
The Last Word: Perfumers on Ingredients and Formulation

Even as the fragrance industry addresses the recent European Union Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS) opinion, which threatens the use of certain perfumery ingredients, New York's Museum of Arts and Design has unveiled "The Art of Scent 1889–2012," a historical survey of key fragrances that highlight the creative and ingredient innovations which have shaped perfumery over the past century (Page 36)^a. The exhibition represents a unique foray into the formal appreciation of perfumery, its creative talents and its ingredients. The presentation and impending EU actions led *P&F* to begin a series of dialogues with perfumers to learn more about their favorite ingredients, their effects and what a broad palette means for these creative and technical professionals.

"Mintonat, Ambrocenide, Ambroxide, Cashmeran, damascones—I love them all," says Symrise perfumer Pierre Kurzenne^b. "I love Mintonat for its great modern role in freshness; [it] pushes the fragrance's own freshness, especially the citrus notes, whether they are natural or [synthetic]. I love Ambrocenide for its tremendous performance and great woody enhance[ment]. Beside typical woody cedarwoodlike notes, Ambrocenide, used in adapted quantities, can improve a wide range of olfactory families from a citrus grapefruit blend to musky ones and has very good resonance with violet accords. I love Cashmeran for its multiple facets, musky and unique woody character; Ambroxide, because it's the best example of softness and richness that all fragrances need; and damascones because no other raw material gives the opportunity to finish the fragrance character and used [so] widely."

^a http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_102.pdf

^b Mintonat, Ambrocenide and Ambroxide are trade names of Symrise; Cashmeran is a trade name of IFF

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When asked about the importance of having a broad ingredient, palette, Kurzenne explains, "Having a broad palette today is still a need. Despite the banning of some raw materials, we can find newcomers ... [T]echnical applications show more and more complexity and therefore oblige us to dig up different raw materials coming from other applications. The regulation restrictions push us to find alternative raw materials as well. When I look at my formulations today it is one of the main reasons I am using certain chemicals compared to the classic original ones, which are unfortunately limited. Another point is the cost; it is a key driver in today's creativity and is another reason for ... more economically sourced materials or new molecules with high impact properties which might allow [perfumers] to decrease dosages in final products and might be a positive aspect regarding sustainability."

"Like a lot of perfumers, many of my favorite ingredients—animal ingredients, mosses, rich florals, leathery materials—and perfumes—*Bois des Iles* (Chanel), *Cuir de Russie* (Chanel) and *Jicky* (Guerlain)—include those in the distant past," says Sensient perfumer Paul McGee. "Economic reasons have brought about a large part of the changes and mass distribution, too, as perfumery has moved away from being an elite product to an everyday necessity. We also have many new and interesting materials, and more will come on the market to replace the 'R' numbers. No doubt too we will lose many of our 'old friends.' Hopefully this time of change will soon be behind us and the future generations will not understand the fuss being made today."

"I believe it is right to be concerned with the health of human beings, plants and animals and our land, air and aqueous environments," McGee continues. "However, as we know if we take the issue of allergens, we can all be allergic to anything; so maybe the perfumery 'allergens'—26 and more coming—should be described only as potential irritants. If we are sensitive to something, best to stop using it [as a consumer]. We do not need to ban everything, but be cautious."

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