

# TRENDS VS TRADITION

## WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

THE GLOBAL PERFUME INDUSTRY IS DIVIDED. ON ONE SIDE, CUSTOMERS ARE SNAPPING UP ENTIRE FRAGRANCE FAMILIES; ON THE OTHER, NICHE HOUSES ARE SURGING IN POPULARITY. AS MICHELLE BATEMAN DISCOVERS, THE FUTURE OF FRAGRANCE MIGHT JUST LIE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE TWO.

### TREND

In the decade since it first hit counters in 2007, Marc Jacobs' Daisy scent has notched up 17 separate versions, including four permanent flankers (the name given to the variations that extend from an original pillar perfume) and a dozen limited-edition scents. It's not difficult to understand their appeal: the fragrances are sunny and sweet, and the candy-coloured bottles are all topped with rubbery versions of the namesake flower, making them an easy drawcard for women wanting to collect them all. The appeal is so strong that in 2016, an impressive 65 per cent of all Marc Jacobs' fragrance sales in Australian department stores were of one of the scents in the Daisy family, according to Coty, which distributes the brand in Australia.

Giorgio Armani has a similar hit on its hands with Si, which launched as an eau de parfum in late 2013. From the beginning, it's had the distinct advantage of being fronted by Armani ambassador Cate Blanchett, who has shown her considerable acting talents in a series of campaign videos designed to show the multifaceted nature of women.

"I think there's a definite optimism in calling a fragrance Si at the moment, particularly a female scent," Blanchett told *The New York Times* in February. "We have to be positive and forward-looking, and we have to say yes to those things we believe in and yes to ourselves."

Women, it seems, are also saying yes to the fragrance itself: a further six versions have been released since the original, including the brand new Si Rose Signature Couture Edition. Interestingly, though, Giorgio Armani Beauty reports that the iconic original remains the best-selling version, both in Australia and globally.

Flanker fragrances first appeared in the 1970s, with the likes of Nina Ricci's Signor Ricci 2, and have grown in popularity ever since. The similarities between a pillar and its flankers can vary widely – while some stay fairly faithful to the original, others have only a few fleeting elements in common.

For Fabrizio Freda, the chief executive officer of the Estée Lauder Companies, the idea of a family of fragrances is one that really resonates with today's millennial shoppers. In a 2016 interview with Bloomberg.com, he noted: "The new generation really looks at fragrances as a wardrobe but not anymore as a personal signature."

In other words, why have one signature scent when you can have six? That's the case, at least, with Modern Muse, Estée Lauder's hit fragrance that has seen half a dozen flankers since its 2013 launch. And with model-of-the-moment Kendall Jenner as the face of the scent – a truly modern muse if ever there was one – it's not showing signs of slowing down.

It's not all about flanker editions, however: one of the new trends in perfume is to launch an entire collection of synergistic scents, all at the same time. Estée Lauder's Aerin brand (helmed by the granddaughter of the company's founder) has just released a bouquet of three colognes – Bamboo Rose, Linen Rose and Garden Rose – each with a different spin on the heady floral. The rationale? "Roses are my favourite flower," Aerin Lauder has said. "The scent alone relaxes me, energises me or inspires me. [The colognes] are a refreshing, effortless way to instantly create or change my mood."

With this sentiment, Lauder could also be speaking on behalf of all aficionados of fragrance families, who are able to select exactly which version of a signature scent sums up their every occasion or whim.

## TRADITION

On Jermyn Street in London, just a short walk from Piccadilly Circus, you'll find the original outpost of Floris, one of the oldest fragrance companies in the world. Founded by Juan Famenias Floris and his wife Elizabeth in 1730, it has an almost-300-year history of creating scents loved by everyone from Marilyn Monroe to the British royal family (it's the only perfumer to hold a Royal Warrant from the Queen). Some of the scents have been in the line-up for decades or even centuries; others were created only recently, under the watchful eye of Edward Bodenham, perfumery director and a direct descendant of Juan Floris.

For Bodenham, a sense of history and tradition is an important component in the magic of perfume. "I think that many of our fragrances are popular because they have that special emotional connection for customers," he says. "People are often intrigued by the story of their creation and by the characters who wore and loved those scents."

