

## *Oriental Perfume* Challenge for the Autumn of 2010

Sponsored by *Coeur d'Esprit Natural Perfumes* in Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada

Posted on August 21, 2010 with an end-date of October 31, 2010



*rose, star anise, frankincense, ambrette, oakmoss, citrus, ambar*

### **Defining an “Oriental Perfume”**

I left it to each participant to research what an Oriental Perfume is and they have done a fine job. This fragrance family definitely calls for notes that are deep, enduring, and delicious such as the exotic, heady florals, ambery or earthy base notes, and spicy or citrus top notes... so, sweet and spicy fits the bill. Orientals are elegant and luxurious; they draw you in and are impossible to resist.

Nine women from four countries submitted their perfume creations for evaluation, and it has been a real joy to indulge in this personal sniffarama.

They were graded from 1-10 on the following categories: how well they followed instructions; their story of the perfume's creation; a short five-sentence bio; a recent photo; a Data Tag with pertinent information about their perfume; the balance, character, diffusion, tenacity, and structure of their creation.

A Natural Perfume has the following qualities:

- o Balance – so that no single component can be detected (unless it is a soliflore)
- o Character – The twists and turns of a perfume as it evolves on the skin. What kind of a perfume is this? Is it a raunchy riot? Is it soft and gentle? Where does it take you? What's at the heart of it? Does it have personality? Who would this perfume appeal to?
- o Diffusion – to surround the wearer with an aura of scent
- o Tenacity – staying power is the ability of a perfume to last on the wearer for more than just a couple of hours
- o Structure – Is there harmony in the mix? Have the base, heart, and head notes been properly addressed? Are the proportions correct for these ingredients so that there *is* balance, character, diffusion, and tenacity? Does it have dimension?

### Data Tags



Green Chi Data Tag



Fire Dance Data Tag

They were asked to create a data tag to accompany their perfumes. It should list:

- o The Name of your perfume
- o Your contact information – your company name, website, and email address
- o Size of the container – is it 10 ml or 2 oz? This should go on the first page

- o Ingredients – including essential oils, absolute, concretes, waxes, tinctures, macerations, and bases
- o How to use – share where to dab or spray and info about natural perfumes in general
- o Precautions – follow your own heart. For me, I list them, as an informed consumer is a safe and happy – and a repeat consumer. I do not use phototoxic citrus oils.
- o Best before date (mm-dd-yy) – I make my product fresh for each person, so I do small batches that do not age-out before they leave here. For cream-based, it is dated 6 months out; for wax-based, it is dated 9-12 months out; for oil-based (fractionated coconut and jojoba is dated 2 years out) (sunflower, sweet almond, and grape seed are dated 6 months out); for alcohol-based, it is dated 2 years out (although I have some I made 6 years ago and they are still great). This is a rule of thumb. Citrus perfumes will age-out in about 6-8 months.



The Entries below were logged as they came in:



1. *Lorraine* Scott, Canada

*“Zen Dynasty”* is in an alcohol base.

**Notes:** Frankincense • Peru Balsam • Ylang Ylang • Neroli • Cinnamon leaf • Petitgrain • Rosewood  
• Black Pepper • Grapefruit • Bergamot • Aniseed

**Vision:** I created the base notes with four of my favourite essential oils that blended into a visionary of thick fragrance, promising exotic adventure. As the top notes blended easily into a fruity spice that captured a vision of the mysterious orient, the test would be to bring the base and top notes together for a feast of the senses. I thoroughly enjoyed the process of blending essence and spicy aromas with a hint of exotic flowers to create harmony in all the notes. As the final creation matures, the scent

reminds me of sweet Asian cuisine wafting from a bustling kitchen, a cornucopia of exotic and tantalizing flavours. Personally, I feel perfume often clashes with the fragrance of food, however, just as wine has a pairing with cuisine, this scent blends beautifully and would enhance a culinary adventure of heady flavours and aromas.

**Bio:** They say ignorance is bliss yet if I didn't step up and explore the adventures of natural perfumery by way of this perfume challenge, I would have missed out on this creative and scent-sory opportunity. This is my very first experience with perfume making and I enjoyed the entire process, from deciding on the essential oils to buying new ones, to observing as my creation matures and changes over days and weeks. Now that I have experienced the fun and creative outlet in blending my own signature scent, merely smelling a fragrance is not gratifying enough. Although I don't know much about perfume and how to make it, this has opened up a new interest especially since commercial perfumes are not that appealing to me. My goal with this contest entry is to chalk up my inaugural experience, then learn the proper process so I can infuse my creations with care and confident energy.

