



52 Fragrances and How to Think About Them

An encyclopedia of some of the most interesting floral, woody, fresh and spicy scents around.

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How do you organize perfume?

Michael Edwards, the perfume historian and author, founded and runs what is arguably the most extensive database on perfumes, fragrancesoftheworld.info. It contains over 8,000 scents and counting. This is nuts. How is anyone expected to make sense of these things? You organize them into categories. OK, pretty obvious — categories exist explicitly to give us a common language we can use to talk about things with one another. The less obvious question, then: How do you create your categories?

Perfume categories have always been based on raw materials. The medium is around 4,000 years old, and one of the oldest known scent material markets was in Kannauj, India, which remains the country's perfume capital today. At first, the ingredients were limited: A few flowers whose oils (which are almost always the part of the raw materials that contain the scented molecules) were extracted with rudimentary methods. A few kinds of woods that, when dried, gave off a scent. Various benzoin — the saps and resins of local plants and, eventually, those that grew around the Persian Gulf, and in East Africa and Southeast Asia. Spices, of course. Green herbs and dried seeds.

Fruit peels, which are loaded with oil, particularly those of citrus fruits.

Then came the 20th century and, with it, solvent-made absolutes, carbon dioxide extractions and molecular fractionations, and the number of raw materials exploded. Almost everyone still divides perfumes according to their predominant raw materials, but Edwards now uses a full 14 categories, and others use even more.

In the name of simplicity, we decided, for our own guide to some of the best and most interesting fragrances on the market today and where they live in relation to others — part of T's Beauty & Luxury issue — to use just four: floral, woody, fresh/citrusy/green and spicy/gourmand — which means that the perfume smells as though it is made of edible ingredients. The dozen or so options in each category should give you a general sense of the range and complexity of the medium, even if what “woody,” or for that matter any label here, means when you apply it to a work of art — and indeed, so-called woody perfumes are some of the most inventive, strange and beautiful ones around — is somewhat arbitrary, or at least subjective. After all, to smell a perfume is, by design, often a personal exercise in imagining.



Clockwise from top left: Estée Lauder Pleasures Eau de Parfum Spray, esteelauder.com. Christian Dior J'Adore Eau de Parfum, dior.com. Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle Carnal Flower, fredericmalle.com. Chanel No. 5, chanel.com. Giorgio Armani Si Eau de Parfum, giorgioarmanibeauty-usa.com. Byredo Bal d'Afrique Eau de Parfum, byredo.com. Vanessa Granda

Floral

No. 5 (1921), Chanel

Arguably the most iconic perfume of all time, No. 5, which was actually the first fragrance offered by the house of Chanel, was created by Ernest Beaux in 1921. (When he presented Coco Chanel with various samples, she chose the one labeled “5,” which was something of a

lucky number for her.) Beaux constructed a platform of aldehyde molecules, which smell powdery, and placed his jewels — rose, jasmine and ylang-ylang — on top. The structure showed them off more clearly and more strikingly than anything else on the market. A century later, it's still going strong. *Chanel No. 5*, \$138 (3.4 oz), chanel.com.

Fracas (1948), Robert Piguet

Another great, Fracas was made in 1948 by Germaine Cellier, the rare woman in the industry at the time. It's a tuberose scent, simple as that. Tuberose, by the way, is a plant native to Mexico whose name refers to its tuberous roots, not at all to rose, and indeed, its smell is closer to that of lily, but with a fascinating camphorlike quality. Altered at some point after the company changed hands, Fracas was returned to its original state by the perfumer Aurélien Guichard in 1999. The feel is soft but potent, as though one has put their whole face into a massive bouquet. *Robert Piguet Parfums Fracas*, \$165 (100 ml), robertpiguetparfums.com.

Carnal Flower (2005), Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle

The genius perfumer Dominique Ropion of International Flavors & Fragrances, Inc. (IFF), who's been working with Malle for over 20 years, is responsible for this equally iconic tuberose scent. It has an unusually high concentration of straight tuberose, but is also instantly recognizable as a contemporary work. Partly this is on account of the fresh ripped leaf scent, and Ropion plays the flower's powdery aspect at a very low volume, which makes the whole thing clearer: You really smell the tuberose. *Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle Carnal Flower*, \$390 (100 ml), fredericmalle.com.

