

## From the Idea to Finished Product

– About the Art of Fragrance Description –

**EURO COSMETICS:** *Mareike, how do you create a fragrance – from the initial idea to the finished product?*

**Mareike Beck:** I am sure every perfumer has his or her own method. One option is to take the basic idea of the fragrance, for example a summer theme with a fig note, and combine it with other scents like wood, water, musk, etc. This begins with the first formulation on paper or on a computer, which is the basis for the perfume oil blends. This is followed by many tests and sensory evaluations, also in the final application. Finally, in close cooperation with other perfumers, evaluators and the marketing department, we select the variant that best suits the desired concept.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *How long does it take to develop a fragrance?*

**Mareike Beck:** That really differs. It can range from anywhere between a couple of weeks and several months. Of course, it takes time to find the right idea and put it into practice. In addition, the subject of ageing should not be underestimated in perfume oils as well as in the finished product. The fragrance changes over time, the components are better integrated and it becomes softer and rounder. Since smelling is a very personal and subjective perception, the evaluation of scents, for example, takes a lot of time. This can be an internal test panel, but it is also possible to carry out extensive consumer tests before a product is launched on the market. Once the development of the actual fragrance has been completed, tests are carried out on functional products such as detergents or shower gel to characterise the stability of the fragrance oil in the respective base. This takes several weeks.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *What connection is there between fragrance and other senses?*

**Mareike Beck:** The other senses are very important when it comes to describing and classifying scents. Listening and music are particularly important. Just like a piece of music, perfumes are often described as compositions. A composition can have many different notes, for example green, fruity or floral. From a combination of notes, chords emerge. These are then combined with other notes and chords to together create one harmonic fragrance. Some scents or chords can trigger specific images or feelings. For example freshly mowed grass or the previously mentioned fig, may remind us of our last trip to Greece. To describe scents, we like to use the vocabulary of our other senses. For example words that are borrowed from the colour world (green, blue, ...), tactile sense (soft, sharp, ...) or our sense of taste (sweet, sour, ...). All these associations together create a clear but very personal image. On the one hand, the perception of the fragrance itself is very different, on the other hand, each person has different personal connections – a different mindset.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *Smell – How can I excite customers with a description that is both technical and emotional?*

**Janine Hammer:** Describing a fragrance is an art of its own. Even though human beings can recognise innumerable nuances, they often do not know how to describe them. But it is precisely these descriptions, first and foremost of course the name, that make a lasting impression on the memory of a fragrance. Consumers love stories, often unconsciously. There is a reason the notion of 'storytelling' has



**Janine Hammer, Marketing Specialist,**  
Bell Flavors & Fragrances EMEA

**Mareike Beck, Perfumer**

established itself as a must-have. Especially in the areas of personal care and perfumes, there is hardly a fragrance that doesn't have its own website with background information or a short explanation on the packaging. But it starts smaller. The basis of every fragrance before it is sold is usually a loving and detailed description of the fragrance that creates a mental picture. After all, one fragrance can express different things depending on the story that is

multi-sensory. All of our senses work together and reinforce each other. One of the most important criteria should therefore be the harmony of the product and the overall concept. Only if the name, packaging layout, colour and fragrance form a single unit can a balanced experience be created. For example, cleaning agents with lemon should be yellow, products with lavender should be purple. On the other hand, products that are highly nourishing are often white. This has nothing to do with a lack of creativity, but it is rather to accommodate the way our brain functions. There are studies that show that scents are more easily recognised when the colours and images match. In studies conducted by Gottfried and Dolan (2003), for example, the brain activity and thus the memory performance of the test subjects were significantly higher if the subjectively perceived match between colour and fragrance was very high. For brand communication, this means that colours and motifs that match the product are preferred. The more harmoniously all aspects work together, the greater the probability that the product will be well received.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *What fragrances are currently especially sought after in the cosmetic industry?*

**Janine Hammer:** The trend towards regional products continues and is also becoming stronger in the fragrance segment. Alongside the yearning for exotic places, which has long been in high demand, consumers are increasingly looking for support in the original and familiar. Europe's cultural

landscapes in particular are home to a large number of interesting plants and fruits, which are ideal as inspiration for new fragrances. The slightly sour cloudberry, for example. With its nickname "Orange of the North" it is the super fruit of Scandinavia. Its high vitamin C content promises effects for beauty products. It's a similar story with seabuckthorn. This bright orange fruit can be found everywhere in the dunes surrounding the Baltic Sea and is seen as the epitome of Baltic nativeness. In 2018, new fragrances for body and household care products will also focus on meadow beauties such as the delicate daisy fragrance of summer.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *What trend developments do you see?*

**Janine Hammer:** On the one hand, we will continue to see strong, fruity floral fragrances and gourmet notes, which are very much in demand for young consumers, especially in the shower gel and creams segment. Another constantly growing consumer group, however, tends to expect light and subtle creations. This is accompanied by the trend towards natural ingredients, which are experiencing a sustained boom in the cosmetics industry.

**Mareike Beck:** The development of natural fragrances plays an important role for us, a very interesting field of work. Here we focus exclusively on essential oils and natural extracts. Additionally, plant extracts are gaining popularity.

**EURO COSMETICS:** We thank you for the interview.



*Moltebeere: Cloudberry*

told. An aromatic cinnamon scent can, for example, invoke a Christmas atmosphere. But it can also be associated with the Orient, with adventure, and with spice caravans of long lost times. And so the product moves from the Christmas collection to the year-round range.

**EURO COSMETICS:** *And what is the decisive factor when buying a fragrance?*

**Janine Hammer:** Human beings are