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# An Ode to Mlle. Antoinette's Parfumerie



*Mlle. Antoinette's Parfumerie first opened in 1966.*

I just spent a day at Disneyland with my family, taking in all of the aromas of churros and popcorn and chlorine-filled water rides. In New Orleans Square, right next to my favorite restaurant (shoutout to the Monte Cristo sandwich at Cafe Orleans), is Mlle. Antoinette's Parfumerie. It first debuted at the park in 1966 and reopened in 2011 after closing in the 1990s, and it's one of my favorite spots.

Walking through the door is like taking a step back in time. The shop workers wear black dresses, all of the bottles are perfectly arranged with blotters to sample. The paintings on the walls were commissioned by Walt Disney's wife Lillian, to whom the shop was dedicated when it first opened.

I stopped in for just a moment to sample a few fragrances, before heading off for more rides and magic.

It may seem strange to have a perfume shop in the middle of an amusement park, but it harkens back to a different era, one where the perfume shop was a staple. The retailers are so attentive and want to share the history of the shop and their knowledge of the fragrances. The experience feels personalized, even though so many people walk through that door every day.

The term "fine fragrance" always conjures up images of high society for me. The idea of fancy dresses and formal dinners and a fine perfume to top it all off. But it doesn't have to be that way. Fine fragrance is becoming mainstream, and consumers of all ages and social groups are using fragrance to express themselves. Whether it be a fruity gourmand or a fresh citrus scent, there truly is a perfume for everyone.

This is where our industry can really get creative and break the mold. Fragrance is reaching more and more audiences, and formulators and manufacturers are leveraging that success. Fine fragrance doesn't have to be the perfect pink glass bottle with a separate atomizer. It can be portable and personal.

I will always walk into Mlle. Antoinette's Parfumerie when I find myself at Disneyland, and I will always take a moment to stop and smell what they are offering. Some of my favorite perfumes have come from that store. Sometimes you just need a bit of a poison apple scent, courtesy of Christian Dior, of course.





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**Avant Organics**

*http://avantorganics.com/*

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## Acetophenone, Natural

**Axxence USA**

*http://www.axxence.com/*

Natural Acetophenone (FEMA #2009, CAS #98-86-2) is recognized for its floral character, with a clear resemblance to hawthorn blossoms. In flavor applications, acetophenone contributes a powdery, bitter almond and cherry character with subtle fruity and coumarinic undertones. Widely found in nature, this product can enhance a broad range of flavors, from fruity and berry profiles to nut, confectionery and savory applications, adding lift, clarity and depth. Its combination of floral brightness and flavor impact makes acetophenone a versatile building block for a variety of formulations. EU and US Natural, Kosher, Vegetarian, and Non-GMO.



## 2-Methyl Pyrazine, Natural

**Penta Fine Ingredients**

*http://www.pentarfineingredients.com/*

Discover the rich, aromatic appeal of Natural 2-Methyl Pyrazine, featuring an inviting nutty, cocoa-like aroma and smooth nutty taste. Ideal for baked goods, confections and beverages, it enhances flavor profiles with warmth, depth and indulgent character, delivering consistent, high-quality results every time. Natural, Kosher and Halal.



## Ecomusk R

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*https://www.symrise.com/scent-and-care/aroma-molecules/perfumery-ingredients/#Ecomusk-R*

Ecomusk R offers an eco-friendly solution with additional properties, such as renewability and biodegradability. The rich, powdery, nourishing musk ingredient supports dark fruity notes complementing fruity themes like apple and red berries. It creates a velvety effect on the skin and cotton-like effects with hints of ionone.

Images courtesy of the manufacturers




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# Kerry Unveils 2026 Global Taste Charts



*This year's Taste Charts are powered by the company's end-to-end digital platform KerryNow.*

On January 14, 2026, flavor company Kerry released its 2026 Global Taste Charts, a comprehensive guide to the flavors set to inspire food and beverage innovation. This year's Taste Charts are powered by the company's end-to-end digital platform KerryNow, allowing customers to directly order samples of trending flavors.

"The food and beverage landscape is evolving at a breathtaking pace, and manufacturers are under more pressure than ever to meet the changing needs of today's consumers," said Leigh-Anne Vaughan, vice president of product technologies. "Brands cannot afford to simply react; they must anticipate and innovate at pace. We challenged ourselves this year to truly walk in the shoes of our customers, designing the new Taste Charts digital platform, powered by KerryNow, to allow them to unlock smarter, faster and more radical innovation.

"We want manufacturers to feel empowered and confident that their flavor decisions will engage target consumers. By making product information and samples available instantly, we are not just providing a roadmap for innovation—we are providing the fuel to get there faster."

The 2026 Taste Charts includes eight product categories: refreshing beverages, alcohol and alcohol-inspired beverages, tea, coffee and cocoa, savory snacks, sweet snacks, soups/sauces/dressings, meats and supplements. Kerry's insights team used several online data points, including menu trends and social media conversations, to determine the patterns shaping global taste. Further, the report is broken down by region to give more specific insights.

2026 Taste Charts Highlights

The Dragon Fruit Phenomenon: Traditionally rooted in Asian markets, dragon fruit has transcended its regional origins to become a breakout global flavor. With a 17% CAGR in new product launches through 2025, it is reshaping refreshment categories across Europe and the Americas.

Botanicals & Florals: As consumers gravitate towards complex, aromatic profiles, orange blossom and hibiscus are forecasted as key future flavors in the US and Asia Pacific beverage sectors. Meanwhile, finger lime is exploding in popularity across Europe.

Global Cross-Pollination: In the USA, gochujang launches have grown 120% over the past 12 months, while bulgogi has left from an emerging flavor in 2025 to become the #4 fastest-growing flavor in the 2026 meat and meals chart. Simultaneously, the swicy trend is evolving, with hot honey and spicy mango driving double digit growth in bakery and confectionery products.

Elevated Staples Beyond Cheddar: Consumers are redefining comfort by trading standard options for premium, texture-rich varieties. The charts map the evolution of 31 specific cheese varieties, revealing a shift toward heritage-rich profiles.

Image by master1305 at Adobe Stock

# ADM Invest $26 Million in Erlanger Facility to Strengthen Reformulation Capabilities



*"We welcome ADM's new investments in northern Kentucky," said BE NKY Growth Partnership CEO Lee Crume.*

Courtesy of ADM

ADM announced its investment in its Erlanger, Ky. campus with a focus on innovation, growth and addressing demand for reformulation in food and beverage.

The investment, totaling $26 million, will include a 3,600-square-foot expansion of an existing facility, representing a 40% increase of capabilities. Further, the company states that the site will also see multiple digitalization, automated technology and integrated process upgrades.

According to ADM's proprietary research, over 80% of US consumers favor reformulation and 63% prefer that brands reformulate existing products to align with better-for-you positioning. The company used this research to identify five key pillars driving product reformulation: cleaner label, reduced sugar, added protein, reduced sodium and optimized fat.

"Our dedication to scaling our innovative solutions for customers, both in the US and globally, coincides with shifting consumer preferences and changing regulatory guidelines, impacting all facets of food and beverage product development," said Ian Pinner, president of ADM's nutrition business. "These enhanced capabilities at our Erlanger facility support our customers in navigating regulatory compliance and achieving consumer acceptance through reformulating for sensory and nutritional optimization."

The announcement builds on the $15 million investment in the site in 2025, resulting in a 7,200-square-foot expansion of ADM's Customer Creation and Innovation Center.

"We welcome ADM's new investments in northern Kentucky," said BE NKY Growth Partnership CEO Lee Crume. "The Cincinnati region has a strong legacy of leadership in the food and flavoring industry, and ADM is building on that tradition with investments in an expanded facility and technology innovations to meet evolving consumer demands."

# New Directions Aromatics Partners with Aromatic Fragrances International to Create Specialty Ingredients Platform



*Company officials hope that the partnership will help expand New Directions' footprint in the United States.*

Natural ingredients supplier New Directions Aromatics announced its new partnership with B2B fragrance supplier Aromatic Fragrances International to develop a digitally-enabled specialty ingredients platform.

Aromatic Fragrances International was founded in 2013 and is based in Cartersville, Ga. The company formulates and manufacturers compounded fragrances and serves the beauty, personal care, home fragrance and other markets. Further, the company has a proprietary fragrance library of more than 50,000 scents and is supported by an e-commerce infrastructure.

