
Vega: The fragrance consumer is the final judge of the success of our product. If we have not satisfied his or her needs all our efforts are lost. Every clue which reveals the demands of the fragrance consumer in the

future provides us with valuable insights.

Shirley Lord, Director of Special Projects, Beauty and Fitness, at *Vogue* must be keenly aware of the emerging trends and changing tastes of the American consumer. *Vogue* has a circulation of over one million readers in the United States.

Born in London, Ms. Lord spent the first part of her career on the staff of British journals and newspapers such as *The Star*, the *London Evening Standard* and the *London Evening News*. In 1963 Ms. Lord joined *Harper's Bazaar* in Great Britain, serving as Beauty Editor for seven years. After emigrating to the United States, Ms. Lord accepted the post of Beauty and Health Editor for American *Harper's Bazaar*. In 1973 Ms. Lord joined American *Vogue* as Editor in Chief, Beauty and Health. Leaving *Vogue* for a five year stint as Vice-President at Helena Rubinstein, Ms. Lord rejoined *Vogue* in 1980.

Ms. Lord has written a number of books including *Small Beer at Claridges* and *You Are Beautiful (and How to Prove It)* and has been named Leading Woman Journalist by the Variety Club of Great Britain.

The emerging fragrance consumer

By Shirley Lord, *Vogue*

Decades ago the *Vogue* reader was like a member of a very special club—you could pick her out in a crowd in New York, Detroit, San Francisco, anywhere. She had a certain look, a style, that represented money, background, or both. Her interests, her way of life—it wasn't called *lifestyle* then—could easily be tabulated into a neat set of statistics by even a novice account executive. And that *Vogue* reader—that member of a special club—was certainly the typical fragrance user of her day. She even had a beautiful cut-glass bottle on her dressing table to prove it. (If she was particularly daring she may even have opened it and dabbed on some scent from time to time—on special occasions, of course.)

Today the *Vogue* reader is as special as she ever was but she is by no means concerned only with how she looks—although that's a job she takes care of perfectly. She is also concerned about how her community looks and works, and what is happening in her world. She is a busy, active woman, a trend-setter

followed by millions (which today sometimes makes it difficult to "pick her out in a crowd"). She is a multi-faceted person, with diverse interests, occupations, and opinions, changing her look—her style—only if and when she decides to change her mind. And just as the *Vogue* reader of decades ago was a typical fragrance user of her time, so the contemporary *Vogue* reader is a typical fragrance user of today.

From a recent survey we know that the majority of *Vogue* readers wear fragrance in one or more of its many forms at least a few times a week. The majority wear it both in the daytime and in the evening. By far the largest number change their scent continually; the average number used is 3.8. Only a small minority use one single scent.

Purse perfume is popular with *Vogue* readers. Half of the perfume users carry a purse perfume. Two-thirds of perfume users, and 56% of those who use cologne or eau de toilette, both buy fragrance for themselves and receive it as gifts. Three out of ten

report they buy all their fragrances themselves. In addition to using fragrance themselves, eight out of ten *Vogue* readers give fragrance as gifts. The available statistics tell us today's *Vogue* reader has an average of 6.4 bottles on hand at one time, and the average price paid per bottle is \$29.11.

Now, all this tells you that today's *Vogue* reader represents the kind of fragrance consumer you like best—fragrance is an important part of her style of living, used in a variety of ways day and night. Not only does she use it personally, but in her home, emphasizing the background she wants to create. This is in striking contrast to decades ago, when the *Vogue* reader, as a typical fragrance consumer, put fragrance on a pedestal, approached it impersonally, and wore it when she remembered to—as an additional attraction not meant to be commented upon, although she obviously hoped it would be appreciated.

It would be easy to draw conclusions from this kind of comparison: that as the *Vogue* reader evolved into the modern active woman we see all around us, so the fragrance consumer evolved, buying and using fragrance freely. But from the figures we have available covering dollars spent on fragrance over thirty-odd years, we know the fragrance consumer of today came into being much more suddenly. In fact she didn't evolve. She erupted—one, two, three.

