



Perfume

Expressing the Essence of Haute Couture

"Smell is a potent wizard that transports you across thousands of miles and all the years you have lived. The odours of fruits waft me to my southern home, to my childhood frolics in the peach orchard. Other odours, instantaneous and fleeting, cause my heart to dilate joyously or contract with remembered grief. Even as I think of smells, my nose is full of scents that start awake sweet memories of summers gone and ripening fields far away." Helen Keller

The sense of smell is one of the most difficult of our senses to express. While we're easily able to find words to describe what we see in the world around us, by defining what we see in terms of shape, size, colour, or by what it sounds like, for example, it is infinitely more difficult to find the words to describe what we smell. We simply don't have the vocabulary to explain the scents around us. Instead, our descriptions are more emotive, drawn from a memory that the scent evokes, conjuring up pictures in our minds based on the way we felt at the time we last smelled that or a similar scent. The result of this process is that you will experience a scent differently to someone else, based on the way the evoked memory makes you feel.





Essence



Uncompromising Perfection



Giorgio Armani believes that a scent should be unique to each person. When looking to express the essence of his haute couture in a collection of bespoke perfumes, he drew upon the treasured moments in his life, finding inspiration in familiar and beloved scenes, and scents.

Armani is obsessed with the pursuit of perfection and precision. His fashion design is defined by elegance and essential silhouettes, and the use of precious and refined materials. It is only natural therefore, that the same can be said for the materials chosen for the Armani Privé collection of perfumes. When creating a fragrance for the collection, he employs 12 to 25 accords – drawn from only the purest ingredients. Just as he strives for perfect design, where functionality and beauty work together in harmony in his haute couture lines, he is careful to select different fragrance notes that also blend together harmoniously to create a new unified scent that smells quite different from the individual notes that were originally combined. While many designer fragrances can consist of 80 to 150 accords, Armani's limited use of accords to create an Armani Privé fragrance bears testimony to the fact that, as with his haute couture lines, only the highest quality, natural materials are used in his collections.

Like a finely detailed garment, each Armani Privé fragrance is a balance of uncompromising

perfection, distilled from rare and luminous raw materials, an artful reinvention of Haute Perfumery designed to create pure moments of emotion. Giorgio Armani fragrances are always built around one strong idea, and are developed by the most prestigious 'nose' in the world, using the best ingredients available.

There are four fragrance ranges in the unisex Armani Privé collection; Les Eaux — inspired by nature and fresh earthy accords such as soil, water and plants, these scents awaken memories of mythic gardens, La Collection — celebrates the most legendary and precious ingredients of perfumery, and La Collection des Mille et Une Nuits — an ode to the Orient and the story of 1001 Nights. In addition, every year, Armani creates a limited edition fragrance, presented in a unique, handmade bottle, in his Les Editions Couture range.

To date, there are seventeen fragrances across the four ranges in the Armani Privé collection. Les Eaux's Eau de Toilettes include; Figuer Eden, Rose Alexandrie, Vetiver Babylon, and the new fragrance Pivoine Suzhou, which will be released in March 2015. La Collection's Eau de Parfums include Bois d'Encens, Cuir Amethyste, Eau de Jade, Pierre de Lune, Eclat de Jasmin, and the new fragrance Encens Satin. Unravelling the infinite splendours of the Orient, La Collection des Mille et une Nuits' Eau de Parfums include; Cuir Noir, Rose d'Arabie, Oud Royale, and Ambre Orient. Les Editions Couture – the limited edition collection includes; Nacre, Nuances and the newest fragrance, Ombre Et Lumiere. Ombre Et Lumière (meaning "shadow and light") draws inspiration from the vibrant undersea palate of Armani's spring/summer 2014 collection. Just as the shadows and light intermingle in the big blue, so too, do the contrasting iris and jasmine notes in this exclusive limited edition luxury perfume. Of the 1000 coveted bottles, just three were available for sale at Luminance in South Africa. This occasion marked the first time the limited edition was sold in Africa. Armani Privé is available at Luminance in Hyde Park, as well as Stuttafords Rosebank and Sandton.

