



*A few products
carry the delicious
frisson of luxury
and glamour that
surrounds fragrance.*

*"As perfumers, we create
illusions," says Frédéric Malle.
But along with that mysterious
aura, there is also the actual
stuff itself—the liquid that
sometimes interacts unpredictably
with your body, comes on too
strong or too faintly, spills,
stains, and sloshes around in
the physical realm. Responding
to the seductive powers of
fragrance comes naturally;
knowing how to make it work
in the practical, everyday
world does not. Most of us got
our fragrance education
at our mother's knees (and
the pulse points behind them),
and that's a great start.
Consider this the master class.
—Lindsay Van Gelder*

Everything You Need to Know About
FRAGR

PHOTOGRAPHED BY KENJI TOMA



ANCE

What makes a perfume last? How do you know when you're wearing too much? Read on for these and other scent secrets.

OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE

The fragrance counter offers almost as many choices as Starbucks. Perfumer Kilian Hennessy helps us decode it all. —SOPHIA PANYCH



Solid Perfume

PROS: The waxy base holds scent for several hours and has the benefit of portability—this is the perfect size to slip into an evening bag.

CONS: The wax has a slight oily smell that can interfere with the actual fragrance; it can also leave a greasy residue.

WE LIKE: Marc Jacobs Solid Perfume



Roller Ball

PROS: The diminutive size makes this ideal for travel (and for testing a fragrance before going for a full-size bottle).

CONS: Roller balls use a low concentration of perfume oil, so the scent lasts only an hour or so. Plus, the glass tubes can break.

WE LIKE: Lancôme Trésor Rollerball



Scented Cream

PROS: You get a scent you love and softer skin.

CON: Certain fragrance ingredients change color or scent when put into a cream. These tweaks can sometimes make the lotion smell like a poor imitation of the original.

WE LIKE: Balenciaga Paris Perfumed Body Cream



Scented Powder

PRO: It's luxurious—just the act of dusting it along your décolletage, arms, and legs feels sensuous.

CONS: Powder rubs off, so the scent is likely to fade after a couple of hours. And applying it can be messy.

WE LIKE: Chanel Coco Mademoiselle Fresh After Bath Powder



Hair Mist

PROS: This instantly freshens hair between shampoos. With little to no alcohol, it won't dry out strands; some are infused with silicones, which soften hair.

CON: A hair mist plus a traditional perfume may result in olfactory overload.

WE LIKE: Viktor & Rolf Flowerbomb Hair Mist

60 percent of *allure.com* users say they wear perfume every day.

Sniff Test

A scent's name, ad, or bottle can influence its effect on us. We placed eight new ones in unmarked vessels and asked Givaudan perfumer Calice Becker and scent expert Jan Moran to describe them. —ANGELIQUE SERRANO

1. CHRISTIAN DIOR COLOGNE ROYALE,

with bergamot, mint, and lemon

BECKER'S TAKE: "A total refreshment, with citrus and mint. It can be unisex."

MORAN'S TAKE: "Very clean."

2. ELIZABETH ARDEN PRETTY HOT,

with red currant, red peony, and freesia

BECKER'S TAKE: "Easy to wear—young, petal-y, and well-mannered."

MORAN'S TAKE: "The sheer florals have an innocence, a lightness of heart."

3. JIMMY CHOO,

with tiger orchid, toffee, and patchouli

BECKER'S TAKE: "Something to wear with smoky eyes."

MORAN'S TAKE: "Oh, pretty. It's a soft floral bouquet, feminine and romantic."

4. MARC JACOBS DAISY EAU SO FRESH,

with violet, rose, and apple blossom

BECKER'S TAKE: "It has a strong personality, but in a good way."

MORAN'S TAKE: "Rose and violet jump out; a green tone gives it freshness."

5. VERSACE VANITAS,

with tiare flower, freesia, lime, and tonka bean

BECKER'S TAKE: "This chic, cool young lady might fly in from Paris for a walk down Sunset Boulevard."

MORAN'S TAKE: "For a woman who likes to be the center of attention."

6. BANANA REPUBLIC WILDBLOOM,

with guava, pink grapefruit, and hydrangea

BECKER'S TAKE: "Sassy and fruity."

MORAN'S TAKE: "A brilliant bouquet of white flowers tinged with tropical fruit."

7. ISSEY MIYAKE L'EAU D'ISSEY FLORALE,

with rosebud, ginger lily, and mandarin

BECKER'S TAKE: "A nice splash after tennis, and before a cocktail party."

MORAN'S TAKE: "English roses—it makes me think of garden parties."

8. VERA WANG PREPPY PRINCESS,

with tangerine, jasmine, and coconut water

BECKER'S TAKE: "A boho-chic quality."
MORAN'S TAKE: "It has a joie de vivre."



Love Story

Where's the love? It may lie in a bottle of the new powdery floral fragrance Love, Chloé. We take a closer look. —ALISON CAPORIMO

THE SCENT

Iris, heliotrope, and orange blossom blended with a face-powder note reminds perfumer and fragrance cocreator Louise Turner of "loose powder that my grandmother used with a big puff."

