

20 of the best vanilla perfumes to warm up your pulse points

Soulful vanilla perfumes are trending, proving that this creamy fragrance note is just as seductive in summer as it is in winter

BY FIONA EMBLETON / 14 JUL 2022



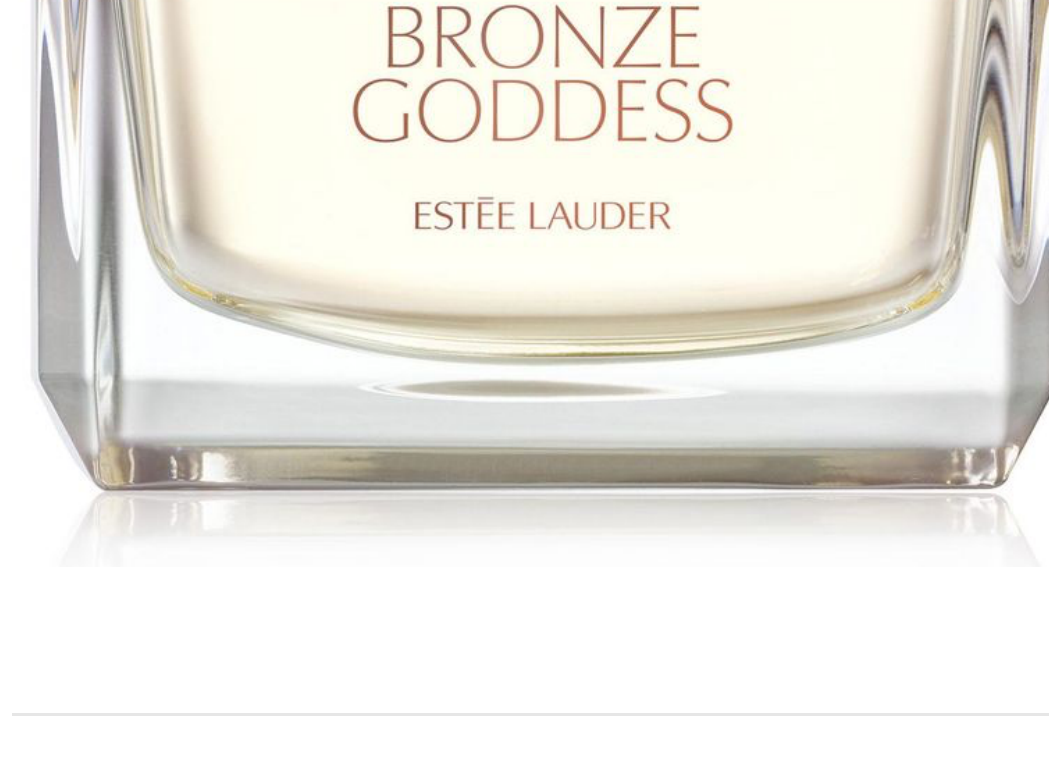
Vanilla perfumes never exactly fell out of fashion but they’re currently experiencing a boom in popularity as we move away from the emotional extremes of the pandemic to a softly luxurious new mood.

Depending on the perfumer’s vision, vanilla can register as sweet or carnal; syrupy like teen lipgloss or sensual like a warm neck. In fact, vanilla is such a versatile ingredient that it rubs shoulders with coconut to smell like sunscreen in beachy scents just as effectively as adding sweetness to gourmand confections. More often than not, though, it sidles up to other ingredients in the bottle for a dry down that’s as warm and elegant as a cashmere jumper.

Traditionally, the intimate puffs that wafted up from a woman’s wrists were vanilla absolute, obtained from the vanilla bean. But all that changed in 1889 when [Guerlain’s Jicky](#) ushered in a new era in which perfumes no longer had to rely solely on extracted botanicals. Touted as the first modern vanilla fragrance, man-made molecules replaced vanilla absolute – an expensive and time-intensive ingredient – which involves hand-pollinating the Madagascan orchid before fermenting the beans and extracting the oil. For the same reasons, the vanilla you smell in many perfumes today is synthetic. Far from being a bad thing, synthetics can give fragrance notes a new character to make a perfume sing. “When formulating with vanilla, you need to have its tenacity worked out,” says British perfumer Lyn Harris. “Vanilla absolute smells like a warm, sweet powder with a nuance of wood and soft cacao. Whereas ethyl vanillin, a synthetic molecule, is three times stronger, more sugar-like, and makes fragrances have a certain fizz.”

