

Fragrances for THE SOUL



The art of fragrance is one that is always adored but rarely understood. The impact one perfume can have can be life-changing, from repulsing to mesmerising in a subconscious instant, as **VANESSA GAINFORD** explores...

The power of fragrance should be tapped into in our everyday lives, as doing so can change our mood and environment; think perfume, body lotions, candles, room sprays and diffusers. All of these have a far bigger influence on us than we care to believe. Different fragrances fall into different olfactory families and, usually, your personal preferences when it comes to selecting a perfume you like will fall into the same category. For example, if you like Miss Dior, you'll likely sway towards liking fragrances that are in the floral family.

The different fragrance families range from fruity to woody notes. Yet there is one category that is relatively new in terms of perfumery that since the pandemic has seen an increase of interest: gourmand.

Gourmand fragrances tend to be mouth-watering with addictive notes that smell almost edible. Notes like vanilla, tonka bean, chocolate, honey, and even marshmallow. In uncertain and difficult times, it's no surprise that we turn to more comforting scents. For example, many of us resonate with vanilla due to fond childhood memories such as baking. We associate food with happiness, but that doesn't mean we want to smell like food, which is where gourmand fragrances come in – a perfect blend of sensual and sweet.

An array of natural and synthetic fragrance notes used in gourmand scents are proven mood-enhancers. The past two years have had us focus on our mind, body, and soul and one less-discussed way to do that is to encompass ourselves in fragrances that are good for the soul.

Shalini Kumar created Shalini Parfum (1) with the intention of her fragrances reflecting the changing moods and passions of the soul. So far, the six fragrances in the collection were created in collaboration with Master Perfumer Maurice Roucel, using the rarest and purest essences the pair can find. The latest addition to the collection is the Vanille Rêve Parfum, which falls into the gourmand family as Vanilla Absolut. Anise creates a level of sweetness that is made alluring with tuberose and jasmine. Vanille Rêve envelops you in a warm and intoxicating scent, whilst the Tahitian Gardenia and Tiare blossoms transport you to the tropical islands of your sun-kissed dreams.

Fragrance influencer Demi Rawling released her much-anticipated perfume with Fragrance du Bois in 2020. (2) The perfume was curated with Master Perfumer Stephane Begana and it did not disappoint. Despite being a fragrance reviewer, Demi has often



professed her personal love for sweet scents, so Minuit et Demi is a warm, addictive and sensual homage to gourmands. Top notes of cardamom and bergamot lead to middle notes of caramel and coffee before drying down to base notes of vanilla, cinnamon, tobacco, liquor, cedar, vetiver, and musk, which combine to create a sexy and mysterious fragrance that lingers on the skin.

If there is one family that does beauty well, it's the Kattan family. Huda created a beauty empire and sister Mona is creating a fragrance one. Mona Kattan launched Kayali (3) around the concept of a fragrance wardrobe, in which you can layer scents to create your own bespoke fragrance. Vanilla is the brand's cult favourite and with notes of Madagascan vanilla, jasmine, Brazilian Tonka, amber, musk, and brown sugar, it's easy to see why. A rich, decadent, yet refined, fragrance that embodies everything vanilla is: sweet, soft, and sensual.

YSL Beauty launched Le Vestiaire des Parfums to pay homage to the brand's capsule collections and bring couture to fragrance. Caban (4) is a scent that embodies the Saint Laurent runways; indulgent, sophisticated, and charming. Vanilla and tonka bean mix with pink pepper and sandalwood, with hints of caramel, praline, and hay, which all come together to create a soft, comforting scent that envelops you and sits softly on the skin just like one of the fashion powerhouse's garments.

Perfumers Quentin Birch and Nisrine Grille came together to create Desert Suave (5), a narcotic fragrance for Liquides Imaginaires. A brand that challenges perfumery as we know it, Liquides Imaginaires aims to spark interest in the nose before igniting the senses – and Desert Suave does just that. Notes of cardamom, mandarin, orange blossom, rose, sesame and cedar create a sensual and usual fragrance yet adding the scent of dates to this concoction makes a unique and unisex fragrance that stays in someone's mind for way longer than it stays on your skin. ■