

THE

www.perfumesociety.org

scented LETTER

NO. 44 AUTUMN 2020

SUSTAINABILITY

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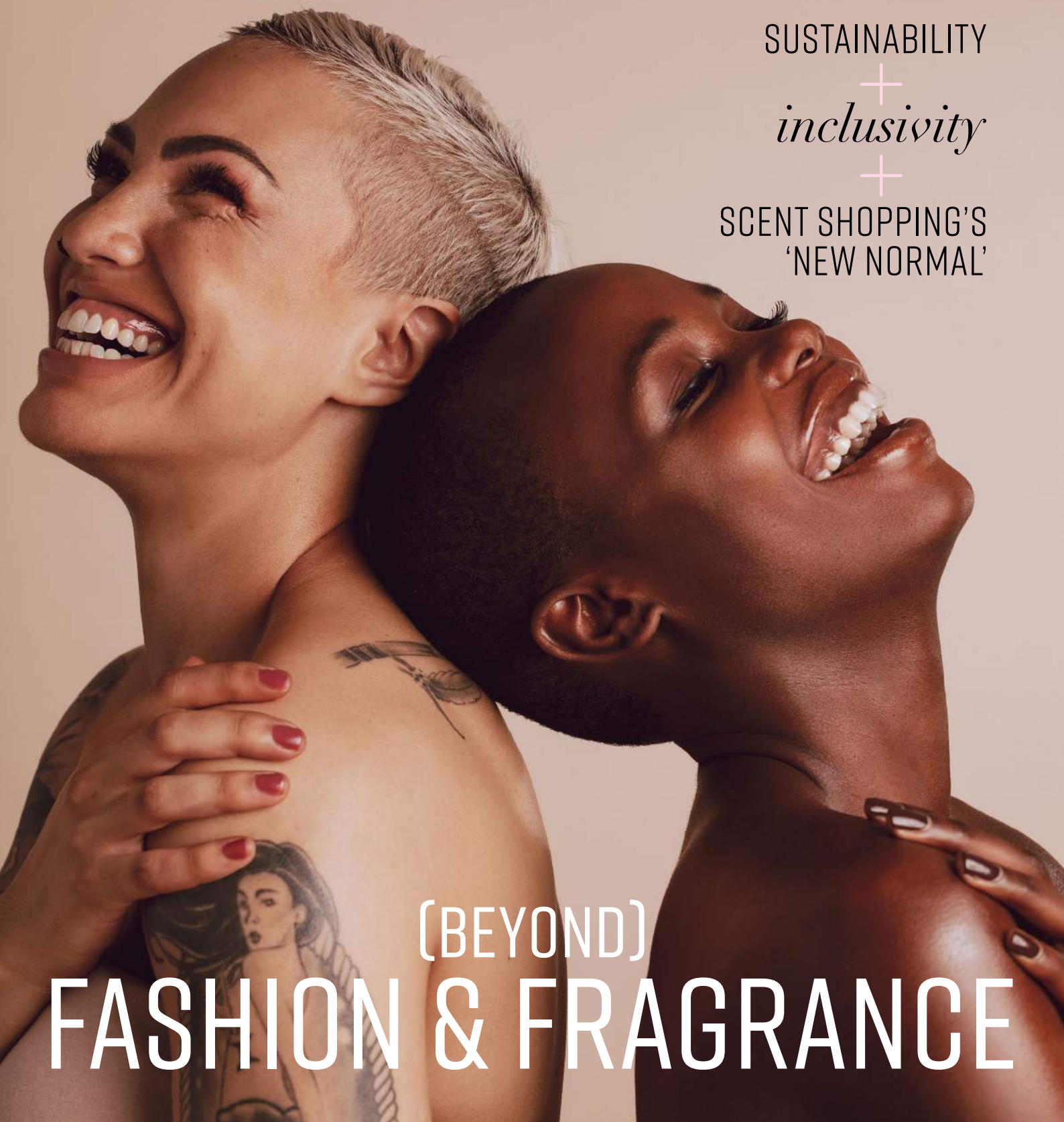
inclusivity

+

SCENT SHOPPING'S
'NEW NORMAL'

(BEYOND)

FASHION & FRAGRANCE



PARFUMS de MARLY
PARIS



PEGASUS EXCLUSIF

editor's LETTER



This is the issue in which, each year, we like to focus on the enduringly close relationship between fashion and fragrance. But while that remains incredibly important – and this season heralds launches from all the big names – there are shifts in the perfume world that we felt it was important to reflect on, in these extraordinary times.

The world around us is changing – so fragrance is changing, too. Because, of course, the scented world is a microcosm, even a mirror of what's going on in the wider world. So in this edition of *The Scented Letter*, we're tackling some really big subjects. We focus on sustainability, in Viola Levy's feature 'Scents & Sustainability'; it's not always shouted from the rooftops, but actually, the fragrance world has a very positive story to tell, when it comes to sustainable sourcing and (increasingly) recycling – as Viola explores, on p.22.

Another buzzword, all around, is 'inclusivity'. Nobody can have escaped 2020's axis shift, here. The impact of Black Lives Matter is still rippling around the globe. It is fair to say that on this front, the fragrance world still doesn't have the most positive story to tell, in terms of inclusivity and diversity. Not enough people of African or Indian or Chinese heritage, either in advertising or being given opportunities in the industry. Not enough mature 'faces' for new fragrance launches, yet. But we asked Persolaise to report on this very important subject – and while his article on p.13 acknowledges there's still a problem, he reports on encouraging steps forward.

Shopping for perfume is certainly different, for the moment. Intrepid reporter Amanda Carr – winner of this year's Jasmine Literary Award – is always up for a challenge, however, so we asked her to don her mask and venture forth to report back from retail's front line on the reality of 'Scent Shopping in the New Normal', on p.40. The good news? It feels safe. It's exciting. It's just a little different – and alongside the more traditional shopopportunities in stores, Amanda reveals that we can look forward to exciting, dynamic ways to discover, explore and enjoy fragrance, in future.

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 has also impacted on the scents we want to wear. We've seen two trends, at The Perfume Society: individuals who want to wear intimate, cocooning fragrances that make them feel safe and comforted. And others, who are all but reviving the 80s fashion for 'room-rockers' – this time, worn almost as a warning: 'Don't Stand So Close to Me.' Suzy Nightingale's brilliant feature on p.30 looks at these two polar perfume opposites – and shares beautiful examples of both the understated and the bold.

There's an old Chinese proverb: 'May you live in interesting times.' We hope you enjoy reading about the ways in which the fragrant world that we all love is being impacted, by the certainly very 'interesting' 2020...

THE *scented* LETTER



WINNER OF THE
PRACTICAL GUIDE
AWARD 2019

THE FRAGRANCE FOUNDATION
JASMINE AWARDS

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Nafia Gulzar

Nafia is a cancer research scientist and self-taught illustrator from London who explores fragrances through mixed media illustrations and watercolour. She has been commissioned to illustrate projects for Tauer Perfumes, FL Parfums, Maison Incens, CaFleureBon and Aspects Beauty. Nafia can also be found wandering around art galleries or meeting up with other fragrance enthusiasts to explore all the fragrant wares London has to offer. Her illustrations can be found over on Instagram @anillustratednose



Amanda Carr

Amanda Carr is a retail trend forecaster, Jasmine Award-winning freelance journalist and co-founder of the influential blog The Women's Room. Having long been a fragrance fan and chief reviewer for The Women's Room, she set up the perfume site We Wear Perfume in 2015, to help people find stylish new fragrances by asking real people what they wore. Amanda is London-based and can be found hanging about most days on Instagram as @wewearperfume



Persolaise

A multi-award-winning perfume critic and author of the *Le Snob Perfume* guide, Persolaise has also written for *Sunday Times Style*, *Business Traveller*, *Grazia* and *Sight & Sound*, among others. He recently took part in an extended series on BBC Radio 4's Film Programme about 'reading' movies through the scents they might conjure. His YouTube videos (including 'Love at First Scent' unveilings) are becoming hugely popular. Follow him on Instagram @persolaise and read his reviews on persolaise.blogspot.com



Viola Levy

Viola is an award-winning beauty journalist, copywriter and consultant. She began her career selling perfumes as a Saturday girl in her local chemist (managing to spray a few customers in the eye), later discovering she was better at writing about fragrances than gift-wrapping them. Last year she won the Fragrance Foundation Jasmine Award for Best Short Piece, reporting on how urban life is damaging our sense of smell. Follow her @scentsandthecitylondon

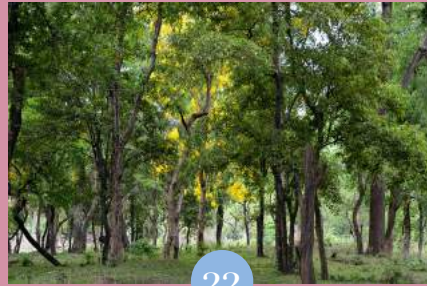
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nosing around

Wildflower-powered skincare, heavenly handcare, stunning home scents – and exciting new retail destinations to tempt you back into perfume's 'real world'

TREATS IN STORE

WE hope you'll be inspired after reading Amanda Carr's 'Scent Shopping in the New Normal' (p.40) to venture out for perfumed pilgrimages, once again.

Harrods's first H Beauty store (right) at Thurrock Lakeside is the first of several planned, showcasing many fab scent brands – and we have to admit a keenness for any beauty hall with its own Champagne Bar.



And if you've not yet experienced the perfume paradise that is The Fragrance Room at Harvey Nichols Knightsbridge (left and below), get set to be wowed. Bigger, better, bolder than ever before – DOUBLE the size it was – the new scent space features over 100 fragrance houses, with in-store boutiques from Creed, Maison Francis Kurkdjian, Serge Lutens, Kilian and many UK niche exclusives. We're dusting off the debit cards.

H Beauty Unit 116, Intu Lakeside Shopping Centre, West Thurrock, Grays, Essex, RM20 2ZP
Harvey Nichols 109-125 Knightsbridge, London SW1X 7RJ





2020 is the year of nature...

... and aren't we all looking to introduce it to our lives, however we can...? Seilich is the first Wildlife Friendly® certified company in the U.K. - using ingredients grown and harvested in their Scottish wildflower meadow, and a traditional copper still to extract essential oils and floral waters.

Meanwhile, Rhug Estate Wild Beauty is a luxury skincare line inspired by the landscape of an idyllic part of North Wales, with COSMOS Organic certification from The Soil Association. Beautiful textures, calming natural smells - and another way to bring the outdoors into your beauty routine.

Seilich from £24-60 seilich.co.uk

Rhug Estate Wild Beauty from £24-120 rhugwildbeauty.com



Bigger and bolder

Yes, BIG news from Floral Street, who've super-sized their scents with the launch of 100ml bottles, joining travel-friendly 10ml and regular 50ml sizes, all adorned with photographer Matthew Donaldson's brazen flower images. Spritz with abandon

£98 for 100ml floralstreet.com



Eaux, YES!

Didn't we all get to ace home hairdressing, during #lockdown? We're keeping up the good work with Percy & Reed's gloriously floral-swagged Eau My Goodness Collection, scented by rose petals, peonies and a woody amber base with rhubarb twist. It's like you've been for a quick dew-sprinkled roll in the garden (but with much better hair!) £35 percyandreed.com

SMELL ME AT THE MUSEUM

Perfumer Caroline Sabas created a 1950s-style fragrance named Pink Jungle to scent the exhibition space of the new Makeup Museum in New York. Emily Bond, head of Fine Fragrance North America at Givaudan, explains they're making this a multi-sensory space because 'Perfume has always been an integral part of beauty.' Exiting via the gift shop has never been more enticing.

94 Gansevoort St, New York, NY 10014, USA
makeupmuseum.com



Home, sweet-scented home

With many of us still #WFH, we want it to smell wonderful. Unsurprisingly, home fragrance is booming – but here's a round-up of some of our favourite innovations



The graphic vessels for Nomad Noé candles deserve to be upcycled as make-up or pen holders after these candles have flickered their last. Created in the perfume capital of Grasse, they whisk us around the world via seven scents and seven nomadic 'types'. Whether you're feeling VISIONARY or more like a REBEL, worth sniffing out at Selfridges, where they've landed. £55 [selfridges.com](https://www.selfridges.com)



We're spoiled for choice with the new Jo Malone London Townhouse Candle Collection: six scents in elegant ceramic pots which are different for each creation – spanning summery Fresh Fig & Cassis (pictured here) to seasonally-perfect Glowing Embers. £90 each [jomalone.co.uk](https://www.jomalone.co.uk)



Just launched at London's fashion mecca Browns, Saint Fragrance London seek to improve your emotional state via six scented candles. Snuggle up with the milky musk of Sunday Papers, sigh into the spicy saffron/leather of Old Fashioned, or evoke a bohemian sunset with coconut, tuberose and cardamom in Balearic Isle. £42 for 200g [brownsfashion.com](https://www.brownsfashion.com)



Inspired by a legendary Irish love story that spanned a thousand years, the Cloon Keen Étaín candle flickers beguilingly with fleshy tuberose and narcotic Egyptian jasmine absolute on a smouldering amber-infused base of loamy patchouli and Virginian cedarwood. £40 for 280g [lessenteurs.com](https://www.lessenteurs.com)



A welcome shaft of sunlight for the greyer days from Floral Street: their Sunshine Bloom scented candle keeps the summer vibe alive with notes of jasmine, fig leaf, wild orchid, black pepper, incense and salted musks, a vibrant solar scent that sparkles and recalibrates. £28 [floralstreet.com](https://www.floralstreet.com)



SCENTED SNIFFS

An elegant solution to not being able to smell scented candles online, **7 Over 7** are offering free fragrant wax seals, to 'help bridge the sense-deprivation gap.' Request your complimentary samples, 'to experience the candle scents before committing to buy.' live7over7.com

Meanwhile **La Montaña** have put together a collection showcasing their nine Scents of Spain candles via sample vials to spray into the air or onto fabrics. Let no cushion go un-spritzed. **La Montaña Home Fragrance Discovery Set/£25** lamontana.co.uk



Feeling Gloved-up

Tom Daxon has unveiled the most stunning handcare duo, in the form of **Gloved** - 'hand care with heart' - that is gentle but effective, all-natural, vegan, pH balanced and (this matters to us!) infused with a grounding cedarwood-y scent. The finishing eco-touch: bottles and caps are recyclable, and the pumps can be used time and again (you'll save £1 on every bottle you buy without one). **Active-Hydrate Hand Wash/£20** for 375ml **Instant-Absorb Hand Lotion/£28** for 376ml gloved.co.uk



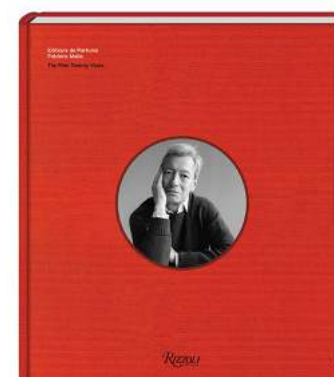
When in Rome...
... do, do, DO visit the stunning new Acqua di Parma boutique, in the famous Piazza di Spagna, where you'll find in-store barber services, onyx counters, custom engraving, a special 300-piece Colonia Special Edition Rome and an atmosphere that's even more warm in its Italian welcome, after the trials and tribulations of the past few months. (But then, Rome's used to those...)

Piazza di Spagna, 27, 00187 Rome, Italy



SUSTAINABILITY WITH STYLE

Taking inspiration from 18th Century perfume fountains and antique fragrance flacons, Potion Paris have created a sculpted amulet to be worn on a necklace or as a bag charm. Slip any of seven vials inside for on-the-go spritzing – and when you post 10 empty refills back, they'll send you back two, on the house. The Collection Set/£79.99 The Iconic Vial/£29.99 potionparis.com



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, FRÉDÉRIC

The man who changed the whole direction of fragrance – by putting perfumers' names on the front of his bottles – is celebrating two decades since he first launched his ground-breaking perfume house. We'll be celebrating by taking a sensorial journey through *Éditions de Parfums Frédéric Malle: The First Twenty Years* (Rizzoli New York) – a must-read book for any perfumista. **£57.50** fredericmalle.com



This year's Fragrance Foundation Awards and The Jasmine Awards were (like many events) banjaxed by the pandemic, taking place online. But we congratulate all this year's winners (and look forward to dusting off our sequins in 2021)



**BEST NEW FRAGRANCE
(MEN)**
Le Labo Baie 19



**BEST NEW FRAGRANCE
(WOMEN) & ULTIMATE LAUNCH**
Yves Saint Laurent Libre



READERS' CHOICE
*Chanel Gabrielle
Essence Eau de Parfum*



**BEST NEW FRAGRANCE IN
LIMITED DISTRIBUTION
(MEN)**
*Armani Privé
Orangerie Venise*



**BEST NEW FRAGRANCE IN
LIMITED DISTRIBUTION
(WOMEN)**
*Floral Street
Electric Rhubarb*



**PEOPLE'S CHOICE
(VOTED FOR
ON BOOTS.COM)**
*Dior Joy
Eau de Parfum Intense*



INNOVATION AWARD
*Lancôme
Idôle*



**BEST NEW INDEPENDENT
FRAGRANCE**
*Floris Vert Fougère
Eau de Parfum*



PARFUM EXTRAORDINAIRE
*Marc-Antoine Barras
Paris Ganymede*



BEST NEWCOMER
Sous Le Manteau



BEST NEW INTERIOR FRAGRANCE
Cire Trudon Ernesto

RETAILER OF THE YEAR
Harrods



ONLINE RETAILER OF THE YEAR
Harrods & The Perfume Shop

Harrods

THE PERFUME SHOP

BEST NEW DESIGN & PACKAGING
Gucci The Luxury Collection: The Alchemist's Garden



THE JASMINE AWARDS

We were delighted to be shortlisted in several categories - but though we didn't walk away with a Lalique statuette in 2020, we're utterly thrilled that several of our contributors and friends did so well, in the final winners' line-up. Congrats to all...