"We built Aromatic Fragrances in an effort to make fragrance innovation accessible and reliable for growing brands," said co-founder Sean Riordan. "This partnership brings together complementary capabilities intended to provide customers access to broader ingredient capabilities and enhanced resources."

Co-founder Josh Thompson added, "Joining forces with New Directions supports the expansion of our capabilities and service offering while maintaining focus on customer service and quality. Sean and I are excited to continue leading Aromatic Fragrances as we build the next chapter with New Directions."

The acquisition of Aromatic Fragrances is New Directions' first acquisition following its strategic investment by TruArc Partners in 2022. Company officials hope that the partnership will help expand New Directions' footprint in the United States and build a comprehensive e-commerce-enabled platform to serve its customers.

"This partnership aligns with our investment strategy by expanding New Directions' footprint into the US while remaining focused on consumer end markets, an e-commerce-enabled business model and product-defining ingredients," said Gerald Sheehan, partner at TruArc Partners. "We look forward to supporting the combined organization as it integrates its capabilities and serves its customers."

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# Tune In!



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## Multimedia

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# PARFEX Breaks Ground on New Grasse Industrial Site




*The work will be carried out by general contractor GSE in two phases.*

On January 8, 2026, PARFEX laid the foundation stone for the extension and renovation of its industrial site in the Bois de Grasse Business Park. The work will be carried out by general contractor GSE in two phases.

PARFEX, which was acquired by Croda in 2021, is a French fragrance house focused on sustainable and natural-certified fragrances. Company officials hope this investment will provide PARFEX with more efficient facilities aligned with its growth ambitions.

The first phase of the project will be the industrial extension of the site, including the installation of a robotic volumetric dosing system as well as new production areas. The second phase will include the renovation of the site's existing laboratories, offices and shipping areas.

"This investment is part of a long-term strategy initiated in early 2023 with the construction of our new Creation Center, inaugurated in June 2025," general manager Christian Galucci said. "It has been made possible thanks to the strong and long-term support of our parent company, Croda, which supports PARFEX in the development of its industrial ambitions. The future plant will be built to the highest standards of sustainability, safety and technology, with state-of-the-art robots that will enable us to triple our capacity. This commitment once again confirms the confidence PARFEX places in the Grasse region and its unique ecosystem."

Courtesy of PARFEX

# MANE Group Acquires ChemoSensoryx Biosciences



*The acquisition will allow MANE to strengthen its innovation and scientific understanding in smell, taste and trigeminal sensations.*

MANE announced the acquisition of Belgian biotech company ChemoSensoryx Biosciences. The acquisition will allow MANE to strengthen its innovation and scientific understanding in smell, taste and trigeminal sensations.

ChemoSensoryx Biosciences is located in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, and specializes in biotechnology for sensory modulation of taste, smell and trigeminal receptors. The company's technology platform offers innovative solutions in the discovery and optimization of active ingredients that are able to modulate human sensory receptors.

According to the company's press release, officials at MANE believe that ChemoSensoryx Biosciences' platform will enhance MANE's current capabilities in several key areas, including odor control, blooming technologies, taste modulation, olfactory receptor modulation and trigeminal receptor modulation.

"With an experienced team of scientists with a strong expertise in molecular and cellular biology, ChemoSensoryx is a leading discovery company in the field of olfactory, taste and trigeminal receptors," said Samantha Mane, chief executive officer of the MANE Group. "We are delighted to welcome the ChemoSensoryx to the MANE family. This acquisition will reinforce MANE capabilities to deliver global and ever-evolving expertise in flavors and fragrance solutions, creating lasting and successful products."




Image by Fikri Haikal at Adobe Stock

# IMCD Opens New Life Science Hub in Cologne



*IMCD has over 80 application laboratories across 60 countries to offer co-creation and formulation support.*

Specialty chemical and ingredient company IMCD Group announced the modernization of its food and nutrition application laboratory in Germany, which has officially reopened as its Cologne site.

IMCD is headquartered in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, and is a leading global partner in the beauty, personal care, food and beverage, home care and pharmaceutical industries. The company has over 80 application laboratories across 60 countries to offer co-creation and formulation support.

According to the company's press release, the Cologne site will combine three specialized laboratory areas under one roof: food and nutrition, pharmaceutical, and beauty and personal care. Company officials hope that this move will strengthen IMCD's position as an innovator in the German food and beverage industry.

"The new Life Science Hub strengthens interdisciplinary product development and provides our food and beverage customers with a best-in-class environment for application support, technical consulting and regulatory support with the aim of developing innovative and market-ready solutions," said Daniel Dany, business unit manager of food and nutrition at IMCD Germany.

Katja Wilmes, application technologist of the food and nutrition business unit, added, "with our modern equipment, the test kitchen and the interdisciplinary interfaces, we can support our customers even more specifically with demanding recipes. Whether we intensify the taste, improve the mouthfeel, extend the shelf-life or enrich the products with nutrients, we combine the right ingredients with technical expertise. This results in new solutions that can be quickly adapted to changing market conditions."

The new IMCD Cologne site is now open for customer visits and joint projects.

Courtesy of IMCD

# CIRANDA Launches Two New Baking Chips Made with Plant-Based Ingredients



*These chips were designed to meet consumer demand for plant-based sweets with alternative sweeteners.*

North American food ingredient company CIRANDA announced the launch of two new baking chips, each made with organic, plant-based materials. These chips are produced in an allergen-free facility and were designed to meet consumer demand for plant-based sweets with alternative sweeteners.

"We're hearing more and more from customers who need reliable allergen control, so we're proud to offer chocolate ingredients made in facilities that are free of the top nine US allergens," said Mariah Sandkamp, director of marketing, innovation and product for CIRANDA. "These new chips give developers real flexibility to create indulgent products that are also inclusive and aligned with today's clean-label and dietary expectations."

The launch includes organic plant-based white chips and organic chocolate chips made with coconut sugar. The white chips contain 45% cocoa butter and are described as semi-sweet with notes of vanilla. This ingredient is made with organic cocoa butter sourced from smallholder farmers in Peru and refined in state-of-the-art facilities to ensure consistency.

The chocolate chips are available as 70% bittersweet chips and are crafted with organic cocoa beans from Peru. Further, by using coconut sugar, the company claims that the simple evaporation process preserves the natural nutrients and flavor complexity. CIRANDA also boasts a uniform sizing in its chocolate chips to ensure easy blending and a consistent melt.

Both baking chip varieties are organic, non-GMO, dairy-free and gluten-free.

Image by YesPhotographers at Adobe Stock

# Flavored Spirit Market Expected to Reach $30 Billion by 2031



*North America accounts for the largest share of the flavored spirits market as a result of developed technology and an intense consumer market.*

The global flavored spirit market is projected to reach $30 billion by 2031 at a compound annual growth rate of 5%, according to a new report from Market Research Intellect. The market is currently being driven by consumer demand for unique taste profiles and experiential drinking options beyond traditional spirits.

"Infusions of fruit, spice, herbal and dessert-inspired flavors across vodka, rum, whiskey and tequila categories are attracting younger demographics and casual drinkers," the report states. "Growth is driven by cocktail culture expansion, social consumption trends and premium packaging that enhances shelf appeal. Manufacturers focus on clean-label flavoring, reduced sugar formulations and limited-edition seasonal launches to strengthen brand differentiation."

North America accounts for the largest share of the flavored spirits market as a result of developed technology and an intense consumer market. The region is expected to see a gradual rise through the forecast period because of the established infrastructure. Asia-Pacific is predicted to be the fastest-growing market over the forecast period, with the expansion of the middle class in China, India and Japan.

Further, the global flavored spirits market is being driven by increased investment and focus on research and development as a competitive advantage. Companies are working to create innovative products with efficiency, scalability and sustainability. Emerging technologies are helping product developers continue to innovate while reducing costs and time.

"R&D spending in the flavored spirit market is at an all-time high, with leading players allocating upwards of 10-13% of their annual revenue toward product development and process optimization," the report states.

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# FLAVORIST PROFILE:
# CHARISSA LOW

To me, being a flavorist means being a little of everything.

### What led you to the flavor industry?

I did my internship at one of the big flavor houses back when I was still a student at the Polytechnic. I was fortunate to be exposed to both flavor compounding and flavor application in bakery. Assisting the flavorists and observing how they created flavors left a deep impression on me, and I knew right away that I wanted to be a flavorist. My ambition was defined from that moment.

### Can you share a defining moment or breakthrough in your career as a flavorist?

There was this one time I was stuck in gridlocked traffic in Jakarta. I looked out my window and noticed the truck beside me. The driver was drinking a carbonated beverage that had the flavor I created in it.