J'Adore (1999), Dior

J'Adore is so complex, it's not immediately clear what category it should live under — it would work just as well among the fresh/green scents here. Calice Asanchev-Becker took what is called a white flowers accord, so not a specific flower but more the idea of a massive floating bouquet, twisted it with fruit aspects (pear, peach, fresh mandarin orange, plum) and then wove a young, pale vine throughout. It makes me think of a setting sun hitting a gold chain — gold has no scent, but if it did, it would smell like J'Adore. *Christian Dior J'Adore Eau de Parfum*, \$135 (3.4 oz), dior.com.

Pleasures (1995), Estée Lauder

When the Estée Lauder creative directors Evelyn Lauder and Karyn Khoury started smelling submissions for the new perfume they wanted to develop, they were astonished by the beauty of the draft made by Alberto Morillas and Annie Buzantian, who were with the Swiss scent maker Firmenich. The perfumers had used the then-new technology of carbon dioxide extraction, which takes place at room temperature and produces scent materials that actually smell as they do in nature (whereas using steam or heated solvents can destroy or change certain molecules), on pink peppercorn. The berry's fruity and floral sides both came through in Technicolor, and Morillas and Buzantian built the scent out with violet leaf, freesia and something akin to the fragrance of a blue sky. *Estée Lauder Pleasures Eau de Parfum Spray*, \$98 (3.4 oz), esteelauder.com.

Black Rosette (2003), Strange Invisible Perfumes

Alexandra Balahoutis, the founder and perfumer of Strange Invisible Perfumes (a reference to Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra": "From the barge, a strange invisible perfume hits the sense of the adjacent wharfs"), practices what she calls "all-natural perfumery." By this she means she eschews synthetics (scent molecules that never existed before chemists created them) and what are called nature identicals (industrially produced molecules that also exist in nature) and works only with oils extracted from natural raw materials — in this case, spearmint, rose and black tea, among others, all blended in a way that recalls a garden at midnight: The rose is dark, sultry and leathery. *Strange Invisible Perfumes Black Rosette*, \$210 (50 ml), siperfumes.com.

1A-33 (2012), J.F. Schwarzlose Berlin

J.F. Schwarzlose Berlin was established in 1856 as a family pharmacy that also sold perfumes. Today, Véronique Nyberg makes all its fragrances, and in 2012 created 1A-33, named for a license plate assigned to the brand's factory car in Berlin, a city famous for its linden trees. She built the scent around the scent of linden blossoms, which are highly fragrant, and dressed the linden blossom accord with mandarin orange oil, pink peppercorn, magnolia and jasmine sambac. *J.F. Schwarzlose 1A-33*, \$160 (50 ml), luckyscent.com.

Rosa Greta (2017), Eau d'Italie

The Italian fragrance house Eau d'Italie could already lay claim to one of the most beautiful rose perfumes, Paestum Rose — a richly textured late-evening fragrance created by Bertrand Duchaufour in 2006 — when its founders and creative directors, Marina Sersale and Sebastián Alvarez Murena, commissioned what would become Rosa Greta, named for Greta Garbo's home on the Amalfi Coast, from Fabrice Pellegrin. Around his central structure, Pellegrin applied fresh, pure lychee and white tea, which lift the rose, making it glass-smooth and almost weightless. *Eau d'Italie Rosa Greta Eau de Parfum Spray*, \$170 (100 ml), beautyhabit.com,

Rose de Grasse Pour Filles (2021), Aerin

Pour Filles means "for girls," so it's only right that this fragrance, a more youthful version of Rose de Grasse, was made by Sébastien Cresp. His family has for generations lived in Grasse, the famed perfume-making city in the South of France, and it was his father, the master perfumer Olivier Cresp, who in 2015 formulated Rose de Grasse for Aerin Lauder. With Rose de Grasse Pour Filles, the younger Cresp lightened things up — it's the scent of roses from the South of France mixed with that of fresh spring rain. *Aerin Rose de Grasse Pour Filles Eau de Toilette*, \$90 (1.1 oz), aerin.com.

Si Eau de Parfum (2013), Giorgio Armani

In Si, Christine Nagel and Julie Massé created what is best described as a scent of pure pleasure. It has rich rose oils and freesia accords,

but is also something of a gourmand — the perfumers paired a sweet, juicy black currant accord with vanilla and gave the whole thing a texture like rough silk by using patchouli, a tropical grass, and then smoothed it out again with a sweet powder accord that smells like new makeup. *Giorgio Armani Si Eau de Parfum*, \$128 (100 ml), giorgioarmanibeauty-usa.com.