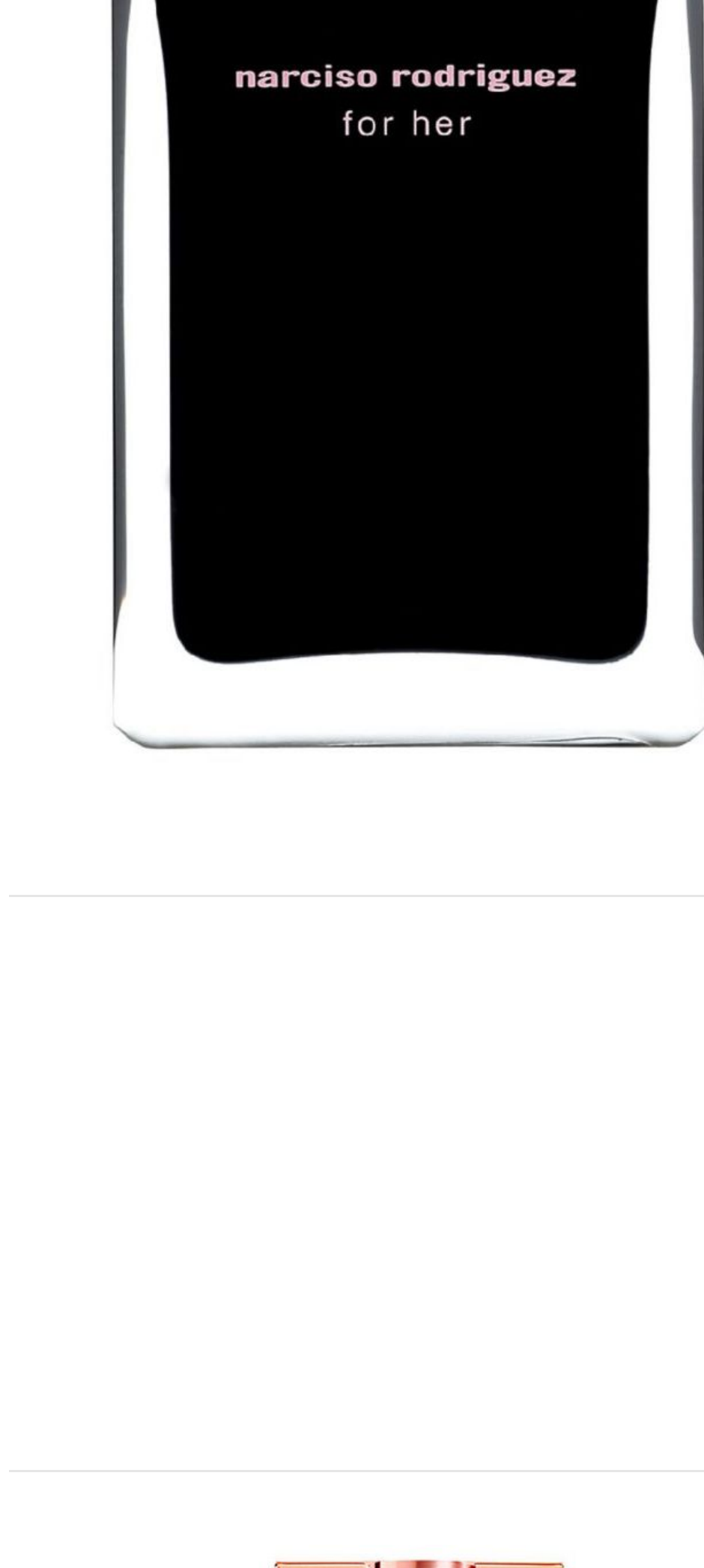
Normally, as soon as our wardrobes lean towards sheer cottons, our fragrances follow suit with laundry-fresh florals, greens and marines. But this summer, fragrance brands are striking out with new vanilla creations that work just as well in a heatwave as they do conjuring up cosy, fireside nostalgia in winter. Indeed, Byredo has chosen this moment to launch [Vanille Antique](#), an after-dark scent that pairs vanilla with black plum and freesia. Elsewhere, [Chanel’s Gabrielle Chanel Parfum](#) settles on the skin in a cloud of florals and vanilla, and also stepping off the beaten track is [Les Infusions de Prada Infusion de Vanille](#), in which soft, smoky vanilla is the heartbeat of the scent rather than lolling in the base. What keeps this scent summery is the balance between delicacy and warmth, “the subtle facets of vanilla in a swirl of fresh, luminous water made of bergamot and neroli,” says Prada’s master perfumer Daniela Andrier. This idea is echoed by [perfumer Francis Kurkdjian](#), who notes that “by creating heat in a fragrance, you push the fresh notes”.

Vanilla fragrances have an additional ace up their sleeve. Normally when we smell something it’s a fleeting experience, as the receptors in our nose swiftly erase one scent to prepare for the next. But a slosh of vanilla slows down this process to really let the spice come alive on your skin. “Vanilla holds other materials and brings the depth you need in amber fragrances, which linger for longer,” explains Harris.



within touching distance as vanilla, glowing amber and coconut milk cosy up together to smell like sunscreen on the skin. But Bronze Goddess Eau Fraiche Skinscent is also a fragrance for floral lovers as the whole blend is anchored in a bouquet of exotic blooms including tiare flower.

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For Her eau de toilette

Narciso Rodriguez
£65.00

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If you think of vanilla as sugary and saccharine, we promise that For Her will change your mind. This supremely soft and feminine scent opens on effervescent osmanthus before the hushed scents of musk, earthy patchouli and creamy vanilla push through and hover close to the skin.

