

Fragrance Foundation Arabia Award Winners Reflect Evolving Market

“It’s an amazing transformation,” says Shahzad Haider, chairman of The Fragrance Foundation Arabia, reflecting on the rapid evolution of the Middle Eastern fragrance market over the last five years. Indeed, the winners of the organization’s 2014 awards underscore this shift, featuring a dynamic mix of multinational and regional brands.

Fragrance sales in the Middle East and North Africa totaled \$2.9 billion in 2013, according to a recent Euromonitor (www.euromonitor.com) report. The annual fragrance spend for the region is \$8.80 per capita, compared to \$6.80 per capita worldwide.

Euromonitor noted that Saudi Arabia was the single largest fragrance consumer in the region in 2013, with 13% growth aided by a 2012 fatwa that declared that Muslims could ethically use alcohol-based fragrances. The Saudi results are also helped by the nation’s high urbanization and status as a regional tourist draw. The United Arab Emirates, meanwhile, experienced 7% growth in the fragrance market, boosted by “a favorable economic climate with rapid investment in infrastructure, including upmarket shopping malls,” according to Euromonitor. The Emirates benefits from foreigners who purchase fine fragrances when visiting.

The landscape of the Middle East’s fragrance industry has completely changed, Haider says, not only for regional brands such as Arabian Oud, Al Qurashi and Ajmal, but also international players. In the last two years, says Haider, multinational brands have significantly increased their ad spends and marketing presence in print and television, as have regional brands.

“This,” he says, “is a very, very positive sign.”

At the same time, says Haider, numerous global brands have established “oriental lines of business.” The multinationals have spent the last few years serving and learning about the Middle East, he explains, initially spurred on by the recessions in North America and Europe. This has raised the stakes for regional brands, which must expand and improve their marketing efforts in response.

“Regional players have learned their lessons,” says Haider. “They’re coming back with niche lines, prestige fragrance, they’re improving their retail outlets and design, packaging and bottling.”

The Middle Eastern consumer, Haider says, embraces both international and regional products. While a woman from Saudi Arabia may have a Western luxury handbag, her dressing table will still include ouds and oriental scents.



Shahzad Haider, chairman of The Fragrance Foundation Arabia.



The winners of the 2014 Fragrance Foundation Arabia awards reflect the growing influence of multinational brands, as well as the resilience of regional players.

Haider concludes, “Another exciting decade is coming and obviously consumers will benefit.”

The winners of the 2014 Fragrance Foundation Arabia Awards were: Arabian Prestige—Women’s Prestige: **Gucci Oud** (P&G); Arabian Prestige—Men’s Prestige: **Dolce & Gabbana Velvet Desert Oud** (P&G); International Prestige—Women’s Prestige: **Dolce & Gabbana Dolce** (P&G); International Prestige—Men’s Prestige: **Mont Blanc Emblem** (Creation); Arabian Popular Appeal—Women’s Fragrance: **Rochas OUD** (P&G); International Popular Appeal—Women’s Fragrance: **Hugo Boss Boss Nuit** (P&G); International Popular Appeal—Men’s Fragrance: **Lacoste LIVE** (P&G); Arabian Popular Appeal—Men’s Fragrance: **Hob 1 (Hob Wahid)** (Khaltat Blends of Love); Oriental Set of the Year: **The Royal Lux** (Hind Al Oud); Retailer of the Year: Arabian Oud—mono retailer of the year; My Favorite Perfume of the Year, Arabian Fragrance, Female: **Awtar** (Arabian Oud); My Favorite Perfume of the Year, Arabian Fragrance, Male: **Oud Mood I** (Oud Elite); My Favorite Perfume of the Year, International Fragrance, Female: **XO for her** (Arabian Oud); My Favorite Perfume of the Year, International Fragrance, Male: **XO for him** (Arabian Oud).

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