L'Eau d'Issey (1992), Issey Miyake

With L'Eau d'Issey, the perfumer Jacques Cavallier-Belletrud changed the state of the art. “Make me,” Issey Miyake had told him, “the scent of water.” What Cavallier-Belletrud actually made was one of the first minimalist scents that streamlined perfumery in a way no one had experienced. It was built around a floral core — rose, peony and the wonderfully light scent of lily of the valley — but he made those elements almost unrecognizable by placing them inside a watery accord of lotus, melon and an ingenious marine-like molecule called calone. *Issey Miyake L'Eau d'Issey Eau de Toilette*, \$106 (3.4 oz), macys.com.

Bal d'Afrique (2008), Byredo

Ben Gorham, the founder and creative director of Byredo, told the brand's masterful perfumer, Jérôme Epinette, that he was thinking of a scent that would get at 1920s Paris's infatuation with African music, and with the American phenom Josephine Baker. The result is at once bright and sensual. It seems to be made of fantastical flowers — in fact, jasmine and marigold, but as you've never quite smelled them before — to which Epinette added buchu and a bergamot, violet and cyclamen accord. *Byredo Bal d'Afrique Eau de Parfum*, \$270 (100 ml), byredo.com.

I Am Trash (2018), Etat Libre d'Orange

I Am Trash might have been the first fragrance to be made with upcycled materials — exhausted rose petals, already distilled sandalwood chips and other ingredients. With the results, Daniela Roche-Andrier created a perfume that is both floral and fruity — and, thanks to a hint of green that flickers in and out, as well as traces of acetone and strawberry, is hard to pin down. Still, it's much, much closer to a summer garden than to detritus. *Etat Libre d'Orange I Am Trash*, \$149 (100 ml), us.etatlibredorange.com.



Clockwise from top left: Hermès Terre D'Hermès Eau Intense Vétiver Eau de Parfum, hermes.com. Diptyque Vetyverio Eau de Parfum, diptyqueparis.com. Sana Jardin Sandalwood Temple Eau de Parfum, us.sanajardin.com. Tom Ford Oud Wood, tomford.com. D.S. & Durga Bowmakers, dsanddurga.com. Vanessa Granda

Woody

Series 3 Incense: Kyoto (2002), Comme des Garçons

Let's start with a reference wood, meaning a work that defines the category. Kyoto was created in 2002 by the independent perfumer Bertrand Duchaufour, and is a cut above both aesthetically (how it smells) and technically (how its pieces fit together). When you smell it, you feel as though you're in a Shinto shrine, surrounded by wood that's been blackened by the smoke of uncountable candles and incense sticks. *Comme des Garçons Series 3 Incense: Kyoto*, \$95 (50 ml), saksfifthavenue.com.

Sandalwood Temple (2017), Sana Jardin

This is perhaps as far away from Kyoto as you can get while remaining in the woody category — where Kyoto is dark and smoky, Sandalwood Temple is light and milky, and yet it's also paradigmatic. Sandalwood is one of the most ancient wood scent materials, and this iteration of it was created by the masterful Carlos Benaïm of IFF, who leaned into the sweet, buttery quality that makes the wood almost gourmand-like. *Sana Jardin Sandalwood Temple Eau de Parfum*, \$145 (50 ml), us.sanajardin.com.

Oud Wood (2007), Tom Ford

Oud Wood, a heady combination of rosewood, sandalwood and oud — the smoky, jet-black detritus that comes from a fungus-infected agar tree — with spicy inflections, might be among the most perfect fragrances ever constructed. Richard Herpin of Firmenich created it under Tom Ford and Karyn Khoury's creative direction, and it also contains cardamom and vanilla. *Tom Ford Oud Wood*, \$340 (100 ml), tomford.com.

Dawn (2018), Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle

The year after he made Sandalwood Temple, Carlos Benaïm created this very different sort of woody scent, with notes of olibanum, oak moss, cistus labdanum (rockrose), Haitian vetiver and oud. It's a refined, well-calibrated fragrance that smells a bit like a summer night spent beneath a violet sky and is likely to convert even the staunchest of oud skeptics. *Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle Dawn*, \$1,600 (100 ml), fredericmalle.com.

Bowmakers (2012), D.S. & Durga

David Seth Moltz, the D.S. of D.S. & Durga, created this work, in the key of wood, after setting an interesting challenge for himself — to recreate the scent of the early American workshops that handcrafted violin bows out of old-growth mahogany, burl maple, amber pine resin and aged walnut sourced from the surrounding forests, as well as varnishes with secret formulas. Like all fragrances, Bowmakers is something of a secret formula of its own, but its deep, woody notes are unmistakable. *D.S. & Durga Bowmakers*, \$260 (100 ml), dsanddurga.com.

