

HOME FURNISHINGS

Aera brings high-end, customizable scenting methods to at-home consumers

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Aera, a smart home fragrance system developed by Prolitec

By JEN KING

Smart fragrance system Aera is looking to tackle outdated home perfuming methods through an activation powered by the Internet of Things.

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The Aera smart home fragrance system was developed by Prolitec, a brand known for its commercial perfuming systems found in retail and hospitality settings. Citing a lapse in market offerings, Prolitec's Aera is the brand's first venture into the consumer space, bringing with it expertise, knowledge and understanding of fragrance distribution and scent development.

"We are in the commercial scenting business at about 100,000 locations, and at the commercial level the bar of performance is very high because consumers have not chosen to have that experience," said Richard Weening, CEO of **Prolitec**.

"The scent experience has to be the same all of the time, has to be a permanent, high-quality part of the entire landscape of say, a retailer or hotel," he said.

"**Aera** allows the user to buy very luxury fragrances that are extensively built and have never been created for household use. The quality is of a very fine fragrance."

Scentsational

Before the creation of Aera, Prolitec systems were found only at the commercial level, with Aveda, W Hotels and others being counted as clients. Across its global clients in retail, hospitality, health and wellness, transportation and real estate, Prolitec's fragrance systems reach close to 20 million consumers on a daily basis.

The development of the Aera system is being hailed as the most significant technological advance in home scenting in centuries. Essentially, many home fragrances, from essential oils to candles, for the past 4,000 or so years, all rely on heat to cause evaporation and transmission of a scent.

Candles, wall plug-ins with fans or gel fragrances, oil burners, reed diffusers and even aerosol cans rely on the same methods to distribute scents throughout a space.

Aera is different, relying on Prolitec's patented AirQ technology, the same system used at its commercial clients spaces, to deploy high-quality scents to consumers in their homes.



Aera, smart home fragrance system

Housed in a sleek vessel that easily fits in with decor or is small enough to be discretely tucked away, the Aera device creates fine, micro-droplets, measuring less than 1 micrometer in diameter into the space's air. Since the droplets are so small, the scent can evaporate 2,500 times faster than other methods.

By design, this also ensures that the scent does not become diluted or change over time and with continued use. Aera, unlike a reed diffuser or a plug-in, releases all of a fragrance's ingredients at once, creating a pure scent that maintains consistency of experience as intended by the perfumer.

To develop the fragrance cartridges for the Aera, Prolitec turned to master perfumers Annie Buzantian and Christophe Laudamiel, perfumers Brian Wilchek and Sabine de Tscharnier as well as fragrance designer Raymond Matts for its inaugural scent portfolio. The hypoallergenic scents range from the crisp and energetic Odyssey to the warm and enveloping Moondance, among others.

The experience is also fully customizable to the consumer's preferences. Aera's three-button operation allows for the consumer to adjust the system's strength, account for any room size up to 1,000-square feet.

Aera also ensures for uniform room coverage by scenting the space evenly without hot spots or weak areas. Likewise, consumers can place multiple Aera units to be used together to create a full home system, similar to surround sound audio setups.

Introducing Aera - Home scenting reinvented

For additional usage ease, Aera has launched a smartphone app to accompany the fragrance system. By downloading the app, consumers can unlock the device's Internet of Things capabilities such as turning the unit on and off, scheduling, scent strength and reordering scent cartridges.

"The main thing about Aera is that it produces a much better sense of scent," Mr. Weening said. "It doesn't change over time, it's uniformly distributed.

"Aera's app, an important feature of convenience, allows consumers to do all sorts of things," he said. "What I think is the most cool is being able to control different units within the home, and develop the levels of each area for your specific needs.

"It is not just controlling Aera remotely, it's controlling the whole household system. Aera can run when you're away, but it is not like a plug-in, it is much more advanced."



Aera mobile app

In 2017, Aera plans for full-feature Nest and Echo compatibility to further its seamless integration into consumers homes.

Aera retails for \$189 and is sold with a fragrance capsule. A single capsule can last for up to 60 days, with cartridges selling for \$47 individually.

Room to grow

In the future, Aera may see opportunities arise from luxury brands. By collaborating on a branded scent cartridge for the Aera system, brands can tap a new way to connect with consumers, similar to scented candles ([see story](#)), to seamlessly become an aspect of their lives beyond in-store touchpoints.

Most commonly, brands look to perfumers to bottle an experience had in-store for it to be enjoyed at any time.

For example, British perfumer Floris London translated bespoke tailor Turnbull & Asser's story into a scent, allowing consumers to explore the brand's heritage through a new sense.

The scent is meant to evoke the feeling of walking into Turnbull & Asser's flagship on Jermyn Street, with a name taken from its street address, 71/72. Turnbull & Asser and Floris London have a number of likenesses, including a shared nationality and possession of royal warrants from the British monarchy, making this partnership a natural relationship ([see story](#)).

Also, St. Regis Hotels and Resorts presented a unified front to consumers with a signature scent that will perfume its many locations around the world.

"Caroline's Four Hundred" is the brand's first bespoke scent, inspired by the Gilded Age socialite and member of the hotel's founding family, Caroline Astor. By uniting its varied locations with one scent, the hotel chain will remind consumers that no matter where they are in the world, St. Regis is comfortable and familiar.

St. Regis' Caroline Four Hundred is also available for purchase in candle and room spray form ([see story](#)).

Aera also has potential for customization through layering different scents throughout the home or within the same room.

"I think customization is a great trend," Mr. Weening said. "We have tech for that trend in the future, but people will be extremely excited for an adjustable scenting product.

"One of the big issues is that others are not adjustable, strong at source and weak elsewhere," he said. "Adjustability is the big innovation here, on top of creating great scents."