

# Les intuitions d' intuition

## New Lifestyles : Bill Gates vs Nicolas Sarkozy

The display of President Sarkozy's private life has raised a storm of controversy, particularly within the media society which at the same time splashes it on its front pages. The idea here is not so much to decry the intrusion of his private life into the public sphere but to think about the president's lifestyle within the perspective of trends.



The glitzy style crystallised about a decade ago with fabulous fortunes made in some sectors (the Golden Boys in London or New York, the new millionaires in emerging countries...) at a time when luxury was being democratised. That style became an aspiration firstly among these new elites and then among the general public. But cutting edge trends ten years ago do not have the same resonance today!

Since then, ostentatious consumerism has given way to 'conscientious living', in other words, to a moderate lifestyle that balances consumer spending with the search for meaning, leading to a stronger focus on ecology and personal discernment. Generosity and a sense of community are now part of the game, gradually replacing hard core individualism. Bill Gates with his eternal student look, his charitable foundation (the biggest in the world), his recent withdrawal from Microsoft to devote his time to Africa, incarnates the aspiration to 'conscientious living' by innovative people in Western societies, including France.

So the problem with our President is not so much that he makes no secret of his private life, but that he flashes around a lifestyle that is far from exemplary and certainly not 'trendy' anymore!



### Our comment

The underlying values of brands, especially those that claim to be innovative, need rethinking in the light of this major social change.