I continued to see people in Malaysia buying the drink at convenience stores. I approached this lady who was checking out at the cashier, and casually asked if she liked it, as I saw her buying three bottles at once. She told me it tasted really good, she loved it, and it was always out of stock.

These defining moments clarified the impact of my work, validated my efforts, and gave me a strong sense of purpose in my creations.

### What were some of the biggest challenges you faced when entering the industry, and how did you overcome them?

Being a trainee flavorist in the beginning was tough. There was a lot of pressure to succeed, as I was not the only trainee candidate. But when I look back on it several years later, I am still grateful for how grueling my training was, as those standards shaped me into the flavorist I am today. I'm glad I pushed through with a lot of grit and determination.

Having done creation work for 14 years now, I've met my fair share of naysayers. The only way to overcome this is through results, positive thinking, and staying steadfast in your passion. And of course, let's not forget to celebrate the people who always had faith in me and my potential.



*Charissa Low, flavorist, creative center manager, Robertet Singapore.*

**Name:** Charissa Low

**Title:** Flavorist, Creative Centre Manager

**Location:** Singapore

### Can you describe a time when a flavor formulation didn't turn out as expected? How did you address the issue?

Being a flavorist, we are sporadically surprised that after writing a formulation and compounding it (putting all the materials together), it may turn out

Courtesy of Charissa Low

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differently than expected. These differences can be due to solubility issues, incompatibility of raw materials, or not meeting regulatory status requirements, and the list goes on. This is why it's important to be relentless during the trial stage, to sniff out all possibilities for the formulation to work, even if it requires some compromise to the profile.

One example is spray-dried powder flavors, where the profile may turn out differently after the spraying process and needs to be evaluated and, at times, reformulated.

### How do you find the right balance between artistic expression and the technical limitations of flavor formulation?

Over time, experience helps anticipate limitations and constraints early, which allows ample room to create freely and purposefully. It becomes second nature to a flavorist to access the palette, select suitable materials, and consider cost and compliance of the formulation at the same time. There is an awareness that exploration mode and delivery mode can both happen concurrently.

I think the trick to this is becoming more inventive rather than see these constraints as limiting. A successful flavor can still be born despite technical limitations and perform well in the final product.

### Are there specific skills or knowledge areas you believe are crucial for a flavorist to master?

Besides having the mandatory technical knowledge of raw materials and being organoleptically sound, I believe a flavorist truly excels when they are creative and passionate about what they do. They must be able to accept criticism, possess strong communication skills, and demonstrate excellent troubleshooting abilities.

To me, being a flavorist means being a little of everything. You have to be convincing that your flavors are the right choice, and above all, have a great deal of wit and grit.





*9-Decenal brings notes of orange pulp to citrus flavor applications.*



BY JOHN WRIGHT
johnwrightflavorist@gmail.com

# Flavor Bites: 9-Decenal in Citrus, Savory and Other Flavors

Learn about the diverse range of flavor applications for 9-decenal.

9-Decenal (FEMA GRAS#3912, CAS#39770-05-3, DG-SANTE#05.139) is a very interesting but little appreciated raw material. It has something in common with one of my favorites, *trans*-2-decenal, in that it is reminiscent of citrus, but without the strong cilantro association.

It is even more powerful than *trans*-2-decenal and can be used in a fairly wide range of flavors. In citrus flavors it distinctly brings to mind the profile of orange pulp.

Note that the dose rates given throughout this article are the levels suggested for use in flavors intended to be dosed at 0.05% in ready-to-drink beverages or in a simple bouillon.

Image by Nitr at Adobe Stock

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## Citrus Flavors

**Bergamot:** 9-Decenal is helpful in all citrus flavors, with a spectrum of ideal use levels. Bergamot belongs at the modest end of the spectrum, with an ideal use level of two ppm.

**Grapefruit:** The somewhat orange-oriented profile of 9-decenal raises the use level to around eight ppm, working equally well in peely and juicy profile flavors.

**Lemon:** Two ppm is a reasonable starting point in lemon flavors. At this level, 9-decenal adds something of a lemonade note.

**Lime:** The same comments apply to lime flavors. At two ppm 9-decenal adds a useful aspect of fresh lime juice



*It might seem counterintuitive that a raw material with an obvious citrus profile should be used at higher levels in savory favors.*

**Mandarin and Tangerine:** 9-Decenal performs well in both profiles, adding freshness and a juice character without overemphasizing orange at five ppm.

**Orange:** Ten ppm is a good initial level in all orange flavors, perhaps a little lower in bitter orange profiles. At this level, it enhances the orange character quite noticeably and nudges the flavor in a more juicy direction.

**Yuzu:** Similar levels, around 10 ppm, are equally effective in authentic yuzu flavors, adding realistic juice notes.

## Savory Flavors

**Bacon:** It might seem counterintuitive that a raw material with an obvious citrus profile should be used at higher levels in savory favors. The usefulness of 9-decenal in


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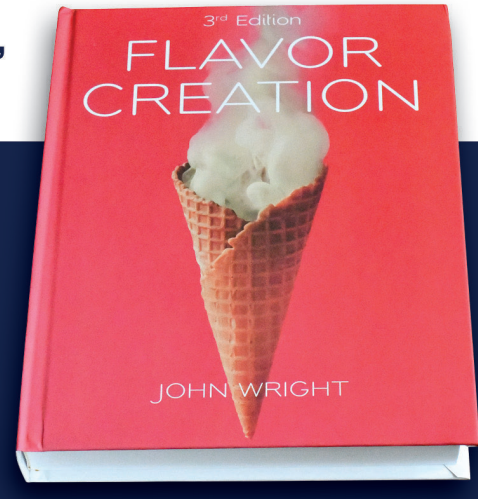




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savory flavors is often to help to counteract high levels of 2,4-decadienal. In this respect it works in a similar way to *trans*-2-octenal, *trans*-2-nonenal and *trans*-2-decenal and can be used in conjunction with those chemicals. Thirty ppm works very well in bacon flavors.

**Beef:** Levels of 9-decenal in beef flavors can vary, starting at 10 ppm, with higher levels very effective in BBQ and roast profiles.

**Chicken:** Chicken fat notes, and especially 2,4-decadienal, are very important in chicken flavors. 9-Decenal helps to restore a realistic balance at 30 ppm.

**Cilantro:** 9-Decenal is obviously nowhere near as characteristic of cilantro as 2-decenal, but it does work well in combination and help to round out the profile. Ten ppm works well.

**Ham:** Levels can vary in ham flavors as a general category. Ten ppm is an effective starting point. Higher levels are better in Spanish-style chopped pork flavors.

**Lamb:** Stewed lamb flavors work well with a moderate addition of 9-decenal, around 10 ppm, fatty roast flavors can go much higher. The sky's the limit!

**Mushroom:** Most mushroom flavors have a cooked character and this can be enhanced by 20 ppm of this raw material. Added complexity is an extra benefit in a flavor profile that can sometimes be too simplistic.

**Pork:** As with ham flavors, the ideal level of this raw material in pork flavors can vary. Twenty ppm is reasonably typical.

**Potato:** 9-Decenal is only useful in fried potato profiles, where it moderates the harshness of 2,4-decadienal at levels around 20 ppm.

**Rice:** This ingredient is only of marginal usefulness in boiled rice flavors, but really shines in fried rice flavors. High levels, 40 ppm and up, work well.

**Seafood:** Seafood flavors are a better fit than fish flavors, with effective levels in the region of 20 to 30 ppm.

**Tomato:** Tomato flavors benefit from the use of 9-decenal, although at a much lower level. Two ppm works well and nudges the profile in a fresh direction.

## Other Flavors

**Acai:** Acai flavors gain a modest increase in authenticity from this raw material. Five ppm is a good level of addition.

**Brandy:** The effect in brandy and Cognac flavors is similarly subtle, but useful. Five ppm is also a good level in this category.

**Hazelnut:** Nut flavors in general can use slightly higher levels of 9-decenal. In the case of hazelnut flavors, 10 ppm works well.

**Peanut:** Peanut flavors can be a little more sharp than hazelnut flavors and the best level of addition for 9-decenal is higher, around 15 ppm.

**Praline:** Ten ppm of 9-decenal is effective in praline flavors, giving welcome complexity and a boost to the roasted note.

**Quince:** Quince flavors are a little out of the mainstream, but an interesting category. Ten ppm is a good initial level.

