

HOW TO *fragrance* *your* wedding

Words by *Rosie Patrick*

Scenting your big day is a bit like dressing for spring – it's all about layers. Get it right and the results will linger long in the memory

Smell this! For a month, this is what my other half has been subjected to, as a succession of perfume vials, candles and essential oils have been unceremoniously thrust under his nose. From the moment his foot hits the doormat every night, he has been

bombarded with: "What do you think of this? What does it remind you of?" He has scrambled for adjectives: citrus-fresh, spicy, warm, meadow-like. But even a fragrance fan like him (you should see our dresser) has his limits: I give both our beaks a break.

For me, scent has been a lifelong love. One of my earliest memories was watching intently as my mother doused herself in Chanel No.5, the distinctive aroma filling the air. Beautiful by Estée Lauder was my first 'grown-up' eau de parfum (a family friend's abandoned bottle had me hooked as a teen) and I remember carefully rearranging my bedside table to best display the tiny golden phial. A close friend's penchant for Paco Rabanne's 1 Million, that ostentatious wall of masculinity, was the scent of university nights out. I've logged them all.

Perfume has a miraculous ability to propel us through space and time to a place, a person, a moment. Why would you not use that to your advantage on your wedding day? That's where my guinea-pig husband and I come back in. We've done the sniffing, so you don't have to. Because fragrancng your nuptials isn't limited to the scent you pick off the shelf for yourself – it extends to the other person, the room and the flowers in your bouquet and buttonholes. Give it a little thought, and you can, quite literally, bottle the memory of your big day.

FINDING YOUR SIGNATURE

Whether you're hopelessly devoted to the one perfume or have a sea of half-finished bottles littering your chest of drawers, a wedding is an opportunity to start afresh.

"Every bride and groom should have a signature scent for their nuptials, a perfume that instantly transports them back to the magic of the day whenever they wear it," claims Amanda Connock, founder of British brand Connock London. "The scent should be stronger than usual but not overpowering. And using multiple products from the same collection will prolong its effects."

Amanda, not surprisingly, is bursting with ingenious tips. For instance: "Your chosen fragrance can be used to scent the invitations, by misting a little eau de parfum over the card and inside the envelope." It's a good thing



[Above] Maison Christian Dior's La Colle Noire is named after Dior's chateau in the South of France, from £200 for 125ml (dior.com)

you won't have to hop on the train to the Big Smoke to experience the brand any more. "We're excited to become the scent of Eleganza Sposa in Glasgow," she reveals. "Together, we'll create indulgent experiences in store. Our Kukui Eau de Parfum and Room & Linen Mist will be spritzed before and during any bridal appointment and we'll have scented candles and diffusers in every area to build a calm and relaxing environment."

If you feel out of your depth in a perfume hall, a consultation with an expert can be helpful. One of the stops on this olfactory journey of mine was a trip to Dior's splendid fragrance counter in Glasgow's House of Fraser department store, where I was introduced to the Maison Christian Dior range - the upper tier of the brand's scent empire. A dedicated parfumeur delved deep into my psyche, hunting for clues as to which bottle

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fun and stress-free decisions in wedding planning," says the brand's fragrance expert Emma South. "Feel free to bring along moodboards or pictures that you're working from, as this will help the stylist to visualise your day and lead them to colognes that capture your style."

With more of a focus on the day itself, and an overarching look at the scent-scape of the wedding, the Jo Malone consultant will ask questions about your colour schemes, flowers and the feel you're trying to create. Then, it's up to the brand to present you with options. "We'll show you how scents can be layered," explains Emma. "It means you can truly personalise your wedding fragrance. Often, couples have a shared scent which unifies them and then each will wear a different perfume on top. Think of this as the 'fragrance fitting'."

The search for a signature comes with a warning, however: "Once you've found it, be strict with yourself and try not to wear it until the big day," Emma cautions. "The more frequently you do, the more you dilute your associations with the scent."

If you're lazy and indecisive like me, or just time-poor, there are other ways to uncover your wedding signature scent without leaving the house. The Fragrance Shop

has launched a subscription service called Scentaddict, whereby an atomiser filled with a different perfume is posted out to you every month for you to 'date' before you commit and splurge on a full bottle. I'm trying out a three-month programme of Chanel's Gabrielle, Dior's →

would speak to my soul. It sounds awfully dramatic, but as the chat veered into astrological territory, I really felt we were getting somewhere - and, strangely, what we landed on, La Colle Noire, a multifaceted floral number, seemed like the scent I'd always been searching for. As I've discovered, most of the perfumes I gravitate towards have a few notes in common, namely rose and amber, and this concoction, interestingly, has both.

"Dior was very superstitious and would stitch a stem of lily of the valley into the seam of a dress for good luck," reveals Carl Groenewald, fragrance ambassador at Christian Dior. What would be Carl's big day go-to? "I think Lucky would be the perfect wedding scent," he says. "It's a lucky charm and the perfume to wear whenever you want to cross your fingers." Please, no rain.

Another big player in the scent game is, of course, Jo Malone London, which like Dior runs consultations in store. "Choosing your scent should be one of the most

[Above] Consultations take place at **Maison Christian Dior's** elegant marble space in Glasgow's House of Fraser (dior.com)



[Above] A co-ordinating candle will treat the whole reception to your signature scent, £45



[Above] Jo Malone London's Orange Blossom cologne blends zingy clementine flower, orange blossom and water lily, from £45 for 30ml (jomalone.co.uk)

Miss Dior and Armani's Si. So far, Gabrielle and I have been getting acquainted, and it makes me feel as if I'm sunbathing. It's rich and fruity, with accents of orange blossom and ylang-ylang. Could it be the One? Time will tell.