CREATIVITY
HARVEY NICHOLS 'In the Air' collaboration with **RAKESPROGRESS**
Rakesense



LITERARY PIECE
AMANDA CARR in *Rakesprogress* for 'Fragrant New World'

PRACTICAL GUIDE
ALICE DU PARCQ in *Glamour Magazine* for 'Message in Bottle'

RISEING STAR
SOPHIE ELKAN in *OX Magazine* for 'The Scents of Britain: Penhaligons'

SHORT PIECE
FIONA EMBLETON on *marieclaire.co.uk* 'Cancer Stole My Mother's Scent'

Read all the Jasmine Award-winning entries on perfumesociety.org - type 'Jasmine Awards 2020' in our SEARCH box



VINES HOUSE PARFUM
FINE FRAGRANCE

WEAR - LOVE - REPEAT

FIND THE RIGHT PERFUME STORY

With every original order you receive a FREE 2ml TRIAL spray
to sample BEFORE opening your perfume box.

After trial use if you decide the perfume is not for you, simply return your
UNOPENED bottle in the ribbon SEALED wooden box to us. Try another!

*One free trial sample per fragrance per customer.

10% DISCOUNT CODE PSV1

VHPARFUM.COM



Perfume has always been a mirror of everything happening in the wider world. But there's some way to go in terms of diversity and inclusivity, writes PERSOLAISE ►

THE CHANGING FACE OF FRAGRANCE

THIS MAY WELL BE the hardest perfume article I've ever had to write. I knew the assignment would be tough as soon as I agreed to take it on: after all, the issue of diversity is complex and multi-layered, sure to stir emotions and spark extreme views. But I had no idea quite how challenging the job would turn out to be.

Here's a brief insight into how I work on pieces like this, which probably isn't dissimilar to how other journalists go about it. I have an initial think about the issue at hand – consider my own ideas, see if I can express them in a coherent form. I start doing some research – reading around the subject, finding out what others have had to say about it. And then I reach out to my network of industry contacts to ask them for their views on the matter, and find out where their brands and companies stand on the issue in question. This last step is crucial, because it adds weight and legitimacy to the work. You need to support an argument with statements from experts and industry insiders, because otherwise all you end up writing is a personal opinion piece.

When I get the responses, I try to find a clear path through them and formulate an article that presents as

balanced and as comprehensive a picture of the subject as the word count will allow.

Normally, the number of replies I receive from the industry is extremely healthy. I get a flood of insights and quotes from people more than happy

“
OUR WORLD IS NOW FULL
OF PEOPLE WHO ARE OF
MIXED RACE AND MIXED
CULTURE. THEIR STORIES
ARE MORE INTERESTING
THAN ANYTHING TO ME

DANA EL MASRI

to be mentioned in the final article. I expected a similar outcome this time.

I went through my usual procedure, putting together a first set of questions. What are your views on the issue of diversity in the perfume

industry? Does your brand/company see it as a problem that needs to be addressed? If so, what steps have you taken to address it, etc. etc. All fairly standard stuff.

I fired off the emails.

And – with just a few exceptions – the response I got was a great big nothing.

So as you'd expect, I sent off several chasing messages. 'I was just wondering if you got my last email. It would be great to hear from you on this important topic etc. etc.'

And then quite a few more replies started coming in – but almost all of them with the proviso that they were to be treated as strictly 'off the record'.

People certainly had a few things to say on this subject. Plenty to say, in fact! But in a huge number of cases – certainly many more than I've experienced when writing an article before – they didn't want their views to be directly attributed to them.

The reason?

Well, most commonly, it was fear. Fear of saying the wrong thing, in an environment where Call-Out Culture is waiting to pounce on the slightest mis-step. Fear of being accused of jumping on a bandwagon. Fear of being told





**Angelica Huston,
Susie Cave and
Jodie Turner-Smith
feature in Gucci's
latest ad campaign
for Bloom,
bottom left**



that the work they're doing is hollow and tokenistic.

For a few other brands, the reason stemmed from a sort of humility. Yes, diversity is extremely important to them, and yes they're doing what they can to make the scope of their operations more inclusive – perhaps by employing people from ethnic minority backgrounds or people with disabilities – but they don't wish to draw attention to such activities. They prefer just to get on with it quietly, and not make any statements that would seem to be fishing for praise or kudos.

That, in itself, tells us much of what we need to know about how diversity is perceived and tackled in the west's perfume industry. It's the hot potato that can't be avoided, but which few people want to pick up. Because of the impact of movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter, and the wider questioning of societal norms, it has made its way into the fragrance world, and many are now uncertain about how to deal with it. So they'd rather stay quiet, and perhaps allow others to be the first to raise their heads above the parapet.

It's a shame, because if we accept that no system is perfect, that we can't expect radical transformations to take place within a day and that change is an ongoing process, then I'd say that the perfume industry has much to be proud of, in all aspects of its operations. All you need to do is compare glossy magazines from today with those from twenty or so years ago to see evidence of this.

We now have a far more diverse range of faces and bodies in advertisements. We have articles taking the time to reach out to people with all sorts of differing life experiences. We have products that try to cater to disparate cultural tastes. Yes, of course, much work remains to be done – just Google 'John Boyega Jo Malone' – but the progress is undeniable.

Here are some specifics. The latest Gucci perfume campaign features one actress – the preternaturally elegant Angelica Houston – who would almost certainly have been considered too old for such an assignment a few years ▶



Singer-songwriter and actor Lenny Kravitz, the new ambassador for YSL's Y Eau de Parfum

ago. (Her campaign-mates include 54-year-old Susie Cave and black model Jodie Turner-Smith.)

Very recently, The World of Chris Collins became the first scent brand owned by a black person to be stocked at Bergdorf Goodman. Multi-national ingredient manufacturers and training providers, including Givaudan and ISIPCA, are making efforts to draw talent from a wider pool of people, and to pour the benefits of their work back into the communities from which they draw resources. YSL's latest 'face' is Lenny Kravitz (yes, he's one of the hippest guys on the planet, but it's a bold choice, as well as a brilliant one).

You need more examples? How about these.

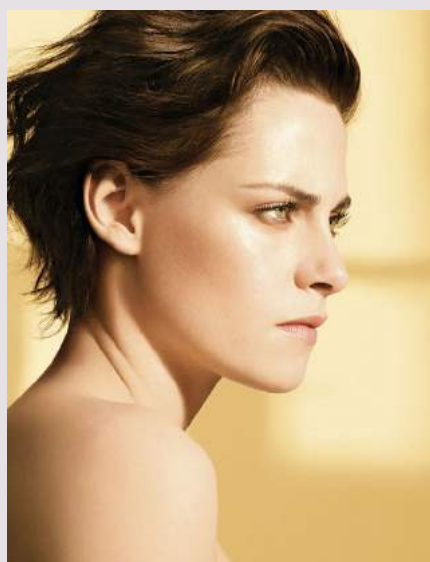
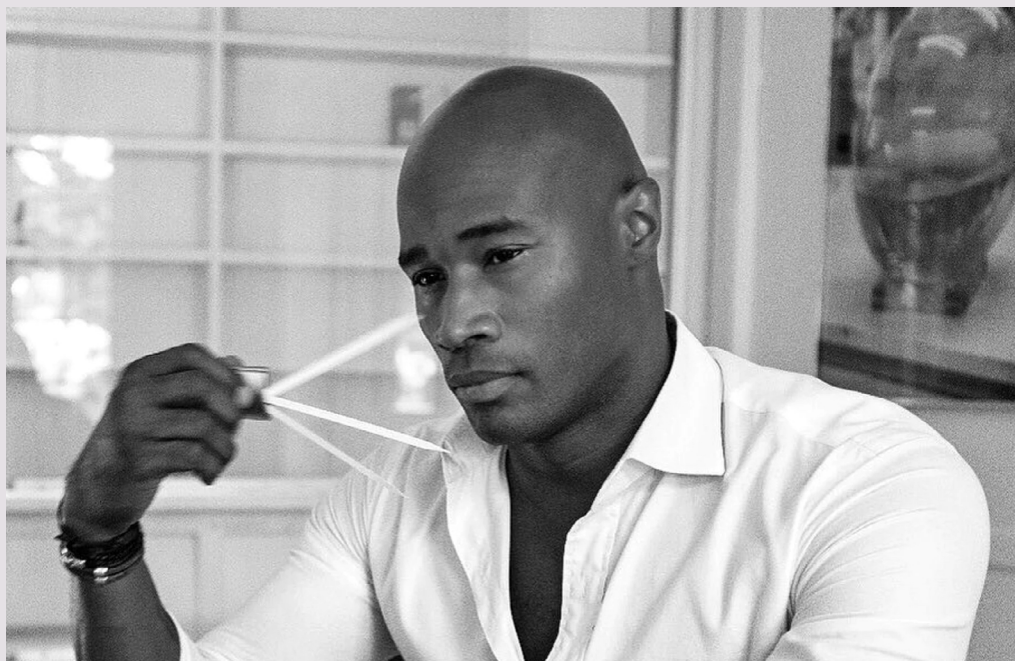
Avon recently launched a perfume to provide public support for

“
PERFUMERS OF
COLOUR ARE VERY
RARELY GIVEN A
PLATFORM – THEY
ARE OUT THERE,
BUT THEY ARE NOT
OFTEN VISIBLE

MAYA NJIE

”

Changing Faces, a charity founded to support people with 'a scar, mark or condition on their face or body that makes them look different.' Chanel made the decision to use bisexual actress Kristen Stewart as the face of their Gabrielle scent. And the fragrance brand Sana Jardin, which has aimed to redress social imbalances since its inception, recently announced a mentoring programme designed to support innovative start-ups; first on their books is A Complexion Company, an African wellness and beauty brand created by Nomshado Michelle Baca. Indeed, with 'Beyond Sustainability' as their motto, Sana Jardin have set themselves the challenging task of



Above: perfume brand founder Chris Collins. Left: a 'face' of Avon's HerStory. Below: Kristen Stewart, chosen to front the Chanel Gabrielle campaign

ensuring that those in the initial stages of perfume production – quite often the individuals and communities who benefit the least from sales at high street stores – reap greater rewards for their efforts.

Change is unquestionably taking place. Yet many people still seem reluctant to talk about it.

But what of those who did write back to me? What did they have to say on this contentious issue? Well, thankfully, they were pretty vocal.

Simon Constantine, formerly at Lush and now founder of Ånd, is clear about the extent of the problems in the industry. 'Perfumery is just racist, isn't it?', he says. 'How many big African schools of perfumery are there? Where do most perfumers live versus the origin of their materials? If we look through the old masters of perfumery, how many aren't white men? Perfumery is steeped in the same problems that the rest of western society shares, and there isn't much point trying to deny it.'

He hopes his new brand will go some way to helping the situation. 'We want to prove that it's possible' ►

to design our lives so that they are empowering and regenerative. Just making a few jobs available for people of colour in cosy marketing departments is lovely, but to truly shake up the world, we need to take the resources of the profitable marketplace and push those benefits back to those who receive the least.'

'The Kayapo of the Brazilian Amazon, who supply much of the world's tonka beans, had to race back to their communities ahead of

: the coronavirus pandemic due to a
: complete disregard by the Brazilian
: state for the impact on them of
: COVID-19. It ripped through their
: villages with the same ferocity of the
: colonial plagues of old. So if we are
: to build ourselves a new world that
: addresses true inequity, we have to
: break cycles like these that began 500
: years ago. We have donated our first
: sales in total to support the Kayapo.
: But it can't stop there. Our plan is to
: reach commercial stability and then

: work with our partners to distribute
: our profits more equitably, and involve
: them in our decision-making.'

: Constantine is well aware that he
: could be seen as yet another white
: European man, travelling around the
: world, 'doing good'. 'I have been
: called out several times for white
: saviour-ism, and I think that's fair
: enough. For me, I have made peace
: with the fact that it's there, and I try to
: answer with a positive response, not a
: brick wall of cancel culture. I have tried

“ WE NOW HAVE A FAR
MORE DIVERSE RANGE OF
FACES AND BODIES IN ADVERTS.
WE HAVE ARTICLES REACHING
OUT TO PEOPLE WITH ALL
SORTS OF DIFFERING
LIFE EXPERIENCES ”



The models for
Avon's HerStory,
which sets out to
raise the profile
of the charity
Changing Faces

to take two forms of action where I can spot my privilege. One, I try to use that privilege for good, listening to criticism but not allowing it to cause inaction. Two, I try to dispose of the privilege or offer to share it with others, finding ways to remedy where it arose.'

Molton Brown appear to have taken a similarly pro-active approach. Their global vice-president of marketing, Beatrice Descorps, says they've 'recently created an Inclusivity & Diversity committee purely dedicated

to driving ideas on how to make real and positive changes in the way we work together. When we introduced our Geranium Nefertum fragrance in 2019, we worked with British GQ and three young artists — singer-songwriter George Shelley, performer Travis Alabanza and drag queen Jacob Mallinson Bird — to kick off conversations about gender expression and identity. Some of our customers were surprised by the direction of the campaign. But this provided us with a

real opportunity to take them on the journey with us. We listened to their thoughts and opinions, while also informing them on the subjects that are closely connected to our core values.'

Few would doubt that all of the above are commendable steps. And yet, always hovering in the background, there's a sense of frustration that such actions somehow continue to reinforce the divisions between people. That's the paradox that lies at the heart of this entire issue: you can't provide help ►





**Jacob Mallinson
Bird, in Molton
Brown's campaign
for Geranium
Nefertum**

to certain groups of people without defining them as a distinct group... and as soon as you define them as a distinct group, you're implicitly setting them apart from the very 'mainstream' into which you'd love them to be integrated.

What's more, as several individuals were at pains to point out to me, defining people within groups is becoming increasingly difficult, because the realities of modern life mean that we don't slot into categories quite as neatly as perhaps we did a few decades ago.

Dana El-Masri is a prime example. She's of Egyptian-Lebanese ethnicity. She spent many years of her life in Dubai. She trained as a perfumer in Grasse. And she's currently based in Canada, where she founded her well-regarded brand, Jazmin Sarai.

'Our world is now full of people of mixed race and mixed culture,' she says. 'Their stories are more interesting than anything to me, because they can shift perspective, and have the privilege of being able to experience different colours, smells, languages, and find a way to blend these worlds, all of which inform our art.'

One of El-Masri's latest projects has been to create Future Olfactives with the perfumer Yosh Han. 'It's a collective working towards further diversity, accurate representation and inclusion

“
PERFUMERY IS
STEEPED IN THE SAME
PROBLEMS THAT THE
REST OF WESTERN
SOCIETY SHARES, AND
THERE ISN'T MUCH
POINT TRYING TO
DENY IT

SIMON CONSTANTINE

”

in our industry, dedicated to uplifting under-represented BIPOC members of the fragrance community,' she says.

For Dana, as for Salmon, sensitivity is key. 'I was once asked to recreate scents found in Mohawk culture in Canada. So I asked who the scent is being made for and why. What kind of research had been done on the traditional use of materials? Was anyone from the culture involved in the project? Most importantly, considering the blatant disrespect and mistreatment of Native people and their communities, would they benefit from the project in any way? These are important things to think about.'

Awareness. Positivity. And definite action. From my many 'off the record' conversations on this issue, I'd say these are the three main factors on which brands should focus, and in which we should find hope for the future. And I firmly believe that we have every reason to be hopeful, thanks to the efforts of people like Constantine, El Masri and Salmon.

I just wish that we'll soon get to the point where more people will be willing to discuss all these issues, to the extent that we simply won't need to discuss them any more, because they'll have become non-issues. As El Masri says, 'We don't need to stay within the parameters the industry has given us. It is time to evolve.'

MIXING IT UP



MAYA NJIE

UK-based, part-Swedish, part-Gambian Njie set up her eponymous brand four years ago, creating scents inspired by her heritage. 'As a woman of colour, it's important for me to support other women of colour where I can. I hope that companies open their eyes to how they play their part and what they can do to be more inclusive. Perfumers of colour are very rarely given a platform – they are out there, but they are not often visible.'

MARYAM AJMAL

The family-run brand Ajmal has been amongst the most successful and beloved scent creators in the Middle East and India for several decades. One of the youngest members of the dynasty, Maryam, is currently obtaining



her perfumery qualifications through the Grasse Institute Of Perfumery. She says: 'The west often makes many assumptions about the east. There are just a handful of international brands who have taken the trouble to understand the cultural nuances of the Gulf and have tried doing ad campaigns targeting a Gulf audience.'

AND

Recently set-up by Simon Constantine, formerly of Lush and Gorilla Perfume, this brand aims to address some of the injustices inherent in the industry. 'I see nothing but positivity from the opportunities diversity brings. I think there is a strong, vocal component of



customers now that is refusing to allow this conversation to be muffled, and brands are frightened, so I think now is the time to seize on the momentum and make real change. It's a big journey and we don't plan to be alone in it. Come help us unstink the world!'

REEM MUTHANNA

Partly trained by Julien Rasquinet of IFF, this young perfumer is now based at the extremely popular Saudi brand, Almusbah, which targets both those living in the country as well as tourists. 'With social media and the internet, I feel we're living in one big world. There are no boundaries. We



see the same thing. Beauty has been defined by standards we mostly see on our phones and in ads, but that doesn't mean this is our reality. They don't reflect who we are.'