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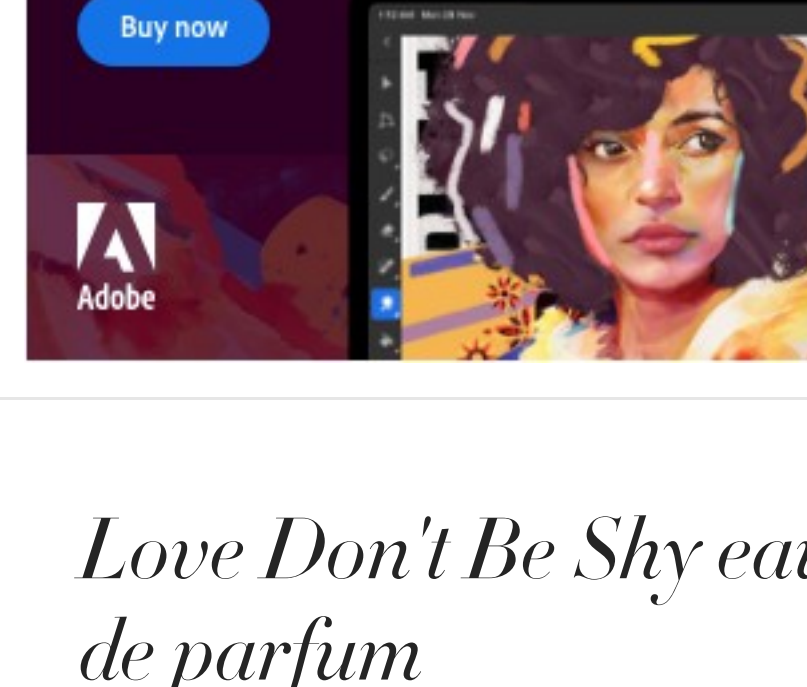
Idôle Nectar Eau de Parfum

Lancôme
£78.00

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Playing on the idea of challenging the status quo, Lancôme's perfumers have created a gourmand fragrance so unusual it has a popcorn accord coursing through the middle. An airy trio of roses keeps things light at first spritz, before mellowing down to vanilla and delivering a scent that's like catnip for those with a sweet tooth.

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Nomade eau de parfum Naturelle

Chloé
£82.00

SHOP NOW

Sparkling your wanderlust is a pretty tall order for a fragrance, let alone changing the fragrance game. But Nomade Eau de Parfum Naturelle has achieved both in a hippy-meets-haute juice with 100 per cent natural-origin ingredients. Formulated with naturally-derived alcohol, sunny sloshes of sustainably harvested jasmine are given depth with vanilla and date that linger beautifully on the skin.

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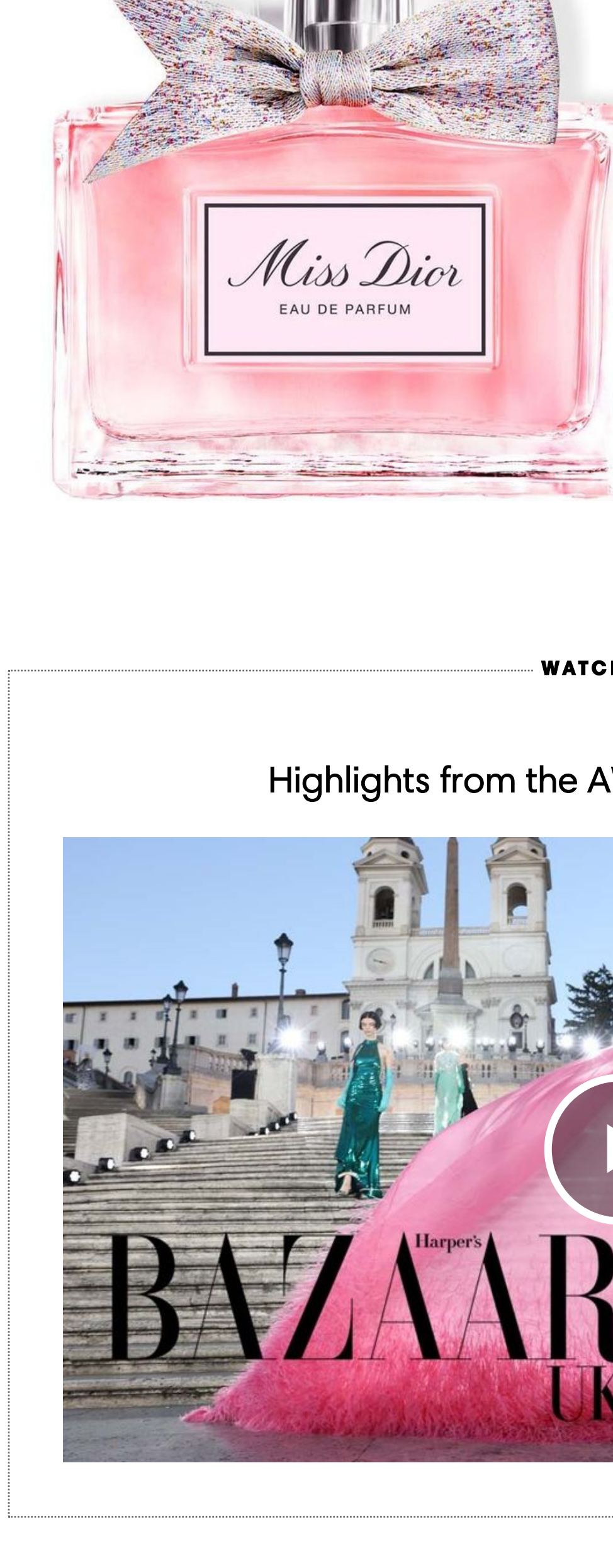
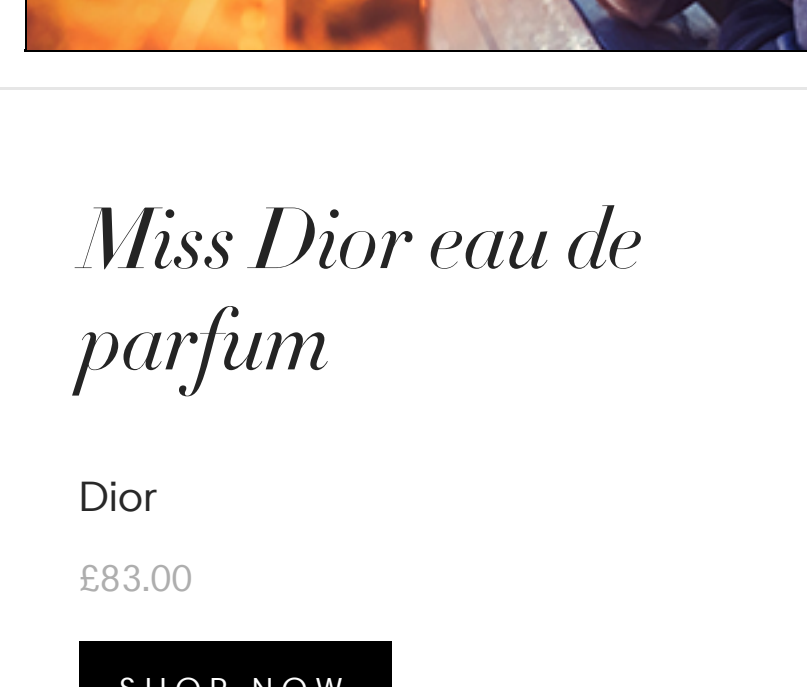
Love Don't Be Shy eau de parfum

