



MAKEUP

7 ways to improve your sense of smell, according to perfumers

Bonus: your perfume will smell better, too.



BY FIONA EMBLETON

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If I was told I could only keep one sense, seeing dawn break with a pink-streaked sky would beat sense of smell every time. Or so I thought.

I was recently at a [perfume](#) seminar in Paris where blotters were waved underneath our noses, each spritzed with the oil from a different part of the neroli tree. Next to me, a group of beauty editors were sucking in deep lungfuls and dissecting the nose-twitching sharpness of the fruit's peel from the mild soapiness of the flowers. All I managed to blurt out was, "They smell fresh".

I couldn't understand it. Normally I can pick out even the most unlikely scents lolling at the base of a perfume, like the smokiness of black tea or the wet concrete smell of cashmeran. Had a recent sinus infection altered my sense of smell *forever*? Or had spritzing a succession of larger-than-life flower bombs every day made me go 'nose blind' (a.k.a TikTok's way of saying you've smelt an odour so often that you've lost the ability to smell it)?

Why smell isn't a bonus sense

As a beauty editor who tests perfume for a living, it's almost an unwritten requirement in the job description that I have a sharp sense of smell. For weeks afterwards I tore fresh basil leaves off the stem to greedily Hoover up their aniseed-like scent. I even wore a silk eye mask to see if I could correctly sniff out the cheese and onion, prawn cocktail and roast chicken flavours in a multi-pack of Walkers' crisps.



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