



{ PARIS }

Uncommon Scents

As a gift from a groom to his betrothed, a father to the bride or the bride to herself, a custom fragrance strikes just the right note.

By Jennifer Laing

LONG BEFORE THE LAUNCHES OF SHALIMAR AND VOL DE NUIT, Guerlain founder Pierre-François-Pascal Guerlain blended bespoke fragrances for his affluent clients. Guerlain's Eau de Cologne Imperiale, for example, a citrus-floral blend, was originally made for Eugénie de Montijo to wear at her wedding to French Emperor Napoléon III in 1853. The empress was said to be so thrilled with the scent that Guerlain was made His Majesty's official perfumer.

While the French perfume house has been in business for more than 180 years, Guerlain's custom fragrances remain a rare indulgence. Sylvaine Delacourte, director of fragrance evaluation and development for Guerlain, has personally

overseen the creation of 19 custom scents in her 29 years with Guerlain. In the end, Guerlain's works of olfactory art capture the character of the wearer in a way that an article of clothing or even a priceless piece of jewellery often cannot.

The process begins with a two-hour in-person consultation in which Delacourte takes a client on a journey of the senses. "The goal is to awaken positive moments from the past," she says. As part of the consultation, the client answers a detailed questionnaire. Then Delacourte presents a range of essences and ingredients based on the client's profile. "Each customer has her own taste," she says. "It's about what moves her."

Delacourte won't reveal precisely how she adapts the >>>

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emotional and sensory information obtained into a perfume that captures the very essence of the individual, but custom clients clearly feel highly engaged by the consultation process. Delacourte says that at the end of each interview, she gives the client the option of ending her fragrance journey there, paying only the consultation fee. Not a single person has ever taken her up on her offer. "Nobody stops after the consultation," she says. "They always want to continue with the creation of their own bespoke perfume."

It takes approximately one year to translate the information gathered into a final formula that uniquely suits the client's personality. As with a custom-made wedding gown, it may take several "fittings" to get a custom fragrance just right. Delacourte likens her process to that of an artist. "It's based on the approach of painting a portrait," she says. When it's ready, the client gets to name the fragrance, and the perfume is recorded alongside Guerlain's legendary scents in its book of formulas (though it always belongs exclusively to its owner).

The finished perfume is presented in a 500-millilitre Baccarat crystal bottle with a quatrefoil design, plus several 30- and 60-millilitre bottles to use on the go. It adds up to about a five-year supply that a bride can enjoy on her wedding day and beyond—anytime she wants to recall the joy and love she experienced on her big day.



Other Bespoke Options

Floris London has been creating bespoke scents since 1730. Work with the perfumer to custom blend a one-of-a-kind scent or add new ingredients to personalise one of Floris' existing perfums. www.florislondon.com
At the **Cartier** flagship on the rue de la Paix in Paris, Mathilde Laurent crafts custom perfumes for discerning clients. www.cartier.com

Jean Patou's Jean-Michel Duriez takes clients on a scent tour to identify their tastes. www.jeanpatou.com

At **Maison Francis Kurkdjian**, the process starts with a phone call before an in-person consultation. Kurkdjian often travels to clients with his mobile "laboratory," a custom-made trunk filled with the ingredients and tools of his trade. www.franciskurkdjian.com

The sensory journey at **Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle** begins with a questionnaire filled out in person or online. Questions include "Why do you wear perfume—to seduce, to refresh, to add a final touch . . . ?" www.fredericmalle.com

For those with a do-it-yourself attitude, **Jo Malone** colognes, such as Grapefruit or Nutmeg & Ginger, are meant to be worn in layers, allowing the wearer to create her own custom scent. www.jomalone.com
4MORE go to FourSeasonsMagazine.com/weddings2012 or download our app to your iPad or tablet to learn about custom fragrance creation at select Four Seasons hotels.

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Five Ready-to-Wear Wedding Scents

A bride who wants instant gratification might consider these romantic fragrances for her wedding day:

Creed Fleurissimo

A blend of tuberose, Bulgarian rose, violet and Florentine iris, this fresh, floral scent was commissioned by Prince Rainier III of Monaco for his bride, Grace Kelly, for their wedding day.

By Kilian Love & Tears, Surrender

This mix of jasmine from India, orange blossom from Spain, petitgrain from Paraguay and lavender from France was inspired by the emotions that mark the progression of new love.

Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle Carnal Flower

Tuberose top notes accented with bergamot, eucalyptus, jasmine, ylang-ylang, orange blossom and a musky finish give this scent a romantic air.

Strange Invisible Perfumes Black Rosette

This mix of roses, black tea, leather and spearmint can be specially ordered in a glass bottle custom-etched with the bride's and groom's initials, wedding date, or other romantic personal sentiment.

Le Labo Santal 33

This warm and smoky combination of cardamom, iris, violet and ambrox, like all Le Labo scents, is unisex, so a bride and groom can make a unified scent statement on their wedding day.