Kilian
£185.00

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Best-known for being one of Rihanna's favourite perfumes, Love Don't Be Shy is a young, flirty gourmand that consists of honeysuckle and rose, topped with sugary marshmallows and a glug of vanilla. It's juicy, slightly syrupy and yet there is something tender underscoring the fragrance at the same time. It's like first love's tentative kisses in spray form.

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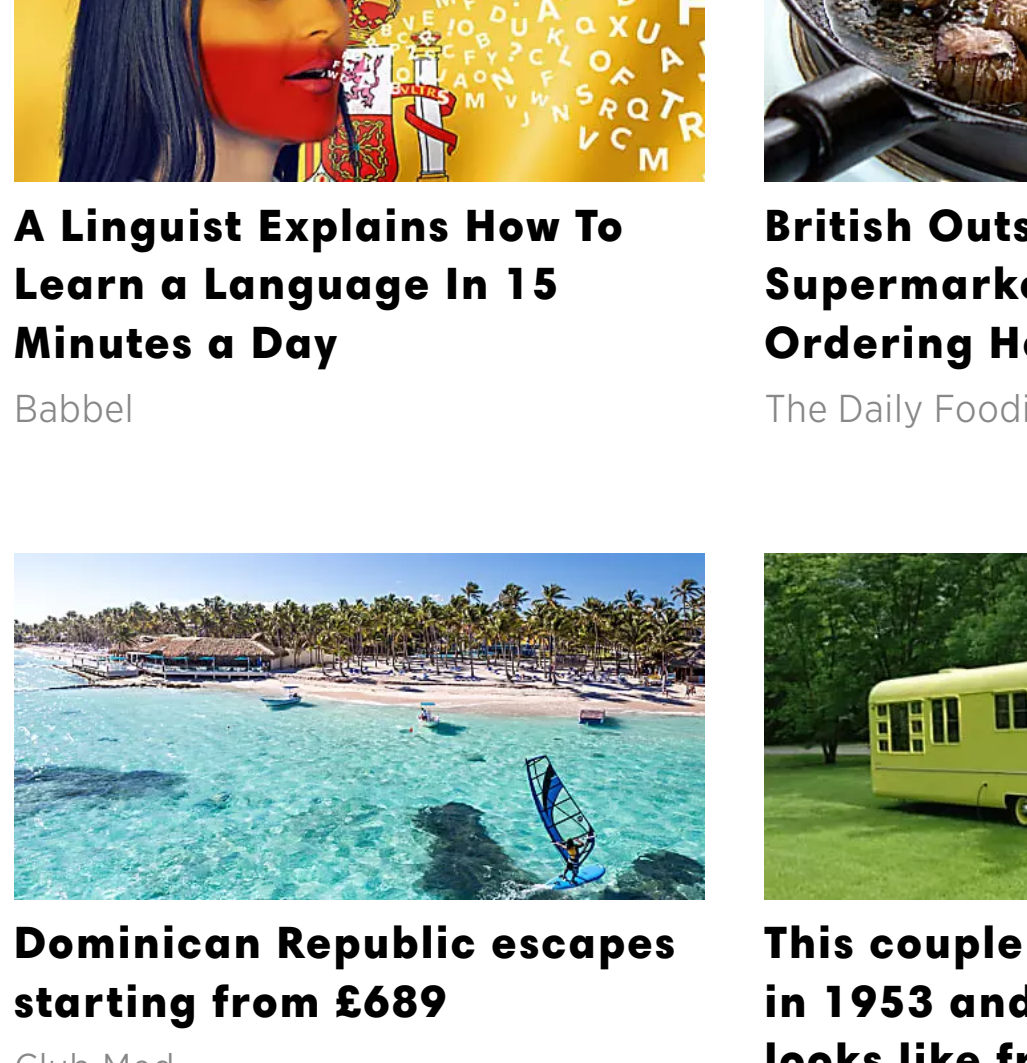
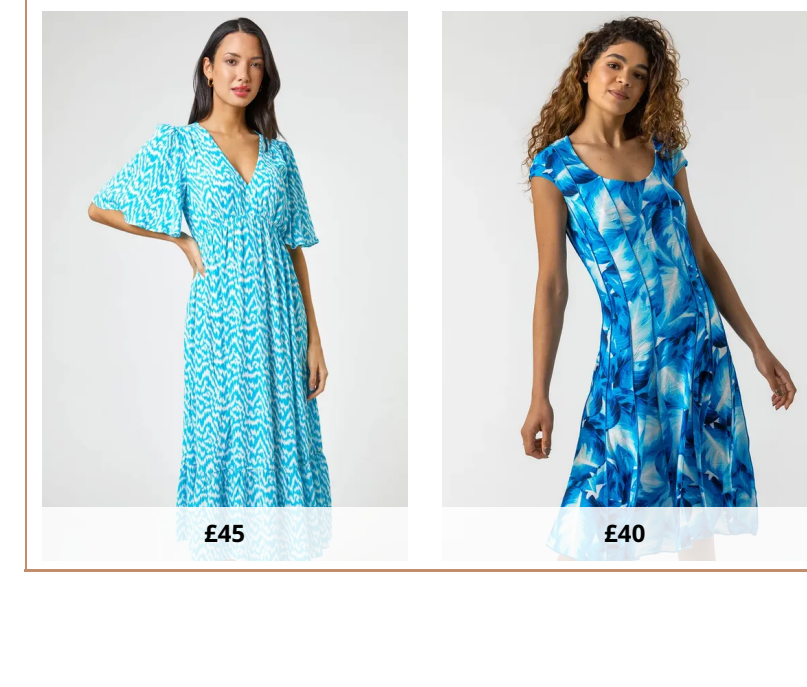
Myrrh and Tonka Cologne Intense

