

and said to amplify your pheromone scent when your body heat rises. Escentric Molecules Molecule 01 EDT (£65 for 100ml), celebrating its 10th birthday this year, is almost entirely built on this note and perfumer Geza Schoen swears you'll need a taser when you go out wearing it. Musks also lend a pheromonal effect, making any scents they're blended with seem more sexy and worn-in – like bed hair.

The new Tinder?

But do pheromone scents really work? Some scientists think so, that while we think we're using our charm to flirt, we're actually doing the equivalent of sniffing bums like hound dogs. This is echoed by a study that found women who wore synthetic pheromones were asked on more dates than those who did not. But other scientists are sceptical as humans don't have the same organ in their noses that other mammals use to detect pheromones.

Even if the pheromones in Scent Of A Dream were a placebo, I definitely felt people were nicer to me when I wore it. Uber drivers smiled at me, one barman winked (never happened before) and I chatted to both men and women on my way home – something almost unheard of in London. And near the end of the week something extraordinary happened. I've been going to the same coffee shop for two years and have the same exchange with the cute Italian barista every time. Me: "A skinny cappuccino, please." Him: "£2.20." But now he wants to talk. "Do you live by the sea?" he asked, looking me in the eye for the first time. "It's just, you, um, smell bellissimo." I did the typical British thing of laughing nervously and skittering away. Still, it was fascinating because the only thing I'd changed that day, and in fact all week, was my perfume. I also saw a pattern: most of these encounters happened later in the day, which makes sense as the synthetic pheromones lie in the base of the fragrance, so need around five hours to emerge after the initial spritz.

What's undeniable is that wanting to smell attractive sells perfume. "Men are physically attracted to a woman's perfume if it smells of something they have sexy associations with," says Professor Rachel Herz, a cognitive neuroscientist at Brown University studying the role of body odour and fragrance in attraction. For example, citrus blended with salty aquatic notes could remind him of damp,

bare, sun-warmed skin. Nor is it a coincidence that 'nudity' is a big theme in perfumery. Many 'naked' scents lie on a bed of iris for a subtle fleshy smell that hugs the skin, like Prada La Femme (EDP, £49 for 35ml).

I don't know if it was synthetic pheromones or a placebo that transformed my week, but there is evidence that a placebo works. I am usually shy around men I am attracted to, but doused in Scent Of A Dream and assured it would work wonders, I was bold and coquettish and my behaviour was repaid in kind.

"If you wear a fragrance that makes you feel sexy on a date, then chances are that's exactly what he will think of you," says Herz. In the case of the barista, that date will be happy hour at my local cocktail bar on Friday night. Oh, and I'll be wearing my pheromone perfume, thanks very much. ♦

WHAT YOUR PERFUME SAYS ABOUT YOUR SEX LIFE

Match the latest sexy scents to your relationship status (and thank us later)

1 NO STRINGS: BRITNEY SPEARS PRIVATE SHOW EDP, £23 FOR 30ML

Britney covered in whipped cream is a teenage boy's fantasy. Now she's built a fragrance on that concept, with orange as the key ingredient (which increases levels of oxytocin, a key hormone released during sex).

2 FIRST DATE: THE LIBRARY OF FRAGRANCE NEW BABY EDT, £15 FOR 30ML

A slightly powdery scent with a splash of lemon "minimally masks your natural body odour, so nothing prevents those mating signals from being sent out", says Herz. All you need to do is get over the unsexy name.

3 HONEYMOON PHASE: BOSS THE SCENT FOR HER EDP, £44 FOR 30ML

This is heavy on osmanthus, a flower that emits the molecule indole for an almost dirty, moody quality. When the roasted cocoa surfaces, it does the same thing to the emotional centre of the brain as falling in love.

4 COMFORT AND CUDDLES: THE PERFUMER'S STORY BY AZZI S&X RANKIN, £95 FOR 30ML

When lust wanes and bonding chemicals move in, it's time to bring out the fragrance big guns. Nothing says 'how hot am I?' like a scent laced with leather and musk.

5 ON THE ROCKS: CALVIN KLEIN DEEP EUPHORIA, £38 FOR 30ML

So he's dumped, but that doesn't mean you don't still want him to pine for you. You may wish to conjure up the scent of hot sex on the beach to remind him of what he's missing. This will do the trick.

