

Environmental Fragrances: The State of the Art and Packaging

By Seymour Murray Kent
New York, NY

Launching new fragrances and talking about the excitement of a new makeup palette, special Christmas packaging, as well as new product and container ideas to tantalize the tastes and desires of the consumer are subjects which I have studied, taught, designed and even sold.

Now "the subject is roses" and thyme, sage and sandalwood—lavender, violets, fougere and woodnotes—patchouli, musk, jasmin, orange flowers and lilacs. All beautiful fragrances when properly blended by an expert perfumer create such exotic product forms as potpourri, sachet, incense, fragranced pellets and soap petals, perfumed candles of all color, shapes and sizes and room sprays.

Actually it is an old idea with a new twist and it is called "environmental fragrances."

Until recent years, it was used mainly as a functional product, a masking agent, in the areas of the home such as the kitchen, laundryroom, bathroom, gameroom and garage. Styling, taste and originality moved the product category to a more upscaled and sophisticated level via product and package design and fragrance innovation.

I personally like to think of environmental

fragrances as home fashions or interior accessories. As a matter of fact, I often call the category, "interior scents." To me that expression conjures up images of sensuality, creates a mood, becomes a kind of personal interior fragrance signature, capable of creating an identification or a remembrance within a room or an interior environment. The French call it *sillage*.

The *sillage* becomes the calling card so to speak, the impression of aura left behind . . . a kind of fragrance awareness without intrusion.

From the point of view of promise and capturing an audience, environmental fragrance must provide its basic functions and then quietly and beautifully move into a more complex sphere and experience. It must reach a plateau of intimacy, warmth, pleasure and completeness.

There must also exist an association between the design concept and the fragrance notes.

The environmental fragrance experience today is being promoted through fragrance and bath boutiques as well as department stores.

Companies such as Elizabeth Arden and Estee Lauder have done well with their coordinated Christmas collections. Avon Products has also had much success with its introduction of many new product forms and designs such as

room air fresheners, scented candles, car pomanders, and sachets.

The history of environmental fragrances really goes back to the days before the early Egyptian civilization . . . even before the far east became an influential factor. And it wasn't until the 15th and 16th centuries that it began to make its mark on the western world. In the 19th century, France created the art of perfume, followed later by England and the United States.

Today, the technique of creating a fragrance is a highly sophisticated and sensitive procedure, allowing for more experimentation and development with new product forms.

As a result, one might say, we have an unlimited "potpourri" of materials and products to play with.

I wonder what Aphrodite would have been attracted to at Bloomingdale's cosmetic and fragrance department? What would she have selected at a Cashwell-Massey apothecary or a Diane Love or a Laura Ashley boutique?

Although the state of the environmental fragrance art is quite well established, as a designer, I am still excited about the future product breakthroughs that will allow for new cre-

ative concepts to this most challenging and appealing product category.

I sense the movement of fashion designers here and abroad into this area. Logical extension to their involvement and authority would be an excursion into the fragrance business. It may even mean that the living room, the bedroom and the bathroom will acquire more status than they already have. Designers have their signatures on boudoir accessories, sheets and pillowcases, and some of them are already into the perfumed candle and environmental fragrance business.

Interior and accessories designers may even take a more active role in entering into this field—and why not? Was not their territory invaded? I've already done some brainstorming with some of them and their thoughts and ideas are fresh and exciting. Ideas keep popping into my head as well and I would like to share some of them with you even though they may not be totally original.

- Fragranced jewelry such as rings, pendants, bracelets. Refillable concepts more fashionable than ever designed before.
- Silk or paper flowers impregnated in the center core with fragrance.
- Safe, cute and selective nursery items.
- Special gifts for such occasions as showers, weddings, birthdays, graduation, Mother's day, Father's day, Easter, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- Porcelain and fabric dolls, stuffed animals, collectors thimbles, pincushions, jewelry boxes, paper weights and wardrobe hangers.
- How about a do-it-yourself environmental fragrance kit? Make it appealing, fun and creative. Include a collection of miniature fragrance oils, ribbons and cords, glitter, ormolu and glue. Also include a beautifully illustrated instruction book on "How To." Get the entire family involved in the project. It's more fun than stringing popcorn and is an escape from the computer tv games.
- And what about an updated version of the original Air-wick package? Remove the handsome overcap, then activate the pump mechanism. The fragrance moves up the dip tube and is absorbed by a marblelike porous material which gently diffuses the scent into the air. Don't let this idea excite you for it has already been done in Japan. But a variation on the theme is not an impossibility and out of its development something original may emanate.

Whatever we do for environmental fragrances from here on in, the challenge demands more style, better function and originality. It must please the senses of sight and smell.

Fragrance products today are stronger and better than ever, and by stronger I don't mean in product strength (although that is also happening), but stronger in popularity.

Men are moving into their own fragrance stratosphere and women are most certainly expanding their experiences with fragrances by trying many of the new ones on the market today.

Exciting new concepts will no doubt move the environmental fragrance experience onto center stage where the purchase pattern and applause will receive strong consumer approval and many encores.

Indeed the state of the environmental fragrance art looks "rosy" and I cannot help feel that it will surge forward and upward as we move closer to the vortex of the eighties.



Felix Buccellato is an active member of the American Society of Perfumers who is currently serving as Treasurer.

Mr. Buccellato's diversified background began with Grace Chemical in analytical chemistry. From there, he joined IFF Research in the organic synthesis group.

In 1966, Mr. Buccellato changed his course somewhat, and spent the next two interesting and most exciting years working for NASA at Cape Kennedy, Florida, in instrumental analysis during the Apollo program.

Once back in the metropolitan area, he returned to IFF Research and spent the next nine years progressing internally from analysis to perfumery. In 1977, Mr. Buccellato joined Alpine Aromatics as a creative perfumer and in 1982, started his own company, Custom Essence in Somerset, New Jersey.

Mr. Buccellato is currently publishing articles annually for *Perfumer & Flavorist* magazine on various natural products and their use in perfumery.

Having maintained an interest and avocation as a musician over the last 15 years, he will discuss the parallels of perfumery and music, which I'm sure will prove to be most enjoyable.

Stan Heuer, Dragoco; Hugh Spencer, Florasynth; and
Gary Shaffer, Universal

Nickolas van Laer and Franya Zibrosky of Colgate
with Fred Daley of Ungerer

Steve Manheimer, J. Manheimer, with Mary Trimble
and Al Adamson of Armour-Dial

Niels Rasmussen, Charabot; Art Edwards, Fritzsche;
and Richard Smith, Bristol Myers

Don Latici, Drom; Rayda Vega, Noville; and Guido
Cianciolo, Alpine

Paul Bedoukian, Bedoukian Research, with Ron
Fenn, IFF