Photo: © Giorgio Armani

Emotion

Encens Satin

The enveloping radiance of Encens Satin, the latest addition to Armani Privé La Collection, celebrates a new vision of legendary, sensual, incense. Inspired by the opulence and radiance of one of the House's most emblematic colours and fabrics, midnight blue satin, this fragrance evokes memories of the fluid Mediterranean, with its impenetrable surface illuminated under a moonlit sky. It is smooth like the quintessentially couture satin, as it caresses and envelopes the body, always in motion. While Bois d'Encens' sharply spicy seduction is both mysterious and powerfully emotive Encens Satin however, takes us in an entirely new direction. It's brightly enveloping sensuality is inspired by the melting, balm-like tonalities of the palest and purest golden incense, harvested by hand in the Golis mountains of northern Somalia, where resinous frankincense and myrrh flow from ancient trees. The fragrance seduces with a softly carnal radiance, the absolute attraction of incense illuminated with spices, then rounded with woods and resinous accents. Not one incense note but two: brightly solar Incense MD (Molecular Distillation for extraordinary clarity), and warmer, more ambery Incense Resinoid, for a truly vibrant incense from start to finish. A woody ambery fragrance, Encens Satin inhabits a luxuriously sophisticated olfactive territory between the spicy woodiness of Armani Privé Bois d'Encens and the opulence of Rose d'Arabie from "Les Mille et Une Nuits" fragrance collection. The fragrance is instantly captivating, with luminous top notes of warm, spicy cardamom essence, sparkling ginger and pink pepper which reveal the first caress of incense MD sublimated by the fresh, citrus-like notes of elemi. Light continues to glow through the golden translucency of incense resinoid, fused with balsamic benzoin absolute and delicately smoky cistus absolute. The heart is enveloping, satiny in its fluidity with a soft touch of Immortelle, like a fine grain of salt upon the skin. As the top notes and heart melt, they expose the intensity of the woody notes, an alliance of cedarwood and patchouli, made even more sensual with the addition of ambrox. The composition is beautifully rounded, its modern refinement equally seductive for a man or for a woman. It is intriguing and sculptural. The signature Armani Privé fragrance bottle is elegant with its stone-like top marbled in tones of twilight blue to a deep midnight; its lustrous polish and organic form create the perfect contrast to the soft matte of the black, lacquered glass bottle. Distinctly architectural, the design resonates with the same, deep sophistication as the fragrance within.



Pivoine Suzhou

With this new fragrance, Giorgio Armani captures the natural perfection of China's most beloved flower – the peony, which is the symbol of the ancient Chinese empire, and represents happiness, grace and prosperity. This is the first Armani Privé fragrance to be inspired by the legendary gardens of Asia, in this instance the nine Classical Gardens of Suzhou, which are listed on the Unesco World Heritage register. Dating back to the 6th Century BCE, when Suzhou, in Jiangsu Province in China was founded as the capital of the Wu Kingdom, the gardens seek to recreate natural landscapes in miniature.

According to Unesco, the gardens, dating from the 11th through 19th century, are generally acknowledged to be masterpieces of the genre, and reflect the profound metaphysical importance of natural beauty in Chinese culture in their meticulous design. There are still more than 50 of these gardens in existence, nine of which, namely the Humble Administrator's Garden, Lingering Garden, Net Master's Garden, the Mountain Villa with Embracing Beauty, the Canglang Pavilion, the Lion Grove Garden, the Garden of Cultivation, the Couple's Garden Retreat, and the Retreat & Reflection Garden, are regarded as the finest embodiments of Chinese "Mountain and Water" gardens.

In explaining why the gardens are included in the register, Unesco says that they were "conceived and built under the influence of the unconstrained poetic freehand style originally seen in traditional Chinese landscape paintings, they are noted for their profound merging of exquisite craftsmanship, artistic elegance and rich cultural implications. These gardens lend insight into how ancient Chinese intellectuals harmonised conceptions of aestheticism in a culture of reclusion within an urban living environment."

In their pursuit of perfection and precision, Giorgio Armani and perfumer Julie Massé have reinterpreted the Eau de Toilette, combining elegance and freshness with soft, lingering sensuality. It is an ensemble of great beauty, balancing art and nature. The fragrance opens with the fresh scent of juicy mandarin coupled with pink pepper and raspberry as its fruity and spicy top notes, and gives way to the floral notes of peony in the heart, beautifully enhanced with rose essence and May rose absolute, which melt to reveal warm base notes of amber, Orcanox™, musk and patchouli. ■ Lindsay Grubb