THE COLOR

The perfume was tinted "a dusky pink," says Turner—mirroring the clothes in Chloé's fall 2010 collection.

THE CHAIN

The rose-gold chain looks like the strap on a Chloé shoulder bag.

THE ENGRAVING

The fragrance's name is "embossed into the base of the bottle like the signature on a letter," says Chloé's international marketing director, Philippe Desroche.


OLD SPICE

Perhaps the least controversial dispatch from the Middle East in decades is about oud fragrance, the warm, musky bouquet that is making its way west. A clutch of new scents, including Dior Leather Oud, By Kilian's Arabian Nights collection, Bond No. 9 New York Perfume Oud, and Michael Boadi's Boadicea the Victorious collection, all incorporate the subtly spicy note. Although it is novel in the U.S., oud—a tree resin indigenous to India and Southeast Asia—has been used for centuries in the Gulf region, says perfumer Kilian Hennessy of By Kilian Fragrances.

"Usually, it's combined with incense or an essential oil, like rose, because one vial of pure oud costs well over \$500." In its countries of origin, people have been known to rub the resin on their earlobes and neck, or burn incense in their closets so clothes pick up the scent, but we're happy to report that ouds also merge harmoniously with traditional perfume notes. —DANIELLE PERGAMENT

She Said/HE SAID

Boyfriends may come and go—but what about their scents? *Allure* editors and their significant others smelled the latest batch of men's fragrances to see which faded prematurely and which lingered...in an appealing (not cloying) way. —ALISON CAPORIMO

SCENT	SHE SAID	HE SAID
 MARC JACOBS BANG, with peppercorns, woods, white moss, and patchouli	<p>"It's a strong mix of evergreen and spice. After a couple of hours, it was milder and easier to take." —Kayleigh, assistant editor</p>	<p>"It's not offensive like colognes that are overly heavy or musky. It smells clean, kind of like soap." —Jared, law student</p>
 CHANEL BLEU, a blend of lemon, cedar, sandalwood, nutmeg, and ginger	<p>"It smells clean and fresh, as long as you don't pile on too much—it can get a little overwhelming." —Caitlin, fashion assistant</p>	<p>"I'd wear this to a special occasion because it smells fancy. I'm glad it doesn't smell like the Abercrombie store." —Tom, financial advisor</p>
 VAN CLEEF & ARPELS MIDNIGHT IN PARIS, with lemon, green tea, and tonka bean	<p>"Musky with a hint of baby powder, which makes it masculine but soft. I was surprised by how much I liked it." —Elizabeth, senior editor</p>	<p>"From the name, I was expecting something like cigarettes in a crowded jazz club. But it's fresh, like a clean shirt." —Victor, writer</p>
 ACQUA DI PARMA COLONIA ESSENZA, with clove, vetiver, and white musk	<p>"It's clearly manly, but a bit strong for my taste. You would definitely smell it from the other end of the bar!" —Liz, associate editor</p>	<p>"It reminds me of my dad's aftershave. It's how I wanted to smell in seventh grade." —Chris, investment banker</p>
 CREED AVENTUS, with black currant, bergamot, birch, oak moss, and vanilla	<p>"It smells hot on him, and I know all the ladies he charms at work will be even more obsessed with him!" —Victoria, editorial assistant</p>	<p>"It smells cool. Like the guys in <i>GQ</i> in suits with private planes—the ones other men are jealous of." —Chandos, broadcasting executive</p>

The Top 10 Perfume Questions—Answered

1 Why does my scent smell different on my best friend than it does on me? “We all have a unique body chemistry that reacts with the components of fragrance,” says Firmenich perfumer Olivier Cresp. Gender, race, coloring, diet, medication, and your skin’s dryness or oiliness can all affect it.

2 Is it true that rubbing the wrists together after spraying a scent changes it? Yes. “When you rub your wrists together, you’re warming up your skin and causing some perfume notes to evaporate faster than they should. Hence, you may not get the exact scent intended,” Cresp explains.

3 How can I make a perfume last longer? Well-moisturized skin holds scent better than dry skin, so slather on an unscented body lotion (or one in the same scent) before applying your fragrance. The oils in hair help retain scent, but don’t make a habit of coif-spritzing—alcohol buildup can dry out hair or fade color.

4 How do I know if I’m wearing too much fragrance? And how can I tone it down if I do OD? The famous rule is your fragrance should be detectable only during an embrace. But most of us become acclimated to a scent over time, says Frédéric Malle; it’s best to figure out how many spritzes are perfect in the first few days you use it. Then stick to that number in the future, even if you can’t smell it as strongly. If you happen to overdo it, “rub your skin with a face wipe to remove some of the perfume oil,” says Steven Semoff, acting copresident of the Scent Marketing Institute. Or apply a layer of unscented lotion over the fragranced area. “The moisturizing film will reduce the perceived intensity,” Semoff explains.