Unique and individual stories are at the heart of the tradition of perfumery, and for heritage brands such as Floris, it allows them to draw on the past, while still looking firmly to the future. Niche companies such as these are experiencing unprecedented growth: according to a report from French fragrance expert Isabelle Ferrand, director of Cinquième Sens, 41 per cent of the 2000 fragrances that launched in 2016 were classified as niche.

"When creating a new fragrance I am really just led by what inspires me at the time and do not tend to think about whether that has any bearing or reference to the history of the house," Bodenham explains. "I do, however, hope that some of the new fragrances that we are creating now will last the test of time and become classics for future generations of Floris customers and of my family."

At Guerlain, the French company founded in 1828, in-house perfumer Thierry Wasser

is similarly inspired by history and believes that it's just as important to his customers.

"My inspiration mainly comes from Guerlain's rich heritage and know-how, two endless sources of imagination," he says. "In my new perfumes, I often pay tribute to previous scents and bottles (more than 1100 creations in 189 years!), which is an argument many customers appreciate, I suppose, in a very competitive market."

Wasser has in his corner a special element known as the Guerlinade, "the signature of Guerlain". This blend of six key ingredients – vanilla, jasmine, tonka bean, iris, rose and bergamot, all used in varying amounts – can be found in almost every Guerlain scent,

drawing on history to establish perfumery traditions of their own. Frédéric Malle formed his company Editions de Parfums in 2000 and acts as both a perfumer and a fragrance curator, working with other "noses" to bring their creations to life.

Whereas other fragrance companies often keep their perfumers behind the scenes, Editions de Parfums puts them front and centre, and Malle sees this celebration as an important way of keeping the traditions of perfumery alive.

"Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle is the only brand in which the world's greatest perfumers not only have total

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giving them a through-line that connects the fragrances across time and grounds them with a strong brand identity. "This scent is both singular and very recognisable," Wasser explains. "I like to say that the Guerlinade is the secret seal present in the majority of Guerlain fragrances."

With perfume connected so intimately to memory, an element such as the Guerlinade can be a powerfully evocative tool, however nostalgia alone doesn't account for the ongoing success of heritage scents. To create a fragrance with longevity, Wasser believes that the most important element is quality: "quality of the ingredients, quality of the formula, quality of the craftsmanship."

Edward Bodenham at Floris agrees: "fragrances that date back centuries are still popular, I think, because they are good, well-constructed scents with personality."

While heritage brands are successfully cultivating new customers in the 21st century, a crop of relative newcomers are

creative freedom, but are also pushed by an expert to achieve the best possible results with the very best ingredients," Malle says.

Each scent takes between six and 18 months to complete and is designed for longevity. In this quest, Malle says there are three important factors: "First, a constant diffusive performance; second, staying true to their own singularity and never imitating another; third, merging with the skin to the extent that the perfume becomes one with the person wearing it."

Perhaps, ultimately, that is the true appeal of a heritage scent: over time, it can become part of a person's own history, bringing the legacy of its past but becoming something new. "After years of mass marketisation, perfume is sophisticated again, truly creative and easy to recognise," Malle says. "Each character will find his perfume echo."



Clockwise from top:  
**Giorgio Armani** Si, \$170 (100ml EDT);  
**Dior** J'Adore In Joy, \$198 (100ml EDT);  
**Chloé** Fleur de Parfum, \$140 (50ml EDP);  
**Marc Jacobs** Daisy Eau So Fresh, \$115 (75ml EDT);  
**Estée Lauder** Modern Muse Eau de Rouge, \$100 (50ml EDT).



Clockwise from top:  
**Tom Ford** Black Orchid, \$185 (50ml EDP);  
**Jo Malone London** Lime, Basil & Mandarin Cologne, \$198 (100ml);  
**Floris** Bouquet de la Reine, \$179 (100ml EDT); **Guerlain** L'Art & La Matière Bois d'Arménie, \$322 (75ml EDP); **Editions De Parfums by Frédéric Malle** Carnal Flower, \$277 (50ml EDP).