

# COMMON SCENTS

## SHOPPING FOR FRAGRANCE **By A. Richard Langley**



From the thriving fragrance market to such films as *Love Potion No. 9* and *Scent of a Woman*, it seems Americans are as obsessed with scents as we are with dollars. In *Scent of a Woman*, Al Pacino plays a hard-drinking, retired Army colonel who is also blind. Heightened by his blindness, his sense of smell allows him to determine the color of a woman's hair and eyes — and even whether she has a sunny disposition — through her scent. Pacino's gruff colonel attracts women because he knows more about them, physically and emotionally, than most men who can see.

The commercial and personal influence of fragrances is commensurate with their romantic origin. According to "The Ultimate Perfume Experience" at ParfumsRaffy.com, Egyptian women used perfumed creams and oils as toiletries and cosmetics and as preludes to lovemaking as early as 1580-1085 B.C.

Today, you can use a fragrance to attract in two ways. The first is to attract attention subtly. When choosing a fragrance for yourself, you obviously want to select one that smells good on you but which also pleases that special someone. As a trend-following teen, I once wore Drakkar and Paco Rabanne. My friends — and girlfriends — marveled at how these fragrances complemented my body chemistry. For a shy, gangly guy finding his social footing, their affirmation was much appreciated. I now have an Imelda Marcos-like stockpile of my favorite fragrances, Gucci, Nobile and Ferrari.

The second is to let that special someone know that you are attracted to him or her when you give it as a gift. Remember that like jewelry or lingerie, a fragrance conveys romantic intent. There must be a mutual attraction between the parties, and the fragrance-giver must be ready to take the relationship to the next level. If the recipient is uncomfortable accepting your scented gift or does not reciprocate your romantic feelings, the relationship may become strained.

A fragrance is an enticing contradiction; meant to be consistently pleasing and sensual, its scent is different on each person. Choose one that both complements his or her body chemistry and attracts compliments — from you and from others. To ensure that you choose the proper fragrance, you must know how the individual's physical makeup will affect the fragrance he or she wears. The same scent can smell different on you than it does on your best friend. Just because it smells heavenly on you does not mean that it will work with his or her body chemistry. Hair color and skin type also affect the scent's effectiveness. Age is also a consideration: As you get older, your sense of smell diminishes, and you may tend to pile on more fragrance than necessary. People seem to choose lighter fragrances early on, and later in life, tend to enjoy a richer scent.

You know what fragrance he or she likes, and a fragrance is a daily reminder of your affection. Go with something different (but equally suitable) from what your significant other normally wears — he or she will be duly impressed with your understanding of his or her needs and preferences.