

INTERNET

McQueen courts nature for re-launch of fragrance house

March 8, 2016



McQueen Parfum

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

British fashion label Alexander McQueen is traveling the world for flowers that #BloomAtNight with the launch of its first fragrance with Procter & Gamble Prestige Beauty.

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The brand teased the fragrance extensively on social media channels, especially Facebook and Instagram, through images and a minute-long video on its fragrance microsite. A strong, consistent marketing campaign is essential in helping new fragrances stand out in a crowded marketplace.

"With the fragrance Bloom at Night, the brand of Alexander McQueen shows its true values through an expression of intention to embody the diversified nature of perfume," said Terry Rieser, co-founder/chief operating officer of **TAG Creative**. "Like always, Alexander McQueen's intention with this perfume is to convey the importance of natural products and the beauty that is inherent in creating something derived from the nature of the night.

"This highlights the brand's values of creating products for their customers that focus on capturing beautiful moments, in this case, the blooming of a flower."

Ms. Rieser is not associated with Alexander McQueen, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Alexander McQueen was unable to comment.

Bloom at night

The McQueen Parfum is being touted as the scent for "the woman who blooms in the dark." The scent is retailing now via Harrods and the brand's Web site for \$395 per 50mL bottle.

Although the fragrance is the first of the McQueen-P&G partnership, the fashion house had two previous fragrances, developed with YSL Beaut, that were discontinued in 2008.

The social posts emphasize a particular set of selling points, namely artistry and transparency. While marketers often cultivate mystery around fragrances or employ celebrities with large followings, Alexander McQueen has taken the opposite approach, detailing the blooming patterns of each of its floral ingredients and highlighting nature and craftsmanship.



Sambac Jasmine

The site includes brief descriptions of these ingredients, including Sambac Jasmine, which originates in the Eastern Himalayas and has a sweet scent, Tuberose, "an erotic siren" taken from Louis XIV's gardens at Versailles, and Ylang Ylang, whose yellow flowers suggest renewal and transformation and can be found on the jungles of Comoro Islands, the archipelago between Mozambique and Madagascar.

As millennial consumers have gained influence in society and accrued wealth, consumers in general have demanded more transparency of brands. For fragrances this can be an advantage, as consumers aware of the worldly range of ingredients will likely be impressed.



Ylang Ylang

One brand video is set to an orchestral score that begins grand but grows more playful. Shots of leaves, mountains and flowers blooming feature at the beginning of the video in time lapse imagery, with flowering always happening at night.

At around the halfway point, the sun rises and people in an unspecified location begin picking flowers and threading them onto a string. They continue to pick and sort through the flowers as the video fades out, emphasizing the handmade and time-consuming aspects of the perfume production.

Alexander McQueen #BloomAtNight

The video, which the brand defines as "the story of an ageless harvesting ritual," ends with #BloomAtNight appearing over a black screen, a reference to the flowers used in the fragrance, all of which are night flowers.

"The scent derives from a flower that is incredibly exotic and delicate, and therefore it is understandable for the video to be transparent in its imagery to illustrate the authenticity of the tradition of farming these flowers," Ms. Rieser said. "As these flowers are not like most flowers, it would make sense for the brand to emphasize the uniqueness of how this particular flower is used to create such a unique scent.

"This video is an exact expression of what this particular product is bringing to the table," she said. "The visual imagery in the video is clearly defining the organic ingredients that have gone in to the making of this perfume."

The bottle will further promote these values with an insert book detailing the source of each note and the bottle's gold feather design.

Another video more overtly showcases artistry and craftsmanship. Workers are shown carefully inspecting and assembling the tops of perfume bottles, from the gold-feather crown to the hand-sealed boxes that contain the bottle. This combination of craftsmanship and the harvest ritual indicate care and precision in designing the scent.



McQueen Parfum bottle

As one of only a handful of apparel brands without fragrances, McQueen's move into the space will likely translate to business from loyalists, while the pricing could conversely introduce consumers looking for a high-end fragrance to the brand.

A sweet story

Because of how crowded the fragrance market is, brands often go through extensive teaser campaigns before a release to ensure a receptive audience.

For example, French fashion house Nina Ricci recently kept tensions high through a trio of short teasers before the official release of the full video for the brand's new fragrance L'Extase.

Nina Ricci spent the weeks leading up to release giving its consumers a chance see some short clips and get excited. By sharing small pieces of the campaign at a time, Nina Ricci was able to keep consumers curious and promote publicity before the big release ([see story](#)).

Because of the importance of anticipation in the sector, brands often tap ambassadors with large followings to help a scent stand out above competitors.

For example, French couture house Dior is appealing to consumers to break the rules in a new campaign for its Homme Intense scent.

Photographer Peter Lindbergh captured actor Robert Pattinson, who portrays a man who never sleeps and thus lives 1,000 lives in one, which the brand explains mirrors the face's own life, on the streets of New York. Through this, Dior is promoting not just its cologne, but also a way of living ([see story](#)).

"As always, there is a melancholic undertone to McQueen's work," said Gina Delio, co-founder/chief commercial officer of TAG Creative. "The tragic beauty of a three-day blooming flower is what makes the storytelling behind the production of this scent so fascinating.

"Where as you see other brands latching on to a celebrity to denote emotion, McQueen effortlessly uses nature to do all the work," she said.