DANA EL MASRI

Grasse-trained, Canada-based El Masri brings her multi-cultural heritage to the fore in her brand, Jazmin Sarai. 'I believe my background was a barrier at times — at other times, I was tokenised. I often felt overlooked because I didn't fit certain criteria, I wasn't related to anyone in the field. I dealt with many things that men just wouldn't. I felt the need to "legitimise" and get proper training if I wanted to become a perfumer. I felt I had something to prove so people would take me seriously.'



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scents & SUSTAINABILITY

With consumers thinking more and more about the impact of all their purchasing decisions, VIOLA LEVY looks at how the fragrance world is embracing a future in which people, planet and perfume matter equally

THERE'S A SNOOTY yet common misconception that those who tend to be more interested in the outwardly superficial world of beauty products – including fragrance – perhaps don't appreciate or value the unadorned beauty of the natural world itself.

But in my experience, this couldn't be further from the truth. Indeed, nature may have inspired your new favourite fragrance find, because while you're quarantining in your one-bed flat, you can – via a few spritzes of perfume – find yourself on an idyllic beach in Calabria, a tranquil rose garden in Grasse, or walking among sandalwood trees in Southwestern Australia. Most of us are intrigued by ingredients from the natural world; it all adds to fragrance's fascination.

Nevertheless, our consumption of fragrance and beauty impacts the planet – whose beauty these products are supposed to be paying tribute to

– in a way that doesn't always make for easy reading. According to Zero Waste Week, more than 120 billion units of packaging are produced every year by the global beauty industry, with the cardboard alone contributing to loss of 18 million acres of forest annually. Then there's the plastic wrapping, which forms part of the eight billion tonnes of plastic that gets dumped into the oceans each year, potentially destroying marine life in the process and even ending up in the food we eat. And that's before we come to the carbon footprint involved in transporting everything to the manufacturers, to shops and onward to our doors.

Beyond that, there are questions about how sustainably ingredients are produced – are crops replanted, or is land stripped or depleted? – and how fairly those farming and picking the plants that are transformed into ►

“*Recycling is good, but if you reuse perfume bottles, you don't have to keep destroying and reproducing them*”

JEAN-BAPTISTE ROUX, J.U.S.



the precious essences we spritz onto our skin are paid, for their work.

The good news is that in common with pretty much every industry in this fast-changing world, sustainability is very much on the fragrance agenda. The International Fragrance Association (IFRA) has recently released the IFRA-IOFI Sustainability Charter (ifra-iofi.org), providing a framework to encourage and help companies to become more eco-friendly. In doing so, it highlights five main focus areas: responsible sourcing; environmental footprint; wellbeing of employees; product safety and transparency.

'While sustainability has always been important, our understanding of the issues has increased greatly over the last 10 years, and this has allowed us to develop a more structured focus,' says IFRA Director Lisa Hipgrave. 'This IFRA-IOFI Sustainability Charter is a joint project with the flavour industry, which enables members to benchmark their progress to date and provides a flexible toolkit to encourage further development of sustainability goals.'

Many brands are already trying to move things in a sustainable direction. Acqua di Parma's latest launch, Colonia Futura, gives the original packaging an eco-friendly upgrade, with a bottle cap made from recycled and recyclable plastic, together with a removable fragrance dispenser (for easier recycling) and a label created

from scrap dust from marble quarries. It plans to roll out this approach across the rest of its range too.

One of the beauty world's giants, L'Oréal (who own Viktor & Rolf, Mugler, Diesel and Ralph Lauren fragrances, among others), recently released new guidelines pledging that by 2030, 100% of the plastics used in their packaging will be either from recycled or bio-based sources, together with a pledge that will ensure all of their formulas are respectful of aquatic eco-systems – meaning fewer toxic chemicals polluting the oceans.

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*Sustainability
has another
meaning for a
brand; being
able to source the
quality ingredients
ensures the
sustainability of
our business, too*
”

THIERRY WASSER, GUERLAIN

Indeed, water-waste is another key sustainability issue, with L'Oréal pledging that by 2030, 100% of the water used in their industrial processes will be recycled and reused in a loop.

At retail level, high street chain The Perfume Shop unveiled a recycling scheme last year, which collects customers' unwanted bottles and sends them to a specialist recycling expert to ensure all elements of the bottle – from glass to metal – are repurposed in the right way. (The bonus: you bag 10% off your purchase, when you buy a new bottle of fragrance there and then).

However, while recycling is better than consigning your fragrance bottle to landfill, it isn't always the most sustainable solution. When you consider all the processes involved in recycling (collecting, washing, disinfecting, sorting, re-processing, and redistribution), it's not always easy or cheap – and incurs its own carbon footprint. Reusing more – or more precisely, refilling – is a smarter long-term approach, and it's something fragrance companies are starting to take on board.

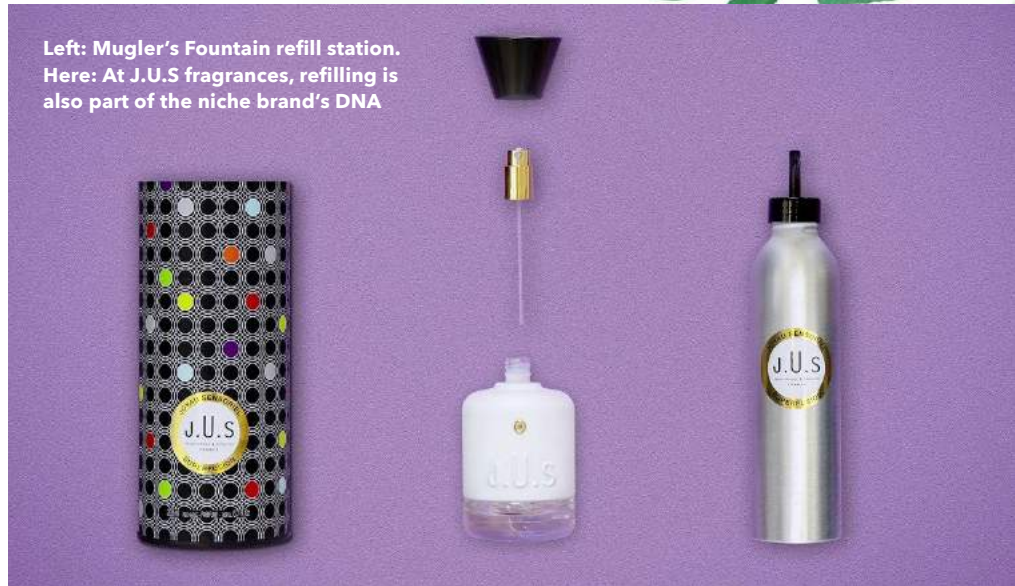
Mugler fragrances were actually ahead of the eco-curve here. Launched several years ago, their 'The Source' has now been rebranded 'The Fountain', but the deal's the same: take along your empty Alien, Angel or Angel, for a top-up in-store (or order a refill bottle from their website, and do it yourself). Disruptive brands like The

**AdP's packaging
has been updated
to eco standards**





Left: Mugler's Fountain refill station. Here: At J.U.S fragrances, refilling is also part of the niche brand's DNA



Experimental Perfume Club and Floral Street, as well as Molton Brown, also offer in-store refill options. And several luxury names – including Armani, Chanel and Hermès – now sell refills in plainer bottles (in Chanel's case, to replenish their atomisers). Because doesn't it just feel so, so wrong to throw away a beautiful *flacon*...?

Refilling is something that French niche brand J.U.S also strongly advocate. 'Recycling is good, but if you reuse perfume bottles, you don't have to keep destroying and reproducing them,' explains J.U.S co-founder Jean-Baptiste Roux. 'We offer refills on all J.U.S perfumes as we think this is better than recycling. Our motto is "produce less and use a lot!"'

Elsewhere, niche independent perfumeries are getting creative in their attempts to reduce waste packaging. Floral Street offer compostable fragrance cartons for all their fragrances, held together with a (reusable) elastic band – eliminating the need for cellophane. Another advocate of what you could call a 'slow perfume' movement is Thibaud Crivelli, founder of Maison Crivelli, whose fragrances are packaged using Forestry Stewardship Council-certified paper, with zero plastics. And though J.U.S still use cellophane, it's from compostable wood-cellulose.

The sustainability of perfume ingredients is its own minefield, however. The large fragrance supply

houses all have their own highly impressive sustainability initiatives (see over) – and it benefits both farmers and the companies who buy from them. As Guerlain's Thierry Wasser explains: 'Sustainability is vital in our industry. It is important because we need to source ingredients in a way that is respectful to the planet and to farmers, protecting biodiversity. But sustainability has another meaning for a brand; being able to source the quality ingredients ensures the sustainability of our business, too.' In other words: farmers (and indeed their descendants) must be healthily incentivised to stay on the land, to keep growing that vetiver, that vanilla, that ylang ylang we so love. ►



From left: The Experimental Perfume Club's refill station. Maison Crivelli scents come in FSC-certified cartons. Floral Street's compostable cartons





Meanwhile, how can the ordinary perfume-lover in the street figure out which ingredients are sustainable, without taking a degree in ecology? Certification from organisations such as the Soil Association and the FSC is a good signpost. 'Preservation of biodiversity and sustainability are important factors considered when we select materials to be used in Soil Association-certified products and ingredients,' explains their Technical Specialist Emma Dawes. 'Ingredients must be non-genetically modified, from certified sustainable palm oil and not from petrochemicals, in most cases.'

It's also well worth exploring the websites of fragrance supply houses such as IFF, Givaudan, Firmenich, Symrise and Mane, etc., where you will find their sustainability reports and statements on issues like slavery and human trafficking. If you're prepared to go digging, there are some very heartening initiatives indeed.

And where perfume brands – as opposed to these supply houses – have good news stories in terms of sustainability, you'll generally find them shouting about them in the 'About Us' or 'Our Story' section of their websites. 100% natural New Zealand perfumery Abel, for instance, transparently lists every single ingredient in each of their

formulas, including country of origin – highlighting those that have been Fair Traded or organically farmed. They also donate 1% of revenue to environmental causes, such as SOIL, which works to improve sanitation in Haiti (where the company's vetiver oil is sourced). But the profile of all these initiatives definitely deserves to be raised even further – because

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*Sustainability is a
360-degree, ever-
evolving journey
and brands need
to understand that*

FRANCES SHOEMACK, ABEL

”
in the same way that consumers are asking questions of food and fashion companies about their environmental policies, those questions are starting to be asked of fragrance companies.

'Without access to this kind of information there is no accountability and therefore no impetus for change,' notes Abel co-founder Frances

Shoemack. 'While I'd like to see full transparency from brands, there are also ways to meet half-way. A simple solution might be for all non-biodegradable and non-renewable ingredients to be regulated in the same way that allergens are [i.e. listed on packaging]. It's about committing to looking at the full product lifecycle. Sustainability is a 360-degree, ever-evolving journey and brands need to understand that and get on board in a genuine way.' And the same, of course, applies to perfume-wearers.

Arguably, fragrance is one of the few pleasures we have left at the moment, given that many of us haven't been able to hug our loved ones in months. So, after the year we've had, nobody wants to read yet another End of Days-style article about the environment – especially not if the result was to make us feel guilty about our love of perfume.

But happily, when it comes to perfume, being more sustainable doesn't mean giving up the things we love. And if we can support those brands and fragrance houses leading the eco-charge, the rest of the industry will follow. Enabling us to enjoy our perfume, its feel-good factor ramped up still further by knowing that it's kind both to the planet and to the people who help magic it from field to *flacon*. 🍷

FROM FIELD TO FLACON

Just five of the fragrance projects transforming lives in the developing world, while ensuring we will have continued access to the naturals we love

Rose ►

In Turkey, Robertet Group – the world leader in the supply of sustainable raw materials – have been financing rose plantations for more than 60 years, securing an income for the 20,000 producer families who harvest the rose petals every year, as well as financing waste water pipelines.



Vetiver ►

Guerlain has revived the sustainable harvesting of vetiver in Tamil Nadu, India. There, Thierry Wasser has overseen the establishment and development of vetiver farming, helping educate the farmers to produce this earthily-scented grass, which offers surprising 'eco-benefits', as well as income. Vetiver flourishes in hostile areas where other crops may fail, surviving on very little water while limiting soil erosion.



Ylang ylang

In Madagascar, Robertet have also helped local farmers purchase stainless steel distillation equipment, to reduce the environmental impact and increase the quality of the ylang ylang oil produced. With more than 60 people employed in the project, it also offers training and education.



▲ *Patchouli*

IFF works to support patchouli-farming communities in Indonesia through the Ecocert For Life certification, to encourage strong environmental and social practices throughout the supply chain. For example, to support the local community in Sulawesi, they helped develop a program to address key challenges related to agroforestry, women's empowerment, resources management and plastic waste management.



Sandalwood ►

Givaudan have been working with the Australian sandalwood industry, one of the most sustainable sources of the ingredient. Harvested by local Aboriginal farmers, Dutjahn sandalwood oil has a 50% 'indigenous financial benefit' - all royalties are controlled by the local Aboriginal farmers, as part of Givaudan's pioneering programme of 'Sourcing for Shared Value'.





You can go your own way

We live in the age of the individual. Our music playlist isn't the same as anyone else's. We want our wardrobe to make a unique fashion statement. And when it comes to fragrance, we're also looking for something that says: this is me. I'm doing it my way...

Which is exactly why – with their finger on the pulse-point as ever – you'll find these words on Armani's latest, beautiful unveiling: MY WAY.

As you'll learn from every single page of this edition of *The Scented Letter*, there are huge changes happening in the world of fragrance. Yes, it's still the case that what we spritz on our skins and perhaps onto our hair must first and foremost smell sublime – and MY WAY certainly does that, swirling with a huge bouquet of exquisite, intriguing (and even ground-breaking) white florals, including tuberose (pictured in the hands of MY WAY's beautiful 'face', actress Adria Arjona, opposite).

But today, we're also looking to tread more lightly on the planet in every aspect of our lives. Sensitive to that, MY WAY's ingredients have been consciously sourced – more of which its perfumers will share in a moment.

Beyond that, when you've spritzed the last from your beautiful MY WAY flacon (right), you can top it up via a generous 125ml refill. 'Refill, recycle, reuse' looks set to become fragrance's new mantra, actually. It's the way we want things to be, now. Yet in fact, Giorgio Armani Beauty's eco-consciousness reflects the designer's own long-term philosophy: 'I love things that stand the test of time.'

With that in mind, MY WAY's renowned perfumers set out to create a juice that will transcend fragrance fashion to become a contemporary classic. And we're delighted to share with you what the venerable Carlos Benaïm and his colleague Bruno Jovanovic have to say, about this inspiring MY WAY collaboration.

How does MY WAY tell a new olfactory story within the concept of Armani femininity?

Carlos Benaïm: MY WAY is a great floral fragrance with a unique naturalness, very much in phase with today's mindset. It highlights a contemporary floral structure infused with naturality and with sustainability at its heart. It connects Armani fashion to Armani scent in a new, spiritual way.

How complementary have your respective areas of expertise been in creating this fragrance?

Bruno Jovanovic: Carlos had a vision for MY WAY that I helped to materialise. We were inspired by gorgeous white flowers: tuberose, jasmine, orange flower. A specifically developed heart of tuberose was also incorporated in order to make it even more exclusive. We wanted to maximise and extend this floral centrepiece beyond its boundaries, from top to bottom.

Would you say MY WAY's richness of ingredients is an olfactory encounter with the world?

BJ & CB: Yes, because we are combining the most beautiful white flowers from all over the world. Indian jasmine sambac absolute and jasmine grandiflorum Super Infusion, which is exclusively crafted for Armani. Orange flower from Egypt and tuberose heart

quality, as each step of their production is scrutinised with care.

What makes the crafting of the tuberose and orange blossom blended in the scent unique?

BJ: It took a whole R&D department to come up with olfactory solutions that would help materialise our vision of this Armani fragrance. Via a molecular distillation method, we developed a very specific fraction of tuberose: the Tuberose Absolute Heart 5. This crafting allowed us to chisel the finest grade of tuberose to select and beautify the facet of the ingredient we wanted: a concentration of creamy, velvety facets from the tuberose. It creates a unique modern and addictive *sillage*.

CB: For MY WAY, we have also revived the *enfleurage* method, an ancestral process of extraction to extract a specific quality. By dipping bitter orange flowers in orange essence, the result is a unique and natural sparkling floralcy, which infuses the top notes with youthful radiance and naturality.

You used a process called 'molecular division' for the tuberose: what does it involve, and what olfactory quality did it allow you to achieve?

BJ: Imagine the tuberose absolute like a rough diamond, which you can cut into a clear-cut gem. We are refining what nature gave us, making it a gem.

CB: When you smell it, it gives you the effect of diving into a fresh petal, still in the field. We took the absolute best facets the flower could offer and 'isolated' the perfect heart for the creation. The Tuberose Absolute Heart 5 brings a modern twist to the note and enhances the perception of naturality.

And how would you describe in a few words the MY WAY woman who the fragrance is inspired by?

BJ: Elegant, free-spirited, with a positive energy, beautiful with effortless, natural femininity.

CB: Independent, sophisticated and alluring, a lover of travel, curious to explore the world and its most coveted natural treasures. ■

Giorgio Armani MY WAY is priced from £55 for 30ml eau de parfum; £125 for 150ml refill armanibeauty.co.uk



MY WAY's stunning 'bottle for life'

from the region of Mysore in the village of Tirumakudal Narsipur, India, but crafted in Grasse. We also have Italian citrus, Virginia cedarwood from USA, and vanilla from Madagascar, sourced through Giorgio Armani's responsible and inclusive sourcing program that promotes social inclusion. It is an olfactory journey through some of the world's most exotic locations.

How does it feel to work with natural ingredients?