Jo Malone London
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Resinous myrrh saves the vanilla and almond elements in the base from being the usual sweet confection. The overall effect is earthy and intoxicating with brighter hints of lavender and honey adding to its unisex appeal.

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Miss Dior eau de parfum

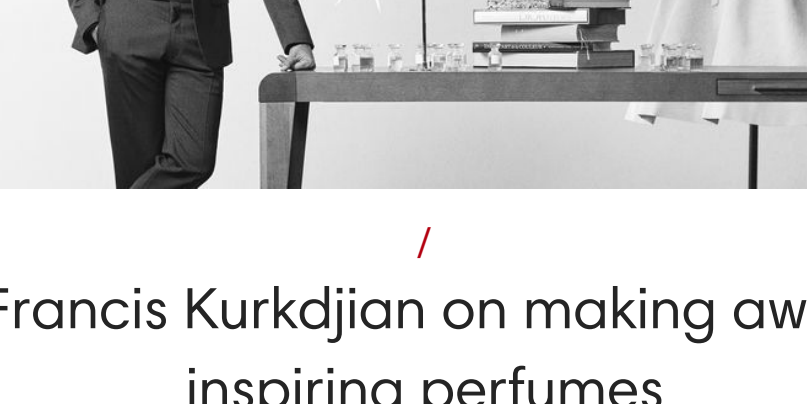
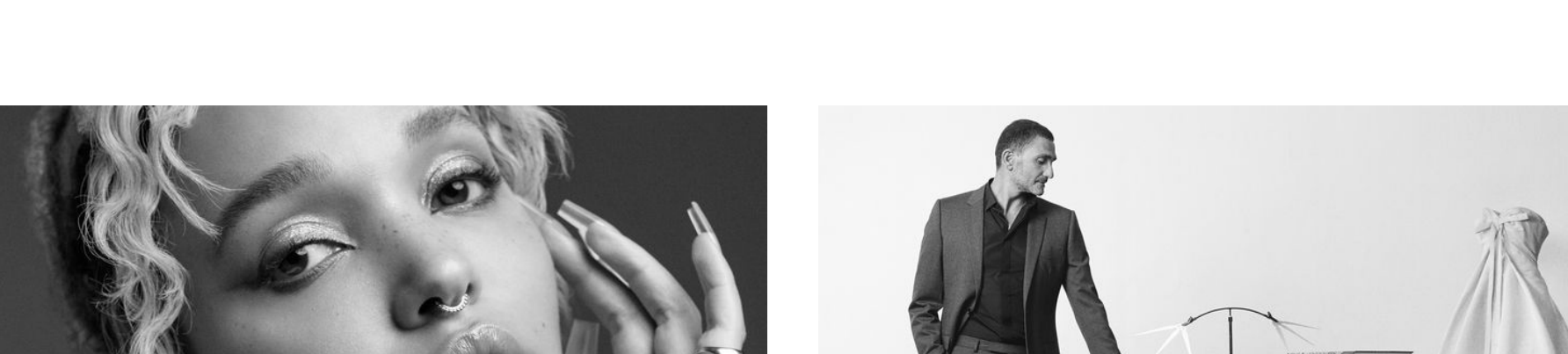
Dior
£83.00