**Rum:** 9-Decenal can be used in light and dark rum flavors, generally at the same two ppm level of addition.

**Walnut:** This ingredient adds complexity and realism to walnut flavors. Levels need not be high; five ppm works well.

**Whisky:** Whisky flavors can be quite complex. 9-Decenal can enhance the malt notes and also work well in parallel with the smoked peat character. Levels can vary from five ppm and up.



*Acai flavors gain a modest increase in authenticity from this raw material.*

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# The Resurgence and Romance of Celebrity Fragrances

Fragrances allow artists to connect with their fans in a more intimate manner, and fragrance companies are taking note of the demand.

BY EMILY LITTLE, Associate Managing Editor, *Perfumer & Flavorist+*



*Emily Little*



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I still have my original bottle of Wonderstruck by Taylor Swift. It was a gift from my parents to celebrate my eighth grade graduation. I remember spritzing the glittery purple bottle for the first time, smelling the notes of blackberry and hibiscus and peach and sandalwood.

I knew even as a young teenager that Taylor did not craft this fragrance herself; she probably had several meetings with her team to describe what she envisioned and what she wanted out of this scent. I imagine her telling these perfumers what her favorite notes were and what she thought of when she heard the term "wonderstruck." But even that feels so personal. This is what my favorite artist believes is the essence of her album and this era of her career.

Celebrity fragrances are not new in our industry, but they have seen a resurgence in recent years. Just last year, Ariana Grande's lineup of perfumes received 941,000 searches in the past month, with a month-over-month growth of 65%, according to online beauty platform Fresha. Other top-searched lines include Billie Eilish, Sabrina Carpenter, Kylie Jenner and Paris Hilton. These launches not only give artists an additional revenue stream, but they also give consumers a small glimpse into their favorite artists' favorite scents.

There are so many small details and decisions that go into a celebrity fragrance campaign. From finding the right beauty marketer to the formulation to the packaging, each decision reflects the collaboration between artists. And as celebrity perfumes begin a kind of second renaissance, I took a deep dive on what goes into these decisions and how the success of a celebrity fragrance is measured.

## The Brief

When I asked my experts about the process of creating and executing a celebrity fragrance, I wanted them to walk me through the process from beginning to end. This, of course, starts with the brief. Stakeholders come together and determine what the fragrance story will be, what the marketing will look like and other considerations for the campaign.

"We strive to understand what is the relationship between the celebrity, whom we prefer to call an 'artist,' and their olfactory sensibility," said Steve Mormoris, chief executive officer of Scent Beauty. "This is related to memory, childhood, important milestones and joyful/traumatic experiences in their life. This is critical as it comes from a place of authenticity of the artist him/herself, and not a construct to fit into the marketplace based on some abstract concept which will generate sales."

Scent Beauty is the mastermind behind several well-known celebrity brands, including Kylie Minogue, Dolly Parton and, most recently, Sabrina Carpenter. The company works with renowned perfumers at dsm-firmenich, one of the leading fine fragrance developers in the world. Mormoris told me that the key is to truly get to know the artist on a deeper level and create a scent they will actually want to wear.

"This provides the initial foundation of the brief to the perfumer, and then after many submissions of olfactory variations, once the artist has lived with the scent, the journey begins to hone in on the perfect scent that reflects the artist, the concept and is commercially and artistically salient."

It also helps to have an artist who is truly passionate about fragrance. If they come to the table with some ideas, that will help match them with the proper marketers and perfumers.

"I was once invited to a major talent's home to have these early discussions," said Theo Spilka, global vice president of strategic licensing and business development at dsm-firmenich. "She wanted me to go visit her bathroom and for me to see firsthand how many fragrances she had in there on her tray, because she loved trying new products all the time. When someone is really crazy about the category, it makes our work a lot easier."

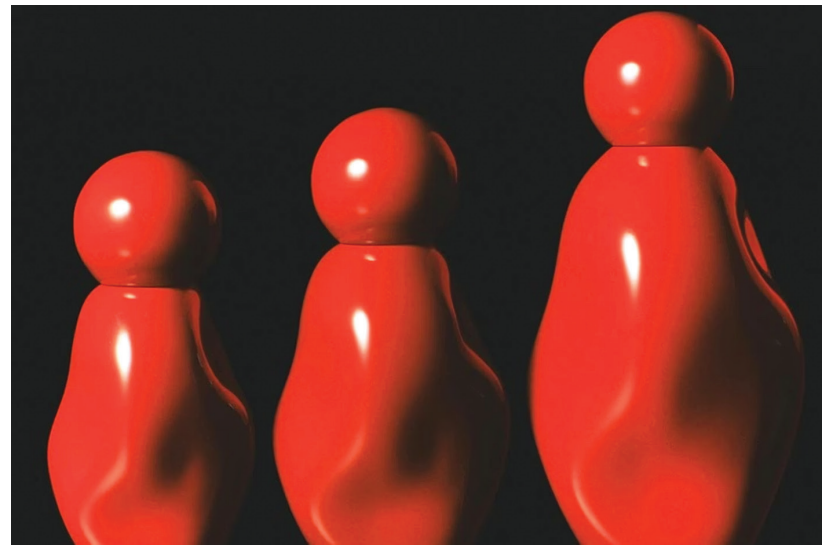



*Ariana Grande's fragrance portfolio was the most searched celebrity line in 2025, according to Fresha, and is considered one of the most successful celebrity fragrance campaigns.*

Courtesy of Luxe Brands

When negotiating terms, Spilka said it is important to make sure the artist is paired with the right beauty marketer. These marketers need to have the bandwidth, creative talent, digital talent and social media presence to be able to market the fragrance to both consumers and retailers. In this stage, he said, communication is key.

"The more they know, the more they know what to expect," Spilka explained. "I talk to them about what is customary in the business and what's customary in a license agreement, what are the points of extreme importance as it relates to both financial as well as time commitment."



*Kylie Jenner's COSMIC fragrance line is known for its unique bottle shape.*

## The Build

Once the agreements have been signed and the terms are negotiated, the creative work begins. A perfumer is assigned to the project and begins the formulation process. Clement Gavarry, principal perfumer at dsm-firmenich, said that this is about really getting to know the artist and understanding their vision.

"It really comes down to communication and collaboration," he explained. "Many artists have a clear vision of what they want their fragrance to express, even if it starts out abstract. Through discussion and feedback, I translate those ideas into olfactive directions, notes and tonalities. When the artist is able to clearly express what they like and what they would like to change, it becomes much easier to capture what they envision and turn it into something tangible."

Momoris described the collaboration process as a mix of "psychiatry, cuisine, marketing, competitive analysis and olfactory experience." There are several back and forth conversations between the marketers, the artist and the perfumers He also said it's important to have conversations with supply chain specialists to make sure the fragrance can be produced with consistent olfactory quality and meet regulatory requirements worldwide.



*Sabrina Carpenter's Sweet Tooth collection is known for its distinctive candy bar packaging.*

And, of course, there is constant testing of scents. The perfumer will often make several olfactive variations of the concept. This allows for better communication between the perfumer and the artist, allowing for a true creative collaboration.

"The process is very involved and collaborative," Gavarry said. "I develop an interpretation of the brief, we review it together and then continue to evolve the formula based on feedback."

Just as important as the fragrance itself: the packaging.

Take Sabrina Carpenter's SWEET TOOTH fragrance line as an example. The bottle itself is shaped like a candy bar, and the carton looks like the classic candy bar wrapping. Each of the five fragrances (Sweet Tooth, Caramel Dream, Cherry

From top: Courtesy of Kylie Cosmetics; Scent Beauty

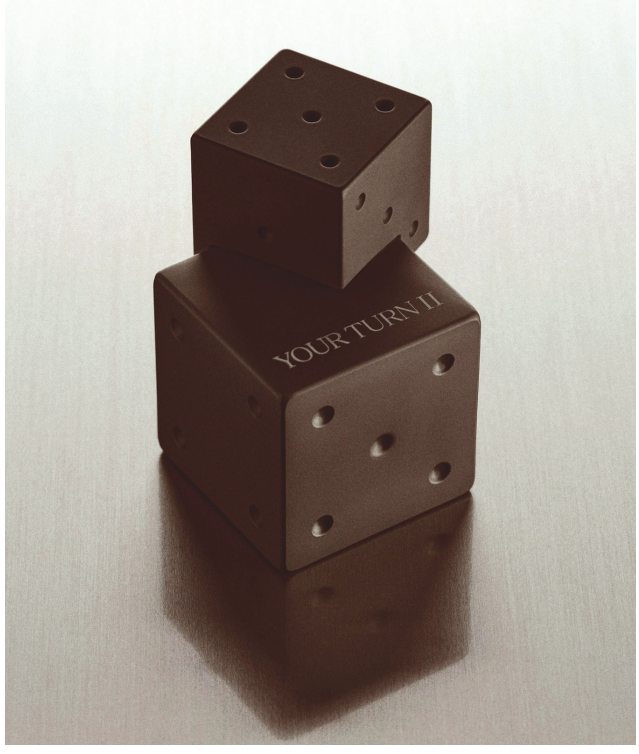
Baby, Me Espresso and Lemon Pie) feature vibrant colors. Even the 10 ml size is called "bite sized," further evoking the candy metaphor.