BJ: It makes you feel responsible and in step with the current climate. Sustainability is a must-do today; it's the right thing to do. But it doesn't hurt that the materials obtained from a sustainable source are also of a higher



DON'T STAND SO CLOSE TO ME

In these continuing strange days, people have turned to fragrance more than ever – but will social distancing change the way we wear scent? Senior Writer, SUZY NIGHTINGALE, peels back the mask to explore personal space and post-pandemic perfumes ►

I DON'T WANT YOU to think that I used to randomly gad about sniffing strangers' necks. Not often, anyway. But when hugging a friend or meeting someone at a fragrance launch, I would automatically lean in and get a whiff of what they were wearing.

Currently, however, the thought of such innocent exchanges – thrusting your wrist at someone or demanding to know what perfume that person you brushed past on the Tube was wearing – makes me shudder. Because, thanks to the outbreak of COVID-19, we have suddenly been made horrifically aware of our physical proximity to other people. The distance between us has become an emotionally weaponised topic of debate on 24-hour rolling news channels, online, in households worldwide. And it's changed us. For how long we have no idea. But when your natural instinct to spontaneously throw your arms around a friend you've not seen for ages – to have much-needed physical contact of any kind if you live alone or are sheltering someone vulnerable – now makes you recoil with regret, well, that literally stops you in your tracks, doesn't it? For as Sarah Knott, author of *Mother: An Unconventional History*, puts it: 'Smell is a language of airborne shouts and whispers that travels across rooms.'

And now, this is even leading to the creation of scents specifically to repel, rather than attract. For instance, are you ready for a Marmite-infused fragrance? Yes, really. Lynx Africa x Marmite has declared itself to be 'the world's first social distancing deodorant.' As it develops, those in your vicinity are apparently '...unexpectedly met with a salty punch of Marmite.'

Yet at the opposite end of the scent spectrum, we see an equally strong trend for fragrance becoming more intimate and personal. Fragrances that whisper, rather than shout. Although it's a spoof, a scent ad on YouTube sums this up, seeking humour in the current situation, with the strapline: 'Introvert: the only fragrance that smells as good as cancelling plans feels.'

We seem to have split into camps of wallflower fragrances and stand-offish scents. It all makes me wonder, rather longer than usual of a morning, what fragrance to wear that day and – more specifically – how strong it should be; how much I should spray. Previously, I've never exactly been what you might call a shy spritzer. But venturing outside the house for my Government-approved stroll this spring, I found myself rather nervously selecting quieter scents in my collection, at first. If my fragrance transgressed into a stranger's face, even if I were standing at arm's length, would they feel invaded, as though I'd reached out and touched them?

It's a subject much discussed on the many internet forums dedicated to perfume parley. So I posted a question in one Facebook group, asking if people's fragrance habits had changed since #lockdown – and if so, why? Many who replied explained they'd been craving the more soothing among their scents. 'There is great comfort in wearing something familiar wrapped up in cherished memories,' related one fragrant fan. Another agreed that perfumes helped her feel better, so although she was awaiting surgery, 'While I lie in bed... I'm at least smelling awesome! I've even laid a little table with all my favourite scents – it makes me happy just having them around.'

Wearing a plethora of perfumes – sometimes several in one day – rather than sticking to one scent, definitely seems to be a trend, with a huge number of correspondents clarifying the specific, COVID-related reason for this: 'I changed fragrances every day so that there wouldn't be a single "lockdown" perfume in my memory,' one woman related. Another agreed that 'I've been forcing myself to wear something

different everyday', even going so far as to put away the recent purchase of a new favourite '...because I don't want to associate this year with one particular juice. I'd never wear it again!' Acknowledging a transition of taste variations, another forum member declared, 'During the initial lockdown, I didn't wear anything much at all, but generally now I'm either wearing my cosy comfort favourites or bombastic don't-give-a-damn strong stuff.'

On balance, most of the perfume-lovers said they were deliberately choosing bold, characterful fragrances that shook them out of their daily woes, and actively enjoying the fact they could wear what they liked in the most generous of doses.

One forum member declared: 'I over-spray massively if I have to venture to the supermarket. I figure people have to stay away, so let's take advantage and get the big hitters out!' 'I'm wearing stronger and more "challenging" fragrances, and using more sprays,' another forumite agreed, 'on the assumption that I won't be getting especially physically close to other people.'

The fascinating revelations from the Facebook group are borne out in a recent report by trends and market data analysts, the NDP Group, who announced that post-lockdown, perfume sales are outperforming every sector and leading the recovery of the UK beauty industry. But people are desperately missing getting to try new perfumes on their skin. A busy nurse told me 'I SO miss going to sniff new things and try them on.' Others chimed in, expressing frustration: 'The virus has affected my ability to travel and to "go sniffing" – I think that's where I've felt the biggest impact.'

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IN THE BUBBLE: *Fragrances* for Quiet Contemplation



JULIETTE HAS A GUN Not A Perfume Composed of a single element called CetaloX, this allergen-free fragrance is a wispy kiss from Casper the Friendly Ghost



D.S. & DURGA Crystal Pistil Petal-soft 'your skin but better' musk, this fragrant dew is composed to layer with any fragrance you own - or simply enjoy it, solo



VINES HOUSE PARFUM Natural Story Radiantly clean cucumber, pear and neroli feel like wrapping yourself in the pearly embrace of a sun-dappled morning mist



CLEAN RESERVE Warm Cotton Solar-filled comfort brushed with ginger, mint, and leafy green notes; spray when you need lazy Sundays and lie-ins, bottled



SARAH BAKER PERFUMES Far From the Madding Crowd Evoking romantic picnics in wildflower meadows; tender fruits frolic with myrtle and fresh eucalyptus



BENTLEY BEYOND THE COLLECTION Mellow Heliotrope Proving mellow needn't mean meek; clouds of billowing vanilla cuddle crisp blackcurrant fruitiness

SOCIAL DISTANCING: *Fragrances for Marking Your Territory*



ORTO PARISI Megamare Ambergris Ambergris, seaweed and sea cucumber sound innocuous, but this salty beast is a tempting tempest, a scented leviathan



JOVOY Psychédélique A smoky swagger of patchouli engulfs a thorny rose, while boozy vanilla makes merry with a twist of amber. Suggestively substantial



MORESQUE Al Andalus Blast imbeciles from your path with a sizzle of saffron, black pepper and ginger, exploding into *oudh* and labdanum lashed by birch



BEAUFORT LONDON Terror & Magnificence Cold flagstones echo incense-laden shadows, dark wooden church pews and a seductively sinister glint of a smile



FRÉDÉRIC MALLE Musc Ravageur Seriously animalic, this snarls with improper intentions; lashings of warm vanilla stridently woven with bergamot and lavender



MOSCHINO Toy Boy Having proffered a bouquet of spicy roses, he's only gone and set them on fire. A handsomely seductive room-filler, it's throbbingly good fun

Retail, of course, is still struggling to find new ways to tempt us back in store (see Amanda Carr's exploration of the new high street scent rules, on p.40), with most shops having swept their counters of tester bottles. As a result, sales have massively moved online (a trend we've definitely seen, as sales of our Perfume Society Discovery Boxes and brands' own sample sets have soared.)

But the bottom line is that in troubling times, we desperately need something lovely, a treat, a daily ritual to soothe our nerves or bolster our confidence with some backbone-in-a-bottle. Firmenich – the world's largest privately-owned fragrance and flavour company – recently published a report, *Reimagine: Generation C is Calling*, on how the fragrance industry itself needs to cling on to the positive. From March to April 2020, their Social Media Insights team ran a worldwide study on how people were feeling. In order of ranking, the emotionally descriptive words used were: Isolated, Protected, Safe, Positive, Sick and Clean. 'During this time,' Firmenich note, 'two other emotions grew significantly – Frustration and Inspiration – in what seems like an odd pairing. But do we need to reconcile them? Or can we reimagine a co-existence: frustration leading to inspiration?'

Based on countless trend reports and observations of consumer behaviour, I personally predict the future of fragrance will consist of polarised, scented 'splinter groups' – a split between those who only feel comfortable wearing 'inoffensive' or 'clean' fragrances; and those who react against this by flagrantly flaunting brasher, weaponised, more solipsistic scents, such as the recently ramped up Tom Ford Black Orchid Parfum, YSL Libre Intense or Paco Rabanne 1 Million Parfum (see our Latest Launches round-up on p.48 for more on this).

But whatever happens, to paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of the death of fragrance have been greatly exaggerated. Sampled from our sofas or sent across the miles to socially distanced, perfume-loving pals, worn as an invisible armour, or to increase the feelings of *amour*: fragrance bonds us.

Whichever olfactory camp you're in, this fact unites us: fragrance sales are up because we need the power of perfume more than ever. For many of us, spraying on the right scent can be that instant hit of happiness which – when we've come to the end of or metaphorical rope – helps us tie a knot in it and hang on; because better days WILL come again.

Until then? At least we're smelling awesome. ■

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*There is great
comfort in wearing
something familiar
wrapped up in
cherished
memories*
”

A HISTORY OF HOW MUCH IS 'TOO MUCH'?

The issue of not wishing to 'offend' others via our perfume habits has become something of a perfumed hot potato the past few years – but it's nothing new. The politicisation of scenting ourselves, and particularly, the judgement of 'women who wear too much perfume', is an argument that has perturbed prudish men for aeons.

Ever since women first adorned their bodies with fragrant oils, certain sections of society (usually men) have had a little perfumed panic. They either assumed women were setting olfactory snares to lure unwary lovers, or pretending to be clean while masking their 'noxious' feminine body odours with scent.

According to an 1880 edition of the popular etiquette book, *The Manners That Win*, 'It is in bad taste for a lady to use strong perfumes. A hint of a delicate perfume is quite enough.' This was a major shift from previous eras, when emanating great gusts of elegant fragrance distinguished the aristocracy from the rather pongier poor.

Rachel S. Herz traces this change of attitude in her book, *Neurobiology of Sensation and Reward* (CRC Press/Taylor & Francis). As soon as perfume became an 'affordable luxury' – available at prices within the means of the working classes to purchase, wearing 'the once-prestigious heavy and animalic scents of earlier generations' soon went from being a desirable sign of one's wealth and social status, to something 'only prostitutes and the *déclassé* dared wear.'

In his excellent historiography of smell from ancient to modern times, *Past Scents: Historical Perspectives on Smell* (University of Illinois Press), Jonathan Reinartz observes: 'Doubts and fears about the benefits of an increasingly fragrant society have not dissipated... increasing numbers of individuals and groups have tried to ban perfumes in public spaces with what could be described as religious zeal.'

But the move towards working from home has surely put paid to any threat of that. Several members of the fragrance forum who answered my query replied they were relishing wearing '...more fragrance than ever, because I don't have to worry about workplace no-scent rules.' Another shared her utter joy at fragrant freedom: 'I had nearly stopped wearing fragrance before lockdown because my workplace regularly sends out e-mails warning against it. Now that I'm staying home, I wear it every day and enjoy it.'

Which is at least one silver lining, to the COVID cloud.



CHRISTOPHE
LAUDAMIEL

MAVERICK AND MAGICIAN

JO FAIRLEY
Zooms with a
talented perfumer,
'scent sculptor'
and author of
a controversial
fragrance
manifesto, who is
out to change the
perfume world
for good

IT'S NEVER EASY chatting with Christophe Laudamiel. First off, I swear he has some kind of electric life-force that crashes Zoom calls, jinxes Instagram Lives and generally makes transatlantic communication between The Perfume Society HQ and this perfumer's New York lab technologically challenging. (For this conversation alone, we had about seven attempts. During some of them, Christophe's phone was angled so that all I could see was a glimpse of his Mohican.)

Secondly, for anyone who's been trained to think about fragrance in a conventional way, the ideas Christophe has for shaking up the perfume world take a while to sediment down, into the brain. For instance: his proposal that perfume companies be more transparent about a bottle's fragrance ingredients, on their websites – as some fashion and candle companies have started to be in the past few years. Or the notion that we should always buy perfume from perfumers, not from fashion or clothing brands – 'in the same way you buy fashion from fashion designers, music from musicians.'

But if ever this industry was ready for a shake-up, it's surely right now. In 2020, all bets are off: how we work, where we do it, how fragrances are created and sold and enjoyed. And whether or not you agree with all his disruptive ideas, one thing is certain: here's a man who seeks to hold up a mirror to the perfume world, and question everything done in homage to Perfumery ('with a capital P', as he puts it). He's also on a mission to get everyone outside the perfume business – the man, woman and child in the street – to focus more on scents and smells, in order to get greater pleasure out of the world and out of life itself. Which, in that respect, puts us shoulder-to-shoulder with Christophe on the soapbox.

Master perfumer Christophe Laudamiel's Wikipedia page scrolls on for days. Here's a man who, before he became a perfumer, won the French National Chemistry Olympiads, in 1986. Who completely shook up the laundry market with his innovation of Lenor Cherry Blossom, Ariel and Gain, delivering new patented freshness; in 1999 he received Procter & Gamble's Special Recognition Awards for his innovative work with fabric softeners, as well as his discoveries of new fragrance molecules and technologies.

Christophe then went on to study fine fragrance with master perfumers Pierre Bourdon, Carlos Benaïm, Sophia

LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRAGRANCITÉ

a fragrance manifesto

by master perfumer *Christophe Laudamiel*

protection of all communities.' And if you don't agree, I'd respectfully suggest you go elsewhere – though you'll miss out on the excellent info on how to improve your sense of smell, as well as how to 'read' a perfume label.

On the Zoo website, you'll also find his open 'Dear Santa' to Leonard Lauder, with a wishlist that includes an Estée Lauder Building at Columbia University as 'a centre for olfactory education and excellence to promote academic scent education across disciplines' (he points out that the public and Nobel Prize winners alike know more about coffee, wine, golf and cheese than they know about their own nose). And a Leonard Lauder Building of Olfactory Technology and Electronics for Motion Pictures, Theatre and Publishing', pointing out that these fields are all 'at an olfactory kindergarten level'. Beyond that, he'd like to see The Jane Lauder Department of Smell Vocabulary, Theory & Ethics at Radcliffe College (named after another senior Estée Lauder corporation executive/family member): 'Scientists and theoreticians are desperate to develop a vocabulary specific to olfaction. Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti, Do; blue, orange, green, yellow; Pantone codes – no such system exists in perfumery, to date,' he says. And so it goes on; I can thoroughly recommend taking a few minutes of your life to read to the end.

Christophe has also published 'A Fragrance Manifesto' – the gloriously named 'Liberté, Egalité, Fragrancité', its title a play on the French national motto. With passion infused into every single line, it strives for greater inclusivity, transparency, opportunity. Lots of blue-sky thinking, for sure. Lots of cage-rattling suggestions. (Read elements of it, overleaf.)

But mostly, the manifesto embodies Christophe's dream of a world that pays more attention to our precious sense of smell, rescuing it from the status, so perfectly expressed by Helen Keller, as 'the fallen angel of our senses.' (It is surely no coincidence that his company is called DreamAir.) 'I've had a lot of positive feedback from other perfumers and niche brands,' he says, about the manifesto, adding that there are groups in certain institutions now pondering how some aspects could be implemented.

On one level, he's clearly hugely proud of the industry. In terms of ►

Grojsman and Pierre Wargnye, winning 2003's FIFI for 'Fragrance Star of the Year' – one of so many awards, over the years. Several of his creations – Polo Blue and Abercrombie & Fitch Fierce (co-created with Carlos Benaïm) – remained top 10 sellers for more than a decade. Describing himself as a 'scent sculptor', one of Christophe's most fascinating projects was the creation of smells inspired by Patrick Süskind's novel-turned-movie, *Perfume*, which included 'the stench of streets in 18th Century Paris.'

Today, as well as working his scent wizardry for big commercial clients through his lab – which is equipped by IFF – Christophe is involved in

'AT THE END OF THE DAY,

I'D LIKE US TO HAVE AS

MANY PERFUMERS AS

WE HAVE MUSICIANS'

two niche ventures: Strangelove (with Elizabeth Gaynes and Helena Christensen), and his own perfume house, The Zoo. On The Zoo website, visitors are asked to agree with this statement before entering the site: 'I align myself 100% in support of human rights and am committed to speaking out: for justice, for freedom, for equal

sustainability, Christophe explains: 'Perfume has been sustainable since the 80s. Safe ingredients, no more child labour, respect for women, no pollution, no exploitation of the land. In fact, he says, 'Perfumery has now entered the age of super-sustainability – patchouli crops monitored by GPS, water pumps in villages where they plant vanilla or patchouli, chemical engineering techniques exported from Grasse transparently, to farmers around the world.'

On the subject of inclusivity, meanwhile, he was very outspoken at the time of Black Lives Matter, grasping the opportunity to help bring about change on a societal level. 'Even at school I was the person in class who would defend the person who was less fortunate. I'm someone who comes from a lower middle class background myself, but when something isn't fair, I have to do something.'

Within the fragrance industry, Christophe does see signs of change, in terms of increased opportunity. 'The programmes at the leading fragrances houses – IFF, Givaudan, Robertet, Mane, Firmenich and Symrise – have been opened up to Asian and Hispanic/ Brazilian students for many years, now. The industry is very well aware that the Black American and African populations are not well-represented at all; two years ago, Givaudan and IFF have started to focus specifically on Africa and Black America, and The Institute of Art & Olfaction in LA now offers classes to become perfumers, specifically for people who have trouble entering other institutions.'

On a personal level, Christophe has himself been training future perfumers in Nigeria since February this year, donating his fee to Paris's Osmothèque (the world's custodian of fragrances) to further the dreams of young Africans to work in fragrance. But one of the fundamental problems, Christophe observes, is that 'many people out there don't even know the job of a perfumer exists – not just in fine fragrance, but also in candles and Downy/Lenor, etc. At the end of the day, I'd like us to have as many perfumers as we have musicians.'

