

# Creating an Emotion: WFFC Gala Honors Karine Lebret Leroux

Colleagues of Karine Lebret Leroux, fine fragrance creation and development director, L'Oréal, touted her hard work and knowledge of fragrance during the 2014 Women in Flavor and Fragrance Commerce gala (WFFC; see photos on **Page 52**). However, Leroux, the night's honoree, stressed the importance of the event raising money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital ([www.stjude.org/donate](http://www.stjude.org/donate)). Leroux added that she was honored to be recognized by an American group—and a women's group at that.

Leroux called out the various industry friends and colleagues who had helped her throughout her career, including Michael Carlos of Givaudan, who accepted her into the company's perfumery school. Leroux's perfumery studies led her to become a fragrance design manager at Givaudan in Paris, where she worked for the company's client, L'Oréal. This role introduced Leroux to the late Patricia Turck Paquelier, who served as the managing director of international prestige and collections within L'Oréal's luxury division. It was Paquelier who eventually hired Leroux to join L'Oréal, where she now oversees the creation and development of fragrances for L'Oréal's portfolio of 14 brands, including Giorgio Armani, Lancôme, Ralf Lauren, Kiehl's, Diesel, Viktor & Rolf and Cacharel. Leroux cited Paquelier's inspiration in her remarks at the WFFC event.



Karine Lebret Leroux; for more photos from the event, see Page 52.

## Creating Emotion in Scents

"Perfume is an emotion," Leroux recently told *P&F*. "The only things that will succeed are those scents that connect with the consumers' emotion."

She continued, "Take [a brand] like Maison Martin Margiela. There is a real emotion. You are able to work with the perfumers for three or four years on the same accord. If you're not moved by the accord you don't move forward."

Leroux added that consumers will recognize a scent without true emotion and will consequently not repurchase it.

"Each launch is a very big business challenge," she explained. "At the end of the day, the only

way to make money in the long term is to create an emotion."

## A Sustainable Future

Sustainable products are "the future of perfumery," said Leroux. "Green products, sustainable development of perfumery—it's just a fantastic initiative. It's a real challenge for L'Oréal and our competition, of course, but it's probably the most human and exciting initiative we have ever had in this industry."

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Designing fragrances and brands that are sustainable requires companies and teams to think of the consequences of ingredients, sourcing and the effects on local communities, she notes.

"I hope to contribute in my job to increase and to help this sustainable aspect," she said.

## A Unique Industry

"The translation between emotion and sense is very unique," Leroux told *P&F*. "The industry is unique because it is small and specialized. Very few learn it well."

From the earliest educational stage, when trainees create their own personal "dictionaries" of smells and associations among natural and synthetic materials, the fragrance industry is highly associative and individual.

The free mixture of artistic and business aspects allows fragrance developers to remain artists as they translate emotions into scents, Leroux told *P&F*, concluding, "It's a profession with a very high sensitivity."



Leroux addressed a packed house at the WFFC gala; all photos by Dan D'Errico.

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