

Perfumers at work

4 and 5

Four questions with drom's Barbara Zoebelein and her five picks for fragrance's future



drom perfumer Barbara Zoebelein is the recipient of a 2006 FiFi award (men's private label/direct sell category) for Avon's today TOMORROW always for Men (pictured above). We wondered what makes an award-winning perfumer, so we recently asked her about her art, challenges and a prescription for this ailing category: artistry, craft and risk-taking.

P&F: What are the biggest challenges you face as a perfumer today?

Zoebelein: Striking a good balance between fragrance elements that are commercially acceptable, yet creatively pushing the limits, while bringing an exciting addition to a very crowded marketplace. Perfumery needs to reclaim the aura of luxury and uniqueness, as well as the passion of the marriage of artistry, craft and risk-taking. When these elements come together, I am sure they will communicate a fascination that will speak personally to consumers.

P&F: What fragrances that you have created or worked on best define your identity as an artist?

Zoebelein: I am always very proud of fragrances I have on the market that still, despite all modifications and consumer testing, carry a clear olfactive identity that reflects my original idea. Very often this is based on a single accord around a particular note or raw material that fascinates me at the moment.

P&F: If you were giving advice to a novice perfumer, what would you tell them?


Zoebelein: Always stay curious and open-minded, while pursuing your passion at the same time. Be excited about getting into people's hearts via their noses, and appreciate the gift of our profession.



Barbara Zoebelein

P&F: What fragrances do you admire most?

Zoebelein: *Shalimar* (Guerlain), *Bel Ami* (Hermès for Men), *Vetiver Guerlain* (Guerlain) and *Aromatics Elixir* (Clinique) are just a few of my favorites. Among recent launches, I like *Dior Homme* (Christian Dior for Men) and *Terre d'Hermès* (Marc Jacobs).

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Five trends ahead

Zoebelein's insights into where fragrance is headed

- 1 A return to more sumptuous fragrance types (chypre, amber, Oriental), executed in a near-classical, artisanal style
- 2 Floral bouquets built around a luxurious monofloral
- 3 A return of the "green" note for women
- 4 Florals for men
- 5 Woody/leather/smoky notes for women