

Perfumers in Awards Spotlight

This year's Fragrance Foundation Awards, held June 16 at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in New York, spotlighted several key achievements in perfumery.

A Life in Perfumery

Carlos Benaim, master perfumer at International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF), received the 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award, which he called "a high point of my professional career."

He continued, "It is particularly gratifying to be acknowledged for doing what I love every day and to share my creations with others. I thank the foundation for this recognition and honor. I also thank IFF for providing a culture where perfumers have a lot of creative freedom and where art and science are valued; a culture that encourages collaboration among the perfumers from all our creative centers around the world. It is a privilege to work with so many extremely talented colleagues and I thank them for their support and inspiration. It is also a privilege to work with our customers and the most prestigious brands in the industry."

Nicolas Mirzayantz, IFF's group president fragrances, said, "We are very proud to have had Carlos as part of the IFF family for more than 45 years. He understands the synergy between art and technology, which enables him to deliver breakthrough olfactive signature fragrances that become market leaders and classics."

Benaim is the chairperson of the IFF Global Creative Council. He received the American Society of Perfumers Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004, and his individual and collaborative creations have received many industry awards, including nine FiFi's from the Fragrance Foundation in the United States and several more in other countries.

Reinterpreting Iris

No 19—which, according to Chanel, was "originally created [in 1970 by perfumer Henri Robert] as Gabrielle Chanel's signature fragrance, and named for her August 19 birthdate"—is the iris fragrance that Mane perfumer Ralf Schwieger admires most. Though the scent is also regarded for its green and chypre aspects, Schwieger is drawn to *No 19*'s iris character. (The scent was later reinterpreted in *No 19 Poudré*, formulated by perfumer Jacques Polge, who incorporated far more musk than the original.) It was this starting point of inspiration that Schwieger pursued in the formulation of *Iris Nazarena* for New York-based

fragrance boutique/brand Aedes de Venustas. The fragrance recently won him and Mane the 2014 Perfume Extraordinaire of the Year honor at the annual Fragrance Foundation Awards in New York, which, according to the Foundation, "recognizes an extraordinary olfactive creation ... [based] on four elements: design, signature, creativity and quality."

The perfumer worked closely with Aedes de Venustas co-founder Karl Bradl, who also oversaw the creation and launch of the brand's oriental *Cillet Bengale* (formulated by Givaudan's Rodrigo Flores-Roux) and chypre *Aedes de Venustas* (formulated by Bertrand Duchaufour).

While conventional varieties of orris rhizome-derived ingredients were used in the fragrance, the gray- and pink-flecked Nazarena iris flower informed the sensory direction of Schwieger's formulation.

"They [Aedes de Venustas] like incense, some kind of dark atmosphere, so that's a common factor in all their [scents]," Schwieger says. "The irises I smelled on the market often have a powdery smell, a bit floral. *Iris Nazarena* really comes out of leather, incense and woody notes. The combination of iris with those notes is really quite peculiar. It gives it a certain modernity and interest."

Orris, which has use in flavors, including gin profiles, and fragrance, is an expensive ingredient, in part because of its low yield and long maturation process. As a result, the high levels of the material used in *Iris Nazarena* are unusual. This dosage allows the wearer to truly smell the depth of the iris, according to Schwieger.

Schwieger says he appreciates having large, mainstream projects interspersed with smaller niche scents to provide a wide variety of creative outlets. The development process for this particular project was unique, says Schwieger, in that Bradl oversees the brand and has a direct connection to the point of sale: "He knows what his clients like. That's very interesting because often the perfumer is so far removed from the actual shopper."

The development process lasted a bit more than six months, though the scent went through relatively few iterations.

"We took time to make it right," says Schwieger. "It's important not to be rushed, especially with something new. What I find important in the development process is to stop and sit for a while, wear [the fragrance] for a little bit, wait a week before you wear it again and see if it spikes an interest. It's important to get used to the scent and to see if you crave it, if you really want to go back to it. That reflects what the user does—when the bottle is empty, do they want to get a new one? That's what you're aiming for."

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"Look for photos and additional coverage in the September edition of *P&F*; www.perfumerflavorist.com/magazine."

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Read more about orris in "Orris: A Star of Inspiration" on Page 36 of the July 2009 issue of *P&F* magazine; www.perfumerflavorist.com/magazine.