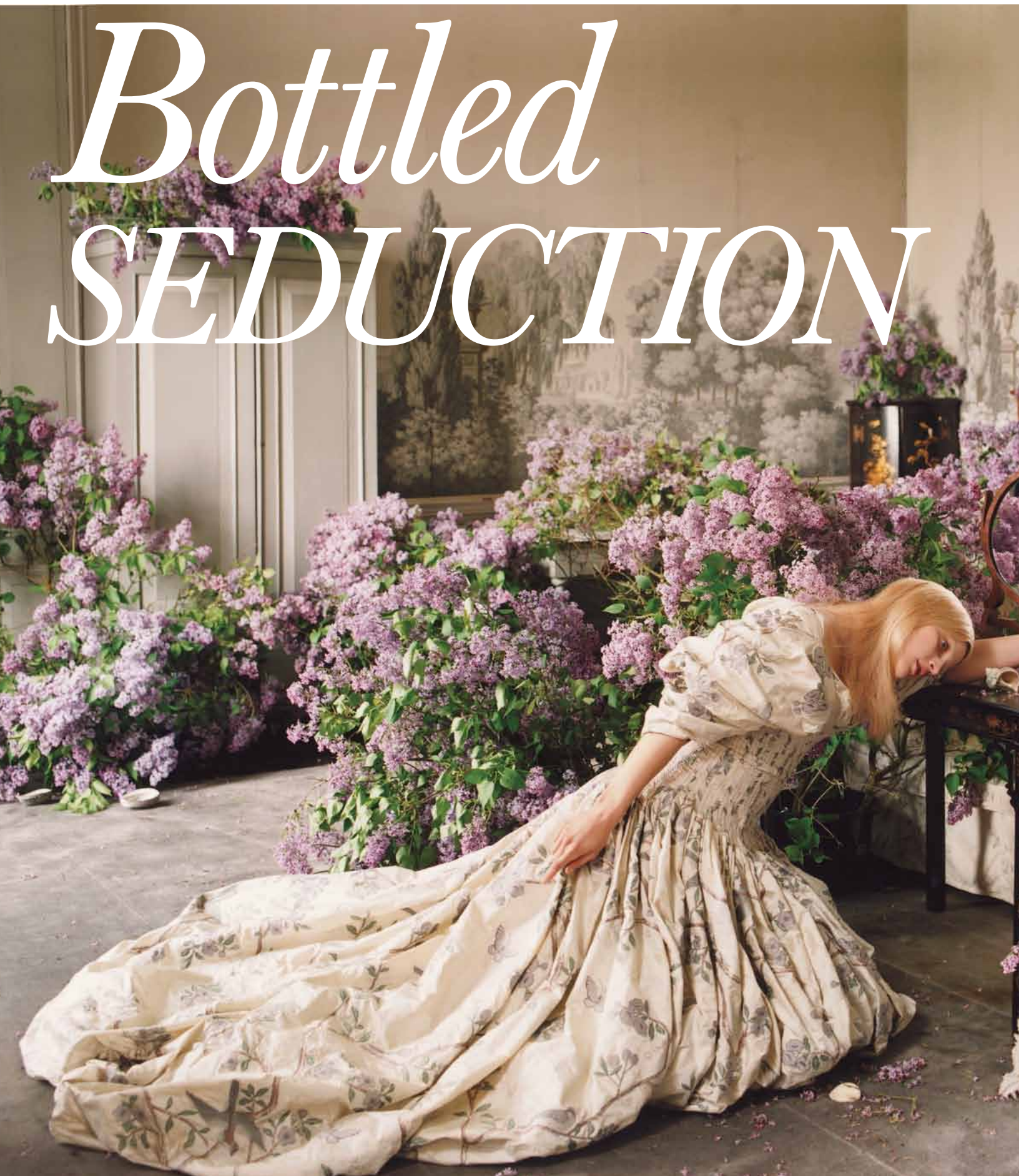


Bottled *SEDUCTION*





ART + COMMERCE

The best way to broaden your love of fragrance is to hone your sense of smell—let no riot of flowers go unsniffed.

