

Perfume creation

The Smell of Success

Perfumers' Choice Award winners discuss inspiration, innovation, creativity and craft

Last year, *The American Society of Perfumers* honored the top creative talents in fragrance at its annual **Perfumers' Choice Awards** in New York. We wondered what inspired these select perfumers to create such successful fragrances, so we talked to some of them about their creative processes and technique, as well as what it takes to be a noted perfumer. The answers are insightful, fascinating and inspiring.

Spicing it Up

Women's contemporary category winner, **Bulgari Omnia**, was formulated by Francois Coty Prize-winning **Firmenich** perfumer **Alberto Morillas**, creator of powerhouse scents such as Mauboussin Homme and Armani Sensi White Notes. Here, this noted perfumer provides insights into his latest lauded fragrance.

The idea was to create a fragrance inspired by spices. India and, in particular, Masala tea were great influences in the perfume's creation; it takes us back to the sources of our civilization. *Omnia* is a representation of femininity and sensuality; it plays on a contrast between the freshness of spices and the sensuality of musk. This Bulgari fragrance is very avant-garde — there is nothing else on the market in a similar genre. The aim was not to create a fashionable perfume, but one that would stand the test of time.

On unique challenges: The main challenge in this project was to create something unique and different — a special fragrance that would be appreciated for many years to come.

On successful perfumers: A successful perfumer is one that understands the brand and the project. It is about finding the right equation between the brand and the fragrance concept.

Love at "First Bite"

The co-winner of the Perfumers' Choice *body care* award was **Bath & Body Works' Black Raspberry Vanilla Lotion**, formulated by **Quest International**. In his own words, New York-based Quest perfumer **Claude Dir** discusses the inspiration and concept behind the scent.

The inspiration for Black Raspberry Vanilla was first born in the quest to capture the fragrance of a fruit's "first bite." This journey inspired us to build a fragrance that balanced a succulent berry note with the creaminess of vanilla, a standout favorite ingredient among consumers. This overall concept paid tribute to the gustative trend, which first reared itself through the hugely successful introduction of *Angel* by Thierry Mugler, boasting notes of cotton candy and apple. *Angel's* introduction led to the development of future gustative icons, such as *Curious* by Britney Spears (pear and vanilla infusion) and *Miss Dior Cherie* by Christian Dior (caramelized popcorn and wild strawberry sorbet).

More on the Web ...

For all of our Perfumers' Choice Award interviews, visit www.perfumerflavorist.com, and click on "The Smell of Success."

On unique challenges: It was a true challenge to create a black raspberry vanilla note that was sophisticated enough to be used as an eau de toilette. In doing so, it was important to stay true to the “essence” of black raspberry without being too literal.

To accomplish this feat, we had to remove the sweet, jammy stickiness of the fruit while still maintaining its signature flavor.

On successful perfumers: A successful perfumer is a good listener. He/she understands what the client is asking for while, at the same time, grasping key market demands. With so much newness in today’s marketplace, it is important to create differentiation while, at the same time, appealing to a broad market. A strong perfumer can do just that.

Working in Multiple Bases

*The environmental specialty category winner was **Balsam Candle (Agraria)**, by **Jean-Pierre Subrenat’s Creative Concepts**. Here, Subrenat talks about the project’s creative process and the challenges of working with multiple bases.*

The brief received by Agraria was to re-create a warm, comfortable signature scent between cypress and balsam for a home line. We tried to give a luxurious effect to our fragrance by using noble materials, and, as the main character is a chypre, we had to be careful not to be either too feminine or too masculine. The result is a fragrance with a very strong personality — rich and diffusive, which smells luxurious and opulent.

On unique challenges: The main challenge was to be able to adapt the fragrance to all the different bases of the line. From the candle to the lotion, potpourri or air essence, we wanted to keep the same character with the fewest distortions possible, despite the different bases.

On successful perfumers: A successful perfumer is one who is able to combine creativity with business — a perfumer who listens to the client’s desire, but who is not afraid to steer the client in a different direction if he/she is convinced that the direction is not a good one. Furthermore, a successful perfumer is one who knows how to look ahead into the future, despite its challenges, instead of cherishing the past!

Spring Forward

*Winner of the awards’ **environmental mass-market scent category** was the **Quest-formulated Glade Suddenly Spring Candle (SC Johnson)**. Perfumer **Michael Papas**, based in Mount Olive, New Jersey, gave us his thoughts about this unique project.*

Suddenly Spring was inspired by understanding the consumer’s needs in this product category. When a perfumer is creating a fragrance, he or she must keep in mind not only the gaps in the customer portfolio, but also must identify the emotional aspect of the brand that will connect with the consumer and impart a positive experience. When consumers smell *Suddenly Spring*, they actually subliminally get a comforting nostalgic feeling of the simple things in life, such as walking in the yard on a spring day with fresh air, flowers blooming, etc., and also think back to growing up and the familiar smells, such as lilac, peonies and also some of the herbal notes growing in the garden. The scent brings the consumer back to the basics and the simple things in life. This fragrance is not a trickledown fragrance; I do not think that consumers are looking for that in today’s aircare products. Fine fragrance in aircare products would be too complicated; the consumers cannot connect with it. I believe that simplistic fragrances are what they can relate to for broader appeal.

On unique challenges: The stability/technical requirements for SC Johnson are probably some of the most stringent in the industry with issues such as burn rate, clogging of the wick, pooling, etc., on top of meeting the performance criteria for cold and burn mode. So not only does one have to create a high-hedonic fragrance, but it must meet the complex technical requirements of the brief, as well.

Seductive Scent

***Robertet** perfumer **Maureen Brooks** is responsible for body care category co-winner **Victoria’s Secret/Limited Brands’ Garden Pure Seduction lotion**. Her brand of creativity highlights the need for creative balance.*

The Inspiration for *Pure Seduction* was to capture a clean sensuality through juicy, yet fresh, fruity notes intermingled with English garden florals.

On unique challenges: The challenge of this project was twofold: 1. to create a fragrance that had fruity elements that would remain fresh and not become overtly sweet; and 2. to accurately convey a consistent fragrance throughout the entire ancillary line.

On successful perfumers: A good or successful perfumer has the aesthetic sense, coupled with the ability to think outside the box. It comes down to a perfect balance between artistry and technique. p&f