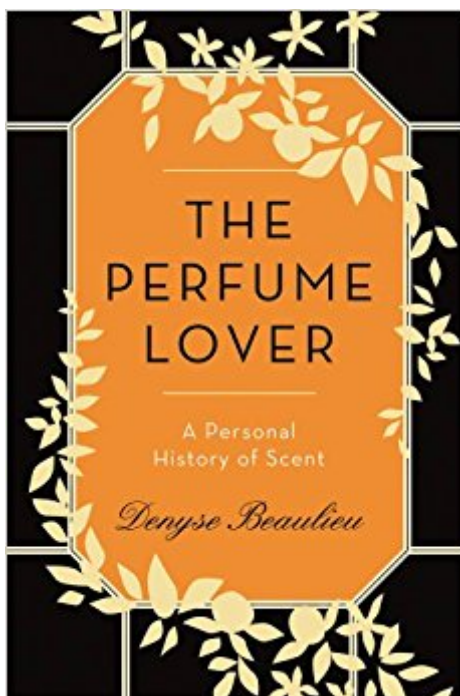


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The Perfume Lover: A Personal History Of Scent



Synopsis

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: *S  ville    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.

Book Information

File Size: 838 KB

Print Length: 321 pages

Publisher: St. Martin's Press (March 19, 2013)

Publication Date: March 19, 2013

Sold by:    Macmillan

Language: English

ASIN: B008E954NM

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,199,047 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #83
in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Chemical > Cosmetics #550 in Kindle
Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Science > Chemistry > General & Reference #1463
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Customer Reviews

The Perfume Lover is a story within a story of life becoming art, in which Denyse Beaulieu, a Paris-based perfume critic of renown, recounts her personal adventures as *À muse* for perfumer Bertrand Duchaufour in the creation of *À Seville* L'Artisan Parfumeur. Turns out, the inspiration of the fragrance (and the book!) is Denyse's hot and steamy account of a single night's love affair in the Spanish capital of *À neroli* (bitter orange). As The Perfume Lover develops, however, it becomes much more than a fascinating and page turning story, as Denyse's brilliant prose educates the reader in fine details of perfume manufacturing, raw materials, procedures and the people that make it all happen.

I usually wait to to read the reviews until after I've read a book myself, and this book was no exception. I have been a perfume crazed scent slut all of my life--- I remember the magical world of my grandma's vanity table and all her little fascinating bottles. And my very own first bottle of Blue Waltz, then Love's Baby Soft, Charlie, etc,etc. for me, perfume has always conjured up experiences, moods, people I've known, and places I've been. And I have and wear many different ones. I've never had a "signature scent". So I was really excited to learn more about some of the scientific aspects of perfumery and the history, and how fragrances are created and blended to evoke moods and feelings. And I did find those parts of the book fascinating--- the history--- the discussion of chemicals--- all of that-- give me more. But, Gawd! The author was so self absorbed I nearly couldn't slog through the book. I get that she's a writer, hence the vastly flowery and verbose style....and this IS her personal story....but I found myself so annoyed by her I was skipping over sections to get to what I thought of as " the good stuff". And all I kept hearing in my mind was " Wah wah.....Wah Wah Wah" Like Charlie Brown's teacher.....So, take it for what it's worth. I do recommend the book for its interesting factual material-- but be advised, you're going to want to fight off that unbearable urge to fling the book across the room.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book, and the fragrance on which it is based. Catnip for fragheads.

Full of facts. Great source.

Immensely interesting story about the author's journey into the exclusive and secretive world of luxury perfume told through her recollections of the scents that have impacted her life. Well-written, informative and a joy for an lover of perfume.

I truly and thoroughly enjoyed this book. It was recommended to me by a dear friend. The book was informative about many aspects of perfume- the creative process, the history of perfume itself, and even the history of some of the most famous scents and scent designers. As far as the reviews that critique the author's tone/ personality, I take them worth a grain of sand. I'm glad that this does not read like a textbook. It is (after all) a PERSONAL history of scent. I found her confident, witty, and intelligent. And while at some points in the story she may have come off a bit self-centered or overconfident, I appreciate that she did not try to gloss over her character flaws (which we all have by the way).

The author writes with passion about the nature of adornment. A must read for anyone who thinks seriously about the nature of fashion and believes (like I do) that how we present ourselves to the world is important.

I'm resisting the urge to rate this book lower than the three stars I've given it. The book isn't badly written, it's just that the narrator is insufferably self-centered. It is, after all, a personal history of scent, so some degree of self-aggrandizement is to be expected. The author interweaves her past experiences with a present-day narrative of developing a scent based upon one of these stories with Bertrand Duchaufour, perfumist of L'Artisan Parfumeur. Interesting enough. Where the book veers into unlikeable territory is when she moves from personal anecdotes to interviews and interactions with Duchaufour and other industry luminaries. She writes him as if he's a reluctant puppet to her string-pulling, pouting when he doesn't take her ideas literally or cancels an appointment or takes too long to get back to her. Her utter insistence in defining her relationship with him and the scent (muse, auteur, author) is insufferably boring. She feels a constant need to establish her dominion over the subject matter and experts. Her explication is less about learning from them and their experiences and more about her demonstrating that she knows as much (if not more) than they do. Examples: About Hypnotic Poison: "Was the perfumer Annick Menardo aware of

what she was doing when she stuck an almond note into its jasmine sambac, musk and vanilla accords? As any reader of classic English murder mysteries knows, you can tell whether a victim has been poisoned with cyanide from the lingering smell of bitter almonds." Menardo's response when caught with the question? "I don't psychoanalyze myself."About interviewing Serge Lutens: "This isn't an interview where a person extorts as much as she can from another without disclosing anything. Lutens is asking *me* questions."And despite having written a memoir about scent and memory, she writes: "The next time someone brings up the perfume-as-instant-flashback cliché, I may scream."Yawn.I do have to credit Beaulieu for being willing to write herself honestly, even if the result is in writing a not-so-likeable character. If you're looking for well-balanced, informative writing on scent, with an unobtrusive narrator, check out the work of Chandler Burr.

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