

Fragrance notes

Story in a Bottle: Anatomy of a Collection

Inside *Perfume*, the unique fragrance project of perfumers Christophe Laudamiel and Christoph Hornetz

Inspired by Patrick Süskind's best-selling novel, the *Perfume* presentation case (Thierry Mugler Parfums) is an exercise in scent's limitless expressions—from the nostalgic to the sweet to the repellent. Loosely following the arc of Süskind's story line, Les Christophes (as the creators are known) employed all manner of novel ingredients and combinations to tell an olfactive tale in 15 parts.



From *Baby* to *Aura*, Les Christophes' *Perfume* coffret is an olfactive journey bridging the traditional (raw *Jasminum grandiflorum*) and the avant-garde (the catty, fungal cheesiness of *Human Existence*)

Baby

With a nod to its namesake, this fragrance incorporates all manner of sweet and dairy elements, aiming for a milky, whipped cream effect, coupled with a buttery-baked pyrazine.

Paris 1738

Reminiscent of this legendary city's streets in the age of Louis XV, Les Christophes paired fresh and dirty notes, including blackcurrant, which features a catty off note as well as characteristic fruitiness. The inclusion of a seaweed absolute contributes understated freshness.

Atelier Grimal

Using Egyptian mimosa, the perfumers have mimicked the animalic-smoky character of leather, an impression lifted by red fruit

notes. The surprise inclusion of a pumpkin potage adds uncertainty to the mix.

Virgin No. 1

Easily the most provocative scent in the collection, *Virgin No. 1* is defined by the novel headspace reconstruction of the scent around a virgin's navel. Less headline-grabbing are notes of white rice, fresh milk and yellow plums (derived from a French brandy).

Boutique Baldini

Described in part as "the equivalent of an olfactory collapse," this challenging fragrance incorporates a litany of disparate impressions: sweet liquor, balsamic bees wax nuances, coffee and anise. A note of vinegar references the material's use in perfumes of an earlier era, just as yellow daffodils ape the scent of pomade. A gentle use of angelica seeds summons the humidity of the Seine and dusty boutique shelves.

Amor & Psyché

Basing a scent on a fragrance in a fictional story is a challenge, to say the least. While the ingredients are named in Süskind's work, the proportions are not, which is akin to having a road map without the roads or towns being labeled. Les Christophes employed the various citrus notes with jasmine, musk, clove and more, creating a classic scent whose character is slightly more in line with contemporary tastes than those of 18th century Europe.

Nuit Napolitaine

Including notes of ginger, gentian, Italian clementines, rosemary and garden mint, this fragrance brings to life the triumph of Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, Süskind's anti-hero. Giving the scent an extra kick is the aroma of *Michaela alba*.

Ermite

Creating this lonesome scent, Les Christophes marshaled a number of synthetic notes that telegraph a "metallic coolness," while moss and mushroom notes lend the composition dim, green, humid impressions.

Salon Rouge

Davana oil does a lot of the heavy lifting in imparting the redness implied by this scent's name. The woody-amber Karanal and semi-acrid Aldron add some abstract accents, in addition to the somewhat obscured tuberose absolute.

Human Existence

This simple construction captures some of the less-than-glamorous aspects of the olfactory universe—cheesy malt absolute notes, synthetic civet, a touch of cumin and fecal Skatol—interesting, if not inviting.

Absolu Jasmine

In contemporary perfumery, jasmine has been dissected into its principle olfactory fields—floral, fruity, animalic and green (to name a few). However, *Perfume's* creators opted to present a sample of *Jasminum grandiflorum*—simple, but not simple.

Sea

Dominating this oceanic scent, Calone contributes a fresh, breezy aspect, while various synthetics bring melon, citrus and anise notes. *Sea* also includes a new cyclamen-inspired molecule.

Noblesse

This scent augments its powdery qualities (imparted by iris root, heliotrope and violet notes) with a touch of animalic Atlas cedar and vanilla powder. Adding to the composition's elegance is the inclusion of Grasse-sourced rose de mai absolute.

Orgie

Perhaps this is the *second* most provocative fragrance in this unique collection. Les Christophes combined animalic dark chocolate notes with musky Nebulone and the sandalwood-like Javanol. To elicit the impression of the human body, the perfumers dispatched a number of "abstract molecules," including Excital which is reminiscent of "dirty hair" or "body heat."

Aura

Containing at least one ingredient from each of the 12 main fragrance families, *Aura* is ultimately a chameleon fragrance comprised of 84 ingredients. The fragrance is designed to be worn as an unassuming scent or combined with the wearer's usual scent as an optimizer of sorts. While much of the formula is secret, what is known is that it is designed outside of the usual top, heart and base structure.

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