Before we look at the fragrance consumer of tomorrow, you'll have to excuse me while I tell you how at *Vogue* we noticed this happening. We give a great deal of coverage to fragrance in *Vogue* today, and it has steadily increased since the first "traditional" coverage of fragrance as a Christmas gift because of the importance of the industry, and because our readers love to read about it. Over the last few years we have given major space to fragrance in the center book pages as well as running a regular fragrance column at the front of the book. Last summer, in discussing editorial content, it was decided that for the major November fragrance pages we should look back at where fragrance once was in a woman's beauty priorities as well as looking ahead to where it is going. What made this story particularly rewarding was that everyone I spoke to gave credit to somebody else as to how in seven years—approximately from 1972 to 1979—volume quadrupled from around three hundred million dollars to over one billion three hundred million dollars. In contrast, in the twenty-seven years prior to 1972 volume had scarcely moved at all, or, you could say, moved at a snail's pace. An astonishing change—in no way explained away by increased prices, but by an enormous increase in fragrance consumers.

The transformation of the *Vogue* reader provided many clues in our fragrance detective story, while Annette Green, who runs the Fragrance Foundation, delivered her own telling description of the enormous changes that came about in consumer fashion, beauty, and fragrance spending from the forties through to the seventies. As she put it, "women began to develop a street smart attitude about clothes and beauty and

suddenly after generations of youths wanting to imitate their parents as early as possible, the reverse started to happen: the grown-ups wanted to be young and 'with it' instead. Many perfumes suddenly seemed too genteel—although in the beginning a touch of real French perfume after six o'clock was still the thing—for a self-discovery was going on, and an enjoyment of the senses was shameless for the first time, feeling, smelling, enjoying."

Vogue's belief in the importance of the fragrance industry is furthered by their merchandising of the editorial pages. "Fragrance Goes to the Movies" was a natural idea around which to build a successful retail promotion. A retail promotion kit went to a selected group of stores, suggesting how best to use *Vogue's* "Fragrance Goes to the Movies" editorial with window and counter displays, plus special event ideas to sell through fragrance on every floor of the store, helped with *Vogue's* own "gift with purchase." In the case of the May issue last year, a little tortoise-shell magnifying mirror in a *Vogue* pouch was given free to participating stores, together with customer booklets full of valuable information for their fragrance consumers during May. A poster was also sent along for in-store display.

Every student of demography knows an important shift in the age mix of the population is taking place and it's one that should prove to be hugely beneficial to fragrance usage. The thirty to thirty-nine-year old age group will expand from 25.4 million to 37 million over the next few years, with a resultant increase in the percentage of households with annual incomes in the \$15,000 a year plus category. Not only will these households have more money available, but many of these family units have already become accustomed to spending freely on fragrance and other beauty aids. Nothing succeeds like success. Once a fragrance consumer, always a fragrance consumer, and so say all of

us.

Statistics projected by the United States Department of Commerce indicate that by 1985 53.5% of all families will be in the \$15,000 and over bracket, and that 76.5% of total income will fall in the \$15,000 and over bracket.

The growth in the number of working women in the labor force also augurs well for fragrance sales. Women who work outside the home buy fragrances more frequently than those who remain at home, not only because of higher levels of income but because of wider social contact. Self purchase, self use, that is the key to growth. In many ways I feel fragrance has an advantage over other products at the cosmetic counter, which today's consumer approaches with a certain amount of cynicism. Where fragrance is concerned, as our May 1980 editorial pointed out, there is a certain entertainment value: "It doesn't cure warts, grow hair, or improve skin . . . but it can and *does* improve the way we feel about ourselves, lifting our spirits and the spirits of those around us . . . just like entertainment." So a woman has no built-in prejudices when she goes to a beauty counter to buy perfume or fragrance. What she does have is a great deal of curiosity, especially now that science has replaced mysticism and we are already in the age of pheromone fragrances. Our reader can now learn about a fragrance containing a pheromone—a chemical substance which has been proved, when produced naturally in human beings, to affect human behavior. This will certainly add to the all-around enjoyment of buying and wearing a perfume.

Today the question isn't where is fragrance going in the 1980s or where it will be by the year 2000. The question is, who will the fragrance consumer be? As Florence Skelly of Yanklovitch, Skelly and White told a group of beauty editors recently, "the fragrance people came late to the marketing approach adopted



Photo by C. Baude

The ASP Board of Directors—John Porter, President; Lawrence Janosky, Chairman; John F. Doyle; Simone Fedak, President-elect; Christian Baude; James Bell, Vice-President; William Doughty, Secretary; and Guido Cianciolo, Treasurer.

by most packaged goods people in the late fifties where, for the first time, the consumer was studied before any new entry was made." As she said at that time, "introspection is a four billion dollar industry today and as a result of that ceaseless analysis the contemporary American woman has been exactly defined as fitting one of four roles or a melange of all four. The consensus of opinion is that whichever one of the four she is, or combination of any of them, she knows who she is, what she wants and her fragrance selection is part of that knowledge. She is

1. busy climbing the socio-economic ladder in the traditional way, striving for the usual material things: car, house, clothes, etc.
2. a homemaker and happy to be a homemaker
3. motivated in a specific career goal and does not deviate from that goal whether it is to be a potter or a podiatrist or a perfumer
4. the antithesis of the motivated, participating in adventure, unsettled, always striving for something new and still never intending to fail."