"Sabrina conceptualized and led the creation of the package, which was clearly around her love of things that are sweet, and an underlying obsession with decadence, irreverence and luxury," Momoris explained. "The package is always important because it carries the emotion of the scent and thus must have some type of sculptural emotion itself. The genius of a colored bar of chocolate for Sabrina's SWEET TOOTH brand works on a level without her name but is amplified by her signature."

Press releases typically mention the unique packaging of the fragrance as a way to set themselves apart from other celebrity fragrances. Billie Eilish's Your Turn and Your Turn II feature a stacked dice design with a soft-touch matte finish. Kylie Jenner's uniquely shaped bottles for her COSMIC fragrance line come from her and her sister hugging over a pot of spinning clay.

All of these decisions complete the package of the campaign: a desirable fragrance, eye-catching packaging and compelling marketing imagery. The marketing of the fragrance often focuses on the emotion behind the scent, as scent is something so personal.

"The artist is always the center of the campaign," Momoris said. "Campaigns focus on their image, attitude and use of the fragrance because it is, in fact, their creation. The promotion of the innovation/trend behind the scent is often emotional - a word, a gesture, a color, a vignette, a scene, a challenge. Like all promotions, this is affected by media investment, digital plans and in-store and DTC platform mechanics."




*Billie Eilish Fragrances saw its fifth launch in 2025 with Your Turn II.*

Courtesy of Billie Eilish Fragrances

## The Payoff

There are several metrics that can determine whether a celebrity fragrance was successful or not. Of course, sales metrics are an obvious indicator of success; big numbers means that a lot of consumers are buying that product. But social conversations and retailer interest can show signs of a good partnership as well.

"The other metric involves how the retailers and, more importantly, the distributors around the world are reacting to a product," Spilka said. "If they're all lining up to carry it and to vie for the exclusive rights to distribute that fragrance, you have a successful business on your hands."

Spilka also said there is a certain amount of ego that comes with having your own fragrance; after all, this is something that will live on forever and always have the artist's face attached.

"Our intent is never to create something fleeting, but something that lives on in the grand panorama of the fragrance market and stands out, and has an indelible signature immediately associated with the artist."

And more and more artists are building their own fragrance empires, using this as another way to connect to their fans. Ariana Grande's fragrance license has lasted over ten years, and Billie Eilish's launch of Your Turn II shows the brand's strong standing in the marketplace.

"Working with Billie Eilish from the very beginning has been a true partnership rooted in creativity and authenticity," said Lori Singer, president of Parlux, in a press release for the launch of Your Turn II. "With Your Turn II, we're not simply extending the moment of Your Turn; we're deepening the story of Eilish Fragrances as a master brand, continuing to push creative boundaries while honoring Billie's unique vision that makes this collaboration so extraordinary."

From all of my conversations and research, one thing is clear: the celebrity perfume is very much alive and well, if not thriving. Consumers are even more keen on fragrances inspired by their favorite artists, and there is an incredible opportunity to tap into this demand.

"The success of the fragrance shows that the idea of celebrity scents being less sophisticated is outdated," Gavarry concluded. "Now, it's about authenticity, emotional storytelling and creating high-performance fragrance that truly connects with consumers."



*The next chapter of fine fragrance is about artistry, emotion and operational excellence.*

Image by Inga at Adobe Stock

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# THE NEW SPEED OF FINE FRAGRANCE

Today's fragrance consumer expects their products to be made faster, cleaner and smarter.

Fine fragrance is in a transitional era. Limited editions, seasonal drops, brand collaborations and retailer moments have moved from "nice-to-have" to core strategy—and the calendar pressure is real. In that environment, the operational question is becoming as strategic as the creative one: how do you move faster without sacrificing quality, safety discipline, or brand integrity?

For years, many teams treated speed and rigor as a trade-off. You moved quickly on scent, then "caught up" on documentation and compliance later. That approach increasingly breaks under modern expectations. Fragrance formulas are complex, global readiness matters earlier, and brands are navigating a more demanding mix of internal standards, retailer requirements and consumer scrutiny.

The result is a shift: the brands moving fastest are not simply iterating faster. They are building a system that makes launches more predictable—especially when timelines are tight and multiple partners are involved.

Lucent has emerged as a key player supporting this shift, creating formulation and validation workflows designed to help brands and suppliers compress development cycles by making formulas easier to review and easier to hand off. Lucent is the infrastructure that helps teams move from creative brief to manufacturing readiness with fewer bottlenecks and less friction.

## Why "Fast" Now Requires "Clean"

When fine fragrance launches slip, it's rarely because a team couldn't land a compelling olfactive direction. Delays more often appear at the handoffs—when a formula has to move between creative, regulatory, manufacturing and external review.

That's where friction hides: versions multiply, ingredient data comes in different formats, and review processes slow down when inputs are inconsistent or incomplete. Even when everyone is aligned, the work of translating and reconciling information can add weeks—and those weeks tend to land at the worst possible moment.



*Ashlee Posner, founder, Lucent*

Courtesy of Ashlee Posner

## What the New Speed Looks Like

"Faster, cleaner, smarter" does not mean cutting corners. It means reducing the rework that comes from discovering constraints too late.

In practice, this new speed is supported by a few capabilities that are increasingly becoming standard among high-velocity teams:

- Formula governance that scales
- Standardized ingredient intelligence
- Documentation as a development output
- Micro-batching and tighter traceability

## A Fine Fragrance Case Study: Verification in Under Three Weeks

A new fine fragrance brand came to Lucent with a familiar constraint: a launch anchored to a fixed retail and PR window. The creative direction was strong, but the team needed to complete independent third-party verification before moving into scale-up. Historically, verification timelines were 3-6 months —usually caused by lack of disclosure, inconsistent inputs and incorrect documentation.

This time, the approach was different. Instead of treating verification as a late-stage hurdle, the brand prioritized being "review-ready" as the formula approached lock. The goal was not to rush the reviewer; it was to reduce friction.

Working with Lucent, the third party was able to evaluate the finished package efficiently and verification was completed in under three weeks—fast enough to protect the launch date and manufacturing plan. For brands, the takeaway is not that verification can always be rushed. It's that verification gets materially faster when the formula arrives in a format designed for assessment, which requires partnership and transparency.



*Fragrance brands are shifting their timelines to minimize friction in verification and documentation.*

## Why This Matters for 2026

Fine fragrance will always be led by artistry and emotion. But the next chapter is also about operational excellence: the ability to launch at modern speed while protecting quality and integrity.

The brands that win will increasingly differentiate on predictable development cycles, fewer late-stage reformulations and stronger internal collaboration and therefore confidence on what is being launched.

For ingredient suppliers, there is a parallel opportunity. In a faster launch world, materials backed by clear, consistent data are easier for brands to adopt—especially when those brands are running multiple launches and need decisions to be efficient. Suppliers who can provide "review-ready" support for their materials (in whatever format brands and verifiers require) become acceleration partners, not just vendors.

The broader industry implication is straightforward: speed is becoming an integrity story. The teams who can launch faster, without scrambling, without surprises, and without compromising governance, will earn trust and capitalize on the market's appetite for newness.

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# The Evolution of the Flavorist: From Bench Chemist to Cross-Functional Innovator

As the flavor industry shifts and evolves, flavorists must also learn new skills to stay competitive.



*Looking ahead, the flavorist of the future will be defined by integration.*

Courtesy of Charlie Packwood

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Charlie Packwood, managing director, global specialty ingredients, Aston Chambers

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BY CHARLIE PACKWOOD, managing director, global specialty ingredients, Aston Chambers

For much of its history, the flavor industry was built around a single, highly specialized role: the flavorist as a bench chemist. Working largely behind the scenes, flavorists were tasked with creating taste and aroma profiles through a deep understanding of raw materials, chemistry and sensory perception. Their work shaped countless food and beverage products, yet their role was narrowly defined, highly manual and largely insulated from commercial or technological influence.