Functional Fragrance (2019), The Nue Co.

The perfumer Frank Voelkl is responsible for Functional Fragrance, which is marketed as a calming supplement but is, nonetheless, a light and lovely woody scent that smells of palo santo wood and iris. It also has cardamom and cilantro, which make it lean toward the gourmands, just far enough to render this perfume truly unique. *The Nue Co. Functional Fragrance*, \$95 (50 ml), thenueco.com.

Vetyverio (2017), Diptyque

Vetiver is a tropical grass native to northern India and southern China (today, most vetiver comes from Haiti) and its dried roots produce a smell that evokes the smoothness of sandalwood, the bladelikey astringency of verbena and the shadowy citrus scent of bergamot. For Vetyverio, Diptyque commissioned Olivier Pescheux of Givaudan, who built the fragrance on woody vetiver, then added grapefruit, lemon, geranium, rose and Virginia cedar. *Diptyque Vetyverio Eau de Parfum*, \$175 (75 ml), diptyqueparis.com.

Dirty Grass (2019), Heretic Parfum

One of the scents in the niche collection of the Los Angeles-based perfumer Douglas Little, Dirty Grass is, like Vetyverio, a distinctive take on vetiver. When considered side by side, the two illustrate how very different scents are often derived from the same raw material. Processing can transform the earthy, smoky scent of vetiver roots into something satiny, but here Little chose to keep much of its natural roughness intact. *Heretic Parfum Dirty Grass*, \$185 (50 ml), hereticparfum.com.

Ett Hem (2013), Fueguia 1883 Patagonia

Ett Hem, by the Argentine perfumer Julian Bedel for his brand, Fueguia 1883 Patagonia, is another take on sandalwood, but one that is on the woodier side. Essentially, Bedel removed the material's milky gourmand quality and left the warmth and velvet, which you can smell immediately, along with black pepper and cedar. *Fueguia 1883 Ett Hem*, \$346 (100 ml), fueguia.com.

Paris - Édimbourg (2020), Chanel

Olivier Polge, Chanel's in-house perfumer, has created Les Eaux, a small collection of fragrances that are based on different travel destinations. The latest, Paris - Édimbourg, has a strange, humid, green beauty that reflects the smells of the Scottish Highlands, with notes of cypress, juniper berry, lavender, vetiver and cedar. *Chanel Paris - Édimbourg*, \$130 (4.2 oz), launching May 17 at chanel.com.

Terre d'Hermès Eau Intense Vétiver (2018), Hermès

Part of what makes Terre, originally created by Jean-Claude Ellena, such a triumph is that each of its natural materials, from the bergamot oils to the Sichuan pepper and vetiver, is of the highest possible quality, and the molecules are perfectly calibrated. In 2018, Christine Nagel, Hermès's in-house perfumer, crafted a new version, adding a beautifully rough vetiver and manipulating it to get the scent of a

lumberyard plus an evergreen forest. *Hermès Terre d'Hermès Eau Intense Vétiver, Eau de Parfum, \$190 (6.76 oz), hermes.com.*

Tobak (2016), Maya Njie

Maya Njie, who is Gambian and Swedish, launched her niche collection in 2016. She was a student at University of the Arts London when she first began working with scent materials and now has her own line, the perfumes of which were inspired by her heritage and memories. For Tobak, a light and lovely woody fragrance, she used tobacco leaf, vetiver, cinnamon, tonka bean and leather in an evocation of childhood visits to her grandfather's. *Maya Njie Tobak, \$145 (50 ml), museexperiences.com.*

China White, (2008), Nasomatto

Alessandro Gualtieri is the founder and perfumer of the brand Nasomatto ("crazy nose" in Italian), and his kaleidoscopic creations are impossible to pick apart. What's more, he famously does not reveal the raw materials he uses to create his scent works, so we're forced to take each one on its own terms. China White, for example, is woody, but seems to have been made with a powdery, violet-inflected wood, and shifts during the dry down, evolving on the skin to recall white flowers — the term used for a light and unidentifiable bouquet, though sometimes a clear waft of rose breaks through. *Nasomatto China White, \$185 (30 ml), godmademefunkyus.com.*



