

# Forward Thinking: A Note on Fragrance, A Feminine Point of View

A focus on rose, love, life and gold carry feminine fine fragrance trends

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A November 2010 article appearing in *Perfumer & Flavorist* magazine sister publication *GCI* magazine, “Fueling The Market—Fragrance Observations,” examined fragrance trends.<sup>a</sup> A year later, fine fragrance competition remains fierce, and brands continue to jockey for position as consumers seek new and unique products. Fortunately, according to the NPD Group, “in fragrance, the prestige market grew by 6% during the first quarter of 2011. The increase in prestige fragrance is due to the positive performance in top existing juice brands, as well as strong sales from 2010 fragrance introductions.”

Ingredient stories, compelling marketing themes and attention-grabbing packaging are conventional methods brands use to differentiate themselves, create emotional connections and gain market share. This year, rose, gold, love and life are the resonating themes impacting the women’s fine fragrance market.

## A Bed of Roses

Similar to last year, rose is a dominant theme in 2011 women’s fine fragrance launches. Classic and feminine, a variety of modern interpretations of this iconic floral are influencing fragrance introductions with warmer, fuller structures.

To add appeal and to reinvent traditional rose fragrances, brands are creating stories based on specific rose varieties and adding warmth and depth with chypre, woody and gourmand nuances. Van Cleef & Arpels *Féerie Rose des Neiges* is based on the *fée des neiges* rose, a white winter rose also known as the iceberg rose, while *Trish McEvoy Black Rose Oud* features “a heart of prized black baccara rose and precious oud oils.” Emanuel Ungaro *Diva Rose* emphasizes an “intoxicating bouquet of Bulgarian roses” and is marketed as a woody floral chypre. Also classified as a floral chypre, Soap & Glory’s *Original Pink* eau de parfum features a signature rose and bergamot scent. Under its *Aqua Allegoria* range, Guerlain introduced a limited edition *Rosa Blanca*, interpreted “as a fresh, crisp rose with peach, jasmine, and magnolia notes.” *Caron Delire de Roses* is “an intricate intertwining of roses, leaves and fruits that reunites all the olfactory facets of the queen of flowers,” while *Trésor Midnight*



*Rose* from Lancôme “is a more gourmand version of the original [Tresor]; the notes include raspberry, pink pepper, jasmine, peony, rose, vanilla.” Heeley’s *Hippie Rose* highlights rose, patchouli, cedar and musk, and natural indie Providence Perfume Co.’s *Rose Bohème* was created with “rich aged patchouli, fir, red tea, oud, saffron, Turkish rose, rare white rose essence and artisan rose petal infusion.” In contrast, Avril Lavigne uses rose as a symbol in her packaging and the promotion of her 2010 *Forbidden Rose* fragrance and her 2011 *Wild Rose* scent. However, neither fragrance actually contains rose notes. This year’s *Wild Rose* is a fruity floral described as “a feminine and exciting blend of sun-kissed fruits and beautiful flowers.”

The adoration of rose is also visible in personal care products such as Korres’ *Wild Rose Skincare* collection and *Japanese Rose* body butter and shower gel, as well as and Olay’s *Silk Whimsy* collection. According to Korres, “Wild rose oil is a natural source of vitamin C, which smoothes and brightens dull skin.” Olay *Silk Whimsy*’s products are formulated with rose extract and almond oil, and the marketing copy reads “Feel it hush over you like rose petals floating in a Venetian bath.” Rose is a classic flower whose popularity fluctuates depending on its translation, and while classic rose will remain, new rose

<sup>a</sup> [www.gcimagazine.com/magazine/pastissues/2010/](http://www.gcimagazine.com/magazine/pastissues/2010/)

species will be explored to continue to inspire contemporary fragrance launches.

## In Love

Like the feminine allure of rose, romantic love-themed fragrances are a fashionable concept that translates well in prestige and mass-market channels. Interpretations range from feminine and playful to flirtatious and sexy. As expected, many of the fragrance directions are floral bouquets intertwined with fruity nuances, sensual warm woods, and gourmand sweet undertones.

