

# The Last Word: Perfumer Insights on Ingredients

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 highlights the creative and ingredient innovations that have shaped perfumery over the past century. 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 and their effects, and what a broad palette means for these creative and technical professionals<sup>a</sup>.

"The creative perfumer's job is like that of an artist," says Janardhanan Mahalingam, a senior perfumer for Givaudan APAC in Singapore. Mahalingam's prized ingredients include  $\alpha$ -amyl cinnamaldehyde, Lilial<sup>b</sup>, citronellol, Peru balsam, vetiver oil, geranium oil, sandalwood oil, lavender and jasmine absolute, some of which have fallen under regulatory scrutiny. The perfumer notes that while some of the commodity synthetics bring high odor value and cost-effectiveness, key naturals can "bring wonder" in even small doses.

"If an artist has a variety of color shades to create a picture, it will be well-appreciated," says Mahalingam. "I look at the palette of ingredients the same way. At the same time, I would like to stress the formulas should not be very long to be effective."

Mahalingam adds, "With today's perfumery, perfumers get little time to dive deep on concepts to create the right perfume. This is due to time constraints and competition in the market."

"Having a wide palette of ingredients allows perfumers to answer our customers' briefs as well as we can," says trainee perfumer Kevin Mathys of Bell Flavors & Fragrances EMEA. "It provides us with stable ingredients for aggressive bases, and can give us wonderful and delicate essences such as rose or jasmine. As a result, it is good to have similar smelling ingredients from different chemical families in order to achieve the same aesthetic properties in different chemical environments."

"I think it is important for us to have a broad palette for our creativity," Mathys adds. "Thousands of ingredient lead to infinite combinations, and perfumers can express themselves ...

by the way they choose the materials and the way they make them tell their story."

Mathys' favored ingredients include amber materials such as ambroxan, Ambrocenide, Norlimbanol and dynamone<sup>c</sup>.

"On their own they just are lovely and somehow rough, but when added to a composition, they bestow a nice, warm and luxury radiance to a whole range of compositions," he says. "They will act on the perfume from the top to the bottom notes. This whole family is a real treasure and gives various effects: embracing the watery notes in some marine types of fragrances and rounding off the sharpness of some fruity accords, especially in alcoholic application."

Mathys also has a fondness for galbanum oil, which he calls "a brilliant material to give naturalness and round off the sharpness of the common green materials." The perfumer adds, "It is a bit expensive, but you can achieve a lot with a small amount of it as it is quite powerful." In addition, Mathys says, "Neobutenone Alpha, is a brilliant one as well<sup>d</sup>. It's very powerful and can drive a composition and completely change it."

"I think it is wonderful to have access to many different ingredients, even when they seem very similar," says Claudine de Vogel, perfumer at CPL Aromas GmbH. "I find each ingredient adds something specific to a fragrance, even when it is not clear at first smell."

De Vogel's favorite materials include bergamot, which she prizes "for its effervescence and ability to cheer me up and add a sparkle to every fragrance." She adds, "It is an absolutely wonderful and multifaceted ingredient. I think it can be used in any type of fragrance direction and adapts itself to the fragrance composition."

"I love the big floral absolutes and essential oils such as rose absolute, jasmine absolute Moroccan and ylang-ylang oil," the perfumer continues. "They add such richness, volume and quality to a fragrance, and that is something no synthetic ingredient can ever really imitate."

De Vogel adds, "As far as synthetics go, it is always difficult to pick just one. Currently I really like Magnolan, as it is a lovely modern floral note with grapefruit connotations<sup>e</sup>. It is great to use in fresh feminine compositions, but also fantastic in a fresh fougère fragrance. Hedione is also still one of the greats—that will never change<sup>f</sup>. It is fresh, clean and subtle, yet gives wonderful light floral and citrus support to the entire fragrance composition. Another of my favorite ingredients is  $\alpha$ -damascone. I love the floral aspect and also love the fruitiness of the ingredient. Again, it is multidimensional and for that reason can be used in so many different ways."

<sup>a</sup>The first article in this series was titled "The Last Word: Perfumers on Ingredients and Formulation," which appeared on Page 58 of the February 2013 issue of *P&F* magazine; [www.perfumerflavorist.com/magazine](http://www.perfumerflavorist.com/magazine).

<sup>b</sup>Lilial is a trade name of Givaudan.

<sup>c</sup>Ambrocenide is a trade name of Symrise; Norlimbanol is a trade name of Firmenich.

<sup>d</sup>Neobutenone Alpha is a trade name of Firmenich.

<sup>e</sup>Magnolan is a trade name of Symrise.

<sup>f</sup>Hedione is a trade name of Firmenich.

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