

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Guerlain recounts 190-year “love story” via film

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Guerlain is looking back on its history. Image credit: Guerlain

By SARAH JONES

French perfumer Guerlain is tracing its olfactory history through the stories of the noses behind its scents.

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Guerlain's "Saga 1: Guerlain Perfumer, a story of shared know-how" delves into what the brand is calling a "love story," representing a shared affection for craft and women. As Guerlain celebrates 190 years in business this year, it is looking back at some of the highlights within its 1,100 fragrances.

Guerlain was reached for comment.

History lesson

Guerlain's film begins in 1828 as Pierre-Francois-Pascal Guerlain founds the perfumery, opening a boutique on rue de Rivoli. As a narrator explains the history, archival imagery flashes to set the scene.

The film shares Mr. Guerlain's achievements, including becoming supplier to Empress Eugenie after creating the iconic bee bottle for her.



Video still from Guerlain's Saga 1. Image credit: Guerlain

Following in his father's footsteps, Aim Guerlain took over as the house's perfumer, pushing it in a more modern direction, reflective of the impressionist art movement of his time.

The younger Mr. Guerlain was inspired by the Parisienne, who became an eternal muse for the brand. Among his creations was Jicky, which blended natural and synthetic materials.

Jacques Guerlain, nephew to Aim Guerlain, was next in line, creating more than 400 perfumes during his time. Among his contributions was Shalimar, the first oriental fragrance in perfumery, and he also created scents for friends including Josphine Baker.

Keeping it in the family, Jacques Guerlain's grandson Jean-Paul Guerlain was next to join the business, starting when he was still a teen. His strategy was to seek out rare ingredients from around the globe.

Showing continuity, Guerlain's film reaches present day. Perfumer Thierry Wasser has created scents including La Petite Robe Noire, which like Aim Guerlain's perfumes was inspired by the Parisienne.

Saga 1 : Guerlain Perfumer, a story of shared know-how

Mr. Wasser was also behind Mon Guerlain, a scent that the brand explains is a representation of his feminism.

Guerlain is embracing a full embodiment of the modern woman in this fragrance campaign.

Guerlain's "Notes of a Woman" tells the creation story of the Mon Guerlain perfume, inspired and designed in collaboration with the actress, filmmaker and humanitarian Angelina Jolie. Guerlain announced Ms. Jolie as the scent's muse and campaign ambassador in January, but only disclosed enough information to pique the interest of its dedicated enthusiasts ([see story](#)).

Brand building

A number of brands, including Chanel and Dior, have released similar short history lessons in film.

Chanel recently continued its multipart celebration of the life of founder Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel with the 21st chapter of its Inside Chanel series, focusing on the philosophy behind the famed designer.

The latest installment of Inside Chanel focuses on Ms. Chanel's design philosophy, boiling it down to three key verbs: seize, dare and create. The video series has been a continued draw for Chanel, providing a clean and engaging way for the brand to explore its own history ([see story](#)).

This approach has also been taken outside of fashion. British automaker Rolls-Royce is giving voice to a typically silent muse as it traces her influence throughout its 105-year history.

The first episode of the film series "The House of Rolls-Royce" centers on the Spirit of Ecstasy, the sculpture that sits on the prow of all of its cars, guiding both the driver and the vehicle's creators. In this short, actress Kate Winslet narrates, bringing to life this iconic figure in Rolls-Royce heritage ([see story](#)).

Like these brands, Guerlain is spotlighting its past to shed light on its brand today.