

BOTTLED EMOTIONS

The right fragrance can make you feel more joyful and relaxed – some even lean on neuroscience to prove their mood-boosting powers

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THE VERY REASON for the existence of perfume is to alter our emotions and burrow into our psyches. Fragrances dare us to feel flirtier, or wrap us in a blanket of musk when we crave calm.

Something significant happens in the brain when we smell certain aromas, too. According to Dr Tara Swart, a neuroscientist and senior lecturer at MIT Sloan, “The scent molecules stimulate the olfactory nerve, which sends the information to the amygdala – the emotional centre of our brains – and the hippocampus, responsible for memory.”

What we sniff can also trigger the release of hormones and chemicals that alter our mood and slow the nervous system. As Dr Swart explains, “Neurotransmitters are released, including serotonin and dopamine, that can make us feel relaxed, happy or energised.” So it is no coincidence that perfumers are now going one step further and exploring the interface between fragrance and neuroscience.

Fine-fragrance house Edeniste has found itself at the cutting edge of this by bringing together the expertise of perfumers and two neuroscientists: one who specialises in sensory perception and emotions, the other from the French National Centre for Scientific Research. The brand is also using a range of ingredients

from Japanese flavour and fragrance company Takasago, which has been conducting studies into scent’s impact on mood for 35-plus years. “This has allowed us to create an emotional fragrance experience with active molecules that have a psychophysiological effect,” says Edeniste founder Audrey Semeraro.

It’s no exaggeration to say that Edeniste’s two-step routine takes its cues from medical research. “Consumers are now looking for products that improve their overall wellbeing,” Semeraro explains. “They want to smell good but also feel good.” With that in mind, the Edeniste wellbeing experience involves choosing one of seven eaux de parfum. Aside from smelling amazing, each one is infused with a patented Destress Accord that’s heavy on musk and molecules with anxiety-melting effects. These Edeniste perfumes are then augmented with one of the brand’s Lifeboost scents, which are described as olfactory mood boosters. “It’s about what you feel in that moment, so you can apply different Lifeboosts during the day as your needs shift,” says Semeraro. All six Lifeboosts are also charged with their own active molecule; these, according to scientific journals, have been proven to stimulate areas of the brain. The final blends were then tested by Edeniste’s neurologist for their effects on heart rate, blood flow and perspiration.

According to Semeraro, the active molecule in Happiness Lifeboost was shown in fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) tests “to activate the brain’s dopaminergic reward pathway”. After inhaling the active molecule in Dream, an electroencephalogram (EEG)

showed an increase in slower theta brain waves, indicating deep relaxation. “Skin conductance tests revealed physiological arousal in response to Energy – a reviving woody citrus,” says Semeraro, “while Wellbeing, a spicy green floral, has a balancing effect, making it ideal for meditation.” The lingering warmth of white florals and vanilla in Relax encourages deep breathing, while Seduction stimulates and relaxes with heady notes of jasmine and musk. And for maximum impact? Semeraro favours spraying the neck and hands, then taking a deep breath to “allow the active molecules to release their effects through the emotional processing centres of your brain”. □



MOOD BOOSTERS

ESTÉE LAUDER RADIANT MIRAGE

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CHANEL PARIS LES EAUX DE CHANEL

An effervescent blend of lemon and mandarin, renowned for boosting energy levels. 125ml, £114

BURBERRY SIGNATURES HIGH TEA

A scent enriched with lavender, which is found to inhibit the receptors in the brain that induce anxiety. 100ml, £190



Top of page Edeniste Relax and Seduction Lifeboosts 30ml, £68 each, Oud Mystique eau de parfum 30ml, £96, exclusive to Harrods, and Néroli Sensuel eau de parfum 30ml, £68

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