As our Zoom call crashes for the umpteenth time, I can't help but agree. Although of one thing I am also certain: it doesn't matter how many thousands of perfumers there are in the world: there'll only ever be one Christophe Laudamiel. ■

thezoo.nyc
strangelove.com

THE MANIFESTO

We don't have room to publish all of this here. But with Christophe Laudamiel's kind permission, we bring you some thought-provoking elements from 'Liberté, Égalité, Fragrancité'. Read it in full at thezoonyc.com

1 FIRST, THE PUBLIC SHALL HAVE ACCESS TO REAL INFORMATION

- Children shall be given olfactory education at home and in schools to awaken the senses, communication and intelligence.
- Universities shall open real Perfume Studies departments. University courses shall use smells, fragrance compositions or olfactory science to illustrate their points.
- Top students at top universities shall routinely join the fragrance industry as much as joining the aerospace industry or Wall Street, be it to become perfume diffusion engineers, perfume managers, perfumers, or anything perfume...
- The public shall be made aware that most of us smell well enough, and smell better once we train and start putting our noses everywhere.
- Blind people around the world shall be offered extra olfactory stimuli and enrichment.
- The public shall be taught that the brain gets as much information, pleasure, intelligence and decision power via our noses as via our eyes. By smelling, one doesn't damage one's nose, lungs or brain, as they are made just for that: to smell. Perfumers are not known to have rotten lungs or worn-out noses. Human beings get fresh olfactory cells every 4-6 weeks like sharks get regularly fresh sets of teeth. Smelling doesn't provoke much more allergies than music provokes epilepsy crises. Let's stop the drama coming from ignorance.
- Teachers and psychologists, as well as doctors and nurses, shall walk around with a scent kit. Via smelling sessions, they shall obtain stories patients won't recall by oral or visual questioning. In return patients shall enjoy the healthy brain aerobic called smelling.
- People shall understand that a perfume piano, also called perfumery organ, has about 1,500 keys, also called ingredients or notes, compared to only 88 keys for a musical piano.

2

SECOND, LET'S JUMP
TO THE NEXT LEVEL

■ Perfumes shall be considered more than accessories. Perfumers shall become again the authority in fragrance design and decisions. Music is not considered an accessory, painting is not considered an accessory.

■ The fragrance industry shall recruit, dress, talk and perfume itself in much more colourful and hip ways...

■ We shall publicly recognise scent heroes: scientists, botanists and authors who contribute to the development of perfumes, general olfactory knowledge and expansion.

3

THIRD, LET THE
EXCITEMENT BEGIN

■ It shall be further exposed that perfumers are not just inspired by flowers and the smells of their grandmothers. Smelling can be quirky, punky, sexy, intellectual and much more.

■ Publishers shall routinely beef up their paper stories with scented pages and smell inserts. Scent tracks and cartridges shall be provided prior to TV or movie programmes, to accompany them.

■ Children shall bring home a scented present, or hide a scented object in their parents' suitcase as a travel amulet. Parents shall hold scent bars and surprises, bring back an unknown scent from an unknown place. These will be unforgettable experiences which mark for life. They enrich culture and diversity, and stretch the imagination.

■ The public shall appreciate the sustainable spirit of fragrance. By using fragrances we effectively help 40,000 farmers in Haiti grow vetiver plants. By loving jasmine and violet leaves coming from Egypt as well as orange flowers from Tunisia and Somalia, we help bring children to school and give women jobs. By enjoying vanilla extracts we allow villages in Uganda to afford basic water equipment, whilst using bergamot from Calabria helps to provide jobs to young generations in one of the poorest Italian regions.

■ Scents and scenting shall become again core religious and spiritual practices. People shall attend celebrations in churches, mosques, synagogues and temples, as well as practicing yoga, around smelling experiences. It nurtures memory, the sense of togetherness, the sense of whole, and promote extra internal and external communication.

■ 'Girls' shall know their vanillas and patchoulis as much as their lipsticks. 'Guys' shall know their oudhs and vetiver distillates as much as their wines and whiskies. And exchange 'girls' and 'guys'.

■ Buildings shall in future get several rotating scents over the course of a day, like giving them a soul.

■ A TV show shall be staged to reveal the backstage of perfume sourcing of precious ingredients in remote inaccessible places - because fragrance ingredients don't grow in downtown Manhattan or inside good old Paris - to show the drama of perfume composition as well as the drama of perfume criticism.

■ Chefs and perfumers shall work together in the same labs, chefs using molecules and patchouli and tuberose and green mandarin essence and much more complex mixtures than just a spice mix, and perfumers using the art of heating, cooking and aging on rose oils, sandalwood, oudh and other immortelle absolutes.

These dreams are actually easy to materialise in the age of today. Let's open our nostrils and go for it.

C. Landi

SCENT SHOPPING

...in the new normal

The future of fragrance shopping is bright – but just a little different from what we have been used to. AMANDA CARR, of We Wear Perfume, ventures out to experience scent shopping in real life wearing her futurist hat, to see what the #NewNormal looks like for perfume-lovers



Amanda paid a visit to Selfridges, where there's very much a 'hands-off' policy in place

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has turned fragrance shopping upside-down: social distancing, liquid sanitisers, safety screens, the non-sharing of tester bottles and absolutely no double-handling of those absorbent scent blotters are just some of the challenges for fragrance shops and customers alike in this weird new normal.

Government guidelines are clear about everyone needing to wear masks while shopping to keep safe, but how do you tempt a customer to inhale a delicious new fragrance through layers of mask material? As I anxiously ventured out onto the almost deserted pavements of central London for the first time in nearly five months, I felt like a fragrant version of Indiana Jones, were he ever to embark on a scent safari.

The first #newnormal point to take on board is: patience is a virtue. There are many new behaviours to learn and we will all undoubtedly experience queuing at some point. My first stop was Les Senteurs in stylish Belgravia, where there is a polite notice on the door explaining the 'two guest' policy for socially distanced shopping. Using the hand sanitiser as you enter is a must and masks must be worn, but – thankfully – your nose can peek out to allow you to inhale when needed.

Once safely inside, though, it was such a joy to be back in a shop. Les Senteurs twinkles like a jewel box, with rows of enticing fragrance bottles lined up like old friends on its glass and chrome shelves, welcoming me back. Though closed during the pandemic, Les Senteurs remained busy with website sales, manager Clair Wills told me, thanks partly to the weekly e-newsletter that the store continued to send out. 'I think people slowed down a lot during lockdown and had time to read properly about the fragrances we featured,' she continued. 'We offer a good tester service so customers had time to order samples and consider them at home.'

And this slowed-down shopping experience is the second of the #newnormal shopping points. Quite simply, post-pandemic shopping cannot be rushed. I had Les Senteurs to myself as foot traffic is still low, but everything takes a little longer when you are not allowed to touch the bottles or spray the testers yourself.

Helped by Clair, I took my time, immersing myself in the selection. I sampled Cloon Keen, a charming Irish brand exclusive to Les Senteurs, plus Andy Tauer's Phtaloblu, launched during lockdown, which is like a cool, sea





Far left and left: Belgravia's Les Senteurs, where expert help is to be had - once you've sanitised, of course. Below: a masked assistant at Floral Street; Diptyque's Liberty store within a store, where Amanda found it a welcome relief to be helped by visor-wearing sales consultants whose lips she could read



Left and right: Penhaligon's pandemic retail management is carried off with their usual wit, on the stylish signage





“Virtual engagements have given us the opportunity to focus on a more personalised, intimate approach with individuals or groups of people”

MICHELLE FEENEY OF FLORAL STREET FRAGRANCES

breeze, lightly tinged with orange blossom and geranium. It all felt safe and cosy, and at the end of my dwell-time (the professional name given to hanging about the shop) I almost didn't want to leave.

But there were more perfume stores to visit, so off I strode to Covent Garden, normally a bustling haven of fragrance-testing opportunities but a more subdued place on the day of my visit, with very few tourists. The lovely Floral Street Fragrances shop was its usual colourful self and staff – known as Floralistas – wore cheerful floral masks that coordinated with their flower-printed aprons, which the store should definitely consider selling.

I caught up with founder Michelle Feeney to ask how she's coping with the new normal, 'What is normal?', she exclaimed. 'We are a small British fragrance brand in a sea of big players and are constantly being challenged. Because we are small, however, we are agile and I am extremely optimistic.' Part of that nimbleness can be seen in how Floral Street has moved swiftly to connect with its customers online. It has upgraded its excellent discovery sets – which are small enough to fit through a letter box – for you to try at home while talking via Zoom to a Floralista, and its hugely popular Scent School, where you can deep dive into learning about scent, has now become a fully virtual experience.

And this brings us to the third of the #newnormal shopping rules, the morphing of store and online services, where travel and health restrictions are motivating stores to improve their connection to customers with better online services. Floral Street is a good example of how it can be seamlessly meshed together, because Michelle realises we will all be learning about, sampling and experiencing fragrance more from home via an online connection.

She points out the additional benefit of connecting digitally. 'These virtual engagements have given us the opportunity to focus on a more personalised, intimate approach with individuals or groups of people. Our Floralistas guide customers through our *eau de parfums* so they can become true connoisseurs of scent.' The delayed launch of the new Arizona Bloom, a deliciously sunny, salted musk, necessarily had a strong digital focus,

to catch customers who were spending more time online during lockdown. This saw it become Floral Street's most successful fragrance launch to date..

Let's take a moment here to mention home testing, the fourth of our #newnormal shopping habits. Stores have upped their sampling game. Independent shops are excellent at this, decanting from tester bottles into 1ml or 2ml sample sized vials for you to try at home (which can also be ordered online). Most brands do discovery boxes, which you try at your leisure – and it's worth mentioning here that The Perfume Society was there first with its excellent Discovery Box collections, so useful for anyone super shielding, with a terrific assortment of brands and styles to choose from; the site now also stocks many perfume houses' own discovery sets.

To get a bigger view on how sampling might look in the future, I spoke to Jill Hill, co-founder of Aspects Beauty, distributor of luxury fragrances to some of the UK's top stores. Aspects Beauty recently launched their own direct-to-consumer website with an exciting array of beautiful fragrances, possibly putting it in direct competition with the very stores it supplies. But Jill is not worried. 'Engaged customers will be shopping across many different channels,' she says. 'They will be engaging with social media platforms, and the communities that each retailer – online or bricks and mortar – tries to establish.'

So as a consequence of shopping more digitally, expect your first 'touch points' with a new fragrance to shift from the shop counter, or Duty Free aisle, to an Instagram post or a store website chat-bot. Digital conversations are number five in the #newnormal rules, and our advice is start following your favourite brands and stores (and of course @theperfumesociety), to ensure your finger is on the pulse-point of all that's new and exciting.

For those who miss visiting department store fragrance halls, with their theatrical windows and bewitching displays redolent of scent – well, things have definitely changed. At Liberty, all fragrance bottles for sampling are held behind a perspex screen, requiring you to wait patiently for a masked-up staff member to spritz a sample on your skin (thankfully still allowed). I found the clear Perspex visor



“Shoppers will be engaging with social media platforms, and the communities that each retailer – online or bricks and mortar – tries to establish”

JILL HILL OF ASPECTS BEAUTY

masks worn by Diptyque staff in Liberty a welcome change from the fabric ones, as it's much easier to understand what's being said. (Am I the only one who's just discovering how much I lip-read?)

At Selfridges, their ongoing Project Earth campaign perfectly demonstrates another aspect of the #newnormal – the opportunity to shop more sustainably for scent. The store's beauty halls – with strict one-way systems and very little product touching allowed – are, however, full of brands showing off their sustainable credentials, including the delightful Skandinavisk pop-up shop, constructed entirely from reusable and natural Danish materials, to promote its New Generation body care collection. Fully transparent about its origins, unusually it lists what percentage of fragrance is included in its body care lotions (high, at 2%).

Thankfully, there is still theatre to be had at Harvey Nichols, where I caught up with new releases from Hermetica, another brand that is proudly ecological and made via sustainable 'green' chemistry. I sank my nose into a blotter doused in just-launched, verdantly soft IvyMe, a captivating green-tinged rose which felt fresh and comforting, ideal to wear for these unsettled times. And Hermetica's animated Heath-Robinson style scent-sampling contraption can't help but make you smile. This is why we come to department stores, for the out-of-the-ordinary experience, and Harvey Nichols excels at this.

I asked Shannon Monteith, Harvey Nichols' beauty buyer, what the store was doing to replace this type of experience for customers reluctant to visit, 'We have collaborated closely with our brands on new ways to trial products,' she told us, 'including enhanced sampling and beautiful luxury discovery boxes.' (Heads-up: there's a new exclusive Perfume Society x Harvey Nichols Discovery Box on the horizon, after last year's collaboration sold out in record time.) Shannon adds: 'Customers are also using Ask HN, our online tool which connects customers directly to a beauty expert in-store, so customers receive impartial, real-time advice directly from our experienced team. It's easy to use, with a video function to allow for a store experience at home, which our customers are responding well to. Innovation is going to be key.'

Over in the heart of East London, meanwhile, Columbia Road is home to the charming Angela Flanders, a fragrant but tiny store, run by the late perfumer-founder's daughter

Kate Evans. 'Here,' Kate told me, 'most customers are used to the new routine of shopping, and more confident about going into shops. It's definitely a challenge, with customers wearing face masks and restricted access to tester bottles. But finding new ways to experience scent will become increasingly important to us.'

To delight customers who do visit, Kate's experimenting with her first lifestyle exhibition, Blue de Chêne, a collaboration with textile expert Bleu Anglais, via a pop-up shop inside her Spitalfields store this autumn. Vintage, Chinese, blue and white, hand-made textiles sets are displayed alongside the Angela Flanders fragrances they inspired, to offer customers a new way to appreciate scent.

This lifestyle crossover will see fragrance move outside of the beauty hall environment and into unexpected shops, often as a collaboration or pop-up. It's the seventh #newnormal rule and is likely to see fragrance 'go local', on a high street near you. According to Deloitte Digital research, three in five of us bought more locally during lockdown and want to continue to do so in the future.

Jill Hill of Aspects Beauty agrees it's an important trend. 'At Aspects, we're predicting a return to more localised shopping and we have launched an initiative to work with more indie retailers to help them optimise this shift and give them opportunities to revive their offering to better survive the current downturn.' This is great news for local stores who might want to experiment with selling fragrance – and excellent news for customers, who will enjoy finding scent sold in more convenient places. Jill continues: 'This will be a very different experience for fragrance customers – one that is more curated and edited and perhaps more easily refreshed with newness and seasonal relevance.'

At this point in my journey I'm wondering if fragrance might perhaps become the new fashion, since so many of us aren't shopping for fashion. Or perhaps the new art? Either way, it sounds exciting.

But at the end of my whirlwind tour around my favourite London scent stores, I can confirm that it's safe and indeed still fun to shop for fragrance and I'd encourage you to do so, because the stores will be delighted to see you. And if you are unable to venture out because you are still shielding, be cheered that stores are innovating and improving their online offers to make better connections to you – because rest assured, they really miss you. ■



As we've seen ourselves, home sampling is becoming hugely important - so look out for our second Perfume Society box collaboration with Harvey Nichols, coming soon

THE NEW RULES FOR FRAGRANCE SHOPPING: A QUICK GUIDE

#1 BE PATIENT

Plan ahead, ring the store to find out what their policy around visiting is and book a time slot if it helps. Remember there may be queues, so be patient and download a couple of good fragrance podcasts (check out our recent recommendations on the website) to listen to while waiting in line.

#2 SHOP SLOW

You may find yourself the only person in the store and the staff are very likely to be thrilled to see you, but testing is a more laborious, with staff in charge of spraying, so take it slow and relish the extended experience.

#3 ONLINE AND OFFLINE ARE MERGING

The future of fragrance service is online, even if it's taking brands a while to realise this. Do remember that The Perfume Society's Find-a-Fragrance online tool can also help you find your next perfume, without leaving home.

#4 YOU'RE SAMPLING AT HOME

Independent stores often offer great sampling services for you to try at home. Discovery boxes are nothing new for regular readers of The Perfume Society, but stores and brands are offering increasingly innovative versions.

#5 YOUR CONVERSATIONS WILL BE VIRTUAL

Social media is where you are likely to encounter your next new fragrance, so make sure you are following your favourites.

#6 SUSTAINABLE STILL COUNTS

Of course it does, possibly even more so after the pandemic has made us realise how fragile the world can be. Check your labels, check the packaging, check what's inside the bottle and check their websites to see what brands are doing to improve sustainability.

#7 EXPECT 'LIFESTYLE AND LOCAL'

Fragrance is coming to a local store near you, as fragrance brands take their product to where customers are. That means your local lifestyle or fashion boutique, possibly even your local art gallery. Good news for everyone.

Last year's The Perfume Society x Harvey Nichols' collaboration box



Angela Flanders
Bleu de Chine
pop-up



MEMORIES, DREAMS, REFLECTIONS

CARINE ROITFELD *is a fashion world legend. After 10 years as the rule-breaking editor of French Vogue, she left to start her own brand, which debuted with a collection of fragrances*

What's the very first thing you remember smelling?

Borscht (a Russian beetroot soup), in my grandmother's kitchen. The smell was so strong, although my grandmother's fragrance, Guerlain L'Heure Bleue, was even stronger. I also remember the smell of the hairspray in my mother's hair – most probably Ellnett.

When did you realise that scent was really important to you?

