

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Penhaligon's heads to the theater for fragrance scenes

April 10, 2018



Penhaligon's Elisabethan Rose is one of the scents featured in its theatrical campaign. Image credit: Penhaligon's

By SARAH JONES

British perfumer Penhaligon's is taking a theatrical approach to marketing by staging an imagined performance about some of its scents.

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"Penhaligon's Playhouse" translates the theater of Shakespeare's day to a digital medium, as an animated thespian narrates stories about the brand's perfumes. Recreating the classic performance art for the modern era, this push takes a different angle to content marketing by putting the viewer in the center of a play.

[Penhaligon's](#) was reached for comment.

Curtain up

Penhaligon's play takes place in a cartoon version of an Elizabethan theater, complete with an animated standing audience. The brand describes it as "A medley of entertaining smells to delight your nostrils. And your scent-ses!"

In scene one, an actor appears onstage and begins to tell a "story of regal harmony and joy."

The narrator continues, explaining how a particular rose is more fit for a queen than commoners. As he talks, a bottle of Penhaligon's Elisabethan Rose descends from the ceiling, delighting the crowd.



Penhaligon's Playhouse reimagines Elizabethan theater. Image credit: Penhaligon's

His final words on the scent include a reference to Gertrude Stein's quote, as he says, "A rose is a rose is a rose, but not all roses were created equal."

Elisabethan Rose is a new launch this year for Penhaligon's. Opening with hazelnut, almond and cinnamon, the fragrance features notes of rose and lily at its heart, with base notes of vetiver, musk and wood.

The second scene of Penhaligon's play sees the return of the same narrator. As he waxes poetical about the joy of a warm steam, a tub is pushed onto the stage.

He opens the shower curtain, revealing a woman hiding within. This elicits both gasps and whistles from the audience as the clothed woman blushes.

After the curtain closes and reopens, a bottle of Penhaligon's Savoy Steam appears. This perfume, released in 2017, features notes including bergamot, lemon primofiore, eucalyptus oil and rosemary oil, white cedarwood oil and fir balsam.

Penhaligon's Playhouse

Penhaligon's play will continue with further scenes, telling the stories of other fragrances.

Scent storytelling

Penhaligon's frequently puts a playful spin on fragrance marketing.

The Puig-owned brand recently brought a touch of classic parlor mystery to its promotion that took the form of an interactive detective game.

The campaign called Penhaligon's Mystery Mansion tasked the players with solving the disappearance of the fictional Lord Truthsbury from his wooded estate. The campaign used elements from point-and-click computer games to promote the brand's unique aesthetic and lure in new customers ([see story](#)).

Storytelling is one way for brands to engage consumers around their scents in a digital medium.

Italian fashion label Dolce & Gabbana, for instance, took a page out of children's storybooks to enlighten consumers on the creation of its Rosa Excelsa perfume.

In an animated film, two Sicilian princesses set off on a quest for the perfect rose, returning with the ingredients of the fragrance. While most brands look to educate consumers on the careful blend behind their scents, taking this narrative approach may make consumers more receptive to the story ([see story](#)).

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