*Love* by Chloe “is a celebration of radiant, generous, and spontaneous femininity” with “a fine, powdery scent—light, sensual, and iridescent with talc and rice.” Oscar de la Renta’s *Live in Love* is described as a green floral and was inspired by many flowers found in the designer’s Connecticut garden. The fragrance is “about how you embrace life—you live in love,” and the ad for the fragrance is illustrated by David Downton with a retro feel.

Reality star and expert marketer Kim Kardashian also produced a limited edition fragrance, *Love by Kim Kardashian*, in conjunction with her now-infamous wedding. Said fragrance sold out in 10 days. According to Kardashian’s blog, she “thought it would be fun to create a special fragrance that represents this special time in my life! We’ve only produced 1,000 bottles ... one for me to wear on my wedding day, 200 for my bridal shower, and 799 for you guys.” The fragrance *Love and Light* from Jennifer Lopez is a flanker to her *Love and*

*Glamour* scent, and according to Lopez “it’s about how you feel inside; it’s not about your outside world.” Mariah Carey added *Lollipop Splash the Remix* to her fragrance collection of *Inseparable*, *Never Forget You* and *Vision of Love* scents. Like Carey’s original *Lollipop* collection, the fragrances are fruity and gourmand. *Vision of Love* is described as “a colorful chic fragrance inspired by the combination of French macaroon and purple jasmine for a tasty surprise.” Kimora Lee Simmons’ sixth fragrance, *Baby Phat Luv Me*, blends apricot blossom, tangerine, jasmine, vanilla blossom and sandalwood and has a similar marketing message to Jennifer Lopez, “what’s most important is that you love me ... for me. Love yourself.” Vera Wang *Lovestruck* states, “It’s all about being overwhelmed, inexplicably, hopelessly in love ... a new definition of Romeo and Juliet!” The fragrance is “a sparkling floral with notes of pink guava, mandarin, tuberose, lotus blossom, precious woods, and sheer musk.” *Loverdose* by Diesel is “the new elixir of love” formulated with “an overdose of ambroxan and liquorice absolute,” and according to the company, the fragrance is said to “stimulate the hypothalamus.” The fragrance is packaged in a purple faceted heart bottle reminiscent of Vera Wang’s original *Princess* fragrance. *Love* by MCMC Fragrances clearly follows the love theme, but surprisingly the fragrance highlights unexpected ingredients such as “Japanese yuzu citrus, French sweet basil and Chinese magnolia oil” with “the burning intensity of ancient templewood and gunpowder.” Watch as new fragrance interpretations of love continue to arise.

## A Slice Of Life

In the same vein as love, life is another emerging fragrance theme. However, it is a bit more ethereal and harder to translate into fragrance. In March, La Prairie added two lighter versions of the company's *Life Threads* scents, *Sheer Gold* and *Sheer Ruby*. *Addict To Life* from Dior was developed for "the confident woman who knows what she wants and lives life fully and intensely" and "the bouquet has a natural freshness with sparkling rose, vibrant jasmine, lilac and white musk." Mary J. Blige's second scent, *My Life Blossom*, launched on the Home Shopping Network in August, and \$1 from every bottle sold is being donated to The Foundation for the Advancement of Women Now. According to Blige, "Life can be beautiful when you're clear about who you are," and the fragrance has gardenia, mandarin, freesia, orange blossom, tuberose, jasmine, marigold, sandalwood, cashmere wood and vanilla notes. In specialty, Bath & Body Works introduced the *Charmed Life* signature collection, "a positively sexy blend of juicy guava, sparkling pear and creamy vanilla musk, inspired by taking chances, having fun and savoring life's fabulous moments!"

A recent, notable concept in line with the life theme is the UK fragrance podcast *Life in Scents*. The broadcast is described as "a new take on the interview show. [In] each edition, a high-profile guest remembers the smells that have meant something to them through their life, from the day-to-day odors of growing up, to fine fragrances and peculiar peccadilloes," and it was created by Odette Toilette, founder of Scratch+Sniff events, and radio producer Jo Barratt.