Perfume is beauty at its most sensual—and its most enigmatic. It takes keen senses and a little practice to unravel its mystery and discover your one true love.

By Alyssa Kolsky Hertzig

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leopatra doused herself in Egyptian musk to woo Marc Antony. Marilyn Monroe stroked Chanel No. 5 on her naked body before slipping between the sheets. Fragrance has always been entwined with femininity, seduction, and sensuality. So why has the process of actually buying a fragrance for yourself become about as sexy as bathing-suit shopping? Perhaps it's the hundreds of bottles that all look vaguely, confusingly alike,

or the service that vacillates between overbearing and nonexistent. Or maybe it's the realization that choosing a fragrance just isn't as straightforward as finding a pretty lip gloss or a pair of jeans that makes your butt look good. All of the above are enough to send any woman back into the familiar, uninspiring arms of that boring eau de whatever that she's worn since college. "Imagine if there were hundreds of new mineral waters that came out every year, or hundreds of computers," says Kilian Hennessey of By Kilian perfumes. "Buying perfume is overwhelming, and people don't know where to start."

What if things could be different? What if choosing a fragrance could be sensuous, pleasurable, even fun? For six weeks this fall, Sephora and the fragrance supplier Firmenich are bringing perfume to the people with Sensorium, a New York City pop-up designed to show how exciting, faceted, and joyful the world of scent can be. For \$15 (which includes a Sephora gift card for the same amount), the Willy Wonka-esque fantasy will take customers on a perfumed thrill ride, in which they'll encounter fragranced, glow-in-the-dark bubbles floating from the ceiling; the wacky dreams of perfumers interpreted in video (and as scent); and flavorless red lollipops that ominously hint at a life devoid of smell. It all wraps up at the Fragrance Bar, where customers can leisurely sniff perfumes that have been organized by impressions—playful, effortless, comforting, and captivating—from unmarked bottles. If you do fall in love with something, a limited number of fragrances will be available for purchase, but the atmosphere is not designed to pressure you into buying. All you have to do is relax, inhale, and enjoy.

And really, that's what the love of fragrance is all about: finding the scents that elicit a response. Wine aficionados, for example, don't order something just because it sounds nice on the menu, or because it's the same thing they've sipped every day for years. They explore new vintages, consider the meal and the company, and, after discovering that perfect Burgundy, savor each mouthful. And so it can be with scent. For a moment, forget about marketing or that

flashy new perfume the woman behind the counter is pushing. Appreciating fragrance means improving your sense of smell, seeing—and sniffing—what’s out there, and then finding the bottles that you can’t live without. Here’s how to fall in love with fragrance all over again.