Florence Skelly told us that in the Yanklovitch, Skelly and White ongoing study of social values in the U.S., now eleven years old, that monitors how people spend their money, they now find for the first time that fragrance is part of the thinking. Very encouraging. For the immediate future, we know the *Vogue* reader, her feet planted firmly on the ground, is enjoying beautiful clothes, furs, jewelry, even more structured hair styles. Not so much a return to elegance as perhaps a new emphasis on elegance, reflected in this May's fragrance issue with a special fragrance section photographed by Richard Avedon. For fragrance, like fashion, performs as a social barometer. It isn't an isolated entity unrelated to what is happening around us and how we react to the many levels of life experiences.

Perhaps the key to fragrance achieving greater and still greater successes in the years ahead lies in the training programs of the cosmetic houses. Back in the early seventies I was told that Federated Stores vice-presidents in the communications area had been asked to project their store of the future. They could take any time period, providing it was greater than two years. The vice-president at Bloomingdale's chose 1984 for obvious reasons, commissioning scientist and science-fiction writer Isaac Asimov to give a picture of the Bloomingdale's of 1984. Back then it seemed 1984 was far in the future. Now it's around the corner. Although Asimov's prognosis on product availability was gloomy, his vision of the ground floor of Bloomingdale's in 1984 described an arena of experts where the valuable commodity of information would be available, sought after, and presumably sold.

The delivery of information is our job at *Vogue* and we already do a great deal to transmit that information to the store. The retail promotion kit that went out this year with suggestions for merchandising our May 1981 editorial fragrance pages emphasized flowers, floral displays, and tie-ups with local florists, together

with a particularly timely sign of the times—a *Vogue* gift with purchase—fragrance for the home potpourri. This was given to customers at selected stores with any fragrance purchase in May, together with an in-depth customer booklet on fragrance.

Perhaps now is the time for beauty consultants to receive more special training in fragrance, to introduce them to its new horizons, not constantly repeating the old ways of selling, concentrating on "how long will it last, how much does it cost." There should be fragrance seminars for store personnel where all kinds of more pertinent olfactory information can be delivered to increase sales.

And what about fragrance for men? An exciting but still uncharted area. Recently I went to Detroit to write a story about a different industry, where I learned of the efforts being made to convince automobile distributors that women are actually buying cars for themselves. "Help us," the manufacturers asked us, "to make a distributor realize he has to make a woman feel at home in a car showroom and not like a man in a maternity shop." In the same way, the fragrance industry has yet to help a man feel at home buying fragrance for himself—and the inner man hasn't even been addressed. Of course, it will happen and *Vogue* will be part of causing it to happen.

As a perfumer once told me, the success of a fragrance is cerebral, not nasal. This is another way of saying it is a message for the brain to appreciate—and this is where *Vogue* comes into its own.

Vega: Parfums Jean Desprez has retained its traditional status as a small, family-owned, prestigious fragrance house. This independence is all the more noteworthy when viewed from an international perspective that has witnessed both the American multi-nationals and the European conglomerates aggressively hitting the acquisition trail. Competing against the financial muscle of the large corporations, Denis Desprez, Chairman of the Board of Parfums Jean Desprez, has gained a wide experience in prospering in a world of corporate giants.

Mr. Desprez's distinguished father, Jean Desprez, a member of the Millot family, began his career in 1920 and as Chief Perfumer of Millot, created *Crêpe de Chine* in 1927. Resigning from Millot in 1938, he founded Parfums Jean Desprez. A master perfumer, Jean Desprez was the originator of the classic fragrance *Bal à Versailles*.

Denis Desprez, born in Paris, was educated in both France and the United States, studying Business Administration at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. After joining his father's company in 1947, Mr. Desprez resigned in 1956 to join, first, Olivetti and then Van der Grinten, a Dutch company. In 1971 Mr. Desprez rejoined Parfums Jean Desprez serving as Executive Managing Director in 1973 and Chairman of the Board in 1980.