5 Why do some scents give me a raging headache? Strong odors of all kinds can trigger a severe headache, says Katherine Henry, chief of neurology at Bellevue Hospital in New York City. Many women react only to certain types of fragrance, or even just a particular scent, she says. Switch to a light floral or citrus, or test sample sizes of heavier scents.

6 What does it mean if a perfume’s color changes—has it lost its potency? Direct sunlight, strong overhead lighting, or the simple passage of time can discolor perfume, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that the smell has weakened or turned. However, liquid that appears muddy or cloudy does usually mean a sour smell. Orientals and chypres have a longer shelf life than light fragrances do—so consider buying small bottles of the latter.

7 Will hot temperatures ruin or alter a scent? Is the best place to store fragrance really in the fridge? Any temperature over 75 degrees can degrade a fragrance’s top notes, making them “sharper, unfamiliar, and even unpleasant,” says Cresp. The best place to store perfume is away from light, with cool conditions that don’t change. (Temperature shifts make the bathroom a particularly bad spot.) The refrigerator should extend a scent’s expiration date by at least 50 percent—maybe more. But keep it away from food that easily absorbs odors, such as butter.

8 Can my fragrance stain my clothes? The darker the perfume and the lighter the fabric, the more likely it is to stain, says Hennessy. But the concentration matters: “Most fragrances won’t stain clothing if lightly sprayed six to ten inches away,” says Semoff. If you accidentally slosh a scent on your favorite sweater, rinse with water and blot with a towel right away.

9 Can perfume harm certain types of jewelry? Porous materials (pearls, turquoise, opal, onyx, amber, coral, resin) are the most vulnerable to absorbing fragrance, which can affect their ability to reflect light, Cresp says. The damage “is due to the alcohol in perfumes,” he says, so don’t spray directly on your jewels.

10 What if I spill a bottle all over my rug? Immediately blot it up with a dry cloth. Then pour some isopropyl alcohol on paper towels and wipe the area to dissolve the aromatic oils, says Semoff; continue blotting and wiping until you’ve absorbed as much as possible. —LINDSY VAN GELDER

HOW TO Return Fragrance

Not all perfume purchases end happily ever after, and there are times when you and Fragrance Wrong need to seek an amicable parting of ways. We checked with a number of department stores and fragrance retailers (including Dillard’s, Sephora, and Ulta) and discovered that most of them have surprisingly generous return policies, even when 20 percent or more of the bottle’s contents have been used, as long as you still have the receipt. Sephora requires the fragrance’s original packaging; most stores also place time limits on returns—between 30 days and six months from the time of purchase. If you and a bottle of perfume you received as a holiday present are already having relationship issues, it’s clearly worth taking a minute to check out the store’s return policy—you may still have enough time to trade up. —L.V.G.



*92 percent of
allure.com users feel
more attractive when
wearing fragrance.*

Small Talk

Like teacup Yorkies and mini cupcakes, fragrances are even more irresistible when shrunk to Lilliputian size—precisely why we're so excited that some of our favorites are now available in travel-size minis: Chanel's Les Exclusifs line in 2.5-oz. flacons; zesty Fresh Citron de Vigne in a 1-oz. bottle; and Gucci's florals—chypre Gucci by Gucci, feminine Flora, and oriental Guilty—in 0.5-oz. purse sprays.



FROM TOP: KENJI TOMA; DAVID COOK

UNCOMMON SCENTS

Tuberose and vanilla, we get. But some perfumes contain hints of “lobster” and “urban renewal”—whatever that smells like. We tested five unusual scents. —SARAH Z. WEXLER

L'ARTISAN PARFUMEUR DZING!

THEY THINK IT SMELLS LIKE: “Sawdust essence” and “airborne talcum powder,” as in a circus performance.

WE THINK IT SMELLS LIKE: Wet hay. No peanuts, cotton candy—or elephants.

DEMETER LOBSTER

THEY THINK IT SMELLS LIKE: Ocean air, “sweet meat,” and “drawn butter.”

WE THINK IT SMELLS LIKE: Briny water and fresh lemon. More like a lobster's tank than the dish itself.

ETAT LIBRE D'ORANGE SÉCRÉTIONS MAGNIFIQUES

THEY THINK IT SMELLS LIKE: “Blood, sweat, sperm, and saliva.”

WE THINK IT SMELLS LIKE: Blood, sweat, sperm, and saliva. It's nearly impossible to smell it without gagging.

BOND NO. 9 NEW YORK HIGH LINE

THEY THINK IT SMELLS LIKE: “Sea moss” and “urban renewal,” evoking the elevated park in New York City.

WE THINK IT SMELLS LIKE: Cut grass and a little grit—it captures the park.

BURGER KING BK FLAME BODY SPRAY

THEY THINK IT SMELLS LIKE: “The scent of seduction” plus “flame-broiled meat.”

WE THINK IT SMELLS LIKE: A man after he's been grilling all afternoon; it's definitely more smoke than beef.