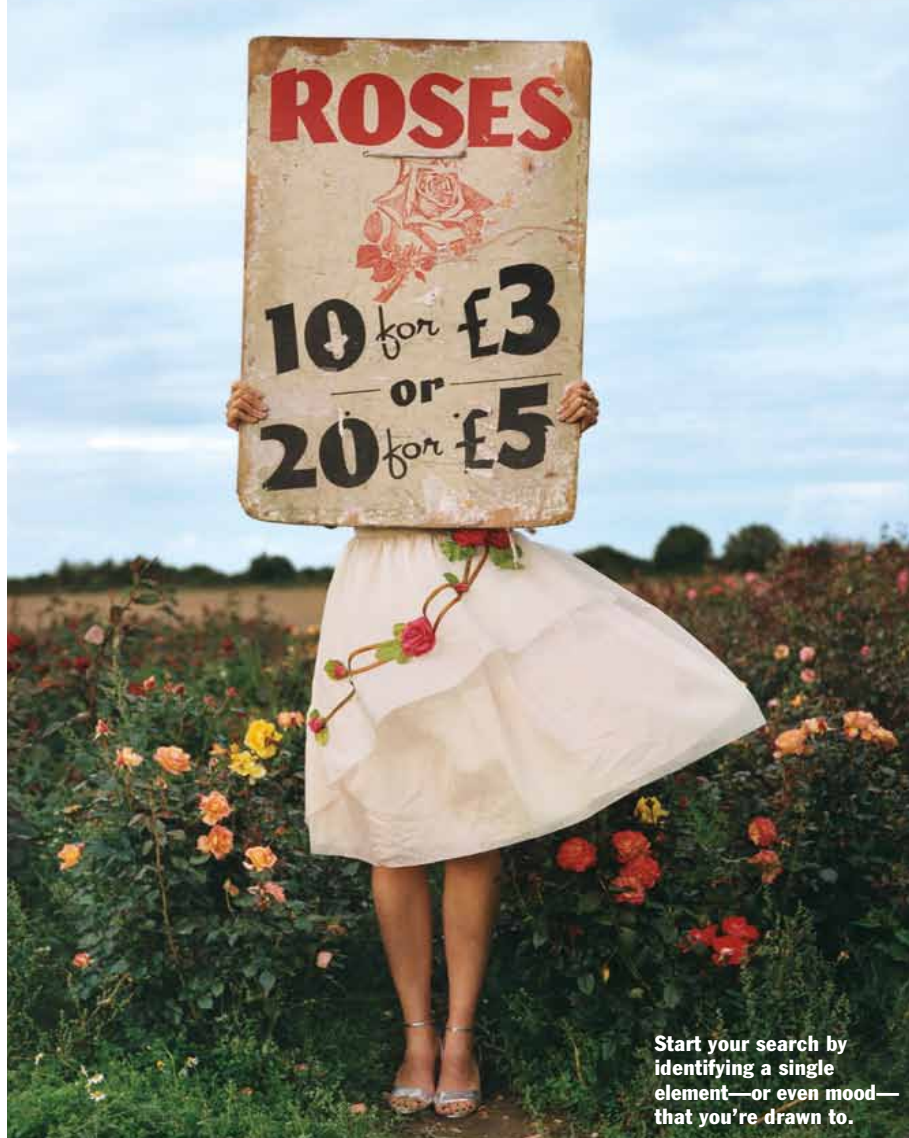
LOVE LESSON #1:
Expand Your Palate

Start browsing. One *Allure* editor has made it her rule to pop into every fragrance boutique she passes to try at least one new thing, simply to broaden her fragrance horizons. Unlikely places such as airports can offer prime sniffing opportunities, too. Karyn Khoury, senior vice president of fragrance development for Estée Lauder, regularly tests multiple fragrances at a time for her job, but she still never fails to hit the duty-free shop for a quick spritz when she’s traveling. “I make it a point to go in and spray something on that I haven’t worn before,” she says. “You’re in a different mind-set when you’re traveling—and you’re just waiting around anyway.”

Check out the classics. If you want to be well read, you dive into Homer and Shakespeare; to be a fragrance connoisseur, you need to immerse yourself in the great works, too. “Visit the nearest Guerlain counter and explore,” says Carrie Meredith, who writes the *Eyeliner* on a Cat fragrance blog. Her own “torrid love affair” with fragrance blossomed after discovering Guerlain’s *L’Heure Bleue* as a teenager. (Jicky and Mitsouko are other must-sniff classics from the company.) “For many serious perfume lovers, Guerlain is the alpha and the omega of fragrance houses,” Meredith says.

Take notes. Perfumers and perfume enthusiasts tend to keep diaries of everything they smell. While you may not want to go that far, record the names of fragrances you try and your reactions to them. “This will help you learn what you like, because you’ll see patterns emerge,” says perfumer Christopher Brosius, who owns the boutique *CB I Hate Perfume*.

Hit some events. Small boutiques, and even some department stores, often hold special events, such as wine-and-fragrance pairings, designed to get you relaxed and thinking about scent in an entirely new way. The blog *Sniffapalooza*, started by



Start your search by identifying a single element—or even mood—that you’re drawn to.

a couple of fragrance junkies, organizes “fragrance journeys” to cities including Paris, Florence, and New York to meet top perfumers and glimpse new fragrances before they hit shelves.

Don’t be afraid to ask. If you smell something you love on someone else, tell her. In France, women are often fiercely protective of their fragrances, but here we are usually more than happy to share. “Ask what she’s wearing, and then go to the store and smell it,” says perfumer Frédéric Malle. “People will almost always see that as a compliment—and it’s a great way to learn.”

