

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Chanel connects food, fashion in latest podcast episode

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The American and British chefs discuss equity, seasonal cooking and the intersection of culinary arts and design. Image credit: Chanel

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

French fashion house Chanel is out with a new podcast episode in its third edition.

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Featuring American chef Jon Gray and British chef Ruthie Rogers, the duo discuss equity, seasonal cooking and the intersection of food and design on the "Chanel Connects" series. Allowing listeners exclusive insights into another creative profession, the sixth installment of the current season puts epicurean excellence and high fashion in the same space, touting both as markers of culture.

Serving style

The third season of "Chanel Connects," a podcast focused on arts and culture, comprises of eight episodes, each showing two-person conversations between creatives.

Luxury favorites such as American actor Margaret Qualley and Spanish actor Penlope Cruz are among those who have appeared in past episodes of the weekly installment. This time, the spotlight duo comes from the world of food.

Ms. Rogers is the chef behind London's [River Caf](#), an eatery established in 1987 that dishes up seasonal concoctions and British ingredients. For the sixth edition, she speaks with Mr. Gray, a Bronx-based chef and cofounder of [Ghetto Gastro](#), a collective that plays with the shared elements between food, art and design.

For 25 minutes, the two delve into the podcast's underlying theme of philosophizing, unscripted, about the culture of tomorrow.

Through profound questions and an intimate conversation, the chefs reveal to listeners their backgrounds, passions and roles in the global culinary landscape.

Ms. Rogers and Mr. Gray share a love of their regions, uplifting the food and cultural traditions of the local ecosystems to their establishments. Mr. Gray specifically weaves in an element of justice.

"As I was a young adult going out to eat in Manhattan, I often saw or heard hip hop playing on the soundtrack of a restaurant, but then when you look around the restaurant, you don't see Black or Brown people dining," Mr. Gray says

in the episode.

"When you look in the kitchen, you don't see many Black or Brown people working, except maybe the dishwasher," he says. "So I was like what's the way that we could use food as a medium and a language to celebrate the culture of the Bronx which is largely [about] hip hop and also kind of create this Pan-African idea of food, taking things from the past and bringing it into the future?"

An intercontinental conversation uncovers the connections between two chefs

With cuisine as a communication tool and portal, the activist's food collective introduces people to the history and legacy of the often-overlooked borough in New York City.

In 2022, Mr. Gray's Ghetto Gastro published the *Black Power Kitchen*, an educational cooking read and ode to his neighborhood that uncovers how influences from the African diaspora feed into the Bronx's culinary culture. The mothers, music and stories that inform Black cooking practices are all laid out in the book.

Ms. Rogers has also completed a food-focused read.

The River Caf Lookbook, though grounded in different themes, is mindful of making the industry more equitable as well, encouraging young people to get in the kitchen by democratizing cooking knowledge.

Through education and sensorial imagery, the book brings to life the possibilities of making one's own meals and eating seasonally.

"The idea was that very often you open a cookbook, and you see a recipe which is very long, and it might put you off actually making it because it looks intimidating, and like so many ingredients," Ms. Rogers says in the episode.

To encourage lesser-experienced cooks, the chef placed recipes at the end of the collective, turning to lifestyle photographers to capture vibrant images of the dishes in an act of support for the age-old saying, "You eat first with your eyes."



Ms. Rogers speaks to the power of stylized photography in the episode, inviting novice cooks into the food world through visuals first, instead of complicated recipes. Image credit: Chanel/River Caf

Together, the pair show support for one another's conscious efforts to bring inclusivity and diversity to the table, as well as their many publications, ideas and, of course, food.

Finding a shared value of community and collaboration, the ways that people interact with what they put on their plates is brought forth, and in the end, the two champions of creativity agree that visual arts including Chanel's chosen form of fashion can help tell deeper stories that go beyond simply answering, "What's for dinner?"

Plating up podcasts

As consumers increasingly show favor for the form of media, luxury brands are beginning to unveil their own podcasts.

French fashion house Dior's "A.B.C. Dior" podcast for example is symbology-focused, bringing consumers an inside detailing of various house codes ([see story](#)).

Another high luxury label, Italian fashion house Gucci, has its own episodes for listening ([see story](#)). Organized

through the company's corporate responsibility arm, Gucci Equilibrium, the production recently explored the importance of gender rights.

While other categories also add to the trend ([see story](#)), Chanel's fashion addition pushes forward a continuous endeavor to cultivate community and form connections via engaged communication ([see story](#)).

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