

Fragrance outlook

Noir to Niche

From “black” fragrances to limited-edition scents, the future of perfume lies in the unique and surprising

drom fragrances’ Tribeca (New York) fine fragrance studio is unique for a number of reasons, including its open floor plan and perfumers’ bar—a sort of shared work space that encourages interaction among noses. The studio’s location, in Manhattan’s trendiest neighborhood, seems the perfect setting for perfumers seeking to stay abreast of where fragrance is heading.

Back in Black

“Noir is chic,” says drom perfumer Pierre-Constantin Gueros, “especially for men’s fragrances.” According to Gueros, the theme of black extends beyond just marketing/packaging. “The tendency,” he says, “is to go back to ‘dark’ and ‘black’ raw materials—of course, chypre with patchouli, oud accords (used in the Middle East as the famous agarwood accord), warm sexy accords (the traditional seductive role of perfume), amber, and even animalic and ‘dirty’ (in a perfumistic way, of course, such as cumin, davana, indolic white flowers and honey).”



drom fragrances’ P.-C. Gueros

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drom marketing manager Martha Basanta agrees: “To translate these black themes olfactively [for men’s scents], perfumers are looking for ingredients with a ‘darker’ and generally heavier connotation: tonka beans, mocha, incense, and black amber or black suede, but especially black licorice (and the olfactively related anise).”

This trend toward black, says Basanta, straddles the line between the sexes. “Right now there is a trend among women’s scents (Jean Patou’s *Sira des Indes* and *Valentino V*) that puts a very strong emphasis on rich dark notes and sensual wood, which usually are reserved for men’s fragrances but now are making a move into women’s fragrances,” she notes.



drom fragrances’ Tribeca (New York) fine fragrance studio features a perfumers’ bar that places the workstations in an open environment.

Photo: Paul Warchol

Modern Rose

According to Gueros, the perception of rose as old-fashioned is coming to an end. “The traditional powdery violet/rose combination is, of course, over,” he says. “But rose is more and more present in formulations in very modern combinations (with edible or dry, woody notes) or textured in a very contemporary way (the metallic part of the rose, with very fresh spices, such as pink pepper and incense).”

Unique and Niche Scents

drom perfumer Agnes Mazin notes that a number of fragrance houses, such as Givenchy and L'Artisan Parfumeur, are demonstrating creativity in small niches. “They are creating fragrances around exceptional natural materials that put forward very luxurious elements and help to educate consumers on raw materials,” she says. For instance, L'Artisan Parfumeur released *Fleur de Narcisse 2006*, composed of “materials from a dated year that connote a special quality.” The house had done something similar in 2005 with Tunisian orange blossoms. The blossoms were handpicked, and the flowers, leaves and stems were distilled down into an absolute, reaching for maximum authenticity of the source material.

Says Mazin, “Givenchy’s *Amarige Mimosa de Grasse*, *Very Irrésistible Edition Pétales des Roses* and *Organza Jasmin d’Inde* [featuring Spanish jasmine harvested in India in 2005] all were created with the idea of focusing on one special ingredient, how it was cultivated, and where it came from, and stamped with its harvested year, making them one-of-a-kind, limited-edition fragrances.

“For me, this is going back to a more natural way of creating a fragrance. A beautiful natural material can be highlighted and bring fragrance composition back to its fundamental elements, as well as help remind people that great fragrances are made first with great ingredients—even exceptional ingredients—when Mother Nature allows it,” she continues.

Gender Blending

Basanta also sees a softening of the line between genders in scent: “As new female elements of style and color are finding their way into the men’s fashion arena—quite a taboo topic until recently—a new breed of masculine fine fragrances incorporates key elements considered rather feminine in the past.

“One indication that trends among female fragrances carry over into modern men’s creations, and that masculine scents are freeing themselves from the boundaries of traditional structures, is the emergence of juicy-fruity top notes. Unlike classic citrus tops, these fragrances open with impressions of pear, green apple, melon, tangerine, or ‘iced mango,’ such as the one found in *Polo Black*,” she adds.



drom fragrances' Agnes Mazin

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