



The Time Machine of Dreams

Interface Systems for Sight, Sound and Smell

By Sharon K. Christie, Scent-A-Vision

The evolution of fragrance as well as the interesting position in which the industry finds itself today didn't "just happen." The beginnings of growth and change started out very conventionally. They were slow, structured, planned, certainly routine and based on past history, sometimes ancient history. But those beginnings, that evolution, has finally taken us to a place I call the last fragrance frontier; a frontier that captures a similar sense of excitement as walking on the moon or the exploration of space.

This is because it offers the promise of expanded sensory awareness. A world like no other. A world that no longer addresses fragrance or scent, per se, in the conventional sense of the word, but marries, intermingles, captures and channels the power and mystique of fragrance into the universe of sight and sound into a total "scentsory" experience!

The Beginnings

The application of fragrance for personal use marks the very beginning of the fragrance "scentsation" or experience and involves the conventional forms, uses, applications and products with which we are all familiar. It is not to say, however, that within this more or less traditional category, new products, packaging, concepts and fragrance extensions aren't being developed all the time. This is a result of more sophisticated technology, research and demand. A good example is the time release "Fragrance Patch," a very interesting and contemporary new concept born out of pharmaceutical research and only introduced on a commercial basis late last year.

We move next to *household and environmental* fragrances—the former consisting of such practical, traditional standbys as room sprays, cleansers, air fresheners, deodorants and the like and the latter of newer, more discretionary, expensive "designer" concepts including fragrance

candles, scented shelf papers, potpourris and sachets, fragrance discs, etc. Believe me, I'm not passing lightly over the size, impact, importance or growth potential of this category and the opportunity for all the kinds of innovation and new product activity that it represents.

With aromatherapy, we arrive at a fragrance category that really does involve "scentsations" or sensations (regardless of the spelling!) and not just the sense of smell. We're also talking about therapeutic, psychological and mental benefits and applications; a total sensorium, not just cosmetics or massage.

In her literature, Judith Jackson uses such words as "calming and refreshing," "energizing and uplifting," "soothing and nourishing," "stimulating and sensual" to describe some of the benefits and appeals of aromatherapy. When she talks of how "... the aroma of essential oils stimulate mental and physical response through the sense of smell which communicates to our memory, emotions and glands," it signals movement into another sensory dimension and accounts for the use of aromatherapy in enhancing our psychological, physical and sensual well being. This is a concept, an evolution, that goes far beyond the attributes, benefits or claims associated with fragrance, per se.

The Next Step:

There's no doubt that we've come a long way in terms of the growth and expansion of our "fragrance potential" both in our personal lives as well as in the world we live. But have we really? How much further is there to go before scent, as we perceive it, involves and evolves into a total and complete sensory experience?

We call this a "*Sensorium*," a total sensory experience. It is *not* something known or connected with everyday life or experience as we know it today.



There is only one place such a vision, such a breakthrough, can begin to happen. That is in the magical world of fantasy and imagination; a world where nothing is too difficult and no dream is impossible. It is a world where limitations or constraints lie only in the powers of our imagination; a world that exists beyond the realm of the practical, the traditional, the reasonable and the conventional. It is "A *Celebration of Scentsations*," the triumph of the innovative and extraordinary. It's called "*The Time Machine of Dreams*." It is a concept that could only come to us today via the world of entertainment!

So let's enter this "scentsational" entertainment world for a sampling of the "real life" role we can expect scents, odors and fragrances to play in centuries to come.

The Entertainment Venues:

Incidentally, all the entertainment venues we'll talk about were either developed or are in the process of being developed by The Landmark Entertainment Group, headquartered in Hollywood, CA. This company was built on experience, creativity and imagination. In just a few years it has achieved success in many diversified entertainment disciplines, ranging from theme park attractions to urban entertainment centers to motion picture theatres to children's toys and animation.

My company, Scent-A-Vision, is fortunate enough to be affiliated with Landmark and has worked with them on various projects involved with the methodology and technology in fragrance transfer and release systems. Scent-A-Vision's responsibility has been to provide the special effects and scent effects process that expand an existing viewing experience. This is accomplished by developing a scent program delivery system that projects odors in sequence and in synchronization with sight and sound scenes.

Power Plant:

The first commercial application of Scent-A-Vision technology and the beginning of their joint technical venture with Landmark Entertainment was in July 1985 at the Six Flags Power Plant in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. The Power Plant was a massive 150,000 square foot building that had been standing idle since the turn of the century. It was rediscovered by Baltimore city planners who thought it would be ideal as a centerpiece and tourist attraction for the city's newly renovated waterfront.