FLOWER POWER

Mother Nature also has a part to play. What about your bouquet? Your centrepieces? How will the florals interact with your personal scent and the overall aroma of the day (more on that later)?

"Before you begin to consider scenting your wedding, break down the kinds of smells you already love, to help you nominate which flowers to prioritise," advises stylist and florist Rosie Conroy of Lavender & Rose. "If you like soft, romantic scents, chances are you're going to identify with the subtle perfume of garden roses, peonies and sweet peas. For those who lean towards stronger scents, try punchier blooms, like lilac and jasmine.

"Alternatively, you might prefer those deep, woody scents that often make up the base notes of perfume - here you might want to explore herbs instead of florals, such as rosemary, which steadily release a heady fragrance through their oils."

As a passionate and ridiculously



[Above] Fragrant eucalyptus from Lavender & Rose is a soothing addition to a bouquet

[Below] Pair Connock London's Kukui Oil candle and Room & Linen mist for a more intense hit of the fragrance you'll be greeted with at Glasgow's Eleganza Sposa (connocklondon.co.uk)



[Above] Picking seasonal blooms will ensure their scent is at its most impactful. "The fresher the flowers, the prettier the perfume," confirms Rosie Conroy at Lavender & Rose (lavender-and-rose.com)

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detail-orientated human being, I took this approach when it came to my own wedding flowers. I actually did chose rosemary (which, incidently, is my real name), paired with eucalyptus and lavender to relieve jitters and throw a blanket of scent over the day. And guess what? Family and friends are still talking about it, especially when they get a whiff of any of those things today.

"Herbs intensify the fragrance," agrees Stirling florist Trudi Todd. "Rosemary, thyme, lavender and eucalyptus are also calming and therapeutic in a bouquet."



[Above] The Fragrance Shop's Scentaddict subscription perfume arrives in a sleek black box (thefragranceshop.co.uk)

Be aware that certain florals are on the naughty list. "Some heavily fragrant flowers, such as lilies, for instance, have colourful pollens that can stain clothes," Rosie warns. "We've heard horror stories of brides with lily bouquets having bright orange pollen crushed onto their dresses by over-enthusiastic hugs from relatives." Shudder. "Stargazer lilies can give off an overwhelming scent, causing headaches and allergy attacks," Trudi also warns. "And I wouldn't recommend including stocks and hyacinths in your table arrangements, as they could put you off your food. They are better in a larger, open space, or as part of an outdoor ceremony or church celebration."

Speaking of the venue, this is an equally vital factor in your decision-making about flowers. "The space will dictate the volume of florals you'll need in order to perfume it," Rosie says. "Smaller places are more straightforward, so you may want to concentrate your efforts on an individual area rather than the whole venue."

Again, layering is key: "While lily of the valley is lovely on its own, you can mix less intensely fragrant flowers in with freesia, wax flower, rose, sweet pea, jasmine and peony." As ever in life, it's all about balance.



[Above] The Little White Cow's collaboration with North East Chandlery can set you up with a fully bespoke scenting service (thelittlewhitecow.co.uk; northeastchandlery.com)

SETTING THE MOOD

Now that your venue is blossoming, what else can you do to boost that function suite or ceremony space with scent? "Think about the mood of your big day," suggests Kate Symington, the brains behind the styling force that is The Little White Cow. "Is it relaxed, green and fresh? Is it romantic, warm and intense? Go for scents that enhance the overall feeling you're after."

Before you accuse us of joining the Too Far Theatre Company, there's another purpose to this process. "Not only does it act as a memory trigger for you and your other half, but it will have the same impact on your guests," explains Jo



[Above] The Little White Cow and North East Chandlery join forces to produce a personal fragrance identity for couples

Top tip

"Everyone's skin wears scents differently. That's why it is so important to try on a fragrance. Ideally, when you compare the perfume on your skin to the blotter, it should be as if it has been brought to life."

Emma South, Jo Malone London

Malone London's Emma. "It will give the impression that you are omnipresent throughout the day and everyone will think they have spent much more time with you than they have!" What sorcery is this?!

Practically speaking, how should you go about it? "Consider the areas you want to highlight, the entrances, the aisle, the chillout spaces," lists Kate. "You might also want to weigh up the season, in the same way that your florist will suggest flowers that complement your chosen date. And ask yourself, do you want one scent for the whole occasion or will you be telling a story with different scents during the course of the day? For example, cedarwood, ylang-ylang and jasmine is a sensual combination, and ideal for later in the evening, whereas rosemary and lemon uplifts and clears lingering food smells."

Given the tools of the trade here (we're looking at you, candle), a quick note on safety: "If candlelight is a critical feature, check your venue's policies," stresses Emma. "Most are flexible with this, but it may be that candles have to be sheltered in a hurricane lantern."

Kate agrees: "We mainly use diffusers, but ask your venue if there are any rules regarding naked flames."

With health and safety out of the way, you'll need to assemble your weapons of choice. Will it be candles? Or perhaps a duet of diffusers and strategically spritzed room sprays? How about incense? There is plenty to play with. "We suggest using a combination of diffusers and candles," says Kate. "Diffusers deliver long-lasting streams of delicious scents that will heighten the overall design. Candles add a beautiful, warm glow, which is hard to beat – a mix of scented and non-scented will ensure it is not overpowering. Remember, you can also add fragrance by introducing herbs or rose petals."

And what if standard, high-street candles and diffusers aren't doing it for you? Don't worry, The Little White Cow has another route. "We offer a bespoke service, which involves Aberdeen aromatherapy specialists North East Chandlery," Kate explains. "We work with couples to devise their own blend of essential oils, tailored to their preferences and fond memories."

Scent is a photograph for the senses. Make it yours. ♥



[Above] A delicate arrangement by Trudi Todd Creative Florist (truditoddflowers.com)