Today, that picture no longer holds. The modern flavorist operates at the intersection of science, data, regulation, manufacturing and market insight. What was once a solitary craft has evolved into a multidisciplinary profession that touches almost every part of the value chain. This shift reflects broader changes in consumer expectations, technological capability and regulatory complexity, all of which have reshaped how flavors are conceived, developed and delivered.

## Foundations of the Craft

Historically, flavorists focused on formulation and sensory optimization. Using approved aroma chemicals, essential oils and natural extracts, they responded to customer briefs through extensive experimentation. Tools such as gas chromatography–mass spectrometry (GC-MS), HPLC, pH meters and titration methods helped identify and quantify volatile compounds, but progress relied heavily on trial and error.

Sensory evaluation was central. Flavorists trained their palates over many years, often memorizing hundreds of aroma materials by smell, taste and chemical structure. A traditional training pathway involved learning 500 to 600 core materials, followed by long apprenticeships under senior flavorists. Repeated tasting sessions, often involving internal panels, were used to fine-tune flavor balance and reach customer approval.

While this approach built extraordinary technical intuition, it was also slow and constrained. Consumer insight was limited to small panels, data was fragmented and projects could take months or even years to complete. As consumer preferences became more complex and markets more global, these limitations became increasingly apparent.

## Expanding Beyond the Lab

One of the most significant changes in the flavorist's role has been the expansion into manufacturing and scale-up. A formulation that performs well at bench scale must behave consistently in pilot and full-scale production, often across multiple facilities and regions. Today's flavorists are deeply involved in this transition, working closely with process engineers and production teams to ensure stability, consistency and efficiency.

Factors such as base composition, heat treatment, pressure, equipment and processing conditions all influence flavor performance. A change in fat content, vitamin fortification or processing parameters can significantly alter flavor perception, requiring rapid reformulation. In emerging categories such as plant-based proteins or fortified beverages, flavorists must also design masking strategies and robust delivery systems to manage off-notes and ingredient interactions.

This involvement has made flavorists critical contributors on the production floor, where they validate formulations, support pilot runs and define specifications compatible with automated blending systems. The goal is no longer just creative success, but repeatability and speed to market.

## Commercial and Customer Engagement

Alongside technical expansion, the flavorist's commercial role has grown considerably. Where sales teams once acted as the sole interface with customers, flavorists are now frequently involved directly in client meetings, tastings and technical discussions. This direct engagement allows for clearer translation of customer needs into actionable formulations and reduces misalignment during development.

Flavorists today are expected to explain sensory concepts in accessible language, contribute to concept development, and support marketing teams with trend insight and positioning. They collaborate on claims such as "natural," respond to niche briefs and adapt flavors for regional preferences while maintaining global consistency for multinational brands.

This shift requires flavorists to understand branding, packaging, consumer research and value propositions, adding a commercial dimension that was historically absent from the role.

## Deeper Technical Capabilities

Modern flavor creation increasingly begins at the source. Flavorists now work closely with extraction specialists, analytical teams and sourcing partners to understand how raw materials are produced and how extraction methods influence sensory outcomes. Techniques such as steam distillation, solvent extraction, cold pressing, supercritical $CO_2$ extraction, enzymatic processing and precision fermentation all yield different aroma profiles.

Understanding these methods allows flavorists to optimize formulations for taste, cost and sustainability. It also enables more informed decisions when working with new botanicals, upcycled ingredients or biotech-derived flavor materials. The ability to characterize off-notes, manage co-extracted compounds and tailor formulations accordingly has become a core technical skill.



*The modern flavorist operates at the intersection of science, data, regulation, manufacturing and market insight.*

Image by NanzXy at Adobe Stock

## Quality, Compliance, and Regulation

Quality assurance and regulatory compliance now sit at the heart of the flavorist's responsibilities. Modern formulations must comply with complex global frameworks, including EU Regulation

1334/2008, FEMA GRAS requirements in the US and additional standards across Asia and other regions.

Flavorists are involved in reviewing analytical data for purity, allergens, residual solvents and microbial content. They work with QA teams to define internal specifications, design stability testing protocols and ensure batch-to-batch consistency. Documentation has become a critical part of the role, with technical dossiers detailing ingredient sources, quantities and safety data required for every formulation.



*Digital transformation technologies can help augment a flavorist's work.*

Clean-label and natural claims add further complexity. Strict definitions now govern what can be labelled as "natural," requiring meticulous documentation of ingredient origins and processing methods. Sustainability regulations are also emerging, pushing flavorists to consider carbon footprint, solvent use and environmental impact alongside sensory performance.

## Data and Digital Transformation

Perhaps the most transformative change in the profession has been the integration of data and digital tools. Flavorists now draw on large-scale consumer studies, mobile sensory panels, social media analysis, retail data and internal sensory databases to guide formulation decisions. Analytical tools such as GC-olfactometry and electronic noses support systematic matching of chemical profiles to desired sensory outcomes.

These datasets increasingly feed into predictive models and AI-driven platforms. In some cases, millions of flavor combinations can be evaluated digitally, dramatically reducing reliance on traditional panel testing. Development cycles that once took months can now be compressed into weeks, with significant reductions in cost and risk.

Automation is also reshaping laboratory workflows. Robotic compounding systems can prepare hundreds of samples with precision and repeatability, freeing flavorists to focus on interpretation, creativity and strategic decision-making rather than manual preparation.

Crucially, industry practitioners emphasize that these technologies augment rather than replace the flavorist. Human sensory expertise, creativity and judgement remain central, but are now supported by tools that expand what is possible.

## Knowledge Sharing and Global Alignment

As flavor companies operate on a global scale, knowledge transfer has become formalized. Internal flavor libraries, standardized sensory lexicons and global training programs allow flavorists to build on collective expertise rather than starting from scratch.

Leading companies invest heavily in flavorist academies and structured training programs that combine raw material mastery with regulatory knowledge, market insight and technological literacy. This ensures consistency across regions and accelerates development by leveraging institutional memory.

## The Future Flavorist

Looking ahead, the flavorist of the future will be defined by integration. Strong foundations in chemistry, sensory science and flavor biology remain essential, but they are no longer sufficient on their own. Digital literacy, data analysis skills, regulatory acumen and commercial awareness are now equally important.

Future flavorists will need to interpret complex datasets, collaborate across functions and geographies, and engage confidently with customers. They will operate within narratives of health, sustainability and personalization, requiring an understanding of nutrition science, environmental impact and consumer storytelling.

The role has evolved from a narrow technical craft into a strategic, cross-functional profession. As technology accelerates and regulations tighten, the flavorist's ability to adapt, communicate and innovate will be more critical than ever. What remains constant is the core mission: to create sensory experiences that resonate with consumers, grounded in science and shaped by a rapidly changing world.

Image by savittree at Adobe Stock



*This past winter saw a host of new vanilla creations launches.*

Image by Stephanie6 at Adobe Stock

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# WHAT'S SHAPING THE 2026 SCENT LANDSCAPE

Gourmand scents are entering their next phase of evolution.

BY ROZ WICKS, founder, TrendAroma Marketing



*Roz Wicks*

After several years of exceptional growth, fine fragrance is entering the second half of this decade in a position of renewed confidence, cultural relevance and creative momentum. What was once a category driven largely by heritage, celebrity and seasonal gifting has become a dynamic space shaped by shifting consumer values, digital culture and rapid innovation.

Today's scent consumers are not just buying fragrances; they are curating identity, mood, memory and meaning through fragrance. As premiumization continues and niche aesthetics influence the mainstream,




*KAYALI's Oudgasm Chocolate Oud | 11 eau de parfum has notes of carmale apple, spiced rum and chocolate oud.*

Courtesy of KAYALI

fine fragrance is evolving into a more expressive, experimental and emotionally resonant category that's driven by a committed global fragrance community – both from an industry and consumer perspective.

## The Building of the Megatrend (but Nuanced) Gourmand Category

Social listening and sales data show us that consumers are building fragrance wardrobes and moving away from a one bottle signature scent to layering scents to create ultimate personalised scent signatures, and seeking deeper connections to the stories, ingredients and craftsmanship behind each bottle of juice. At the same time, technology, sustainability and data-driven insights from AI are changing how fragrances are formulated, marketed, and experienced.

