

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Gucci enters haute perfumery with fragrance "laboratory"

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Gucci's The Alchemist's Garden. Image credit: Gucci

By SARAH JONES

Italian fashion label Gucci is exploring the chemistry of perfume in a fragrance collection that aims to inspire consumers to customize their scent.

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The Alchemist's Garden features a series of perfumes and a scented candle that are designed to be layered and combined. As consumers crave individuality, Gucci is giving them the tools to be their own fragrance designer, expanding beyond its array of premixed juices to more traditional perfumery.

"Gucci was smart to take the lead on this," said Andre' Barnwell, instructor at the [Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising](#), Los Angeles.

"Customers are always looking for the inspiration behind brands and more and more customers in the fragrance world are looking for the classics," he said. "Why? There's a feeling that the older fragrance brands have more passion and simplicity in their development and their ingredients are better.

"This separates Gucci from new brands that can't offer their customer this history."

Mr. Barnwell is not affiliated with Gucci, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Gucci](#) fragrances, a licensee of Coty, was reached for comment.

Perfume potentials

The scents in the Alchemist's Garden collection were created by Gucci artistic director Alessandro Michele with perfumer Alberto Morillas. The creations are designed to reflect the memory or feeling of a particular place or time.

This line includes seven eau de parfum, each of which is centered on one scent, with complimentary notes.

For instance, A Song for the Rose features rose as the hero, with additional notes of musk and woods.

The Voice of the Snake takes reference from the reptile's movement with an oud-based juice including leather, saffron and patchouli.



Gucci's The Alchemist's Garden. Image credit: Gucci

Other eau de parfum highlight amber, violet, woods, iris and mimosa. All of the perfumes are packaged in porcelain bottles with whimsical sayings and nature-themed illustrations such as a tiger or a squirrel.

Gucci also designed three acque profumate, which feature scents with a single note such as cypress or lavender. These are housed in white lacquered glass bottles.

Four perfumed oils in scents including rose, violet and bois modern also allow for combinations. These feature a vintage-inspired glass pipette applicator.

"The oils and acque profumate create individual statements," said Mr. Morillas in a statement. "Personalize your beloved scent with an oil or a floral water to build a unique sillage.

"Each oil or floral water of the collection can be layered with each eau de parfum," he said. "Just play with the scent to find your favorite, as an alchemist would work to find the gold formula."

A scented candle in a perfume dubbed "The Virgin Violet" features musk and iris fragrances. Inspired by a swan, the candle comes in a jar featuring an illustration of the bird.

All of the containers were inspired by a vintage apothecary. One of the blue shades used was chosen by Mr. Michele as a nostalgic nod to a bottle that resided in his mother's bathroom.

To promote the Alchemist's Garden, Gucci released a film art directed by Christopher Simmonds and shot by Colin Dodgson that shows a woman in an ornate bathroom filled with perfumes and creatures including snakes, birds and butterflies.

Providing a soundtrack to the scene, a pianist in another room plays Chopin's "Prelude No. 4 in E Minor."

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"It is a kind of bathroom that belongs to the imagination, where strange objects are kept, and someone obsessed with smells and fragrances. The images are evocative of a suspended time, which is then what makes you experience a scent, to bring you back to an imaginary place," #AlessandroMichele on the campaign video for the #TheAlchemistsGarden collection. Discover more through link in bio and on @guccibeauty. #GucciBeauty
Directed by @colin_dodgson Art Director: @christophersimmonds Music: Chopin Prelude No 4 E Minor

A post shared by Gucci (@gucci) on Jan 8, 2019 at 4:45am PST

Instagram post from Gucci

"It is a kind of bathroom that belongs to the imagination, where strange objects are kept, and someone obsessed with smells and fragrances," Mr. Michele said in a statement about the film. "The images are evocative of a suspended time, which is then what makes you experience a scent, to bring you back to an imaginary place."

Upscale ambitions

As a ready-to-wear brand, Gucci has shown its couture aspirations in categories outside of fashion.

Gucci is expanding into high-jewelry, taking Mr. Michele's vision for the brand to a new category.

As reported by *Le Figaro*, the Kering-owned house's high-jewelry collection will drop in June or July this year. Gucci has ambitions to become a \$12 billion brand ([see story](#)), and jewelry could help fuel its growth further ([see story](#)).

Since arriving at Gucci, Mr. Michele has put his own touch on the brand's existing collections, including its fragrance portfolio.

Gucci is evoking a softer side of its Bamboo fragrance through a revamped look and corresponding advertising update.

The scent, which debuted in 2015, was marketed at launch with a commercial featuring Wonder Woman actress Gal Gadot, who was depicted as a glamorous, sensual renaissance woman ([see story](#)). A campaign released in 2017 reflects Gucci's marketing aesthetic under Mr. Michele, allowing the effort to more closely fit with the brand's current image ([see story](#)).

"This is a departure for Gucci and now they are embarking upon a combination of an upscale ambient home arena and personal EDP's with a specific nod to 'traditional' single-note ingredients such as rose, amber, lavender, violet, cypress, woods and oud," said Sue Phillips, bespoke perfumier and founder/CEO, [Scenterprises](#), New York.

"There is such a proliferation of perfumes that this classic, traditional approach harkens back to perfumery' - even the packaging has a traditional feel," she said.

"This will certainly appeal to a broader base consumer versus the high-fashion consumer, as many consumers are

reminded of memories and emotions with these ingredients based on a more traditional time in their lives."

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