Clockwise from top left: Louis Vuitton Afternoon Swim, louisvuitton.com. Jo Malone London French Lime Blossom Cologne, jomalone.com. Maison Francis Kurkdjian Aqua Universalis Cologne Forte, saksfifthavenue.com. Creed Virgin Island Water, creedboutique.com. Acqua di Parma Colonia Futura Eau de Cologne, sephora.com. Vanessa Granda

Fresh/Citrusy/Green

Calyx (1986), Clinique

Calyx, formulated by Sophia Grojsman, is one of the most beautifully and accurately named fragrances. A calyx is the group of small, petal-like structures at the base of a flower bud that helps protect it when it starts to bloom. With Grojsman's creation you get the powdery, lush smell of guava, passion fruit, grapefruit, freesia and rose, all undergirded by an accord of green leaves. *Clinique Calyx Exhilarating Fragrance, \$60 (50 ml), clinique.com.*

Aqua Universalis Cologne Forte (2021), Maison Francis Kurkdjian

Since launching his own brand in 2009, Francis Kurkdjian has put out scents that span from ferocious to tender, and from avant-garde to more traditional. Aqua Universalis is a reinvention of a classic eau fraîche, or a light mix of citrus oils and aromatic herbs, the most famous 20th-century example of which is Eau Sauvage, made in 1966 for Dior by Edmond Roudnitska. Kurkdjian updated the form by clearing out all ornamentation and simplifying the structure, making each of his materials — citrus oils, orange flowers, lily of the valley — sing. *Maison Francis Kurkdjian Aqua Universalis Cologne Forte, \$225 (2.4 oz), saksfifthavenue.com.*

CK One (1994), Calvin Klein

Arriving in the wake of L'Eau d'Issey in 1992 and Bulgari Eau Parfumée Au Thé Vert in 1993, CK One, by the perfumers Alberto Morillas and Harry Fremont, cemented the idea of a minimalist fragrance, one that has been stripped of all excess until the few materials that remain are clearly identifiable. Here you'll find a striking green accord mixed with papaya and pineapple — as well as a lily of the valley accord, violet and a green tea accord. CK One also caused a commotion because it was marketed as a unisex perfume, a move that reflected the era's androgynous fashion but was still rare in the fragrance world. *CK One by Calvin Klein, \$65 (3.4 oz), macys.com.*

French Lime Blossom (1995), Jo Malone

If you enjoy the sweet, sunny scent of lime blossoms, you can't do better than this perfume, created by Patricia Choux under Jo Malone's creative direction and meant to evoke memories of Paris in the early summer, when the linden trees' blossoms come out. Tart bergamot and herbaceous tarragon cut some of that sweetness, though, and actually make this a great scent to wear year-round. *Jo Malone London French Lime Blossom Cologne, \$142 (100 ml), jomalone.com.*

Bigarade Concentrée (2002), Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle

Bigarade is another name for bitter orange, and bigarade peel oil is the darkest of the citrus oils. It's also, one could argue, the most sophisticated. With this scent, Jean-Claude Ellena made it the star of a layered, textured work that also incorporates cardamom, pink peppercorn, hay and cedar. *Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle Bigarade Concentrée, \$290 (100 ml), fredericmalle.com.*

Le Chèvrefeuille (2002), Goutal Paris

"Chèvrefeuille" is French for honeysuckle, one of the most flowery of flowers but, yes, this fragrance, which was the work of Camille Goutal and Isabelle Doyen, actually belongs here. Because as much as you smell the honeysuckle itself, you also get the green stems of the plant's curling vines. *Goutal Paris Le Chèvrefeuille, about \$152 (100 ml), goutalparis.com.*

Virgin Island Water (2007), Creed

This perfume smells, well, like a piña colada. And sure enough, it contains notes of coconut, white rum and sugar cane, though, on account of the lime, bergamot and Sicilian mandarin, the overall effect is citrusy — and vacation-esque. *Creed Virgin Island Water, \$415 (100 ml), creedboutique.com.*

Stem (2019), Malin + Goetz

Malin + Goetz has a knack for scents — Lime Tonic, Dark Rum, Cannabis — that only seem simple. Stem is no exception. Its smell is that of green leaves, some of them a bit past their peak, and just-cut stems of green hyacinth and lily of the valley, without even a trace of an actual floral, which is what makes it so unusual. Musk molecules add to the general earthiness. *Malin + Goetz Stem Eau de Parfum, \$95 (1.7 oz), malinandgoetz.com.*