As ever, there are many evolutionary and revolutionary trends driving the fragrance market - and as with any trend there is nearly always a parallel counter trend – we've seen beast mode versus skin scents gain traction in 2025, but this article discusses one of the strongest trend categories for 2026; gourmands. More than ever in 2026 taste and flavor will intersect with scent – so here's a few strong trend signals and launches to watch as the category continues to be a market driver.

## The Rise of Intelligent Gourmands

The "smell like a snack" trend will continue on social media, and vanilla will continue to have a core presence in consumers' perfume collections. The "ingredient" is entering a new era of elegance, dimension and unexpected contrast. No longer merely sweet, vanilla becomes multifaceted; be it mineral, salty, leathery, woody or luminous. Yes, this an era of neo gourmands, but don't discount this core ingredient in future creations and trend mapping as consumers certainly aren't discounting it in their fragrance purchases.

This past winter saw a host of new vanilla creations launches, including Ellis Brooklyn's Vanilla Man, which brought a spicy, aromatic masculinity to vanilla, whilst



Image by RajuanaHussain at Adobe Stock

*Fruit notes are often used in gourmand fragrances to blend scent and taste.*

BDK Vanille Caviar added cacao richness and balsamic depth. Atelier des Ors Novae Vanilla radiated celestial minerality and mimosa glow and the YSL Libre line launched Vanille Couture which dresses vanilla in lavender, orange blossom and rum. This year the latest launch from Giorgio Armani; My Way Sunny Vanilla will be bringing pineapple and vanilla together.

Spinning off from the vanilla trend we delved into chocolate with Kayali Oudgasm Chocolate Oud 11 which blend spiced rum, caramel apple, velvet orris, incense, dark cocoa and chocolate oud, whilst BORNTOSTANDOUT's Choco Loco brings the full power of the gourmand scene with notes of cocoa powder, cocoa butter, cocoa liquor, cacao absolute, condensed milk, caramel fudge, burnt sugar, ginger liqueur, whipped cream, cookie dough, vanilla absolute, brown sugar, marshmallow, musk and ambrette.

## Straight from the Dessert Cart

Further moving the gourmand needle are hyper-realistic pastry and dessert notes, with patisserie level detail and milky notes straight from the café menu embracing frothy sweetness and syrupy seduction.

Vietnamese brand D'Annam launched Mooncake as a scent of sweet nostalgia - a warm, golden crust giving way to a luscious centre of salted egg yolk. Snif recently launched Crumb Couture Almond, paying homage to the golden, buttery croissant inspired flakes of viral scent Crumb Couture but this time with almond cream, a croissant accord, powdered sugar, vanilla, buttery musks (butter will be a trend to watch) and creamy sandalwood. TOCCA recently released Laila, which marked the brand's first gourmand creation, with notes of green mandarin, bergamot, a desert rain accord, jasmine nectar, lily of the valley, cardamom blossom, toasted vanilla and white woods.

## Gourmand Leans into the Tea Scene

Tea is bridging the 2026 gourmand gap from softly sweet to a more savory style of calm clarity. Transparent gourmands featuring matcha, steamed rice, milk, mochi or sugarcane fuse purity and indulgence as delicately dusted counterpoint to the continued vanilla addiction storytelling.

Prada is launching Infusion de Santal Chai this year with notes of cardamon, citrus, masala chai, spices, milk, sandalwood and musk. Phlur has launched a Matcha Milk Fragrance Mist where macadamia milk and vanilla swirl through the grounded calm of matcha, black tea, bergamot and musk. Overose Clean Matcha is a gourmand-leaning tea composition centred on a matcha accord. It opens with matcha wrapped in kuromitsu (Japanese brown sugar syrup), balanced by a clean-linen freshness, with blackcurrant buds, milk, vanilla mochi, marshmallow, musk and sea salt. Setchu's Monday 9am Genmaicha features a blend of green tea and roasted popped brown rice, while adding uplifting bergamot, sweet cardamom and earthy vetiver.

## Fruit Notes Become a Taste and Flavor Scent Fusion

In 2025 the "fruit" category in fragrance began to get a bit more exciting and as we head to 2030, we are going to see this category get a lot more nuanced. Partnered with a lot of fruit notes, oud began to give depth without creating heaviness to provide a new sophisticated edge to the olfactive category – but before we go deep on partner notes as that could be a whole article on its own, lets look at the 'fruity' landscape that's evolving.

Obviously, cherry. You can't dial down the effect cherry has had on the fruity olfactive landscape. YSL Black Opium Over Red was a bestselling cherry scent in



Europe last year, and Phlur - the brand that is literally winning on social media - just launched a new cherry; Cherry Stem this winter with notes of black cherry, orange brandy, red freesia, sugared jasmine, plum nectar and soft leather.

Strawberry and raspberry notes are still popping up everywhere too. A flurry of strawberry happened in 2025 – Clean launched Strawberry Fields, Armani launched Si Passione Red Musk and Creed launched Fragaria. Then we saw Room 1015 launch Love-O-Matic with strawberry, lemon, blackcurrant, musk and a chewing gum accord (think white floral tuberose-y) then the strawberry, gardenia, jasminum grandiflorum absolute, amber, patchouli and brown sugar composition of Miutine by Miu Miu appeared on the fragrance scene.

The big launch of early spring 2026 though is the raspberry leaning YSL Libre Berry Crush, a new, fruity iteration of the original Libre, which opens with bright mandarin and tart raspberry, moving into fan favourite combination of lavender, vanilla and orange blossom that's boosted by some coconut warmth.

Orange is having a new moment too. The 'citrus positivity' and sunshine factor have been turned up trend wise since 2022 – everyone needs the boost and consumers want fragrances that smell like sunshine year round. This year it's rumored that Tom Ford will launch Taormina Orange with notes of blood orange, bitter orange, cardamom, orange blossom, oakmoss and patchouli. Armani Privé's new fragrance Orange Méditerranée is a radiant citrus fragrance with a distinctive bitterness inspired by the Sicilian springtime sunrise, where vibrant and fresh bitter orange blends with sparkling cedrat and aromatic notes of fennel and tea accord capturing carefree sunshine moments.

So, whilst fruit isn't the most traditional of gourmand categories - when we smell new fragrances designed by esteemed noses you can't help but notice the flavor fusion angle that will be driving the category forward further in 2026 onwards.




*Miutine by Miu Miu includes fragrance notes of wild strawberry, gardenia, brown sugar and vanilla.*

Courtesy of Miu Miu

## A Few Final Thoughts on the 2026 Fragrance Landscape

In summary, new entries to the gourmand landscape will define 2026 but there is also a lot more happening. For example, the men's fragrance sector will continue to boom as all generations are investing in scent for enjoyment and for the vibe – with indie, niche and male grooming brands already stepping up.

Affordable and accessible price points will be bringing more to the fragrance game as the body mist evolution continues. Hand in hand with that the layering revolution will continue apace – for example, Noyz have just launched their new fragrance milks spanning the skin care, fragrance longevity and layering space bringing in novelty but in a premium way. It's definitely an exciting time to be in fragrance!


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# The Final Note: Master Perfumer John Pascale Looks Back on 50 Years of Fragrance

Pascale walks down memory lane with photos and remembrances of his work in the fragrance industry.

BY JENNA TROYLI, co-founder, Noted Communications LLC



*John Pascale (right) attributes his early career education to his mentor Raoul Pantaleonie (left).*

Courtesy of John Pascale

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In the final weeks of John Pascale's tenure at Phoenix Flavors& Fragrances, just before his retirement, I visited the Red Bank Creative Center with special permission to review photographs chronicling his career. The images trace a professional life in perfumery spanning more than five decades – a career defined by technical rigor, mentorship, and an enduring commitment to craft. I arrived with coffee and doughnuts, a small offering in exchange for more than 50 years of memories. With a jelly doughnut in hand and a coffee with cream, Pascale began telling the story of his life.

Born and raised in East Harlem, Pascale's path into fragrance began not with a childhood fascination for scent, but with chemistry. He pursued his education at City College, commuting by bus for ten cents and paying just five dollars per semester. There, he earned a degree in organic chemistry and distinguished himself by taking a course in polymer chemistry, an uncommon specialization at the time.

"Because, why not? The class was only five bucks," Pascale says, holding out his hand and all I can focus on is his gold pinky ring.