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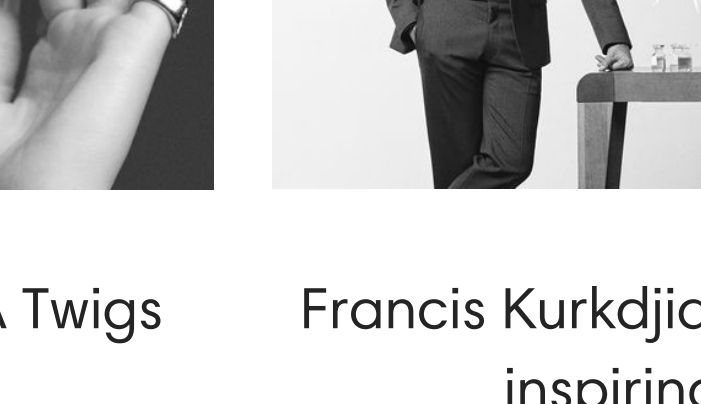
Vanilla is said to enhance all sensations of pleasure. So it comes as no surprise to find it nestled in the base of this joyous perfume, where fresh lily of the valley, sweet peony, powdery iris and the honeyed nuances of centifolia rose bloom on the skin.

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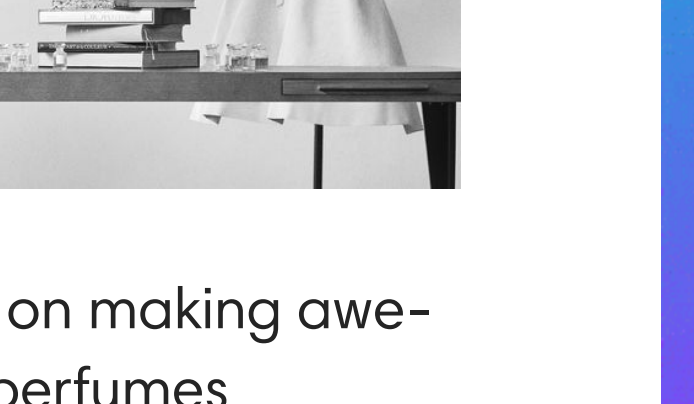
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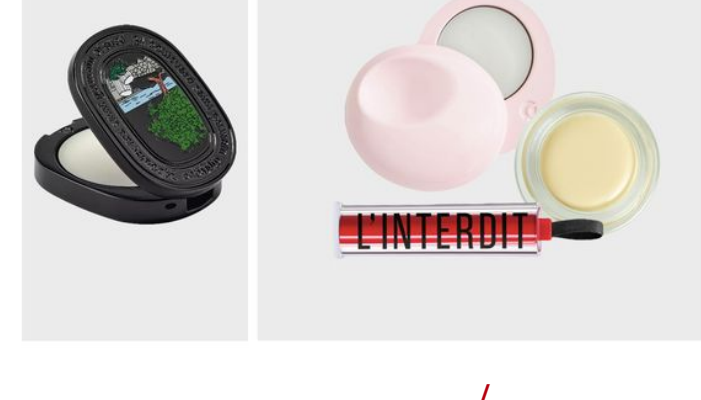
