

Style

THE SUNDAY TIMES

OCTOBER 19, 2008



HOW TO BE A RECESSIONISTA

50 WAYS TO BE CHIC ON THE CHEAP

I NEED A LIFE NOT A WIFE

THE BACHELOR BITES BACK

YOUTH ELIXIR

THE NEW ANTI-AGEING PERFUME

note

EXCLUSIVE

“HAPPY HOUSE, VODKA TONIC, THE SHORTEST SKIRT AND THE HIGHEST HEELS!”

MISS MOSS'S GUIDE TO A GOOD TIME

LET US

PERFUME'S NEVER BEEN MORE POPULAR, AND DOESN'T THE INDUSTRY JUST KNOW IT. **EDWINA INGS-CHAMBERS** ON THE LATEST GIMMICKS THAT WILL HAVE YOU REACHING FOR THE BOTTLE

Hold on to your atomisers, folks. According to Harvey Nichols, perfume sales were up 40% at the beginning of the month. Fragrance, after all, has traditionally weathered financial storms – it's all part of the so-called "lipstick factor" (when times are tough, women stop splashing out on big luxury items, preferring to treat themselves to a new lipply).

So what are the latest fragrance launches to hold our attention?

THE GRAFFITI SPRAY

It was always going to be the case that when Zowie Broach and Brian Kirby, the duo behind the London fashion brand Boudicca, launched a fragrance, it would be one with a difference. They have not disappointed. Wode, which launched during Paris fashion week, combines both sight and smell: it is blue and comes in a silver spray can, which looks like it should be used for doing graffiti, trussed up with a black ribbon. The blue "dye" disappears after a few minutes, so no clothes are ruined, but the sense of drama is strong, lending an entirely different spirit to spraying on scent: it feels more like an empowering battle cry than a veil of seduction.

"The concept started in 2001, when V Magazine gave a brief to designers who weren't capable at that point of launching their own fragrances, asking what they would do if they could have one," says Broach. So the duo took inspiration from their namesake, Queen Boudicca. Woad (the spelling is changed for the fragrance) was the blue dye Boudicca and her warriors painted on themselves for battle. And graffiti? It is "a tribal marking".

The pair teamed up with Geza Schoen of Escentric Molecules to work on the smell and were "very much led" by him, as he interpreted the words and sentiments that they wanted to get across – including incorporating the smell of an old oil pump that Kirby remembered from a garage when he was a child. Notes include a herbal-spicy mix of juniper berry, cardamom and nutmeg, which merge with saffron, tuberose and amber to create a heady, almost rebellious, mood.

It is set to remain on the exclusive side. Numbers are limited to 4,000 for the first run, but the scent "doesn't have to be everywhere immediately; it can take its own journey", says Broach.

2 Wode Paint, £65, and Wode Scent (more intense, without the colour), £75; boudicawode.com

THE VIOLET HIT BY A METEORITE

According to the milliner Stephen Jones, there is a historical precedent for fragrances created by accessory designers. "Glove makers made it and used it to hide the smell of the tanned leather, which was tanned with urine, so it was all a bit smelly," he explains.

Jones had no worries on that particular score when he became the first person to team up with Comme des Garçons to create a perfume. So what did he want from it? "I wanted it to somehow smell like outer space and to be slightly space-agey – which is weird, coming from a hat maker, because even though we try to escape the past, the Queen Mother is our patron saint. So I wanted to have something modernistic, but still quite sweet and familiar. Eventually, I came up with the concept of a violet hit by a meteorite." Of course he did.

Housed in a black bottle inspired by a late 19th-century ink bottle, the fragrance – a blend of violet, cloves and mandarin – is, according to Jones, what the Comme des Garçons founder Rei Kawakubo said it should be: "Strong and beautiful; that is the way she describes Comme des Garçons' fragrances."

It has been "a huge learning curve", says Jones. "Basically, I've done most of the creation, though Rei has been a wonderful editor." It was she who suggested the bottle be housed in a mini hatbox.

1 CDG Parfum Stephen Jones, £75, from Dover Street Market; 020 7518 0680

THE ANTI-AGEING PERFUME

Can you turn back almost 10 years with a fragrance? The folks at Harvey Prince think so. "The patent-pending fragrance elixir defies your skin's natural age-revealing scent," says Tracy Van Heusden, the perfumery and cosmetics buyer at Harvey Nichols. "Research has proven that men believe women who use Ageless Fantasy to be at least eight years younger. Women buy into skincare that allows them to fight the early signs of ageing, and now there is a fragrance that helps to knock off the years."

The fragrance uses a blend of notes, such as pineapple, grapefruit and jasmine, that people perceive as being young. Perhaps the elixir of youth really is just a spritz away.

3 Harvey Prince Ageless Fantasy, £59, from Harvey Nichols



SPRAY



Blue rinse The indigo colour of Wode, the new scent by the design duo Boudicca, disappears after a few minutes