Acqua Viva (2006), Profumum Roma

There is much pleasure to be taken from a work made to give pleasure. Which is to say that this fragrance seems to have been designed not to wow you with its tricks but simply to delight you. Sometimes too much lemon oil can make a fragrance dull, but this one throws caution to the wind, and to good effect: It's a sunny scent that also contains volcano broom flower and cedar. *Profumum Roma Acqua Viva, \$275 (100 ml), exscentia.com.*

Colonia Futura (2020), Acqua di Parma

Colonia Futura, by the perfumer François Demachy, recalls the classic eau fraîches of the 1920s, the sort we might imagine a freshly shaven, besuited gentleman rising from the barber's chair to have worn. Demachy's fragrance has the usual eau fraîche citruses (lemon, bergamot, grapefruit) and aromatics (sage, lavender), but to these he added vetiver, which deepens the scent, and then gave it a fruity-floral sheen with pink peppercorn, an ultracontemporary touch. *Acqua di Parma Colonia Futura Eau de Cologne, \$175 (100 ml), sephora.com.*

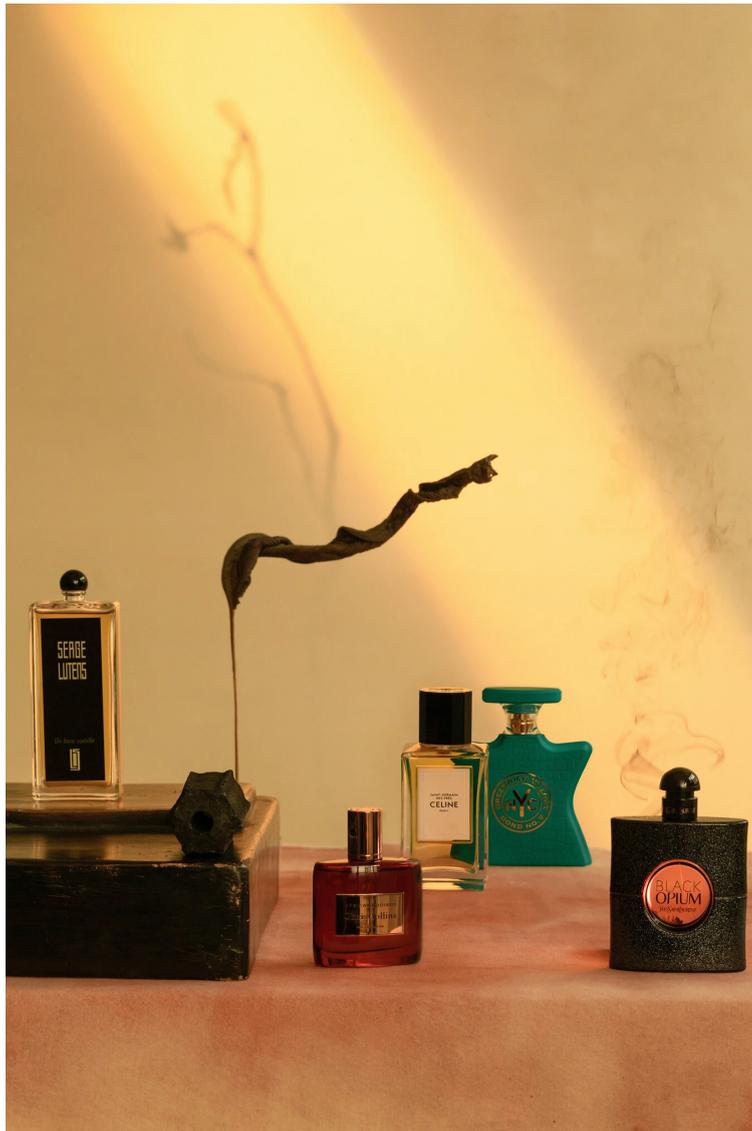
Afternoon Swim (2019), Louis Vuitton

Nearly 30 years after changing the game with L'Eau d'Issey, Jacques Cavallier-Belletrud came at the smell of water from another angle. Here, he conjures a swim in the ocean, with its salty, mineral quality, and perhaps the subsequent walk over the warm sand of a beach near a grove filled with orange, bergamot and mandarin trees. *Louis Vuitton Afternoon Swim, \$265 (100 ml), louisvuitton.com.*

Paris - Deauville (2018), Chanel

In the hundred years since Chanel released No. 5, the brand has likely created more significant works of scent than any other. It's had excellent in-house perfumers — Ernest Beaux, Henri Robert, Jacques Polge — and, as of 2015, Olivier Polge (son of Jacques). Both sumptuous and technically virtuosic, his Paris - Deauville paints a picture of the Côte Fleurie resort town with basil and Sicilian mandarin, petitgrain, rose, patchouli and jasmine. There's something beachy about this one, too, but perhaps it's a beach you view from a terrace,

with a crisp club soda with a slice of lime in hand. *Chanel Paris – Deauville*, \$130 (4.2 oz), chanel.com.