Pascale recalls that the course set him apart within his graduating class of 60 chemists in 1962 when industry recruiters visited the campus. It was what ultimately landed him his first professional role at Allied Chemicals in Morristown, New Jersey. He remained with the company for seven years, during which time he continued his education, attending night classes to earn a master's degree at Stevens Institute of Technology.

He remembers carpooling with his colleagues from East Harlem to Morristown. "Work in New York starts at 9 am, but in New Jersey it started at 8 am and you went until 5 pm!" he explained, and then recalled taking the bus before the sun was up to his coworker's house and loading up in the car before eventually moving to New Jersey.

In 1968 Pascale was head hunted for a position at International Flavors and Fragrances' (IFF) new research and development facility in Union Beach, New Jersey. That was his introduction to the flavor industry, more specifically, sulfur chemistry extraction of natural products. He remembers having to leave his shoes outside of his house when he got home thanks to working with garlic and onion formulations.

It was there that he successfully isolated the lachrymatory factor in onions through gas chromatography of a raw onion extract, co-authoring the paper "Thiopropanal S-oxide: a lachrymatory factor in onions" with Michael H. Brodnitz in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. He also identified diallyl thiosulfinate as a major constituent of solvent-extracted garlic,



*Pascale pictured in 1976.*

Courtesy of John Pascale

a discovery detailed in a second published paper, "Flavor Components of Garlic Extract," also appearing in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* co-authored by Brodnitz and Linda Van Derslice.

In 1975, Pascale made a pivotal transition, transferring into the fragrance department at Alpine Aromatics as a technical director. He began training his nose on raw materials and accords while attempting to duplicate fine fragrances. He found it fascinating through dupes, he could see how perfumers were utilizing materials to build a fragrance. His chemistry knowledge could fill in the blanks for substitutions and shifting the composition for a fine fragrance versus a candle. Much of that early education came through hours of hands-on study with mentors, most notably the late Raoul Pantaleonie, owner, and president of Alpine Aromatics International Inc.

"I remember he came into my lab when I first started at the company, it was 5:30 pm, and he said, 'You see what time it is? Work ends at 5, you got to get out of here.' It's rare to find a boss that doesn't want you to be at work after hours. That meant a lot to me. He really cared about his employees. I've carried that with me ever since, at 5 o'clock, I'm out, because I know I've put my all into the day."

Pantaleonie's sudden passing in 1978 marked a turning point. Pascale remained at Alpine for another 15 years, though he notes that the company was never quite the same without his mentor. Even so, Alpine's influence on the industry was significant. The talent cultivated there went on to form several companies, including Belle Air Creations, Custom Essence LLC and Intarome.

Wanting to do more for the fragrance industry, Pascale joined the American Society of Perfumers (ASP) in May 1982. From behind his desk, he pulled out a navy photo album with a gold inscription on the front cover:

**JOHN V. PASCALE**
**AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PERFUMERS**
**JUNE 11, 1988**

"Maybe you'll want to see this," he said, flipping through pages filled with smiling faces of living and late perfume legends. The photographs were taken at a dinner held on June 11, 1988, honoring Pascale at the conclusion of his term as ASP president (1987–1988). Holding the album felt like holding a living time capsule.

He then began pointing around his office to photos of him holding while being surrounded by rose pedals, another photo holding a snake, and a third photo in Geneva being holding his ASP Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2024 World Perfumery Congress.

He picks back up the story in 1993, when Pascale was recruited by former Alpine colleagues to join Libenn Aromatics, where he joined as a partner in South Bend, Indiana. His time with Libenn ushered in a new chapter defined by constant travel. He worked extensively throughout Asia, including Hong Kong, Singapore and Korea, developing fragrances on the road and faxing formulas back to the laboratory for production.

Throughout his career, Pascale relied on his deep chemistry knowledge and an extraordinary mental library of aromas. He adhered to a singular philosophy: he would only smell a fragrance he created after the client had experienced it and requested any modifications. "But that was rarely the case," he said with a laugh and a shrug.

Maintaining his home base in New Jersey, Pascale adopted a demanding routine – flying to South Bend to work Monday through Wednesday, then returning home to continue composing and faxing formulas from his personal office.

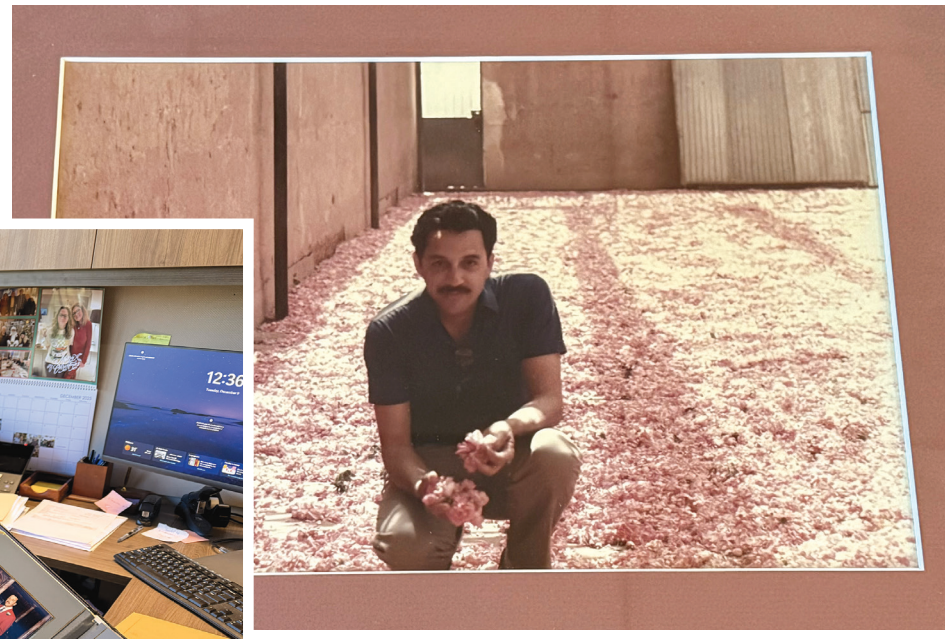
After a decade, Libenn Aromatics was sold to Noville Essential Oils Co. (later acquired by Firmenich).




*Pascale speaks at a president's dinner for the American Society of Perfumers.*

Courtesy of John Pascale





*Pascale traveled extensively throughout Asia during his time at Libenn Aromatics.*

*John Pascale spent nearly 50 years in the fragrance industry.*

Reflecting on the transition, Pascale remarked, "Owning a company is like a boat – it's great in and even better out of it."

Shortly thereafter, he received a call from Aroma Tech owner Stu Zlotnik and spent the next five years with the company. It was there that Pascale received The William P. Lambert Service Award, recognizing his many years of dedicated service and outstanding contributions to the fragrance profession.

His final professional chapter began in 2005, at the age of 66, when James "Jim" Unrath invited him to join the Ascent team, now known as Phoenix Flavors & Fragrances.

Unrath, president of Phoenix Flavors& Fragrances, recalls, "I had known John for over 20 years, so when the idea of starting a new company first came up in 2005, there was only one man I had in mind – and that was John. Ascent Aromatics needed a perfumer who could do it all: creation, GC, chemistry, applications, and sales. Without John, Ascent would not have survived those early days. Because of him, we not only endured but thrived, growing Ascent – now Phoenix F&F – into what it is today."

On his first day, the company consisted of just five employees, Pascale among them. One of those early colleagues was Alex Nunez, who became Pascale's mentee. Pascale would have Nunez smell and memorize accords daily, a practice reminiscent of his own training under Pantaleonie. The discipline continued for years and reflected Pascale's deep commitment to mentorship and education.

Alex Nunez, now vice president of perfumery, shares, "John Pascale has been more than just a colleague, he has been a mentor, a friend, and an inspiration. His commitment to perfumery and unwavering kindness has left a lasting mark on our team here at Phoenix and on the entire flavor and fragrance industry. While we will miss John's presence in the office, we are very

excited for him as he begins a new chapter filled with well-deserved rest, new adventures, and time with his family."

Nearly twenty years ago, Pascale initially signed a three-year contract to join the Ascent team. That contract was renewed again and again, extending his influence at Phoenix far beyond expectations.

In the end, the photographs spread across the table at Red Bank revealed more than a long career. They told the story of a man who built companies, trained noses, and passed on knowledge. As Pascale steps away from the lab, his legacy remains not only in the formulas he created, but in the people and institutions that continue to carry his work forward.

Courtesy of Noted Communications LLC; John Pascale

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