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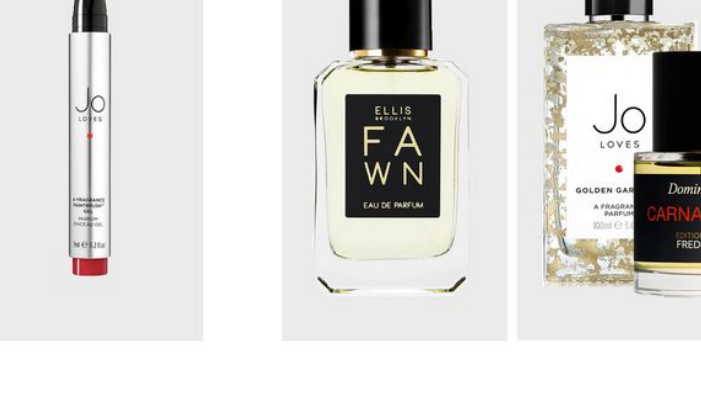
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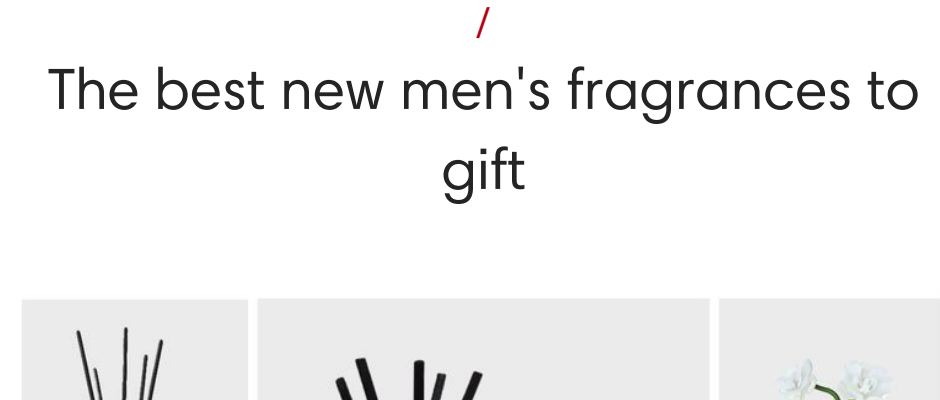
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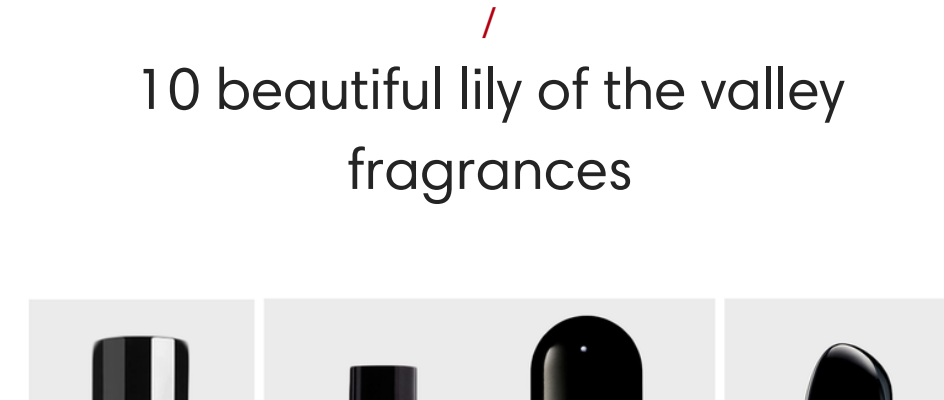
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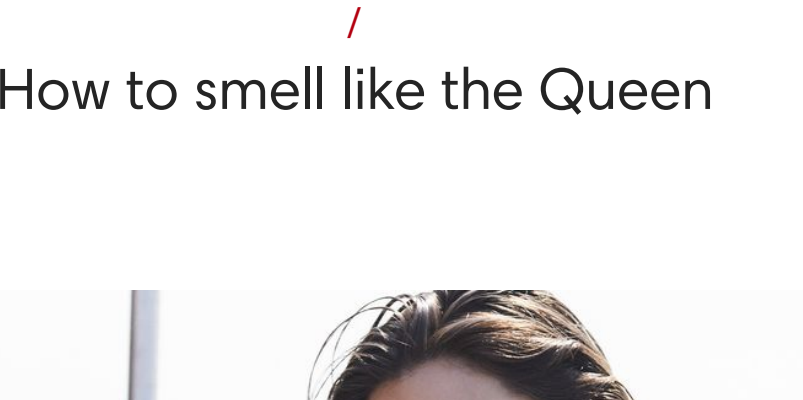
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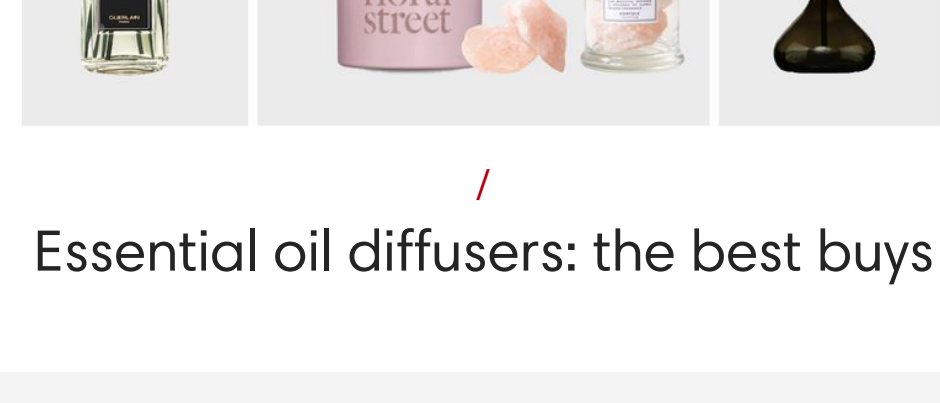