From Left: Serge Lutens Un Bois Vanille, sergelutens.com. World of Chris Collins African Rooibos, chriscollins.com. Celine by Hedi Slimane Saint-Germain-Des-Prés Eau de Parfum, celine.com. Bond No. 9 New York Greenwich Village, bondno9.com. Yves Saint Laurent Beauté Black Opium Eau De Parfum, yslbeautyus.com. Vanessa Granda

Spicy/Gourmand

Un Bois Vanille (2003), Serge Lutens

Although the phrase is hardly ever heard in the U.S., *les parfums gourmands* is a universally used category in France and, indeed, perfume has always been loaded with food. Un Bois Vanille, created by the talented perfumer Christopher Sheldrake, is a good place to start because it smells exactly how it sounds. The vanilla is of the rich, creamy variety, and it's mixed with sandalwood and guaiac wood, along with coconut milk and spices — all in all, a decadent dessert. *Serge Lutens Un Bois Vanille*, \$230 (100 ml), sergelutens.com.

Coconut Fizz (2019), Guerlain

Guerlain's founder, Pierre-François Pascal Guerlain, is known for having created perfumes for Napoleon III and Queen Victoria. The brand's Aqua Allegoria collection, though, makes a case for getting away from pomp and seriousness. The work of the brand's in-house perfumers, Delphine Jelk and Thierry Wasser, Coconut Fizz is overtly gourmand, and takes you straight to the tropics. *Guerlain Coconut Fizz*, \$140 (125 ml), guerlain.com.

Black Opium Eau de Parfum (2014), Yves Saint Laurent

In 1977, Yves Saint Laurent launched Opium, a powerful, sensual scent filled with ylang-ylang, jasmine, rose, clove and cinnamon that despite, or perhaps because of, the fury caused by its name, would come to define the '80s. The brand removed the scent's shoulder pads, so to speak, with its 2014 launch of this refined, slightly subtler take. What is actually missing is the clove, while additions of coffee, pear and pink peppercorn tie it all together. *Yves Saint Laurent Beauté Black Opium Eau De Parfum*, \$155 (150 ml), yslbeautyus.com.

Dries Van Noten (2013), Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle

Dries Van Noten is known as a hyper-intellectual designer, and Bruno Jovanovic, under the creative direction of Frédéric Malle, honored that side of him perfectly with this warm, spicy scent that forces you to rack your brain in order to place what it is you're smelling, namely sandalwood, vanilla, saffron and sacrasol. *Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle Dries Van Noten*, \$330 (100 ml), fredericmalle.com.

African Rooibos (2021), Chris Collins

Rooibos, meaning “red bush,” only grows in a small mountainous region of South Africa’s Western Cape province, and is usually used to make a sweet, smoky and vanillic tea. Chris Collins has managed to turn that wonderful taste into a fragrance, one that is sweet when it hits the skin and, after it dries down, becomes more smoky and dusty. *World of Chris Collins African Rooibos*, \$175 (50 ml), chriscollins.com.

Rima XI (2012), Carner Barcelona

Sara Carner founded her brand, which seeks to create fragrances that unearth memories and emotions, in 2009. Rima XI was inspired by a love poem by the 19th-century Spanish writer Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, and reads like an explosion of spices. It contains cardamom, nutmeg and cinnamon, as well as vanilla and saffron, mint and coriander. *Carner Barcelona Rima XI*, \$120 (50 ml), carnerbarcelona.com.

Taosi (2016), Therapeutate Parfums

Taosi was created by perfumer Rodney Hughes, who wove three kinds of freshness around each other: citrusy (lime, bergamot), floral (fundamentally lavender, with some rose and ylang-ylang for good measure) and herbal (nutmeg, black pepper and oak moss, with a woody and astringent vetiver to support them). Altogether, they create a delicate, airy quality that makes this a good gourmand for spring. *Therapeutate Parfums Taosi Eau de Toilette* \$430 (100 ml), tpeta.com.

