



Fragrance Fraillies

A lesson in the manly approach to the perfume counter by S. ROBERT FOGEL

If ever you feel that you're running out of companions for your fellow man, here's an easy way to tell whether or not a drop of pity remains in your blood: Hide behind a post in a department store and watch some other guy trying to buy a perfume or a fragrance—or anything—at the toiletries counter.

You'll want to laugh or cry, depending on how you feel about people in general, and men enmeshed in the sweetest maze of a perfume bazaar in particular.

Men are now known to pass through department-store-lingerie-departments, flanked by housewives and parties, without the slightest tremor. They can look stocking salesgirls anark in the eye, and ask for size 9½ nylon, 51 gauge, 15 denier, Hereward Brown shade. But send a man shopping for a fragrance and even the strongest male stomach begins to convulse.

The reason is pretty obvious. The modern male has a pretty good idea of the whys and wherefores of the female anatomy, and so he doesn't blanch at the sight of a braless. He appreciates a feminine ankle, leg and thigh, and so the sight of nylon doesn't send him reeling. But he hasn't the faintest glimmer of what makes women wear fragrances. He still thinks of perfumes as the modern counterparts of love potions, and he's likely to approach them with all the timidity of a pubescent youth.

Yet surveys tell us that most fragrances sold are meant to be given as gifts, and that about three-quarters of those are bought by men. Since you're bound to buy a perfume sooner or later, you ought to know more about the stuff that sends the wits out of Mr. Average Jones.

First, then, remember this: Except for a small minority, women do not generally use perfume as man bait. The ads may imply otherwise when they promise to cloak Miss Cynthia C. in a magic mist of feminine fete—but even Miss C. knows better. The scent-maker knows seven out of ten bottles will be bought by men, so why should he disillusion his best customer-prospects by daring to say that women will like the fragrance for itself alone? But women do! A fragrance is as important to a lady as her lipstick.

Naturally, the idea that her scent can be as

attractive a lure for a man as a Royal Coachman is for a trout has occurred to her. She's no dope. But even the most ardent lady will admit that the subjective qualities of a perfume are of secondary importance.

Secondly, be specific: Know what you want when you step up to a perfume counter. Sure, the salesgirl knows her job. But if you say, "I want to get something for my wife," she'll probably size you up as a guy with an anniversary to remember (or forget) and sell you something the missus wouldn't wear to the supermarket.

Decide on perfume—or can de cologne—or toilet water—or bath salts—or body powder. The list is endless. But be specific.

One way to make sure is to ask the person for whom you're buying the stuff. No harm in the direct approach, is there? If you'd rather not ask, though, look around and see if you can find out the type of fragrance she likes best.

Some women hesitate to use perfume, but take to the lighter can de cologne. Others pour pounds of fragrant salts into their baths and would welcome more. Still others know from nothing about toilet water, but have an assortment of perfumes on their dressing table that would make retail stores envious. Giving the wrong type of fragrance is like giving Irish whiskey to a maiden aunt who likes nothing but an occasional drop of gin.

The kind of fragrance is your biggest consideration, though. And, obviously, the simplest solution to this problem is to give her her favorite brand. A woman who uses a floral scent will thank-you-very-much for the exotic, oriental kind—and probably hand it over to her maid.

A good way to learn a woman's preference in fragrance brands is to get her warmed up on the subject. You'd be surprised how much they know about it.

Otherwise, you may go in, ask for something, be bowled over by it, buy it, give it—and then learn it's the wrong one. Of course, you can sniff the samples in the store, but don't sample more than three. Beyond that, you couldn't tell clover from chlorine. And don't sniff a sample of the fragrance on the salesgirl's wrist. Fragrances react differently on different people, and you're likely to get the wrong idea of the scent.

If you've had a couple of sample stuffs and can't quite make up your mind, don't be afraid to walk out of the store without buying. Best thing you can do is to get some fresh air into your lungs. Then go back, if you want. You may find the choice easier to make this time.

Now here is a fairly broad perfume-preference gauge. Use it judiciously, however, like any poll, it's only an approximation of average likes.

If you're big, the sweet young thing likes light flower fragrances: lily of the valley, lavender, rose, violet. For the little woman, settled with home and husband, choose a heavier floral fragrance, such as jasmine, carnation or gardenia.

The girl who gets around is more of a problem. Be choosy: find one of the heavier floral scents that have been blended with other ingredients to make them more interesting. You won't have trouble picking a perfume for the girl who's been around. For her, choose heavier fragrances with sandalwood, amber or oriental bases, or any of the smoky, smoky scents.

As for the girl who golfs, swims and rides better than you do—well, why not remind her that she's a female with one of the lighter blends of floral scents? But don't give that kind of a fragrance to the president of a woman's club. The big-operator type of woman needs a dominating fragrance—the heavier the better.

Even Grandpa has her favorites. She'd probably prefer a toilet water or an eau de cologne—one of the lighter ones, perhaps with a floral base.

Here are the essential differences between those often misunderstood fragrances:

Toilet water has the same fundamental ingredients as perfume, but it is diluted with alcohol to make it lighter. Naturally, its fragrance won't linger as long as the perfume will.

Eau de cologne branches off into two categories: the citrus type and the perfumed type. The former is stimulating and refreshing. The perfumed eau de cologne may neck and neck with toilet water. Biggest difference here is that most colognes have more alcohol.

Buying a perfume can be an adventure! Some of the most interesting scents are beautifully bottled for your lady's pleasure, and you're in for some interesting reactions when she wears them.

Give her perfume, and we what we mean. #



Esquire's CALENDAR QUEEN

Barbara Harvey—everybody's dream for the winter season—photographed by Philippe Halsman

THIS country is full of colleges full of girls. All kinds of girls. From the be-jeweled chain-smoker talking intensely about "dickensians" and "correlations" to the pudgy convertible owner hanging around school because where else can she have such a good time at the small price of passing the snap courses. Then there are the golden girls like Barbara Harvey and, perhaps the largest group of all, the would-be Barbara Harveys.

Our Esquire Calendar Queen is a sort of national ideal—alike to useful co-ed imitators, to slushy heavy-breathing college men, to nostalgic middle-aged parents. Listen to the particulars in the varsity branch of the American

dream: Barbara is twenty—a sweet, pretty kid . . . Her bright eyes are blue, her long, sleek, nightly brushed hair is blonde, and she measures like a slim hourglass—thirty-four, twenty-three, thirty-four . . . She is a junior at Colorado College in Colorado Springs—an earnest English major and Kappa Alpha Theta member . . . She belongs to the ski club and the modern-dance group. When she was little she took piano lessons . . . The editor of the college Tiger knocked himself out sponsoring Barbara in Esquire's national contest where she won out over five thousand other co-eds. We almost had her photographed in a flag for love, gentlemen, in Jock College, U.S.A.



Miss Barbara Harvey