When it opened, the Power Plant was the most elaborate indoor entertainment facility of its kind

and provided a dazzling journey through time and space to a magical turn-of-the-century world of fun and fantasy. One of its special attractions was a spectacular *sensorium* where visitors had a chance to journey back and experience what America was like 100 years ago, without leaving their seats. Through a totally controlled sensory environment, the audience was not only able to see in these dimensions, but also to feel, hear and smell Victorian life and history come alive!

The Sensorium included 17 different fragrance "scenarios" including the smell of fresh pine needles, hot dogs and mustard, fresh flowers, ripe lemons and many, many more.

King Kong:

Our next "scentsory" venture opened in June 1986 and marked the debut of Hollywood's most famous "mon-star," King Kong, as showcased by Landmark in a new \$6.5 million attraction on the Universal Studios Tour.

Going back in time, King Kong first premiered in March 1933 at the Radio City Music Hall. This was the first major "special effects" movie of its kind and generated an impact that has lasted 55 years and is still going strong!

Today, on the Universal Tour, the special effects take place in a massive 26,000 square foot sound stage where a contemporary, fully computerized Kong towers a gigantic three stories above the Brooklyn Bridge, swings across the New York City skyline and uses the Brooklyn Bridge as a trapeze to smash trams and battle attacking helicopters.

King Kong is one of the most visually exciting shows at Universal Studios. It uses 48 separate tracks of audio effects and music to create a total sound environment. It also surprises and stuns audience members in a way they'll never forget because it adds even another dimension to their total experience and involvement.

This short excerpt from the King Kong script will give you the idea!

... The passengers in the first car slide within inches of Kong's roaring mouth and giant glistening teeth. It seems as though he's going to swallow them alive, but as he lunges forward to do so, he forgets the broken power cable in his right hand. A blast of sparks burst from the cable. The passengers in the tram *see* Kong roll backwards. They *hear* him roaring in pain as his eyes light up from the surge of current running through his body. They *feel* the heat of hot breath billowing from Kong's roaring mouth. And, (best of all), they even *smell* Breath-of-Kong—the sweet, pungent, unmistakable,



overly ripe and very distinctive odor of banana breath!

You have it all right there. Interface systems for sight, sound and smell, all working together to present a total entertainment picture. And, after all, isn't that what "Scentsationalism" is all about?

Sanrio:

As a result of the background, build-up and all the experience coming from the research and development done in connection with the Power Plant and King Kong, the very epitome of "Scentsation," as captured by the wonderful world of entertainment, is just about to happen!

The Time Machine of Dreams will open in late 1989 or 1990 at the Sanrio Communication Center, a six acre cultural and entertainment complex located in Tama, Japan, only minutes away from Tokyo by train. Planned for an influx of three million visitors a year, there will be nothing in the world quite like it for many decades to come!

Produced as a 3D film show, it's targeted to a new 4th dimension in the world of entertainment and "scentsational" experience. In space or NASA jargon, it's equivalent to "pushing the outer edge of the envelope," only this time we're talking about the envelope of our senses, not the sound barrier.

Prior to entering the Sanrio entertainment theatre itself, guests assemble in a special pre-show chamber where they have a chance to marvel at the high-tech futuristic decor, active video monitors and other computer apparatus. A huge video panel stretches across one wall, capable of projecting one single image, or as many as 28 separate images and gives guests the impression they are in the pre-launch area of some gigantic, futuristic vehicle.

The entrance doors to the theatre, called The Main Transport Vehicle, open. Guests pick up a pair of 3-D glasses and are escorted to their individual, specially designed flight chairs by show attendants.

Revolutionary in design and concept, these chairs provide high backs, reclining footrests, headphone-headrests and seatbelts. With the exception of King Kong revisiting Planet Earth, the chairs will accommodate just about any size man, woman or child.

The Main Transport Vehicle seats a total of 275 guests per performance with each flight chair acting as a total environmental space-age cocoon that completely enfolds guests in a warm, friendly, comfortable sensory environment. The chairs have been designed to move, turn, rock,



toss, tilt, sway, rotate a total of 360°—and eject. Each is also a totally self-contained, individually operated unit that responds, adjusts or reacts in appropriate ways to the entertainment “script” and enhances the guests’ perception, awareness and involvement in the total panorama and Time Machine experience.

