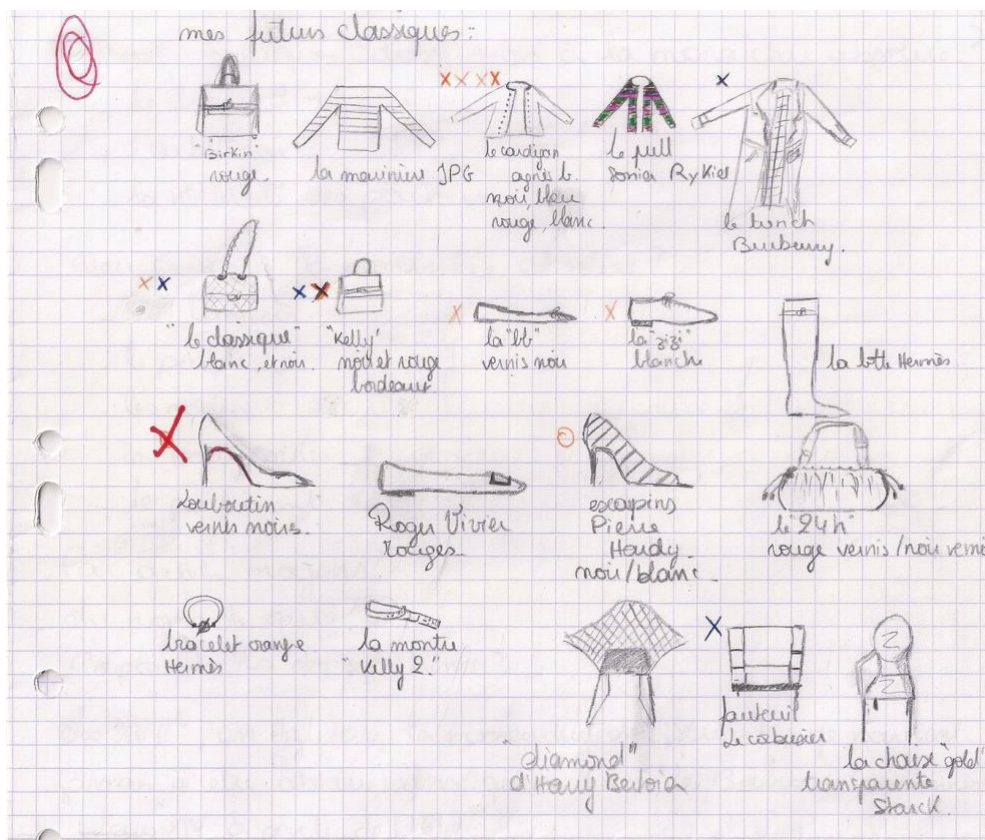


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A French Girl's Lifelong Quest for 19 Iconic French Girl Fashion Pieces

By Lolita Cros
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The original master list, compiled and illustrated at 14 years old. Courtesy Lolita Cros.

When I moved to New York in 2007, where I now work as a curator, I carried this piece of paper with me. I updated it each time I added one of those items to my wardrobe or home: In 2008, I got a blue Agnes b. cardigan and black Repetto ballet shoes, both coincidentally ideally suited to my school's dress code;

in 2009, a white Chanel bag for when I passed my exams; and in 2015, my boyfriend, bless him, saved up to buy me the Louboutins. Come to think of it, all this probably also doubles as an indictment of the lack of evolution in my personal style.

Each orange "X" I made on the master list meant I finally got the item, while a blue "X" meant I'll maybe get it if I'm nice to my mom. I can't deny that my mother is a big inspiration for me. A speech therapist, she has managed to raise four kids while helping to pass a law for deaf children to receive better education (two of my brothers are deaf). She's worked with autistic children and volunteered with the Red Cross to give language classes to immigrants. And she's done it all, without fuss, in a vintage Chanel jacket.

In 2016, I inherited one of my parents' Le Corbusier couches. I hate waste, and the idea of saving up for pieces that will last you the rest of your life appeals to me. My parents subscribe to that notion as well, except they are more willing to hunt for a bargain. Years ago, they'd gotten a really good deal on a whole set of Le Corbusier furniture, and had always intended to pass along the pieces to their kids. I made fun of my parents for always haggling, but this couch is such a great example why a little patience can be so worthwhile.

This list is quintessential not despite but specifically because a French girl can come up with these 19 items at 14 years old and still be chasing them 13 years later. I guess that's why these pieces are timeless. Of course, along the way my fashion tastes have swerved—there were the red Spice Girl sneakers circa 1998, or my fascination with Diesel, circa 2003. But I always came back to these classics. Everyone's style is influenced by where they're from and how they were raised, and I'm certain the fact that my mother forced me to wear *petite fille* *modelle* smock dresses until I was 10 years old probably imprinted on my sensibility. The French-ness of these 19 items is maybe best explained by the fact that, worn well, they allow women to be *négligée*, or a little shabby, and elevated at the same time. You can wear that Jean-Paul Gaultier Marinière sweater with running shoes or high heels, with jeans or a skirt. And the fact that you don't have to think too much when you put them on? That's the most French thing about them.