Very early on, when I realised it was closely linked to memory. Later, I became aware of the importance of *sillage*, or the trail you leave behind you. I like the idea that people recognise me by my scent, in the elevator, in the office, so they know I was there, and left.

What's your favourite scented flower?

Lily of the valley, traditionally given in France on 1st May for good luck.

What was the first fragrance you were given?

Carven Eau Vive.

What was the first fragrance you bought for yourself?

Raspberry extract from an Indian shop.

Have you had different fragrances for different phases of your life...?

I started with that raspberry extract, then Eau Vive. Depending on the boyfriend at the time, I wore Dior Eau Sauvage and Guerlain Habit Rouge. My next scent was Fracas, by Piguet; it was hard to find at that point, and I used to get it in the US. Then I moved onto YSL Opium for Men, and for almost 20 years, YSL Opium layered with Serge Lutens Fleur d'Oranger. That was my first fragrance 'creation'.

Nowadays I wear my own fragrances, of course, which are named after real and fictional men: Aurélien when I am in Paris, George in the summer, and Sebastian when I am with my photographer friend Sebastian Fanea.

The smell that always makes me feel happy is... the aroma of coffee first thing in the morning.

The smell that always makes me feel a bit sad is...

L'Heure Bleue, because it reminds me of all the losses in my life.

The scent that I love on a man is... vetiver.

The scent I love to smell on a woman is... orange blossom.

The fragrance from the past that I've always wanted to smell is...

still with us: it's Chanel No.5, because it's a fantasy, and also because of all the stories and advertising that have been linked with it, through the years – from Mademoiselle Chanel to Catherine Deneuve and Marilyn Monroe.

What is your favourite book about fragrance?

Le Parfum by Patrick Süskind.

Find Carine Roitfeld's fragrances at net-a-porter.com and harrods.com; read more at perfumesociety.org



Carine Roitfeld's first venture, after French Vogue: fragrances named after men she's known or admires



Top: Carine's favourite scent book. Above: her fresh first scent. Right: Carine's grandma wore L'Heure Bleue



Carine's five favourite smells



❶ INCENSE IN A RUSSIAN CHURCH

❷ PARSOL PINES They are such a unique smell of the South of France.

❸ CASABLANCA LILIES In the hallway of the Carlyle Hotel in New York.



❹ LEATHER I love the smell of the leather interior of an English car, because it's like an invitation to a great party.

❺ SKIN The scent of a body after bathing in the Mediterranean. It just captures the sense of summer. 🌞



Catherine Deneuve in an vintage ad. for Chanel No.5, such an enduring icon of the scent world



CHANEL

Catherine Deneuve for Chanel

Perfume in the classic bottle from 8.50 to 400. Eau de Chanel from 7.00 to 200.00. Eau de Cologne from 4.00 to 200.00. Spray Perfume and Spray Cologne each 6.00.

Carine's first smell memory - beetroot soup - and her favourite flower, lily of the valley

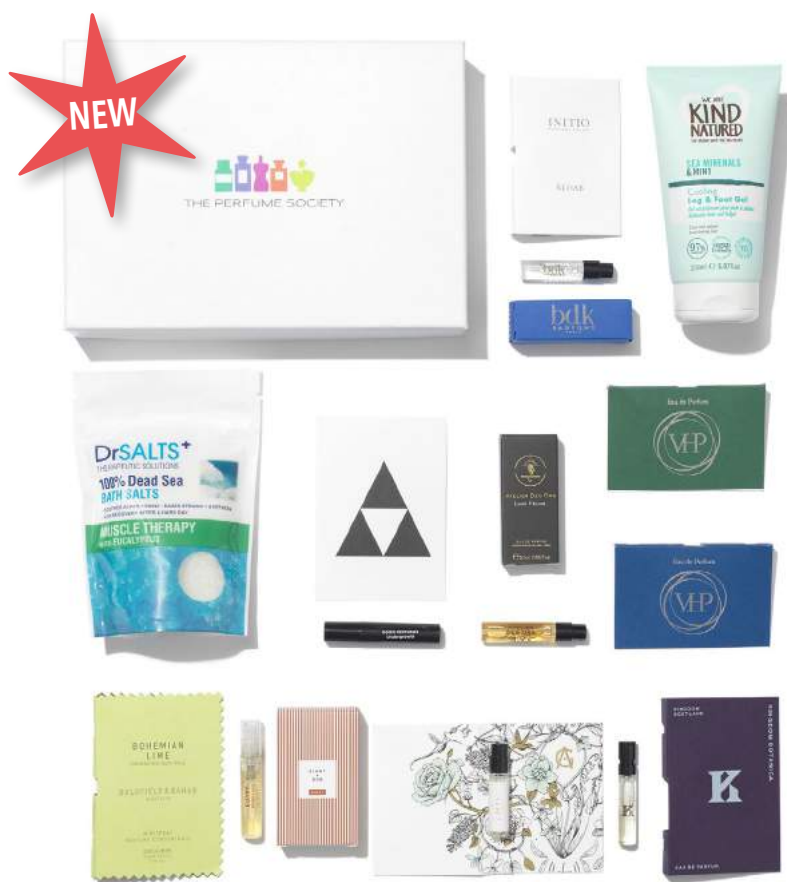


latest launches

Dozens of scents that have been unleashed in recent weeks, after 'perfume's great pause'. Here's the low-down

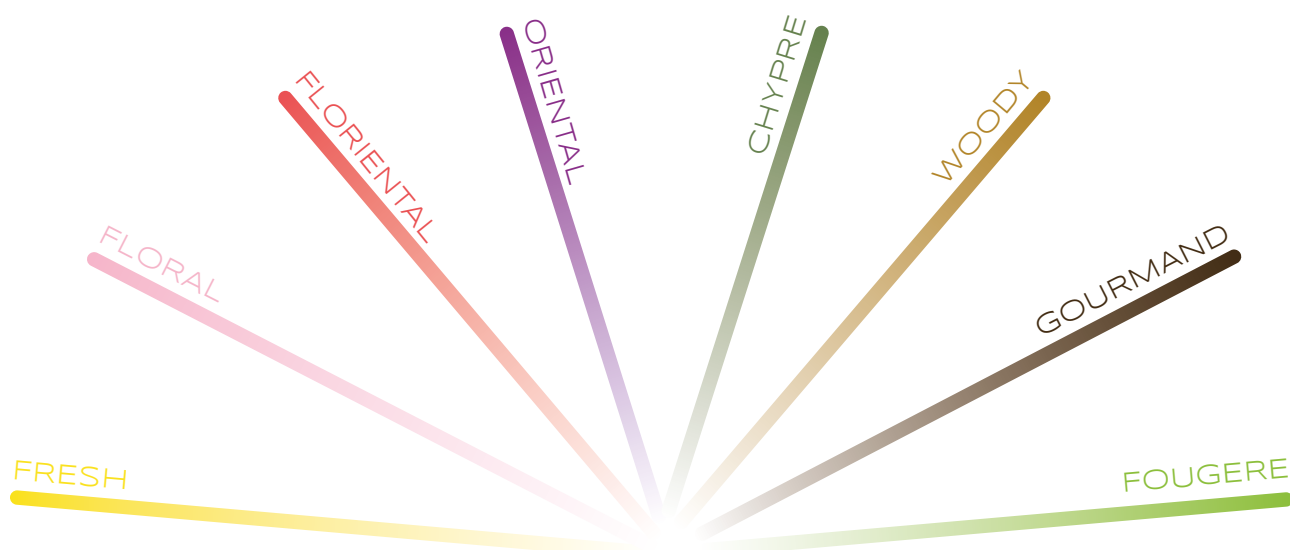
The Sharing Collection offers fabulous scents that can be worn and enjoyed by everyone, plus two fab 'unisex' body treats. Find it at perfumesociety.org/SHOP, price £23 (£19 to our VIPs). Among others, you'll enjoy...

- ATELIER DES ORS LUNE FÉLINE
- BDK PARFUMS SEL D'ARGENT
- EIGHT & BOB EGYPT
- GOLDFIELD & BANKS BOHEMIAN LIME
- GOUTAL EAU D'HADRIEN
- INITIO REHAB
- ROOK PARFUMS UNDERGROWTH



THE FRAGRANCE FAMILIES

As scentophiles know, fragrances fall into different 'families'. So we've used the same classification system for launches as on our perfumesociety.org website. Just look for the coloured strip above the name of the perfume, which is your visual clue to the families. These are listed below. Most of us are drawn to a specific family/families: once you know which you fall into, that colour can act as a cue – and help you take a short-cut to the ones you may want to try first.



AESOP *Rōzu*



You can wait a long time for a new Aesop fragrance – but in the case of Barnabé Fillion's play on rose, this was definitely worth it. Designed to 'articulate the full lifecycle of the rose', inspired by the outdoorsy life and work of modernist designer Charlotte Perriand, this very shareable green woody-floral creation does indeed take you from a rose's dew-drenched unfurling through to its almost dusty fading moments, enshrouded in a bonfire smokiness.

£130 for 50ml eau de parfum
libertylondon.com

AMOUROUD *Sunset Oud*



The shimmering succulence of yuzu infused with camphoraceous rosemary feels like a welcome mist of droplets spritzed on tobacco flower's petals. Forget all notions of *oudh* being a heavy cloak: this is a gauzy veil of white vetiver that swirls intriguingly to lavender, layered with gently smoked amber, a nuzzle of that *oudh* and a white leather that begs to be stroked. Cleverly captivating and beautifully nuanced, it's yet another reason to explore this house.

£166 for 100ml eau de parfum
ab-presents.co.uk

ÅND FRAGRANCE *Sånd*



A new venture by Simon Constantine (formerly of Lush), who has created fragrances with sustainability and ethical sourcing to the fore. Sånd celebrates sandalwood, working with the producer Dutjahn (winner of the UN Equator prize), using distilled 'deadwood' so no living trees are depleted. Cardamom-flecked banana, rich labdanum and benzoin feel like a warm hug, infused with smokiness and a touch of black pepper. Memorable, long-lasting and very, very comforting.

£35 for 10ml eau de parfum
andfragrance.com

ANINE BING *Pure Noir*



In a take on rose that feels laced with mystery yet still exudes a lightness, black Baccarat rose is entwined with papyrus atop the deeper mahogany sheen of spicy saffron and guaiac wood in the base. Perfumer Rodrigo Flores-Roux has created a fragrance that's unapologetically sensual but carries itself with subtlety. Designer Anine Bing was inspired by that moment when you book into a hotel somewhere new and feel the world is '...ripe with possibility.'

169 euros for 75ml eau de parfum
aninebing.com

AQUA DOS AÇORES *Azul*



If Turner could have bottled one of his tempestuous seascapes, this would surely be it. Storm-tossed seas and wind-whipped, salty strolls are thrillingly evoked by this new ultra-niche fragrance house (and vineyard), now exclusively stocked in the UK by Roullier White. Billowing with natural extracts of sap-laden cryptomeria (a conifer in the cypress family), geranium Bourbon, clary sage and lentisl, it feels jauntily adventurous and head-clearingly fresh.

£75 for 50ml eau de parfum
roullierwhite.com

ART DE PARFUM *Le Joker*



What a multifaceted character this one is! There's a sense of a traditional *fougère* about the opening – timur pepper's bouquet of bitter herbs among a lemony, frost-tinged freshness. A backstage pass to a dressing room brings illicit love letters and lipstick kisses; motes of face powder caught in the curls of a cigarette's smoke, the effervescence of passionfruit touched by salty tears of ambergris. You'll be ready for your close-up wearing this, for sure.

£114 for 50ml extrait de parfum
artdeparfum.com

ATELIER COLOGNE *Love Osmanthus*



The gender lines are well and truly blurred here, with a fragrance swirled with narcotic osmanthus that is pitched by Atelier Cologne as being 'unisex', and composed of 93% natural materials. (We've noted more and more that perfume houses are sharing with us the percentage of naturals in their blends.) Alongside peachy-creamy osmanthus, you'll have your olfactory interest piqued first by lemon, before the new-pencil-case woodsiness of American cedarwood. £55 for 30ml Cologne Absolue feelunique.com

ATELIER MATERI *Santal Blond*



After 12 years working in fragrance for other brands, Véronique Le Bihan has poured her passion for sustainability into Atelier Materi, which is 'committed to empowering women', with an emphasis on fair trade and environmental wellbeing. What this means for us is a quintet of scents, each showcasing a specific star ingredient – in this case, a smooth, caressing, smoky play on sandalwood, cardamom, jasmine and tonka, tapping into the wood's famously spiritual powers. £195 for 100ml eau de parfum lessenteurs.com

BERDOUES *Guaria Morada*



A welcome dose of chicly rendered exoticism from this consistently brilliant house via Brazilian orange, ylang ylang, amyris, pear and patchouli (and how extra-cheering are the ingredient-illustrated bottles to look at, right now?) Perfumer Mylene Alran conjures blue skies and sun-warmed skin at the time we need it most. Even if we can't gasp at painterly sunsets and shake the sand from our toes, wearing this is akin to drowsy dreams of better days. £80 for 100ml eau de parfum ab-presents.co.uk

BJORK & BERRIES *September*



For many of us, autumn is our favourite season: mists, mellow fruitfulness, bonfires, crisp mornings. Deftly, the nature-focused Swedish brand's latest captures all of that, via bright fruits of pomelo and kumquat, aromatic lavender and eucalyptus, petals of apple blossom and jasmine, woven through with the smokiness of vetiver, papyrus, guaiac wood and the sweetness of pink praline. We're dreaming of toffee apples round a crackling fire, all snuggled up in this. £85 for 50ml eau de parfum bjorkandberries.com

CALVIN KLEIN *Eternity So Fresh*



Christy Turlington reprises her role as the face of Eternity – and this time, her co-star is real-life actor husband Edward Burns. (Handy to have the two models in a 'bubble' of their own, at a time when on-set smooching breaks social distancing rules.) Bestselling Eternity is breezily uplifted by pear, bergamot and blackcurrant, rendered smouldering via skin musks and amber. Do watch the commercial, too, to rekindle your faith in happy-ever-afters. From £35 for 30ml eau de toilette lookfantastic.com

CAROLINA HERRERA *Good Girl Suprême*



If you're anything like us you'll have been living in slippers of late, so how glamorous to reach for a spangled stiletto – even if only in perfume flacon form! Tonka bean really is having a moment (no wonder, being sweetly addictive and creamily comforting) and the self-confidence abounds from the first spritz when it's generously swagged by delicate posies of jasmine and tuberose. We know many collectors of these bottles who'll be stepping up. £55 for 100ml eau de parfum theperfumeshop.com

CAROLINA HERRERA
CONFIDENTIAL
Saffron Lazuli



Showcased in the most stunning flacon inspired by lapis lazuli – a stone which is ‘a timeless emblem of success, sophistication and luxury’ – those are all words which could equally apply to this gem of a juice. Showcasing saffron and blackcurrant, rose and orris on an exquisitely structured foundation of guaiac wood, vanilla and leather, Saffron Lazuli has us longing to cast off our PJs and zip ourselves into a proper frock, at last.

£235 for 100ml eau de parfum
harrods.com

CARTIER
La Panthère Pure Parfum



The many fans of Mathilde Laurent’s feline Panthère will rejoice that not only is this contemporary classic Chypre now available in its most intense form yet, as an exquisitely skin-lingering *parfum* (above), but it’s also now layerable, via a solid perfume and a fragrant hand cream. Radiant as ever, the sensual floral star note of gardenia billows even more sexily here, amplified by osmanthus. Apply to pulse-points and perfect your prowl.

£125 for 75ml *parfum*
harrods.com

CHANEL
Coco Mademoiselle
L’Eau Privée



Turn down the lights. Draw the curtains. L’Eau Privée is unabashedly designed to be worn at night – ‘sprayed in an enveloping gesture before bed’, as Chanel put it, though we don’t think an evening slumped in front of Netflix was quite what Olivier Polge had in mind. The woods have been downplayed, allowing both the freshness of mandarin and the pillow-y softness of jasmine, rose and white musks to take centre stage. Just dreamy.

From £67 for 50ml eau de parfum
chanel.com

CHLOE
Rose Tangerine



Close your eyes and imagine bending toward a rose bathed in sunshine, reaching out and bringing the bloom close, taking a deep breath... Ahhh, yes, that’s better – now we sense fruity, freshly unfurled petals (no heavy dustiness, here) and the tangy brightness of blackcurrant. Dry, woody cedar and white amber fluff a featherbed landing for your reverie, and while we snuggle, let’s gaze at the so-pretty blush of tangerine ribbon adorning the bottle.

£65 for 50ml eau de toilette
johnlewis.com

DIOR
J’adore Eau de Parfum
Infinissime



François Demachy puts an exquisite spin on Dior’s iconic white floral masterpiece, with its bouquet of Centifolia rose, ylang ylang, lily of the valley and tuberose – here, amplifying that most sensual and suggestive of Grasse-grown flowers, a stem of which can perfume a whole room. Honeyed, creamy, addictive, this is J’adore’s most intense, dance-till dawn version yet, refreshed by a twist of pink peppercorn and blood orange, softened by sandalwood. Femininity, bottled.

From £84 for 50ml eau de parfum
dior.com

DIPTYQUE
Othoniel Rosa



So here’s the story behind the limited edition Othoniel Rosa’s unusual name: Jean-Michel Othoniel is a French artist, author of *The Secret Language of Flowers* about the hidden meanings of the Louvre museum’s flower paintings. In tribute, a rose breeder named a new introduction ‘the Othoniel rose’, a spicy bloom now incarnated in scent form by Diptyque, its petals shot through with pink peppercorn, ambrette, vetiver and Akigalawood (an airier patchouli note). *Très belle*.

