

shopping

Fragrant Fun For Everyone!

By Christine de la Cruz

Invent your Scent with Tijon Parfumerie

How many times have you mounted a hunting party for your perfect perfume - perhaps having smelled the scent on someone else or choosing to favor your favorite brand's latest release - and been disappointed? Perfume is as personal as the person you love and changes form depending on the wearer, the environment and the weather. It helps to define your character, highlight your traits and make your mark with the people you interact with. In short, choosing the right perfume can 'make or break' that perfect date, close that elusive business deal or make you the belle (or the beau) of the ball!

The use of perfume dates back to 4000BC when fragrant substances were burned in China, Arabia and Egypt for sacred purposes, their smoke believed to carry messages to the gods. In fact the word parfum derives from the Latin phrase per fumum meaning 'through smoke'. As prestigious as the development and appreciation of wine through the ages, the story of perfume is a fascinating science, with an intricate story that traverses empires, cultures and ages. Today, with hundreds of commercial scents on the market, the selection of your perfect scent is nothing to turn your nose up at!

Now, in the beautiful little fishing village of Grand Case lies a secret spot resplendent with scent, where all the mysteries of perfume will be unraveled - under the expert judgement of... yourself of course! Who better than you to create your ideal olfactory indulgence? Of course it's not quite as straightforward as burning a few fancy smelling substances hence why owners John and Cyndi Berglund have developed the perfect solution for the beginner in their Perfumer's Class 101 - the definitive class to explore, understand and develop this beautiful and fine art.

Open since 2007, Tijon Parfumerie has become one of Grand Case's highlights - along with the aromas of the innumerable gourmet restaurants of course! In fact, in high season, you'll find a selection of Tijon samples or 'amuse nez' in the powder rooms of some of the villages' top dining establishments.

With our motto of 'if we're going to write about it we have to do it' Destination magazine caught up with four parfumerie professor candidates to get a sneak peek at how to invent a scent. The setting was per-

fect. For starters, the Tijon boutique is unlike any you'll find on island. The tasteful décor and faithfulness to the entire story of perfume oozes from every shelf and display stand clearly expressing the fact that the Berglund's are more than passionate about perfume. Then there are the battalions of essential oils, imposingly overlooking the first time visitor and inspiring a sense of 'where would I ever begin' awe! A glance into 'the lab' and you know John and Cyndi mean business. Think back to



your last science class at school - Bunsen burners, test tubes and petri dishes - then put them on steroids and you'll have a rough idea of the amount of technical 'what the heck is that?' equipment all there to create heavenly scents.

Our 'scientists' (or scentsists!) for the day come from all walks of life, Robin - accounting, Phylis - marketing agent for medical and scientific equipment, Melissa - the hos-

pitality industry on mega yachts and Mark (yes, this is for the guys too!) an architect. So without further ado, they don their white lab coats and get ready for one of St Martin's most exciting adventures - without once getting wet or dirty! The goal of the 3 hour class: to educate the students about the history of perfume, function of the olfactory system, to understand the processes of selection and utilization of essential oils and ultimately, to create a perfume perfect for you.

After a fascinating introduction and overview from John, the first part of the exercise involved a simple quiz - a 'pre test' - to see just how much everyone knew about scent. For example, here's one for everyone: If the average person can visually recall a photo 50% of the time after 3 months, to what percent can the average person recall a smell after 1 year? You know where to get the answer! As you read this, you are using your sense of smell right now and probably don't even realize it. Although it is the most neglected of all our senses, it plays a vital role in our sense of well-being and quality of life.

So, overview, history and pre-test under our belts, on with the adventure and a look into the raw materials used in perfume making. In the plant world, perfumes are made from over 3,000 possible ingredients derived from flowers and petals, roots, leaves, herbs and stems, peels of fruits and citrus, resins, gums and balsam, seeds and wood, bark, mosses and lichens! Then a foray into the various techniques for extracting oils from these raw materials. If fractional distillation, terpenes removal, decolorisation or enflourage mean nothing to you, then you'd best be hot-footing it to Tijon right now!



By now, the 'students' are itching to get their hands on the good stuff and within minutes, we have a fully active laboratory with delicious scents flying around in pipettes and glass beakers.

All scents are categorized into three "notes" thanks to the classification of 19th Century French perfumer Septimus Piesse and a 1923 publication by W. A. Poucher. These notes are based on the scents' evaporation rate. These are divided into 'top,' 'middle' and 'base' notes, the former evaporating the fastest and the latter, the most enduring.

Along with John and Cyndi's expert guidance throughout the process, each perfumer was armed with a comprehensive booklet listing the endless essential oils and a selection of perfume recipes, though it soon became apparent that these guys were more than happy to be independently adventurous.

By the end of the session, we had four completely original perfumes, each with its distinct character and name. Robin had created 'Bambi, Philys 'Phylisse', Melissa 'Mine' and Mark 'Monsieur John 09'. After

bottling and labeling their original scents, what better way to celebrate than with a glass of bubbly! Each perfumer also received a fabulous bag of goodies from Tijon and left the boutique educated, inspired and smelling 'oh-so'good'!

If you're looking for something a little different to complement your shopping experience whilst you're on-island, then Perfumer's Class 101 is definitely for you. Fragrant fun for everyone!

"Happiness is like perfume. You can't help but give it away without getting a little on yourself" anon





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