Train your nose. “When you want big biceps, you go to the gym. When you want a more attuned nose, you must exercise it, too,” says Rodrigo Flores-Roux, a senior perfumer at Givaudan. His favorite workout: Fill small jars with spices, close your eyes, and then try to identify each one by smell alone. The point is to hone your sense of smell as you go about your day. “Smell everything—I’m not

joking,” says Victoria Jent of the *EauMG* fragrance blog. “Whether you’re zesting a lemon or slicing an apple, take the time to smell the subtleties of everyday items. It isn’t that fragrance critics have a better sense of smell; it’s that they’re in better touch with their senses.”

LOVE LESSON #2:
Savor the Search

Take your time. If you look for a perfume when you’re busy running errands, you’re bound to wind up disappointed. “To have a good experience, shopping for fragrance is not something you can do in ten minutes,” says Khoury. “Approach it with the attitude you would shoe shopping or a massage: as something fun and gratifying.”

Narrow the field. “Staring down a huge wall of 200 bottles of perfume is daunting, but doing a little bit of research before you shop can help a lot,” says Meredith. “Read online reviews of the scents that interest you, then make a

list of a few that sound intriguing.” Free apps like Givaudan’s iPerfumer or osMoz from Firmenich let you plug in your favorite fragrances, then instantly give you personalized suggestions for others you might also like.

Try them on for size. Start by inhaling five or so contenders on blotting papers. “The first ten seconds are very important,” says Firmenich master perfumer Olivier Cresp. “That’s when you’ll smell the top notes, and that will really help tell you whether you’re going to like the fragrance.” If you’re just “eh” about any of them at this point, move on. Next, spray your favorites (but no more than four) on your wrists and inner elbows to see if you like the scent on your skin. Then walk away. “A good perfume takes time to get to know, and it takes time for it to get to know you,” says Brosius.

Score samples. If you can’t decide on a fragrance, there’s no shame in asking for some to take home. Many stores, such as Nordstrom and Sephora, offer free samples of the fragrances they carry and will even create a sample if they’re out of something. Many online perfume stores offer trial sizes for a small fee that is often then applied toward a purchase.

LOVE LESSON #3: Wear It Well

Create a wardrobe. If you had to find one dress you liked enough to wear every single day of the year, it would be an impossible task. For that same reason, true fragrance lovers tend to have a collection of at least five favorite scents. “Women get caught up in the idea of having a signature fragrance, but I love having a fragrance wardrobe,” says Ann Gugliotti of Blogdorf Goodman, a fragrance and beauty blog. “Sometimes I want whispery violets; other times I want thick amber. The choice depends on everything from mood, weather, clothing, to if I’m reading a Jane Austen novel.” And of course, there’s another advantage to changing things: “If you wear something every day, eventually you can’t smell it anymore,” says Brosius. “That’s why there are little old ladies you get a whiff of from three blocks away, because they stopped being able to smell their own perfume in 1957.”

Don’t make it an afterthought. Women usually give their (continued on page 299)

All in the Family

Last year, there were 760 new women’s scents, and that’s not counting the thousands already lining the display shelves. Where do you start? Narrow your preference to a single family—though be warned: The experts don’t always agree on categorizations. If there’s a perfume you already love, it undoubtedly has variations-on-a-theme siblings, cousins, and in-laws that may draw you in, too. —LINDSY VAN GELDER

Fresh



These are the lightest, sportiest splashes, designed to smell like lemon slices (the citrus group), fresh herbs and mowed grass (the green group), or the ocean (the marine group).

• **IF YOU LIKE CALVIN KLEIN CK ONE:**

The citrus-and-green-tea scent that put clean-cut unisex fragrances on the map in the ’90s.

• **THEN TRY DOLCE & GABBANA LIGHT BLUE:**

Concocted to smell like the Mediterranean.

ANNICK GOUTAL EAU D’HADRIEN: An almost pure citrus and probably the most sophisticated in its class.

