

The Three Glorious Decades

A new kind of perfumery is born



From the end of the Second World War to the mid 1970s, France was the origin of direction-setting fragrance compositions

In 1945, the songs of liberty can be heard in the voice of Charles Trenet and the American sound of Glenn Miller's orchestra. And even though France regains her creative standing, the 1940s see Europe on the wane and America's star rising, although nobody knows it yet.

Following these years of privation, the French anticipate a return to abundance, while the future consumer society is still in its infancy. Citroën's "Ugly Duckling," the 2CV, is ready, and the off-the-rack clothing market emerges. Marcel Boussac, an industrialist with an interest in Haute Couture, joins forces with Christian Dior, and on

February 12, 1947, Christian Dior's first collection premieres to resounding applause in the Grey Salon in Paris. The "New Look" was born.

Compositions made from the new synthetic substances and the natural products of the late 19th and early 20th century established modern perfumery. The perfumes of the day, for example, are Chypre by Coty, Shalimar and Vol de Nuit by Guerlain, Tabac blond by Caron, "No. 5" by Chanel and Tabu by Dana.



The Fifties:

The scent of lily of the valley is "in"

The Soviets end the American nuclear monopoly by detonating their first atomic bomb, and fears of a Third World War grip even the post-war generation. France is confronted with the Indochina War, the Algerian War and, finally, the Suez Conflict. At the same time, new consumer goods appear: Refrigerators, washing machines and television sets, which are soon found in virtually every home. In 1950, there are 3,500 TVs, by the end of the decade over a million. Paris reasserts itself as the guiding

light of fashion, with the pace being set by Chanel, Jeanne Lanvin, Nina Ricci, Marcel Rochas as well as rising stars like Pierre Cardin and Hubert de Givenchy. While Piguet, Rochas, Balmain, Carven, Ricci, Fath,



Balenciaga and Dior characterized the late 1940s, Grès and Givenchy are creating the perfumes of the new decade.

The scents of the 1950s are like taking a walk through a garden full of lily of the valley. Typical of these fragrances are: Vent Vert by Pierre Balmain, Muguet du bonheur by Caron, Premier muguet by Bourjois and the enchanting Diorissimo by Dior. The masculine scene is dominated by strict, elegant root and wood fragrances, with Carven, Givenchy and Guerlain offering up vetiver.

The sixties:

Musk oil is a smashing success

Beginning in 1960, culture increasingly comes to encompass the consumer goods sector – the leisure society has arrived. The Hippie wave that is spreading throughout the United States is counterpoint to the



cultural policy. Incense sticks are burned, and the skin is perfumed with sandalwood, musk or patchouli. These strong scents, which seem to always reappear during times of libertinism, will follow us all the way to the 1980s.

At the end of the decade, banners appear in American drug stores proclaiming that “We Have Musk Oil.” This concept, which Jovan pursues in Musk for Men and Musk for Women, is a smashing success and marks the final breakthrough of synthetic musk, with its sweet-syrupy scent, in perfumery; from now on, musk usage rates of 10 to 30 percent will be typical of numerous perfumes in the United States.

In addition to Haute Couture and the mass-market, off-the-rack segment, Prêt-à-porter, ready-to-wear, clothing comes on the scene with creations by Yves St Laurent, followed by the first designers, like Daniel Hechter, Cacharel and Mary Quant, who invents the miniskirt.

In 1966, Christian Dior launches Eau Sauvage, which immediately becomes an international success. With its simplicity and strictness, this eau de toilette rejuvenates the field of fine fragrances, brings innumerable variations in its wake and sparks the development of feminine, masculine and unisex eaux de toilette.



The seventies:

Opium, “an addictive scent”

In the early 1970s, the American way of selling is all the rage. The idea of selling what’s been produced is old-fashioned; manufacturing more and better products, shaping consumer motivation and planning product development to satisfy the consumer – that’s what marketing is all about. For luxury perfumery, scientific marketing, which analyzes the competition and the market, as well as the cultural, economic and

social environment, plays an decisive role.

Yves St Laurent’s marketing strategy is to express desires, fantasies and passions in signs and symbols, and to create an object. Opium breaks the taboo of nonconformity and drugs. Possessing it means gaining access to life on a higher spiritual plane in the quest for the absolute. Opium, “an addictive scent,” is the advertising slogan.

1973 also sees the first oil shock. For perfume manufacturers, 1973 marks the introduction of applications technology, the appearance of systematic testing, imitations of thoroughly researched natural products, the birth of headspace analysis, the classification of perfumes – in particular with the “H&R Genealogy” from Haarmann & Reimer – as well as the demand for perfume concentrates that are 50 percent less expensive. Like “Nouvelle Cuisine,” the new perfumes shed the fatty, thick, rich and soft character of their predecessors. Tradition pales in the face of the demise of absolute values and the increased employment of synthetics.

Young perfumers abandon the white laboratory coat and reject the image of a technician or chemist. They utilize the technique of chromatography to understand the archetypes of the past and the theories developed by perfumer Roudnitska. Thus, their creations lead to a new simplicity, to an elaboration of a single theme, for which they then provide an olfactory interpretation. A new kind of perfumery is born.