Hugo Corbin, Paris on His Own Terms

Parisian skateboarder and model Hugo Corbin reflects on personal style and the freedom of following his own path, on and off the board.

For Hugo Corbin, skateboarding is a way to clear his mind and reconnect with himself. Whether he is having a good day or a difficult one, being on the board gives him a sense of freedom.

> *“When I skate, I feel free,” he says. “I can fully express myself, let my passion speak, and simply be who I am.”*

The 27-year-old skateboarder and model grew up between the suburbs and central Paris, finding inspiration in the local skate scene and the people around him. His own approach has developed naturally over time.

What he values in skateboarding is the room it leaves for individuality: different people, different styles, each finding a way to express who they are. That openness also shapes how he thinks about the future.

Fashion, skateboarding and motorcycles are all things he hopes to explore further, through new experiences, encounters and opportunities to create things he feels connected to.

“There’s no fixed picture of how the next chapter should look,” he says. He still has plenty of ideas and dreams, while

wanting to stay present and enjoy the things he does every day. Finding a balance matters: staying focused and passionate, with enough room for things to happen naturally.

Traveling with a skateboard has already given him a different way of seeing the world. A country can feel very different with a board under his feet: its architecture offers new possibilities, and unfamiliar streets become places to explore. From his first trips to the United States to familiar sessions at the Palais de Tokyo, those experiences continue to shape the way he skates.

You grew up between the suburbs and central Paris. How has that environment shaped your style and the way you skate? I grew up between the two, with my family and friends. Paris influenced me in lots of ways: how people dress, how they express themselves, everything around me. I found inspiration in local skateboarders, but also in people outside

skateboarding. At the same time, I feel that my personality comes from my own experience of growing up. My style developed naturally, year after year, as I grew within skateboarding.
I keep doing what I love and creating in a way that feels individual to me.

Skateboarding has taken you from Paris to San Francisco and many other places. Is there a trip or experience that changed the way you see it? That’s a really good question. At this point in my life, I can see how different a country can feel when you visit with a skateboard and when you visit without one. I find that really interesting. The United States opened my mind a lot. The first time I went, I was amazed by the level of skating, the events, the competitions and, especially, the street spots. That’s what matters most to me. I love skating street spots and being challenged by them each time. The architecture is very different from Europe, so there are things to skate that you don’t necessarily find here. Every trip has given me fresh motivation. The more I’ve travelled, the more I’ve developed as a skateboarder and the

more creative I’ve felt. I’ve had great experiences in the United States and Europe, and it’s exciting to see what’s developing in Indonesia too. Ultimately, every country I’ve visited has taught me something about life and skateboarding.

What does Paris offer a skateboarder that you don’t find

anywhere else? That’s a difficult question. One great thing is how easy it is to get around. There’s public transport, but it’s also amazing to cruise through the centre on a skateboard and stop at spots you happen to find along the way. Every city has something unique. I think of Barcelona, Lisbon and lots of other places: everywhere has good things and less good things. It depends on the person and how they see it. I love skating in Mallorca too. For me, Paris has a particular feeling that I don’t find in exactly the same way elsewhere. Your own relationship with a place is part of what makes it special.

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Which spot best represents your relationship with the city? I’d say the Palais de Tokyo. I love that plaza and its architecture. The ground has deteriorated, there are cracks, and the conditions aren’t what they used to be, but people still love skating there. I also like what happens around us.

Sometimes tourists stop and become interested in what we’re doing and how we use and explore the plaza. Fashion shoots take place there too, so different people and activities cross paths. For me, it’s still one of the best plazas in Paris to skate and warm up. You can meet your friends there, then head off, go with the flow and explore the city.

Photography: Giacomo Cosua

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