JO MALONE LIME BASIL & MANDARIN COLOGNE: A citrusy green unisex scent that’s like an instant Caribbean rain forest.

including rose, lily, tuberose, marigold, muguet, and jasmine.

CLINIQUE HAPPY: Pink grapefruit meets orchids and lilies in an effervescent fruity floral.
TOMMY HILFIGER TOMMY GIRL: Fresh and young, with apple blossoms and mint.
DIOR MISS DIOR: The fragrance that, in 1947, launched Christian Dior as a perfume house as well. It is subtle and greenish.
ISSEY MIYAKE L’EAU D’ISSEY: Not as lush as the others, with sharp floral tones.

Gourmand



Purists might scoff that this newish group of fragrances doesn’t deserve a category of its own, but its growing popularity speaks to the sensual connection between smell and taste. They won’t make you

lick your pulse points, but they have strong hints of chocolate, vanilla, caramel, rum, and cotton candy.

• **IF YOU LIKE THIERRY MUGLER ANGEL:** A big fragrance that’s frequently called an oriental, with berry, chocolate, and vanilla notes.

• **THEN TRY COMPTOIR SUD PACIFIQUE VANILLE EXTREME:** From a line of mostly gourmand fragrances, this one ratchets up the vanilla.

BOND NO. 9 NEW HAARLEM: The headiest coffee aroma this side of Starbucks.

BY KILIAN LIAISONS DANGEREUSES TYPICAL ME: Elegantly fruity, the Damascus plum is backed up by prune and black currant.

PRADA CANDY: A new arrival, bursting with caramel and vanilla.

Oriental



Heavy, sexy, spicy, and usually wintry—with a whiff of Middle Eastern souk—these scents were born to be dabbed on the cleavage.

• **IF YOU LIKE GUERLAIN SHALIMAR:**

Contains most of the vampy, genre-defining oriental artillery, including patchouli, sandalwood, and musk.

• **THEN TRY YVES SAINT LAURENT OPIUM:** An oriental carried to the incense-y ’80s max.
EDITIONS DE PARFUMS FRÉDÉRIC MALLE NOIR ÉPICES: More woody and less sweet than many of its spicy relatives.

DONNA KARAN CASHMERE MIST: Lush and soft, with lily of the valley notes.

BULGARI BLACK: The gritty urban cousin, it smells like a beautiful, intoxicating brew of tea, smoke, and rubber.

SERGE LUTENS AMBRE SULTAN: Often mentioned by perfumers as their favorite perfume, it smells like sex (no joke).

Floral



In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, almost all perfumes were florals. Like real flowers, there’s a huge range, and they’re prone to intermarrying with other families, which is why you’ll hear about “floral greens” and “florientals.”

• **IF YOU LIKE FRACAS DE ROBERT PIGUET:**

This has been a popular fragrance since the 1940s and is rich and heady with tuberose and jasmine.

• **THEN TRY CHANEL NO. 5:** Perfumers might quibble that this is not a true floral, since it incorporates the synthetic compounds known as aldehydes, but this icon is redolent of roses and jasmine.

ESTÉE LAUDER BEAUTIFUL: Dreamy and pure, it contains notes from more than 1,000 flowers,



Chypre

“Chypre” means Cyprus in French, and it originally referred to the odd mix of scents of the island’s vegetation: a bit of citrus, some amber, and a lot of the bitter native moss. People tend to love chypres for their sensual complexity or hate them for their mossy dankness. Newer chypres depart from the mossiness.

• **IF YOU LIKE GUERLAIN MITSOUKO:** One of the oldest chypres—it launched in 1919—and easily one of the most gorgeous, with lots of peach and rose notes on top of the mossy ones.

• **THEN TRY CHANEL 31 RUE CAMBON:** An updated chypre that’s light, lean, and sheer, with extra patchouli and less moss.
AMOUAGE JUBILATION 25: A modern chypre with a bright bolt of citrus that still manages to please traditionalists.

CHANEL COCO MADEMOISELLE: Another updated chypre, and wildly popular, although purists note that it does promiscuous leaps into fruity, floral, and oriental territory.

