



The Perfume Lover: A Personal History of Scents

By Denyse Beaulieu

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The Perfume Lover is a candid personal account of the process of composing a fragrance, filled with sensual scent descriptions, sexy tidbits, and historical vignettes.

What if the most beautiful night in your life inspired a perfume?

When Denyse Beaulieu was growing up near Montreal, perfume was forbidden in her house, spurring a childhood curiosity that became an intellectual and sensual passion. It is this passion she pursued all the way to Paris, where she now lives, and which led her to become a respected fragrance writer. But little did she know that it would also lead her to achieve a perfume lover's wildest dream: When Denyse tells famous perfumer Bertrand Duchaufour at L'Artisan Parfumeur of a sensual night spent in Seville under a blossoming orange tree, wrapped in the arms of a beautiful man, the story stirs his imagination and together they create a scent that captures the essence of that night. As their unique creative collaboration unfolds, the perfume-in-progress conjures intimate memories, leading Beaulieu to make sense of her life through scents. Throughout the book, she weaves the evocative history of perfumery into her personal journey, in an intensely passionate voice: the masters and the masterpieces, the myths and the myth-busting, down to the molecular mysteries that weld our flesh to flowers.

Now, just to set your nostrils aquiver: *Séville à l'aube* is an orange blossom oriental with zesty, green and balsamic effects, with notes of petitgrain, petitgrain citronnier, orange blossom, beeswax, incense, and lavender, and is now available at fragrance outlets in the U.S.

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Editorial Review

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Perfume seduces, and it is so much a part of dressing to please that it's often taken for granted. It will be difficult, though, to think of scent in such an uncomplicated fashion after reading this tantalizing mix of history, contemporary events, and autobiography. The author opens her narrative with Bertrand Duchaufour, head of L'Artisan Parfumeur, an organization that creates many of today's celebrated and favorite odors. He agreed to whip up a scent capturing the essence of her years-ago fling in Seville. Interspersed with Duchaufour's trials in arriving at the right scent are personal tales of the author's divorce from Tomcat; her liaisons with Monsieur; her upbringing in Montreal, complete with allergies and Catholic private schooling; and her intense desire to be a Parisian. Integrated in her elegant yet dense prose are definitions (such as perfume is but an aesthetic, cultural, and emotional elaboration of the raw materials provided by nature); acknowledgments of the great figures and great moments in the industry (for instance, the 1982 Dior launch of Poison); and a hint of the science and art that go into the making of a perfume. --Barbara Jacobs

Review

"The Perfume Lover is a gorgeous romp through the history of perfume and a personal exploration of its role in Beaulieu's life as a woman and world class sensualist. In lush prose that is as evocative as its subject, Beaulieu describes the alchemy of perfume: its intriguing manufacture, its delicious seductions, and the potent mnemonic rhapsodies ignited by the mystery of olfaction. A thoroughly delectable and passionately intelligent read." ?Debra Ollivier, author of the national bestseller *What French Women Know*

*"Denyse Beaulieu captures the intimate pas de deux between perfumer and creative muse. We see a new fragrance brought to life amid a revolution that has transformed the nature of perfume and made stars of perfumers. Denyse Beaulieu is a keen observer, a thoughtful guide, and a graceful story teller. *The Perfume Lover* enchants and seduces as effortlessly as it teaches and entertains."* ?Avery Gilbert, author of *What the Nose Knows: The Science of Scent in Everyday Life*

"The Perfume Lover is more than the story of the making of a perfume; it is the story of perfume, a blogger's saga written with wit and passion, insight and elegance. I read it first with interest, and then again, for pleasure. Denyse Beaulieu is a rare muse." ?Michael Edwards, author of *Fragrances of the World and Perfume Legends*

*"A uniquely personal--even intimate--story of a love affair with perfume and with Paris. Chatty, gossipy, and charming, *The Perfume Lover* draws aside the veil on the secret world of scent."* ?Tilar Mazzeo, author of *The Widow Clicquot and The Secret of Chanel No. 5*

"Femme fatale Denyse Beaulieu undresses the art of perfumery with a sensual, scintillating striptease." ?Laren Stover, author of *The Bombshell Manual of Style*

"[Beaulieu] writes with penetrating intellect about perfume, gender roles, cultural signifiers, the boudoir and her Bohemian life in a style that marries Jacques Derrida with Anaïs Nin." ?Los Angeles Times

"...an intoxicating book that interweaves both perfume's and the author's personal histories. Beaulieu makes brilliant use of such diverse subtopics as prerevolutionary France, 20th-century fragrance icons, their products, and later-generation fragrances, changing gender ideas and their connection to perfumes, the relationship between perfumes and fragrances in other products, and the contemporary mania for celebrity

scent.” ?*Publishers Weekly*

“fascinating insight . . . *The Perfume Lover* is not only a tale of the history of perfume; it is above all tale of one woman's passion for olfaction and for life.” ?*Basenotes*

About the Author

DENYSE BEAULIEU is a Paris-based translator, fragrance writer, perfume editor for *Citizen K*, and industry consultant who established herself as one of the foremost bloggers in the field with *Grain de Musc*. Her expertise has been acknowledged by at the London College of Fashion where she teaches an intensive "Understanding Fragrance" course, and the Société Française des Parfumeurs, where she is lecturer.

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