

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

## Fenty captures Rihanna's voice to sell her new fragrance

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*Rihanna is releasing her first fragrance. Image credit: Fenty Beauty*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Rihanna and LVMH's Fenty Beauty has unveiled its first fragrance in a unique online push that relies on audio to evoke the spirit of the new scent.

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Fenty Eau de Parfum: Bridgetown is inspired by the hometown of singer Robyn Rihanna Fenty, the label's founder. The Bridgetown scent, which is launching as an online exclusive, was revealed on a microsite that uses audio and images to describe the fragrance's development.

"The audio storytelling is incredibly impactful," said Kelly Bayett, cofounder and creative director at **Barking Owl**, Santa Monica.

"What is amazing is that Rihanna is involved because she owns the company, but really the entire campaign is about sense memory; how a scent can transport you to something real in your life," she said. "It's absolutely brilliant.

"What memories will be triggered when you encounter this scent in a few years?"

Ms. Bayett is not affiliated with Fenty, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. Barking Owl is a music and sound company that has worked with brands including Audi, Tag Heuer, Apple and Nike.

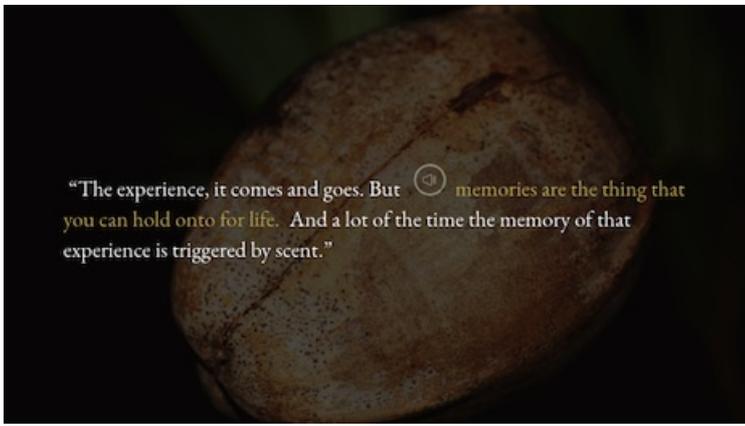
Fenty memories

Fenty Beauty launched as a partnership between Rihanna and LVMH's beauty incubator Kendo Brands announced the new parfum on social media, encouraging followers to visit [fragrance.fentybeauty.com](https://www.fragrance.fentybeauty.com) for early access.

The microsite opens to a map of Barbados, with a gold bottle icon appearing where Bridgetown is located. Rihanna grew up in the capital city until relocating to the United States to pursue her music career.

After clicking the bottle icon, a "Bridgetown" pop up opens. A video of Rihanna posing in a delicate dress is seen on the page's dark background.

As users scroll "Fenty Memories," they learn more about the fragrance and how it connects to Rihanna's personal stories.



"The experience, it comes and goes. But <sup>🔊</sup> memories are the thing that you can hold onto for life. And a lot of the time the memory of that experience is triggered by scent."

*Shoppers are able to hear audio of Rihanna explaining the inspiration behind the fragrance. Image credit: Fenty Beauty*

"Scent triggers memory like nothing else," the microsite introduction reads. "Growing up on the coast of Barbados, Rihanna learned that early on."

There are no images of the perfume bottle itself and no mention of the fragrance notes.

Instead, the page resembles a mood board or scrapbook, with images of Rihanna, roses and more interspersed between quotes from the star. Different phrases are circled for emphasis, as if in a notebook.

"Most fragrances rely on a celebrity endorsement and some kind of overly dramatic scenario, but what is amazing about this, is that you can really be a part of an experience instead of just this weird world of fantasy that is so dated and boring," Ms. Bayett said.

In another personal touch, users are prompted to press speaker icons and hold to listen to Rihanna in her own words. This makes the digital experience more authentic, as Rihanna's passion for the fragrance and appreciation for her childhood memories is clearly heard.

"It always felt like my mom was going to get ready for work and look so beautiful," Rihanna says in one snippet. "And the last thing I would remember after she left was the smell she left in the house, and that trumped every other smell that related to my struggle."

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by FENTY BEAUTY BY RIHANNA (@fentybeauty)

*Rihanna elaborates on her early memories of fragrances*

After users click "own it" on the microsite, they can choose to visit an early access product page on the Fenty Beauty site to purchase the fragrance.

The genderless Fenty eau de parfum consists entirely of middle notes, including magnolia, musk, tangerine, blueberry, Bulgarian rose absolute, geranium and patchouli.

Its amber, vintage-inspired bottle is meant to fit in one's hand and the stopper is engraved with the Fenty logo.



*The first fragrance from Fenty is only available online. Image credit: Fenty Beauty*

While many luxury brands tout fragrances as entry level offerings, with a \$120 price tag for 2.5 fl. oz., the Fenty fragrance costs more than other Fenty Beauty and Fenty Skin products, excluding gift sets.

According to Fenty Beauty, the fragrance will be available exclusively online with shipping to the continental U.S. only. It remains to be seen if it will eventually be offered at other retailers where Fenty Beauty and Skin are sold, including LVMH subsidiaries Sephora and DFS Group.

However, other icons on the Fenty Fragrance microsite and the prompt "check back later" seem to hint at more upcoming launches.

#### Fragrance marketing

The Fenty eau de parfum is Rihanna's first major launch under her beauty label since she and LVMH decided to pause her ready-to-wear label, also under the Fenty name, in February.

While Fenty Beauty has had strong sales since its launch in 2017 eventually serving as a launchpad for the skincare brand Fenty Skin the fashion house struggled to establish a clear identity after its debut. Since shuttering the fashion brand, LVMH has been continued investing in Fenty's beauty and skincare businesses ([sees story](#)).

The strategy around the Fenty fragrance launch is the latest example of Rihanna's digital-first mindset. The entrepreneur, however, is not alone in experimenting with audio as a way to sell fragrances typically a high-touch purchase.

This summer, beauty brand Esté Lauder reimagined the concept of fragrance marketing through its "Dare to Love" digital campaign for its Beautiful Magnolia eau de parfum.

In partnership with the *The New York Times* 'Modern Love' podcast, Esté Lauder brought to life through four custom audio spots about four types of love written by author and activist Rebecca Walker, writer Alejandra Castro-Castillo, writer and director Em Weinstein and writer and photographer Taiye Selasi ([see story](#)).

Esté Lauder differed from Fenty, however, since the label still promoted the eau de parfum through more traditional fragrance marketing with brand ambassador Ana de Armas.

"We are ready for people to reinvent what advertising a fragrance is," Ms. Bayett said. "We can't smell it through media, but in this work, Fenty created experiences that the viewer could be a part of.

"It's brilliantly interactive," she said. "I am a huge fan."