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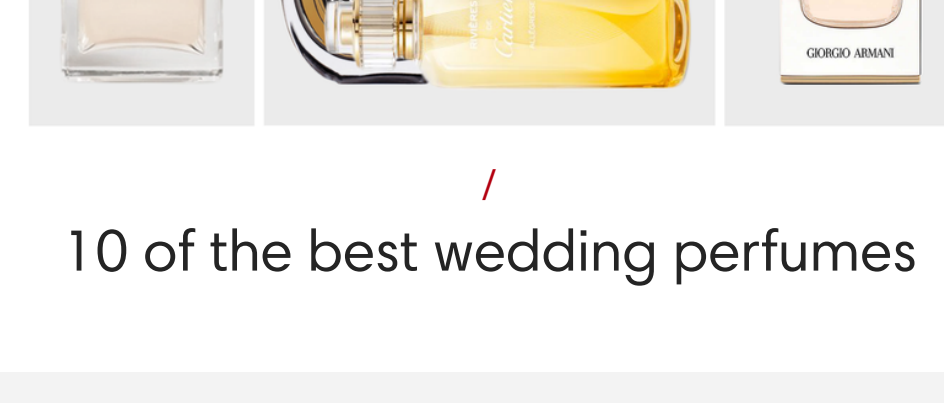
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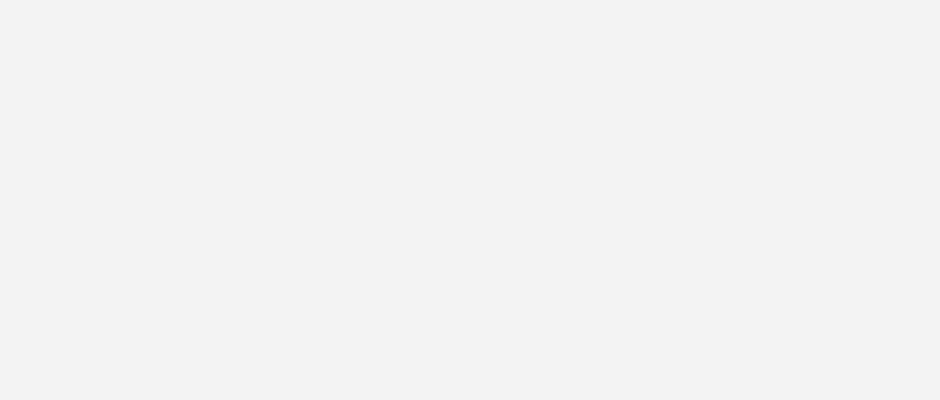
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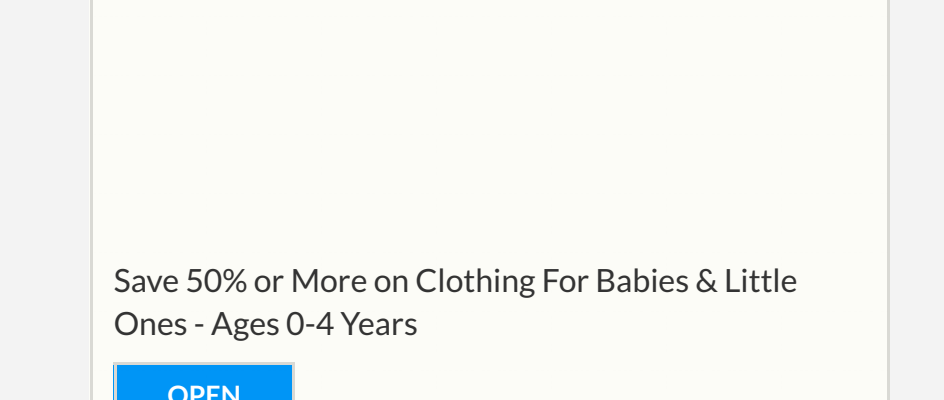
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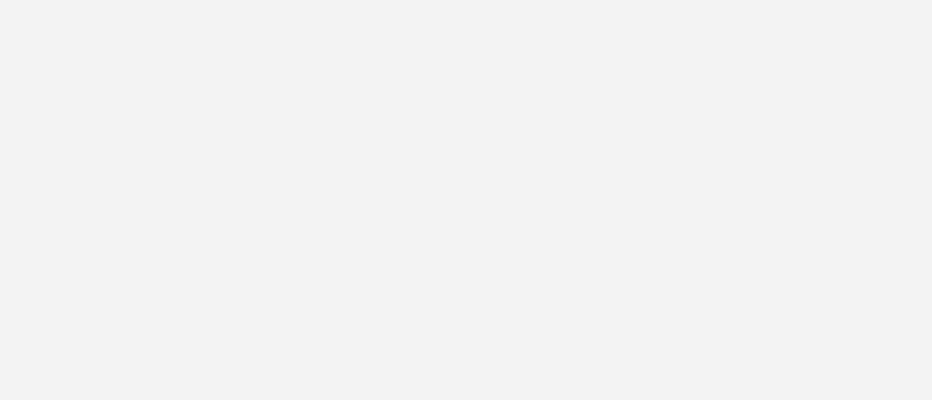
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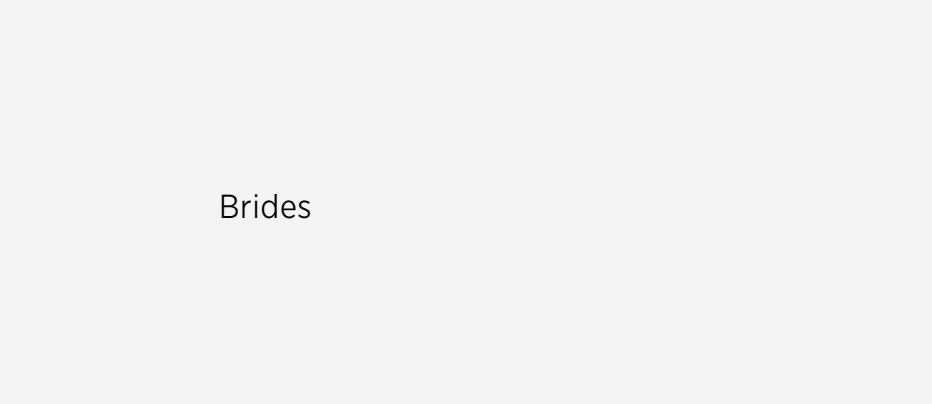
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