£120 for 100ml eau de toilette
diptyqueparis.com

DUSITA
La Pavillon d'Or



Self-taught perfumer Pissara Umavijani is proof that you don't always have to have attended ISIPCA to confect scents that are very special – in Dusita's case, inspired by Pissara's father's philosophical poetry, and her Thai heritage. Honeysuckle garlands citrus mints, boronia, green frankincense and white thyme, mellowing to an almost lickable base of vanilla, spicy rum, oak and sandalwood. We'd happy take up residence in this 'golden pavillion'. £218 for 100ml eau de parfum lessenteurs.com

**ÉDITIONS DE PARFUMS
FRÉDÉRIC MALLE**
Portrait of a Lady



Of course this isn't 'new', exactly. POAL has been stopping strangers in their tracks for two decades, sparking thousands of 'What are you wearing?' conversations. For a limited time, it's available in this special edition bottle – one of seven Frédéric Malle fragrances whose 20th birthdays are celebrated this autumn. Its rosininess is accented by berries, sandalwood, patchouli, musk, amber and benzoin – unchanged, unmistakeable and utterly unforgettable. £245 for 100ml eau de parfum fredericmalle.com

ERIS PARFUM
Green Spell



Antoine Lie worked for two years on ERIS's sixth fragrance, launched via online crowd-sourcing platform Indiegogo. Living up to its green promise, vibrant Italian mandarin is squeezed over succulent blackcurrant absolute, with Iranian galbanum and Egyptian violet leaf absolute evoking florist's shop snapped stalks and sap-drenched blooms. Dusky narcissus and fig leaf drape the shadowy base, and tomato leaf shines with photorealistic phosphorescence. £150 for 50ml eau de parfum erisparfums.com

GIORGIO ARMANI
My Way



Carlos Benaim and Bruno Jovanovic gathered armfuls of exquisite white flowers for Armani's biggest launch in years: light-filled, radiant, modern. But it isn't just the free-spirited, so-feminine fragrance itself that is of note, but the way it reflects Giorgio Armani's sustainability commitment, through an innovative refillable and recyclable flacon and the sourcing of vanilla through a programme that benefits local communities. We believe we've smelled the future. From £55 for 30ml eau de parfum armanibeauty.co.uk

GOUTAL
Les Temps des Rêves



As we daydream of pre-quarantine travel, Goutal's latest effortlessly whisks us to the sun-drenched Med on a breeze of orange blossom absolute, neroli, bergamot and myrtle. Annick Goutal herself began her training in Grasse; now, Camille Goutal and Isabelle Doyen revisit the landscape of a thousand bitter orange trees and Provence's characteristic aromatic trees and scrubland, introducing sandalwood and a bran absolute note for a pashmina-like, cocooning finale. From £75 for 50ml eau de toilette harveynichols.com

GUERLAIN
Iris Torrifié



Guerlain's L'Art & La Matière series spotlights especially precious raw materials – in this case, *Iris pallida*, already a cornerstone of Guerlain creations from L'Heure Bleue to Shalimar. As they put it: 'A symbol of protection and wisdom, in perfumery, iris remains one of the most delicate and precious scents in existence.' Here, Guerlain's virtuoso perfumers temper iris's signature powderiness with a jolt of coffee that renders it contemporary, exciting and very, very chic. £185 for 75ml eau de parfum guerlain.com

HEELEY
Zest de Gingembre



Whoosh! If you're having a sluggish day, here's a scent to make you feel supernaturally refreshed from the very first spritz. A *mélange* of mouth-watering lemon and lime is grated onto a cocktail of natural ginger accord – not the fiery dryness we sometimes encounter in fragrances, but a less aggressive, aquatic take that warms the cockles, nonetheless. With the heat enhanced by a tingle of pink pepper, then tempered by cooling cardamom, joy abounds.

£125 for 100ml eau de parfum
lessenteurs.com

JACK
Richmond



Of the many and varied Instagram Live Q+As we filmed over the summer (which can be viewed on our YouTube channel), the hour spent with Richard E. Grant was probably the most joyous. His irrepressible exuberance is captured once again in his fourth Jack fragrance, with Alienor Massenet conjuring up the actor's verdant Thames-side stomping ground via ginger, clary sage, moss, labdanum, cedarwood and cade oil. Once spritzed, you'll be back for an encore.

£95 for 100ml eau de parfum
jackperfume.co.uk

JO MALONE LONDON
Fig & Lotus Flower



Part of the 'Lost in Wonder' collection and inspired by ancient hanging gardens, get ready to be beguiled by the milky plumpness of figs, beautifully enlivened by the sunshine-in-a-bottle happiness of neroli. The green juiciness and brightness afforded by that neroli cuts through any notes that might have otherwise become too creamy to feel refreshing, and make this a pleasure to wear in any season. Wonderfully unisex, too, we feel, and of course, so layerable.

£100 for 100ml eau de Cologne
jomalone.co.uk

JULIETTE HAS A GUN
Lipstick Fever



Is there anyone who doesn't love the 'Mummy's handbag' smell of a *luxe* lipstick? We've yet to meet them. Capturing precisely that in liquid form is Romano Ricci's latest, with a slash of iris, violet absolute and raspberry softening to the woodsiness of patchouli and cedarwood, chosen to echo the leather interior of a handbag, before the comforting sweetness of vanilla slowly emerges as it warms on the skin. As for the suitably scarlet *flacon*? Mwah, mwah!

From £85 for 50ml eau de parfum
harveynichols.com

L'ORCHESTRE PARFUM
Bouquet Encore



Continuing their series of 'fragrances to smell and listen to', L'Orchestre Parfum's inspirational music this time is techno-inspired. Perfumer Pierre-Constantin Guéros weaves an ultraviolet bouquet of glowing white flowers that throb with a mellow undertone of Madagascan vanilla, airy Ambroxan, spicy pepper and euphoric musk. The effortless harmony floats around you – the kind of fragrance to reach for when you want to feel fragrantly supported, held aloft.

£129 for 100ml eau de parfum
ab-presents.co.uk

LALIQUE
Les Compositions Parfumées
Glorious Indigo



As part of their series celebrating the mastery of synthetic notes (the backbone of modern fragrance since the 1800s), Lalique are 'inspired by the alchemy of perfumery, jewellery and crystal-making', with perfumer Clément Marx creating a cool burn (because 'blue can be the hottest colour') of cinnamon and ginger juxtaposed against the creamy rosiness of Javanol, papyrus and patchouli, with soft woods in the base and an overall air of quiet confidence.

£190 for 100ml eau de parfum
lalique.com

LANCÔME
Idôle L'Intense



A stellar trio of Shyamala Maisondieu, Nadège le Garlantezec and Adriana Medina combined talents for this 'tribute to the innate beauty of inspiring women'. (We suggest they hold up a mirror, for inspiration.) Rose and jasmine star in the 'white Chypre', which fuses two patchouli elements, one extraction of this earthy note revealing accents of cocoa and leather. Smoothed by a balsamic vanilla, the result's surprisingly airy, while lingering smoochily on skin. From £54 for 25ml eau de parfum lancome.co.uk

LANCÔME
La Vie Est Belle En Rose Happiness Drops



Couldn't we use some bottled happiness right now? Lancôme are doing their best with a trio of darling, downsized, be-ribboned La Vie Est Belle flacons, filled either with the original fragrance, or La Vie Est Belle Intensément or this rosiest variation of the three, with its ramped-up rosepetal power, peony and iris. As they put it: 'Sometimes a single smile, a single drop of perfume can illuminate your day'. (But we've always known that, haven't we?) £28 for 15ml eau de toilette lancome.co.uk

MAISON CRIVELLI
Iris Malikhân



An exploration of innocence unfurling into something altogether more sinful, the opening lulls us with a gentle stroke of freshness via galbanum and cypress, followed by a tickle of incense and pink pepper and just a hint of hot, musky skin in the coriander. The heart purrs of powdery, woody, strawberry-tinged facets of iris – a surprising fruitiness amplified by blackcurrant absolute, licked with lentisque, softly snarling into an animalic base of mimosa-infused leather. £175 for 100ml eau de parfum harveynichols.com

MARC JACOBS
Perfect



Marc Jacobs's mantra: 'I am perfect as I am' is expressed in one word tattooed on his wrist: 'Perfect'. Now here's a way to wear it on yours via an unexpected clash of rhubarb and daffodil smoothed by almond milk in the heart. A snuggle-soft base of Cashmeran and cedar swathe you in comfort, and during the online launch party, Marc told us he adores the idea of all genders wearing this 'as a scented hug of self-care.' £69 for 50ml eau de parfum theperfumeshop.com

MEMOIZE LONDON
Ghزالh



The result of a twelve-month collaboration between Memoize London and Middle Eastern travel influencer, Ghزالh Wedhawia, this limited edition gets pulses racing by contrasting warm maple and crisp bergamot, a delicious opening that trickles into tart, almost leathery liquorice and the sophistication of shady vetiver. Smoky guaiacwood, swirled into an amber-rippled creamy tonka base creates a fragrant trail we'd be happy to follow around the world. £197 for 100ml eau de parfum selfridges.com

MEMOIZE LONDON
Isla Rose



From the all-natural house that celebrates deeply-held scent memories, here's an invitation to reflect on the purity of 'unconditional love', as they put it. Kick off your shoes and wander a garden path strewn with bushes of ripe, red berries into the welcoming warmth of the floral heart, in which exuberant jasmine is entwined with creamy magnolia. Wrapped in the amber-rich trail, supple leather and silky vanilla swathe oudh's throbbing base. £197 for 100ml eau de parfum selfridges.com

MIHAN AROMATICS
Munlark Ash



Nothing seems so bad after a good walk, and if you don't happen to live near a breathtaking landscape, Mihan Aromatics will transport you there, fragrantly. Travelling to Australia, we experience crushed leaves and fir needles, loamy earth and cypress tree sap – a concoction created to feel like 'a remedy of morning air inhaled deeply.' Spaciousness, a sense of quietude and time to just 'be' is buoyed by verdant botanicals, rendered magnificently.
AUD \$220 for 100ml eau de parfum
mihanaromatics.com

MORESQUE
Secret Collection Tubereuse



Taking inspiration from the notorious courtesan, spy and exotic dancer, Mata Hari, you might have just walked into her dressing room – thick velvet curtains obscuring the daylight, a huge vase of voluptuous tuberose on the table, exuding its carnal delights. The narcotic allure is ramped up even further with heady lily and heavenly ylang ylang on a smouldering, incense-laden base. Whatever your precious secrets, you'd spill them for a bottle of this perfume...
£115 for 75ml eau de parfum
harrods.com

MUGLER
Angel Nova



A sheer, fresh floral take on the iconic classic, this iteration twists ripe raspberry and succulent lychee with petal-soft damask rose atop a darker base of Akigalawood and resinous benzoin. Definitely one to try if you clutched your pearls and backed slowly away from the original scent – it's a very pretty fragrance that feels perfect to wear when you want something characterful yet transparent enough to let your own personality shine through.
£53 for 30ml eau de parfum
theperfumeshop.com

NARCISO RODRIGUEZ
Patchouli Musc



Perfumer Jordi Fernandez weaves a new spell from the modern classic, that instantly recognisable signature white musk accord drifting through the dappled shade of Indonesian patchouli and patches of sunlit jasmine. The season of drowsy, honeyed sunshine and distant drifts of woodsmoke is welcomed with tempting russet tones of cider apple and vanilla atop the rustling dried patchouli leaves in the base, in the most mellow yet addictive version yet.
£140 for 100ml eau de parfum
At Harrods (from 1st October)

NOËME PARIS
Kalahari



Named after the African desert, the opulence of this creation from an exciting new Parisian fragrance house more precisely evokes the opulence of a bustling spice market, to us, hazy with saffron, cardamom, incense. Labdanum delivers aromatic, resinous warmth, while cedar and musk tether the fragrance. If you imagine yourself staring out over the sand dunes as bright stars fade into dawn, this will still be making its presence deliciously known, on skin.
£180 for 100ml eau de parfum
harrods.com

PERFUMER H
Cucumber



Cucumbers don't come any cooler than this: an airy Cologne which has at its heart a perfectly balanced accord of cucumber sap and green woods, composed with Lyn Harris's minimalist flair. This haiku of a scent also features bergamot, watermelon and lemon rind, cedarwood, vetiver and musk – clean, outdoorsy and honestly mouthwatering, from Lyn Harris's latest collection, which recreates in olfactory form some of her favourite epicurean delicacies. Utterly delicious, all of them.
From £110 for 50ml eau de parfum
perfumerh.com

PERFUMER H
Pear



This feels like a nod to the finest tradition of French perfumery, harking back to when women made pilgrimages to perfumeries, wearing their finery, with the intention of finding a new scent. (You could do worse than plan exactly that around a trip to Lyn Harris's Marylebone boutique, actually.) In other words, bottled sophistication, via mandarin, bergamot, white pear, white iris and rosewood, with a sprinkling of sugared musk and vanilla. Just so, so pretty. From £140 for 50ml eau de parfum perfumerh.com

SALVATORE FERRAGAMO
Tuscan Creations Cupola



The magnificent dome dominating the skyline of Florence inspires an olfactory ode by perfumers Antoine Lie and Luca Maffei. Softly nuanced tangerine and green angelica are lit by golden saffron – a reference to the first rays of sunshine that bathe the cupola. Dusty orris and amber invite us inside, the echoing majesty of the cathedral itself, while labdanum, a rich trickle of patchouli and sacred woods evoke the chilled splendour of the contemplative space. £195 for 100ml eau de parfum harrods.com

SARAH BAKER PERFUMES
Flame & Fortune



A soft opening for such a strident name, a petitgrain piquancy sashays into the room with an air of insouciance and apricot lip gloss. But wait; there's something sizzling, and soon a ginger-spiked tuberose begins to bloom, a hip-swinging confidence that grows exponentially and feels subtly sinister in the best of ways. Amber flames lick the insatiably smouldering mezcal base with hints of sweetly burned rubber. The getaway car after a bank heist, perhaps? £80 for 50ml eau de parfum sarahbakerperfumes.com

STRADA PARFUMERIE
Via Veneto



A capsule collection of four unisex fragrances marks the launch of this new house. Their mission? To capture some of the world's most famous locations in olfactory form. Here, the spirit of Rome is spritzed in a cloud of jasmine, iris, tuberose, neroli and rose – refined, standing slightly aloof perhaps, but definitely a scent your nose wants to know; and the dry-down of ginger-tinged woods and amber-swathed cypriol is quite simply *bellissimo*! £90.62 for 30ml eau de parfum stradaparfumerie.com

TOM FORD
Black Orchid Parfum



There are going to be some super-excited perfumistas at news that Tom Ford's bestselling signature fragrance is now available as a *parfum*. 'To me, it is the perfect flower... luxurious, elegant, pure and sophisticated,' Mr. Ford says of the bloom which inspired this narcotic blend of ylang ylang, bergamot, black truffle, dark florals, rich fruits, patchouli, incense and sandalwood. Check out the gilded, limited edition purse-sized travel spray, too. Double-swoon. £98 for 50ml parfum tomford.co.uk

VALENTINO
Voce Viva



Celebrating unique femininity expressed through individualism, this evanescent bouquet is radiant with white flowers. A burst of instant happiness with the golden orange blossom borne aloft on a fresh breeze of bergamot and mandarin, the gilded gardenia beckoning us further to a mossy base that's redolent of soft woods, transparent musk and a feeling that you can accomplish anything. One to spritz when the doldrums hit hard and you need prettiness, *pronto*! £110 for 100ml eau de parfum valentino.com

VINES HOUSE PARFUMS
Voyage



Instilling a spirit of adventure wherever you may travel (even if it's only in your imagination currently), this will give the courage to face anything with aplomb. Pineapple and Earl Grey tea hint at exotic destinations, while apple and jasmine hum harmoniously in the heart. A dusting of luxurious orris with the comfort blanket softness of oakmoss, *oudh* and ambergris in the dry-down make this all but indispensable in the current unsettled clime, we reckon. £75 for 50ml eau de parfum vhparfum.com

WORLD OF WIMSETT
Circe



Gifted artist Frederick Wimsett has unveiled his first, gender-free fragrance, a floral-woody-Oriental creation intended to conjure up 'a stroll on a sun-baked Greek island.' Hand-blended with hyacinth absolute alongside 100% natural essential oils that include cedar, vetiver, coriander, sandalwood and patchouli, it's named after Circe, Homer's sorceress/goddess, who used her magic to transform the world around her. If only we had Circe's powers, right now. £30 for 30ml eau de parfum frederickwimsett.com

YARDLEY
250 For Her



Celebrating 250 years of their heritage, this fragrance is part of a limited-edition duo, and here 'the strength and empowerment of the contemporary woman' is recognised with English lavender – a nod to tradition – in the top notes, resting on a tart cassis and citrus accord and a generous bouquet of lily, jasmine, neroli and rose. Donating 1.5% from this fragrance to cancer support charity, Look Good Feel Better, it smells great while doing good, too. £25 for 100ml eau de parfum yardleylondon.com

YVES SAINT LAURENT
Capeline



Not a strange name at all for a fragrance, once you understand Yves Saint Laurent's Le Vestiaire des Parfums collection sets out to interpret iconic designs from the designer's *oeuvre* – here, the groovily wide-brimmed hats of which the *couturier* was so fond. Bergamot and mandarin make for a bright introduction to sweet yet elegant floral notes of lily, neroli and ylang ylang, with musk and vetiver sashaying in, for the end of the show. From £155 for 75ml eau de parfum harrods.com

YVES SAINT LAURENT
Jumpsuit



Another new introduction to what is literally 'a designer fragrance wardrobe', this pays homage to a short evening jumpsuit which first appeared in 1968, a dashing spin on a utilitarian design whose femininity is echoed here via mandarin, bergamot, peony, magnolia, jasmine, mandarin, with sandalwood and a peach accord also elegantly strutting their stuff. The black caps of Le Vestiaire flacons, meanwhile, mirror the *grain de poudre* texture of YSL's famous tuxedo fabric. From £155 for 75ml eau de parfum harrods.com

YVES SAINT LAURENT
Libre Intense



The original Libre intentionally 'retailored' for women a traditionally masculine family, the *fougère* – just as Yves Saint Laurent tore up the gender rulebook with his *couture*. For this tawny-hued new spin, Master Perfumers Anne Flipo and Carlos Benaim return, intensifying the fragrance's orange blossom and lavender facets via an orchid accord which now blooms at its pulsing heart, adding a drift of smoky vetiver in the base. Cool yet hot, all at once. £84 for 50ml eau de parfum yslbeauty.co.uk

ACQUA DI PARMA
Colonia Futura


Adding weight to the sustainable scent movement is AdP's newest: the first of their Colonia line to be created with 99% natural ingredients, with every aspect of the packaging reassessed and rethought. But what clinches any conversion to 'eco' products is that they're as good as anything customers bought before – in this case, a herbaceous fusion of lavender, clary sage and vetiver, with sunlit shafts of grapefruit, bergamot, pink pepper and lemon.