Yet another, possibly more esoteric, interpretation of the essence of life is blood. In Trendincite's March 2009 newsletter *Tidbits*, a piece titled "What's Your Type" explored blood as a trend. This year, Giovanni Castelli and Antonio Zuddas created *Blood Concept*, a line of four unisex fragrances corresponding to the basic blood types: A, B, AB and O. According to the company, "The human body is totally pervaded by a liquid vital rush that brings us what we are most fond of: Life. Filled with legends and meanings, blood is soaked with mystery, fascination and respect: it's the most tested and studied part of the human body. Hiding the multitude of secrets that reveals our inner and unique way of being. *Blood Concept* is a ceremony devoted to the pulse of life and its visceral boost. It is actually the river of life." A is classified as an aromatic scent, B a woody spicy, AB as a mineral and O as leather. The fragrances are packaged in metallic bottles with a simple white letter representing the blood type and a dropper applicator to reinforce the message. Expect the birth of more variations on the life theme.

## Midas Touch

Rose, love and life are all sophisticated subjects, and gold follows suit in these fragrance trends. Trendincite's March 2008 *Tidbits* newsletter featured a piece called "Gold Mine" that highlighted gold as the vogue ingredient used to communicate luxury. Three years later, gold is making a statement in fine fragrance, particularly in naming conventions and packaging designs, as well as in nail care products.

*A Dozen Roses Gold Rush*, *Bebe Gold*, *Kim Kardashian Gold* and *Michael Kors Gold* limited edition are all examples of 2011 fragrance launches that were inspired by gold's luxury, glamour and timelessness. *Michael Kors Gold* includes magnolia, freesia, violet, tuberose, peony and ambergris notes, while *Bebe Gold* combines fresh florals, sensual sandalwood and golden amber. *Kim Kardashian Gold* features bergamot, grapefruit, pink pepper, jasmine, rose, violet, patchouli, sandalwood, amber, benzoin and musk. *A Dozen Roses Gold Rush* scent is comprised of "blackberry, neroli, ylang ylang, bittersweet chocolate, ebony woods, gold rush rose and *A Dozen Roses*' signature rose absolute," which further supports the universal appeal of rose.

Fashion designers such as Diane von Furstenberg and Fendi were inspired by their signature accessories and used the color gold as a design element in their fragrance packaging. *Diane Eau de Parfum* is "housed in a bottle featuring interlocking golden rings evocative of another signature Diane von Furstenberg accessory: the Sutra bracelet," while *Fan di Fendi*'s bottle "features Fendi's emblematic double F logo—a reference to the Forever buckle on the iconic Baguette bag, and the cap recalls the black lacquered clasp of the Peekaboo bag." The ultimate and most opulent design is Donna Karan's million-dollar *DKNY Golden Delicious* perfume bottle created by celebrity jeweler Martin Katz. The apple-shaped bottle is carved out of 14-carat yellow and white gold and adorned with "2,700 brilliant white diamonds and 183 golden yellow sapphires." Unveiled by YouTube beauty vlogger Elle Fowler, it will be showcased around the world and then sold with proceeds going to Action Against Hunger charity.

Due to its inherent color and texture, it's no surprise gold's appeal has spilled into nail care. *Big Ben*, a golden hue by Nails Inc., is part of the new magnetic polishes line that is formulated with metallic particles and a magnet to create 3D nail art designs. CND's limited-edition gold-leaf effect *24K Sparkle* launched in September, and Sephora's recent releases include *Sephora by OPI Only Gold for Me Top Coat*, "a brilliant finishing touch that acts like jewelry for your nails," and Sephora Collection *Nail Bling* in limited edition *Gold Bubbles* and *Gold Leopard* textured nail stickers. Because of gold's timelessness and luxury connotation, it will remain an inspiration. Pay attention as gold glitters and inspires new consumer products.

## Final Note

When researching the fine fragrance market for this article, Trendincite examined both women's and men's introductions. While there was activity in the men's market, there were no overarching trends. However, the women's market had clear themes and fragrance stories. Rose, gold, love and life will influence other consumer packaged goods categories and present new creative opportunities for fragrance suppliers to develop personal and emotional connections with consumers.