BODY AND SOUL

(Continued from page 147)

for a few really down days, he did. “It was the best thing I could have done for myself,” Ricks says.

Of course, Ricks was not without her inhibitions. She recalls the first night with another man she became engaged to, an Argentinian named Armando. He was an MBA student and considerably younger; she met him playing tennis in the Hamptons. “I wore a T-shirt to bed,” she recalls. “The first time we were together, he took it off and said, ‘This is ridiculous,’ and he kissed my scars.’ I never felt love immediately as I felt it for him.” They were together, on and off, for three years, but Ricks ended the relationship in January. “He was young, he should have his own children, and I couldn’t give him that.”

In less than a year, Ricks will celebrate five years of being cancer-free. For a year after finishing chemotherapy, she was on Herceptin, a drug that interferes with HER2-receptor cells and is thought to stop this particular form of cancer cell from growing. Now she takes tamoxifen, a pill that disrupts the effects of estrogen on the body. Like many premenopausal women on the drug, she continues to have her period and none of the ill effects of estrogen reduction: Her skin is fine, and as far as lubrication and libido goes, as she says, “I know I sound like Rainbow Brite, but I’ve had no negative side effects down there.”

Ricks has made some concessions to her cancer. She gets her blood drawn every three months to check for cancer markers, and she wants to have a full-body scan, though her oncologist doesn’t think it’s necessary. “I still wake up in the middle of the night,” she says. “Without the distractions of my three full-time jobs—the business, the philanthropy, motherhood—the fears come back.”

But right now, it’s daytime, it’s sunny, and Ricks is getting ready for a meeting at the Freeman Navigation Institute, of which she is now chairman. She is dressed in a formfitting yellow Missoni off-the-shoulder dress. Currently single, she wants women facing breast cancer to know this: “I love my breasts more than before the reconstruction...and I swear I’ve never felt so sexy in my life.”

And that house in the Hamptons? “I tore it down,” she says. “I rebuilt everything. Now I have my dream home.” ♦

BOTTLED SEDUCTION

(Continued from page 263)

daily spritz of perfume about as much care as their morning swipe of deodorant, but fragrance needs love, too. “Think about what you’re going to be doing that day and how you want to feel,” says Brosius. “The right perfume makes a difference.” Fragrance shouldn’t be relegated to the medicine cabinet or stuffed into an overflowing drawer—get it out in the open. “Seeing your favorite perfumes is feminine and personal, and helps create a feeling of ritual,” says perfumer Mandy Aftel of Aftelier Perfumes. “The whole experience of perfume is enhanced by a beautiful bottle.”

Spritz based on mood or occasion. “I wouldn’t wear the same thing on a date that I would to a business dinner, so I don’t choose the same scent,” says Hennessey. “Fragrance can complement what you’re wearing—or how you’re feeling.” What works for everyone can differ, but in general, citrusy and fruity fragrances are uplifting, spicy notes are energizing, and florals are ideal if you’re feeling seductive, says perfumer Jane Hendler, cofounder of Ajne Pure Botanical Academy. Says Meredith, “If I’m feeling dreamy or romantic, I’ll choose something with heliotrope, but if I need energy, I like a lot of cedar and herbs, like Le Labo Santal 33.” Fragrance also has the ability to conjure powerful memories and emotions. Every year on her anniversary, Khoury wears Estée Lauder Pleasures, the fragrance she was developing when she met her husband. “It was the first thing he ever complimented me on,” she says. “I have such an emotional connection to it.”

Never go without. To perfume lovers, the thought of skipping scent is nearly as unappealing as forgetting to wear shoes. “Fragrance is such an important part of my life, so I don’t feel fully dressed without it,” says Karen Adams of Sniffapalooza, who carries rollerballs of her favorites in her bag. The diehards even wear fragrance to sleep: Some switch to a sexy perfume that the husband loves, others dab on coconut scents that call to mind a tropical vacation, and some simply view the evening as an extra eight hours to spend with their favorites. “I choose fragrances that I want to smell all night long,” says Meredith. “The right perfume can lead to amazing dreams.” ♦