From £80 for 50ml eau de Cologne
johnlewis.com

AMOUAGE
Black Iris Man


Pierre Negrin brings his olfactory talents to this complex reinterpretation of Amouage's original Interlude. The clue is in the Black Iris name: it's dark, it smoulders, it's shot through with intrigue, fusing bergamot, rosemary and cool violet leaf with amber, frankincense and cistus labdanum in orbit around the fragrance's real star, orris. The dry-down of agarwood smoke, patchouli, sandalwood and cedarwood beckon you deeper into the shadows, lingering seductively.

£260 for 100ml eau de parfum
amouage.com

AMOUROUD
Himalayan Woods


A fresh fall of snow blankets the earth, smothering sounds and making everything seem new. A whisper of cool cardamom presages the unfurling of soft spices – black pepper, juniper berry and clary sage freshened with a sprig of lemon blossom. Melting into a heart of luxurious vanilla flower and jasmine, the layers reveal themselves further – crystal clear guaiacwood and sheer incense with droplets of tonka bean, white amber, oudh, patchouli and musk. Transcendently delightful.

£175 for 100ml eau de parfum
ab-presents.co.uk

BDK
Sel d'Argent


Showcased in our box The Sharing Collection, Sel d'Argent is from BDK's Collection Azur, capturing the shimmering coastal magic of the Med, with its clear blue waters – echoed in the *flacon* and a salty accord, further freshened by grapefruit and bergamot. This is more enduring than you'd expect from that initial freshness, warmed in its sunset moments by come-closer elements of Timebrsilk, Cashmeran, Ambroxan and white musk.

£150 for 100ml eau de parfum
harrods.com

BRUNO FAZZOLARI
Zdravetz


Visual artist and perfumer Fazzolari showcases rare and expensive *zdravetz* essential oil – sometimes compared to rose or geranium, but far greener and woodier. (Imagine the prince slicing his way through the thorns to reach Sleeping Beauty's castle.) It balances the fizz of grapefruit and bergamot with leafy galbanum, spicy Bulgarian rose oil, creamy leather and passion fruit, with a veritable thicket of that *zdravetz* note weaving a fascinating scented spell.

£113 for 30ml eau de parfum
roullierwhite.com

BVLGARI
Man Glacial Essence


All the exhilaration of climbing to the top of a mountain but with zero effort (or crampons) required, Bulgari always know how to awaken our senses in scented form. Following their fragrant exploration of the elements Wood and Fire, this crackles in the form of an airy, frosted *fougère*. Piquant juniper berries make for a fairly traditional opening, before a welcoming nuzzle from the smoothness of sandalwood and a transparent woody patchouli via crystalline Clearwood.

£91 for 100ml eau de parfum
bulgari.com

CALVIN KLEIN
Eternity Fresh



The bottle is cool and green. Its face, Edward Burns, is cool and 'green' (he and his Eternity campaign co-star wife Christy Turlington are long-term supporters of the sustainability movement). And the juice for this new interpretation of classic Eternity is distinctively cool and green, too, outdoorsily breezy with aromatic notes of lentisk (an evergreen shrub which grows on the Greek archipelago), Bourbon geranium, mosses and woods, revved up by ginger. £59 for 100ml eau de toilette feelunique.com

DAVID BECKHAM
Bold Instinct



Powerful, elegant, self-assured, charismatic – those words could as equally be applied to the legendary David Beckham as to his latest scent, which swirls with earthy, spicy power. Juicy pineapple and herbaceous laurel notes deliver the first hint of boldness, before the spicy warmth of nutmeg, cinnamon and cardamom is unveiled in the heart. Bold Instinct's conclusion is seriously masculine, an interplay of musk, amber and deep, dark patchouli. We're hoping for extra time. From £19.95 for 30ml eau de toilette superdrug.com

GALLIVANT
Bukhara



Founder Nick Steward was inspired by the historic Silk Road and his travels around Uzbekistan – a vision translated by Ralf Schwieger in swaggeringly elegant, charming manner, with caraway and spiced pear evaporating into an orris-filled heart to evoke the chalk pale, sun-bleached colours of its houses. Jasmine and clove nestle alongside salty apricot and saffron-speckled wood as cotton-soft musk fluffs the base; there's an irresistible stillness amidst the shimmering layers. £65 for 30ml eau de parfum gallivant-perfumes.com

GIVENCHY
Gentleman Boisé



As anyone with even the rudiments of French will glean, this is a woodier interpretation of Gentleman, designed to 'heighten the sensuality of any gentleman'. A supremely elegant blend of black pepper, coriander, moreish cocoa and sophisticated iris smoothly segues into the sandalwoodiness of the base, to be wrapped in an Oriental accord. Warning: only to be worn around those from whom you don't need to socially distance. From £59 for 50ml eau de parfum johnlewis.com

JO MALONE LONDON
Cypress & Grapevine



The inspiration behind JML's Lost in Wonder collection is just so seductively romantic, with a nod to the ancient Hanging Gardens of Babylon, 'a place of fabled beauty lovingly created by a gallant king for his wistful queen under the blazing sun...' So here we have towering notes of cypress, garlanded by trailing grapevine, with amber for warmth and smoochiness. The more masculine of the two new Cologne Intense launches – but awfully borrowable. From £82 for 50ml Cologne Intense jomalone.co.uk

JUSBOX
Night Flow



Continuing their clever series of musically-inspired fragrances, with perfumer Julien Rasquinet as their 'master of ceremonies', JUSBOX offers a vibrant cocktail of saffron, raspberry and pink pepper that seamlessly segues into the darker floral heart of fruity osmanthus, smouldering davana and hypnotic jasmine sambac. When the base kicks in with a salty lick of ambergris atop patchouli, leather and tolu balm, you'll be lost in the rhythm of this fragrantly alluring flow. £140 for 78ml eau de parfum selfridges.com

L'ORCHESTRE PARFUMS
Electro Limonade


Close your eyes and inhale, letting Nathalie Feisthauer's fragrance take you 'to a terrace overlooking the Mediterranean Sea at sunset, with a "chill out" cocktail in hand.' Mixing fizzing citrus and mint, capricious rhubarb and orange blossom sway to a groove along with amber wood, incense and Haitian vetiver. Aromatic electronica can be heard in the accompanying musical track (accessed via a QR code), with laidback vibes resonating into the early hours.
 £129 for 100ml eau de parfum
ab-presents.co.uk

LALIQUE
Les Compositions Parfumées
Imperial Green


Verdant greenery rendered luxurious in Lalique's inimitable style, here's another celebration of modern, man-made perfumery notes. Perfumers Nathalie Lorson and Julien Plos 'explore orange blossom from every angle', co-distilled with a secret molecule to amplify its fresh facets. Meanwhile, Ambrox adds the warmth of skin, sun-dried hay and long shadows in flower meadows, anchored by rooty vetiver essence and pared-back Patchouli Heart.
 £190 for 100ml eau de parfum
lalique.com

LALIQUE
Les Compositions Parfumées
Woody Gold


Asked to 'imagine yourself in a palace,' perfumer Mathilde Bijaoui melded the burnished warmth of Ambramone to the smooth leather of Lorenox, choosing 'a palette of golden notes, from sunny citrus fruit to creamy vanilla, along with a blend of potent amber woods that smell as radiant as sunlight.' Touched with tonka bean and swirled with vanilla, the world itself seems gilded as Woody Gold warms and you radiate its liquid lustre.
 £190 for 100ml eau de parfum
lalique.com

LOUIS VUITTON
Météore


To quote creator Jacques Cavallier Belletrud: 'Here, freshness is not only a starting point; it becomes a major vector, a backbone around which all other elements orchestrate and interlace.' A definite get-your-mojo-back introduction, with Tunisian neroli, the zing of several citruses rendered even more nose-tingling by a cocktail of spices and a trio of peppers, plus a specially-distilled vetiver that exhales 'fresh, zesty notes of grapefruit and damp soil.' Completely magnetic.
 From £200 for 100ml eau de parfum
louisvuitton.com

MAISON FRANCIS KURKDJIAN
Homme À La Rose


A rose by any other name, perfumer Francis Kurkdjian has done it again: interpreting a classic note in streamlined, contemporary yet still romantic form. A whoosh of grapefruit accord bursts forth the birth of the Damask rose, like watching a sped-up scientific film of the bloom unfurling. Fuzzy sage and amber woods awaken the Centifolia now, a honeyed sigh of cistus drying to a base that evokes soft leather – or perhaps the memory of a kiss.
 £180 for 70ml eau de parfum
johnlewis.com

PACO RABANNE
1 Million Parfum


Fans of the blockbuster original are bound to like this, but don't expect a repeat performance; this is a stunning evocation of soft leather infused with a surprisingly salty tuberose. Naysayers of that narcotic note, please unclench your teeth: it's creamily rendered, but perfumers Quentin Bisch and Christophe Raynaud have leaned handsomely into the savoury aspect. Smoky, sensual, sophisticated, with a sillage that lasts all day. We're stealing this for our own collection.
 £54 for 50ml parfum
escentual.com

PENHALIGON'S
Brilliantly British



'As if swaying lavender had been plucked from a sleepy English garden, and frozen on the spot,' is Penhaligon's description here. But here's the twist: frozen lavender – evoked by lavender oil, together with its olfactive near-relation lavandin – has been dipped in sweetness, via a toffee accord which is further mellowed by resinous cistus labdanum and benzoin. Dapper as it gets – and we're completely seduced by the Brilliantly British flag adorning the neck. £144 for 100ml eau de parfum penhaligons.com

SARAH BAKER
Bascule



If ever a fragrance were going to lead you astray, this could be it. This is ruthless seduction executed in the most refined manner, as succulent peach juice drips onto hot leather and rich tobacco strokes warm hay. There's enough cleanliness to render it fit for wear beyond the bedroom, but only just: lily of the valley and cut grass evoke the cleanliness of a bath, following a torrid tumble in the stables. £80 for 50ml eau de parfum sarahbakerperfumes.com

STRADA PARFUMERIE
Sloane Street



With a tagline of 'from the streets to the world' these fragrances invite travel via your nose. Here, we're sauntering along London's Sloane Street, a fuzzy cloud of soft *oudh* countered by the sense of a freshly starched, immaculate white shirt. Hot tarmac sweetness swirls with motes of dust borne on a cool breeze, turning the corner from warm stone into sudden shady depths. The base is beautifully leathery – supple, strokeable, nonchalantly expensive. £140.73 for 30ml eau de parfum stradaparfumerie.com

TAUER
Phtaloblue



Daydreaming of stretching on a Mediterranean sun-lounger? Yes, us too. Happily, maverick perfumer Andy Tauer is going to take us there via his latest fragrance. Phtaloblue is a brisk walk beside the sea that mellows into an elegant aquatic citrus that has none of the brashness and over-developed muscles we might associate with the 90s iterations of this much-maligned genre. Think photo-realistic blue skies, bright white linen suits and a salty, herbaceous breeze. £105 for 50ml eau de parfum lessenteurs.com

TOMMY HILFIGER
Tommy Impact



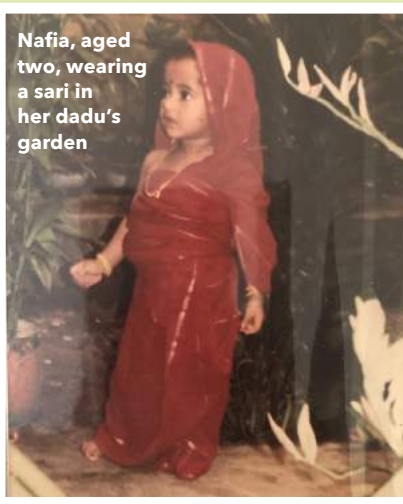
'For those who dare to dream and those who strive to do so', setting out to empower 'the next generation of visionaries.' Ergo the halls of every uni in the country ought to be filled with the scent of this woody-aromatic, with fruity red apple, grapefruit, bitter orange, bergamot, pink peppercorn and coca leaf fading to an aromatic fusion of clary sage, labdanum, cypress and elemi, before a strong, woodsy dry-down of cedarwood, amber, musks and Akigalawood. From £41 for 50ml eau de toilette theperfumeshop.com

YARDLEY
250 For Him



Via a duo of limited edition fragrances celebrating their 250 year history, Yardley tip their hats to Cologne-inspired citrus notes and a hint of their iconic English Lavender, shot through with the piquancy of tart cassis and pimento berries. The woody base lends a contemporary air that feels effortlessly classy, a laid-back insouciance that doesn't try too hard. For everyday, pocket-friendly pleasures, this new duo deserves to become everyone's go-to. £25 for 100ml eau de parfum yardleylondon.com

Nafia, aged two, wearing a sari in her dadu's garden



I LOST MY FATHER in April this year to Covid-19, suddenly and unexpectedly. He was my anchor in this world and without him, I feel totally unmoored and bereft. One thing that grounded me in the aftermath was my nose. I adore nostalgic smells; I love how with one giant sniff, the dusty cobwebs that drape the surfaces and crevices of our scent memories are blown away and the unearthed memories can stop us dead in our tracks.

I buried my face into the collar of the jacket he last wore, his scarf and woolly hat. I can close my eyes and instantly conjure up his scent, a mix of the hair pomade he wore and Astral cream. Other smells acted as a painful reminder of my loss: crisp, refreshing watermelon, ripe, fragrant mangoes

and the soothing mint tea we both liked to drink before bed. The smell that has pervaded my memories however, one that threads its way through my past, present and future, is the gloriously heady scent of white flowers, jasmine in particular.

Having come to the UK aged four, I don't have many memories of my early years in Bangladesh. We revisited in 2005, 11 years after leaving, for an emotional reunion with my grandparents and family. As our car weaved through dense Dhaka traffic, I marvelled at how familiar the air smelled. Nothing prepared me for the *déjà vu* I experienced walking into my dadu's (paternal grandmother) garden, the jasmine, tuberose, hibiscus, the sugar cane and so many other fruits and flowers I had no name for yet but instinctively remembered the smell of.

I read a poem titled 'A Portable Paradise' by Roger Robinson recently which started 'And if I speak of Paradise, then I'm speaking of my grandmother', and for me, the smell of paradise is my dadu's garden. We stayed for eight weeks and I greedily absorbed every bit of my motherland I could, from happily wearing *salwar kameez* every day to speaking Bangla to my family, even when my cousins wanted to practice their English with us.

Visiting during the monsoon season heightened the sensory experience of my

Night-blooming jasmine

Cancer research scientist and fragrance illustrator
NAFIA GULJAR shares poignant memories
triggered by an exotic flower

dadu's garden. The air becomes heavy, humid and electric, the promise of a heavy storm in the air. Once the rain comes, the air becomes alive with the scent of lush greenery, earthy soil going from parched to wet and muddy. We would run to the roof to dance in the pouring rain or sit on her *barindah* (porch) and watch the rain lashing down. The scent of flowers always lingered, especially after rain where bruised petals

would scatter the ground, mixing with the smell of petrichor. The scent of the huge jasmine bush would make itself known when the sun went down.

After eating *nashta* (afternoon tea), my cousins, siblings and I would retire for the evening to the *barindah* where we would bring out all the board games, usually Ludo and

Carrom [a tabletop game like snooker]. My dad would often join us and regale us with tales of his younger years of being a formidable Carrom player. The night-blooming jasmine would unfurl and release its treasured fragrance, weaving through the window slats and impregnating the air around the house with its heavenly scent. Jasmine became synonymous with times that were more relaxed and easier, a little slice of paradise, playing board games in my dadu's house surrounded by my loved ones.

Years later, standing in Fenwick, Tom Ford's Jasmin Rouge managed to transport me straight to that *barindah*, as I deliriously lapped up its notes of jasmine, tuberose and buttery ylang ylang. There are so many elements in

Jasmin Rouge which remind me of my beloved father, of my four grandparents, of my dadu's *barindah*, of *borsha* (monsoon), of *rajani gandha* (tuberose), *korobi phul* (frangipani), *joba phul* (hibiscus), *ghandaraj phul* (gardenia). And above all, *sheuli phul* – that night-blooming jasmine. Following my father's death, and having lost all my remaining grandparents over the years, smelling Jasmin Rouge now is equal parts painful and pleasurable; it fills my heart to the brim with both happiness and sadness. I wouldn't have it any other way. ■



"The jasmine would release its treasured fragrance, weaving through the window slats and impregnating the air with its heavenly scent."

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