Cierge de Lune (2016), Aedes de Venustas

Aedes de Venustas is a jewel of a New York City boutique that’s filled with candles, creams and all manner of intoxicating perfumes, including those of the house line, which the shop’s very helpful owners, Karl Bradl and Robert Gerstner, launched in 2012. Cierge de Lune, created by Fabrice Pellegrin, translates to “moon altar candle” and is a homage to night-blooming cereus, which smells like a spicy vanilla. I think it is one of the strangest gourmands I’ve ever encountered — akin to a baked alaska still in flames. *Aedes de Venustas Cierge de Lune*, \$245 (3.4 oz), aedes.com.

Saint-Germain-Des-Prés (2019), Celine by Hedi Slimane

Named for a Left Bank *quartier* in Paris, Saint-Germain-Des-Prés is perhaps too elusive for any one fragrance category — orris root makes it powdery, vanilla and almond make it delicious and petitgrain and neroli make it citrusy. What is certain is that it’s a rich, heady construction that, above all, channels a certain sort of French glamour. *Celine by Hedi Slimane Saint-Germain-Des-Prés Eau de Parfum*, \$220 (100 ml), celine.com.

Greenwich Village (2019), Bond No. 9

Just as iconic is New York’s Greenwich Village neighborhood, which to the perfumer Laurice Rahmé is a gourmand paradise. With notes of lychee, cassis, mandarin orange and peony, this is the fragrance version of sitting under the trees in Washington Square Park to eat a scrumptious pastry. *Bond No. 9 New York Greenwich Village*, \$405 (100 ml), bondno9.com.

Angels’ Share (2020), By Kilian

The angel’s share of a whiskey is the evaporate that escapes through the wood barrel and into the atmosphere (or, more poetically, to heaven). Under the creative direction of Kilian Hennessy, the perfumer Benoist Lapouza has seemingly bottled some of it on its way skyward, creating a warm scent with praline, vanilla, cognac and, for a bit of the barrel itself, oak. *Angels’ Share by Kilian*, \$195 (50 ml), bykilian.com.

Prada Amber (2004), Prada

A perfumer once showed me a raw material, and it was the most delicious thing I’d ever smelled, like gentle spices mixed together in cream and honey. It turned out to be benzoin Siam, a kind of resin. Prada Amber is built around just that, and woven in and around the resin are patchouli, sandalwood, mimosa and ylang-ylang. It’s a dreamy, romantic scent that also recalls certain prewar French perfumes, and yet it feels very modern. It’s lush, but without a trace of excess ornamentation. *Prada Amber*, \$126 (2.7 oz), sephora.com.

Escentric 04 (2017), Escentric Molecules

Geza Schoen is the founder and sole perfumer of Escentric Molecules, a cult German fragrance line that emphasizes the science of fragrance-making as much as the art. What Schoen does is create nonidentical pairs of fragrances, one called Molecule, which is a bottle of a single synthetic material, and one called Escentric, which is an actual perfume he creates using that molecule. For Escentric 04, which to my mind is the most interesting of his works, he focused on a synthetic called Javanol, which smells like sandalwood oil, though Schoen describes it as having an “almost psychedelic freshness ... if liquid metal grapefruit peel were poured over a bed of velvety cream-colored roses.” It also contains juniper berry, osmanthus, galbanum and rose, all dialed up to 11. *Escentric Molecules Escentric 04*, \$150 (100 ml), luckyscent.com.

Fedora (2020), Pink Mahoghany

Pink Mahoghany is a niche scent house created by the Dallas-based Chavalia Dunlap-Mwamba, who makes her perfumes by hand using organic cane alcohol. With Fedora, she set out to create a translation of a traditional Italian eau de cologne, and succeeded in a fascinating way. She used the typical eau de cologne citruses, but added some edible-seeming freshness with mint and basil, then deepened the scent with rosewood, African sandalwood, cedar, tea and the most refreshing of the woods, vetiver. Wearing it is like cloaking yourself in a cooling veil that can stand up to the hottest summer. *Pink Mahoghany Fedora*, \$142.25 (50 ml), pinkmahoghany.com.

At top, from left: Chanel No. 5, chanel.com. Serge Lutens Un Bois Vanille, sergelutens.com. Byredo Bal d'Afrique Eau de Parfum, byredo.com. Hermès Terre D'Hermès Eau Intense Vetiver Eau de Parfum, hermes.com. Maison Francis Kurkdjian Aqua Universalis Cologne Forte, saksififthavenue.com.

Correction: May 13, 2021

An earlier version of this article misstated the number of scents in the perfume database fragrancesoftheworld.info; it is over 38,000, not 3,800.