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DECEMBER 2009

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The violet heart of Yves Saint Laurent Paris (launched in 1983) is uplifted by a sophisticated rose—and in that floral smackdown, Grojsman channeled the essence of every innocent abroad's first giddy encounter with the City of Light.

Fragrance whacks the primitive, reptile part of our brains. A whiff of perfume or cologne can trigger instant associations with your mother, a lover, a time in your life...or a city or part of the world. Voilà! It's the next best thing to a round-the-globe airline ticket.

There have been fragrances inspired by locations as far-flung as Fiji (Guy Laroche Fidgi), Tokyo (Guerlain), Timbuktu (L'Artisan Parfumeur), Russia (Chanel Cuir de Russie), African big-game country (Safari Ralph Lauren), Sicily (Dolce & Gabbana), Positano (Eau d'Italie), and the hills above Florence (Christopher Brosius's A Room With A View, named after the E. M. Forster novel that's set there).

Sometimes a perfumer will create a fragrance that's close to the way a place actually strikes the nose. To capture the sensuality of Morocco, Mandy Aftel of Aftelier Perfumes homed in on *ras el hanout*, the cooking-spice rub whose aroma wafts over every souk. Her Parfum de Maroc uses natural oils derived from the ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, allspice, pimento berry, and nutmeg in the traditional recipe. The result is bottled casbah.

Tropical-theme fragrances have olfactory hits that put you right in the

hammock under the palm tree, such as coconut water and pink grapefruit in Jennifer Lopez's Miami Glow, or watermelon in Lilly Pulitzer's Palm Beach-inspired Beachy. Mediterranean notes such as cedar, cypress, fig, mint, orange, and citron can similarly plunk you down on the corniche overlooking the harbor in fragrances like Elizabeth Arden Mediterranean and Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle's Lys Méditerranée.

But not all places smell like orchards, gardens, spices, or oceans. The real Paris aroma is as much about baguettes, Citroën exhaust, and the curious orangey disinfectant they use in the Métro as it is about flowers. And ultimately, "good fragrances are made to become a part

research the Jardins fragrance series, drawing inspiration from Tunisian gardens, the banks of the Nile, and the smell of the air after a rainstorm in India. "The way I create our Jardins is not about capturing or reproducing faithfully the smell of a place, but rather capturing the creative idea of the place," he explains. "I'm looking for the emotion, so certain fragrances will be highlighted—for instance, the fig tree in Un Jardin en Méditerranée, the green mango in Un Jardin sur le Nil, the ginger and water idea in Un Jardin Après la Mousson," his fragrance based on a monsoon.

"You try to capture the place either literally, through the raw materials, or figuratively, to evoke the feeling," says

Tropical-theme fragrances have olfactory hits that put you right in the hammock.

of somebody," notes perfumer Frédéric Malle. Therefore they "can only include glimpses of an atmosphere in their composition, as their main task is to smell like a person, not like a place."

So perfumers combine conventional fragrance ingredients with subtle geographical hints to create a mood—as with the black tea in Dior's Escale à Pondichéry, or the red currant and pine needles in Paris-Moscou, Guerlain's evocation of a train trip to Moscow.

Hermès's in-house perfumer Jean-Claude Ellena travels the world to

Trudi Loren, vice president for fragrance development worldwide at Estée Lauder. Or both: For instance, she explains that Michael Kors's Bermuda contains passion flower, cedarwood, and hibiscus, which are indigenous to the island, as well as synthetic ingredients such as musk that have nothing Bermudian about them but which, in the perfumer's art, can evoke warm skin and "bring you to that moment in time when your toes are in the fine sand." Kors's Capri, on the other hand, honors a chic but rocky island that has very little natural

Around the World



(1) Editions de Parfums Frédéric Malle Lys Méditerranée Spicy, like a European summer evening. (2) Ralph Lauren Safari An exotic, floral scent. (3) Carolina Herrera 212 Named for Manhattan's first area code. (4) Creed Virgin Island Water A unisex scent with hibiscus and ginger. (5) Dior Escale à Portofino Bergamot and bitter almond from the Italian seaside. (6) Michael Kors Very Hollywood Inspired by red-carpet-ready

actresses. (7) Bond No. 9 So New York Notes of cocoa and espresso for chocoholics and the coffee-obsessed. (8) L'Artisan Parfumeur Timbuktu Mango and papyrus wood evoke landscapes in Africa. (9) Guerlain Paris-Tokyo Jasmine and green tea capture this train trip from France to Japan. (10) Estée Lauder Beyond Paradise A floral scent based on rare English plants found in the Eden Projects gardens in England.