

SCENTS OF CALM

Craving peace of mind? Spray these clever new perfumes to soothe your soul and boost your mood

WORDS ALICE DU PARCQ
ILLUSTRATION JESSICA MAY UNDERWOOD



DEALING WITH overwhelm is a must-have skill in 2017. Our 'always-on' culture coupled with an often alarming news agenda is making us all seek out personal solutions to the very important job of unwinding. Whether through an app, a reflective podcast or a healing sanctuary on a Bali beach, the ways we now unravel our stresses come in all shapes and forms. So if you're a perfume lover and feeling the strain of everyday angst, may we suggest it's time to connect these two worlds?

Experts are keen to explain that fragrance directly impacts our subconscious – 'Perfumery is a game of associations,' explains Palvinder Mann, fragrance manager for Estée Lauder. 'Emotions are stored in a part of the brain called the limbic system, which also supports a person's behavioural tendencies and abstract feelings such as "motivation" and "arousal". This is also the same part of the brain that evaluates scents. Ergo – I smell, I feel.'

As it happens, the latest fragrance launches are more sensorial than ever, wrapping you in ingredients chosen to manipulate and tend to your most deep-rooted feelings. These mindful scents can boost confidence, as well as achieve calm and courage – pretty convenient, given our current state of play.

We've picked the perfect tonics to smooth anxiety spikes, rekindle courage, refresh your mind and motivate your mojo.



SCENT TO FEEL... SAFE AND SUPPORTED

Whether you suffer from a constant stream of stress or bouts of acute panic, a lungful of consoling scent might just bring you back from the brink. 'We derive comfort in fragrance notes linked to sources of comfort elsewhere in our lives,' says Palvinder. 'Consider, for example, the ultimate "security blanket" of your childhood: your parents. Lots of make-up that our mothers wore, especially face powders, carry the powdery scent of iris, violets and nurturing vanilla, so the scent you might catch when she held you in her arms would, in adulthood, translate to a textural feeling of security and comfort. Within a modern perfume those notes can also be incredibly sophisticated.' On days when you feel a little off-kilter, this safety net of pillow-soft perfumes will hold you by the hand and instil a sense of calm and composure.

1. Bulgari Splendida Iris d'Or, £97 – a maternal hug, buttery-rich with violet-infused sweetness. **2.** Bottega Veneta Eau de Velours, £52 – an enveloping cloak akin to old-fashioned powder puffs. **3.** La Perla La Mia Perla, £39.95 – a hazy swirl of talcmy iris root and peony petals, as if wrapped in a pale pink cashmere shawl. **4.** Modern Muse Le Rouge, £49 – richly autumnal, full of syrupy berries and warm vanilla, like the scent of the perfect red lipstick

**SCENT TO FEEL...
READY TO ROAR**

Suffer from social stage fright? A courage-fuelling fragrance could be just the thing. 'Perfume holds the power to build confidence,' says Alice Olins, co-founder of empowerment networking hub Step Up Club (step-up-club.net). 'The right scent can evoke a time when we felt strong and that positive impact carries through to our external demeanour.' Grounding notes from the forest floor, such as woods, nuts and earthy patchouli, provide anchoring, replacing adrenaline bursts with composure and resolution. 'Confidence is a state of mind rather than a personality trait,' adds Alice, 'and when we accept that we have the power to build our confidence, we can learn to be stronger, more resilient and happier versions of ourselves.' Try these nutty, woody, positivity-laced perfumes.

- 5. Juliette Has a Gun Sunny Side Up, £76 – a balmy, optimistic mix of woods, jasmine and coconut.
- 6. Trish McEvoy 100, £155 – Trish's vision of feeling 100% is cossetting, smoky and packed with cedarwood and leather notes.
- 7. Aromatherapy Associates Eau de Parfum, £64 – the earthy base of vetiver, meditative patchouli and enlivening frankincense feels empowering.
- 8. Jo Malone London English Oak & Hazelnut, £44 – bold and penetrating, with roasted woods and toasted nuts

**SCENT TO FEEL...
SHARP AND
SMART**

You can post all the Insta-waffle affirmation quotes you want, it's impossible to nail life all the time. And on those days when you're feeling less perky cheerleader, more overwhelmed plate-spinner, it's worth spritzing a revitalising scent to help you decipher the chaos and function more efficiently. For the ultimate energy rush, psychologist Suzy Reading (who collaborated with Neom to produce their mind-enhancing perfume, below) has this advice: 'Scent has an undeniable impact on your mood. Bracing herbs and citrus notes are the perfect companion for your busy day or lifestyle. They provide extra bursts of energy coupled with a feeling of personal power.' Try these shots of stimulating botanics and juicy, zippy citrus for an instant intellectual injection.

- 9. Penhaligon's Portraits The Remarkable Success of Mr. Harrod, £185 – a brain-jolt with a spicy cinnamon buzz and mouthwatering fruits.
- 10. Y by Yves Saint Laurent, £53 – with bright bergamot and ginger plus invigorating fir (ignore the fact it's 'for men').
- 11. Neom Energy Burst, £49 – the punchy mix of grapefruit, lemon and rosemary is sparkling and luminous.
- 12. Vilhelm Basilico & Fellini, £60 – like a magical rainforest dripping with vitality and life.

**SCENT TO FEEL...
CONFIDENT
AND KISSABLE**

No one is invincible to first-date nerves, regardless of age or experience, so consider accessorising with some liquid libido. 'Add the hypnotic, captivating allure of tuberose to your soirée for a little "je ne sais come hither",' suggests Palvinder. 'These waxy, generous flowers are rich in an aromatic compound called indole, which is also produced naturally by the human body (in particular at the root of hair follicles in our most intimate regions). It gives scent a carnal quality, which puts both the wearer and inhaler in the mind of amorous activity. Tuberose comes from the lusciously humid climes of India where, in centuries past, virgins were forbidden entry to gardens where it grew, for fear that its scent would effectively deflower them and lure them down a path of corruption.' Give into these salacious scents and turn your nightcap into breakfast in bed. ■

- 13. AERIN Tuberose Le Soir, £145 – a sexy, voluptuous and indecent tuberose magnified by vanilla and amber.
- 14. Twilly d'Hermès, £47 – the heady dose of creamy, silky tuberose is shot through with a fiery kick of fresh ginger.
- 15. Chanel Gabrielle, £79 – refreshing yet ultra-glam, bold tuberose is combined with a cluster of other white flowers.
- 16. Gucci Bloom, £52 – a lighter, fresher, more gossamer tuberose thanks to hints of dewy green stalks – ideal for a daytime rendezvous

Photos: Giandomenico Traina, AERIN: esteeauder.co.uk/world-aerin, Aromatherapy Associates: spacenk.com, Bottega: debenhams.com, Bulgari: harrods.com, Chanel: chanel.com, Estée Lauder: esteeauder.co.uk, Gucci: gucciboots.com, Hermès: hermesparfumer.com, Jo Malone: jomalone.co.uk, Juliette: harveynichols.com, La Perla: johnlewis.com, Neom: neomorganics.com, Penhaligon's: penhaligon.com, Trish McEvoy: trishmcevoy.com, YSL: ysbeauty.co.uk