Special fragrance cartridges or discs have been built into each chair. These project odors in sequence and in synchronization with sight and sound scenes and make it possible for viewers to smell everything they see, hear and feel and, in so doing, capture and experience the immediacy of expanded and heightened sensory awareness.

The “Scentsory Script” for each performance includes the smell of:

- lush greenery and the oxygen-rich atmosphere of a forest
- roasting meat
- hot dogs and popcorn
- a sequence of fantasy fragrances
- pleasant and euphoric smells

As the show begins, a platform rises directly in front of the guests. On it, there is a figure dressed in arch-typical pilot’s gear, secured in a seat not unlike that of the guests. Here’s our hot, hot rock, space-and-time jockey now:

“Ladies and gentlemen, meet Voyage Pilot, Operator 759—Code Name, Dreamon—a likeable, laid back, ‘gung-ho’ character on a quest for the ultimate adventure.”

From his control module, Dreamon’s job is to steer the course of The Time Machine as he charts the adventures and sensory experiences of guests in The Main Transport Vehicle.

The Show:

And so the journey of the time machine, with Dreamon at the controls, finally begins. It takes us:

- inward to a time before there was time
- backwards to the birth of the universe, the stars, the galaxies and planets; the dawn of earth and encounters with prehistoric animals
- to the beginning of man, centuries before recorded time; through all the centuries up to today
- to contemporary man in his purest form, the result of millions of years of evolution
- to our eighties man at an athletic stadium, with runners at a track meet, in a boxing ring living through the total darkness and silence of a knockout, the experience of being “out cold”
- All the way to that final journey inside the



mind of man into a whole Universe in miniature

In describing this last adventure, The Time Machine of Dreams script reads like this:

“Much like our universe, the mind is mysterious, fascinating, vast and relatively unexplored. It is a complicated network of *ten billion* nerve cells, with infinite and profound capabilities. *This is the new frontier of science.*”

Our voyage has finally taken us to that last, ultimate experience. We have reached the fourth dimension with its psychedelic experiences and euphoria, with a trip into The Nightmare Lobe—the macabre world of dark and shadow—to the final decompression chamber and a return ticket to 1988 reality.

The Time Machine of Dreams is not only an open door to imagination. It is also all about scents and fragrances. It's about how our sense of smell and perception of odors color, enrich, magnify and complete the messages and impressions transmitted by the other senses and influence our over-all reaction to life around us.

The Time Machine of Dreams is the entertainment vehicle that pushes this concept to its most extreme, new world application and conclusion. And however farfetched and imaginative, it *does* make the point! In addition, it provides the type of challenge, new wave brain-storming and conceptual thinking in the sensory area that could result in immediate, practical, contemporary applications and adaptations of concepts originally developed strictly for entertainment venues.

This has already happened in the area of fragrance transfer and release. The first retail, commercial application of the special effects technology developed for the Power Plant's Sensorium and the “banana breath” of King Kong occurred with the introduction of Scent-A-Chip, the diminutive, custom designed, custom molded piece that guarantees excellent and long lasting fragrance fidelity without distortion.

The markets are not saturated. There is always room for something new, provided it's fresh, exciting, or makes sense in terms of on-going changes and evolution in our lifestyle. Remember that a few years ago there was no such thing as a cartridge or disc that plugged into a wall or lighter socket and released fragrance for 60 hours or more?

Are you aware of the “scented oxygen bars” that are starting to gain popularity in Japan? Instead of a drink, you go into one of these special “bars” for an “oxygen fix.” Depending on the scent, the results are claimed to be:

- soothing and relaxing
- good for a quick pick-up
- effective as an anti-stress treatment

What are we doing about the latest scientific research which suggests that smells trigger memories? Pleasant odors are more likely to stimulate happy recollections and foul odors, unpleasant ones. According to findings reported recently in American Scientist Magazine, “Odor perceptions recreate significant past episodes in a person's life (and) . . . the strength of memory varies with the special involvement a person has with the odor.”

There's a message here and in The Time Machine of Dreams for all of us. If we listen to this message, we'll all be enjoying “A *Celebration of Scentsations*” in the years to come!

This paper was originally presented at the American Society of Perfumers' 34th Annual Symposium.

Address correspondence to Sharon K. Christie,
Scent-A-Vision, 171 East Second Street, Huntington
Station, NY 11746 USA.