**Review:** *"Zen Dynasty perfume opens with a fruity peppery accord, which mellows into a slightly spicy floral and down to a soft and airy floral bouquet with a light spice edge to it. A Data Tag was attached to her perfume samples. This is Lorraine's first foray into the creation of a natural perfume. Her entry is lovely and lasts overnight. For a debutant in the perfume arena, this is quite an opening stanza: entering an Oriental Perfume Challenge, creating one's first perfume, having a review of it, and being mentioned as a runner-up in a Blog post. 'And, she's outta the gate!' I admire your courage and your creativity, Lorraine."*



2. *Karen* Maniapoto, New Zealand

*"Roulette"* is in a solid wax base.

**Notes:** Valerian • Mushroom absolute • Fossilized Amber • Peru Balsam • Benzoin • Ylang Ylang super extra • Tuberose absolute • Jasmine sambac absolute • Wild Sweet Orange • Cardamom • Nutmeg

**Vision:** Sitting in thought about the Oriental creations, a visual picture conjured in my mind of a curvy mature woman, robed and stretched out by the fire; sensual, feminine, maturity, sublime. So here lay the lines describing ingredients to create a risqué encounter.

Sassy lady with mystique; mature in her way

Intriguing vulnerability, captivating feminine play.

Subtle hint of spice awakening ecstatic sweet delight

Alluring soft warm pout, like a flower in the night.

A powdery puff encapsulates the air

Igniting twinkle in the eye, as stiletto shadow climbs the stair.

**Bio:** Aromatherapy began for me in 1993 after I discovered some essential oils and bought Maggie Tisserand's book "Aromatherapy for Women". I was intrigued by what they offered for well-being, especially on the mental/emotional levels and so my studies began! As well, as personal use I have incorporated Aromatherapy into my Massage, Reflexology, and Healing Practice. The years 1998-2009 saw me evaluate where my passion was and that was when I decided, after 3 years of considering various Perfume courses available, to extend my knowledge and create products for deeper self-healing that were passionately enjoyable and totally natural. I chose to enrol in Mandy Aftel's classes in San Francisco and have now completed Levels 1 and 2.

**Review:** "Roulette is created in a soft waxy base and opens with a dark and somewhat mysterious aroma, which evolves into a more floral bouquet, then deepens into the earth. This scent is completely appropriate to the autumn into which we are entering where the leaves lay upon the moist ground, willing to become part of the earth once again. A well-balanced composition."



3. *Rachel* Fentiman, Australia

*"Winter's Embrace"* is in a base of Fractionated Coconut Oil

**Notes:** Labdanum • Ambrette Seed • Patchouli • Vanilla • Rose moroc • Neroli • Jasmine • Cinnamon leaf • Clary Sage • Palma rosa • Coriander

**Vision:** Living by a rainforest makes for a very inspirational backdrop for creating perfumes as every season comes with its own abundance of fragrances.

It's the middle of spring yet the air still holds the icy freshness from the still-abundant snow fields down south so that crisp arctic breeze combined with the dense sodden forest and the heady Jasmine vine in my garden was a perfume begging for creation!

On a whim, I mixed Jasmine with Clary Sage and Coriander and found just the right bouquet to represent that icy air with a fun floral spin and to top it off, Palma Rosa and Rose Moroc added a subdued softness so the perfume doesn't remain "sharp" for too long.

Once the head notes of Clary Sage, Coriander and Palma Rosa dissipate, in roll more heart and base notes that portray the forest element and for this aspect of the perfume I chose Neroli, Ambrette Seed, Labdanum and Patchouli with a hint of Cinnamon for extra spice and intrigue.

I was content with the manifestation of these ten essences but there was something missing; one last essence that would hold everything in place and make "Winter's Embrace" a more graceful journey for the olfactory sense and for that I chose the humble and inviting Vanilla bean.

**Bio:** I've always had a keen and curious nose and to me every essence has the potential to be teamed with other ingredients to create something scrumptious for the olfactory sense.

I also find the psychology behind fragrances compelling with how they can bring forth memories of childhood, of grandma's kitchen, of your first boyfriends aftershave, or just remind you of something intriguing that you can't quite put your finger on.

Every day has the potential to bring forth another tantalizing concoction and the abundance of essences available makes for a truly blessed and often overwhelming experience. Isn't it fascinating how fragrance alone can make us smile, laugh, cry, remember, crave for more and beg for less? How they can induce physical enjoyment or even instigate sickness or make us feel emotions or think of colours, certain places, things or even specific people and the best part of all is that every body's reactions to every different fragrance is utterly unique, just like each and every one of us.

**Review:** *"Winter's Embrace opens with a green floral note, inviting me to sniff closer. A few minutes later it has evolved into a spicy affair then dries down to an earthy, ambery floral. Rachel has created a scent which stays with you overnight. It speaks to sitting in front of the fireplace, wrapped in a shawl, and sipping a hot drink. Rachel is new to this arena, as well, and I am inspired by her courage to compete. You have created a lovely aroma."*



4. *Gabriella* Berran, Canada

*"Fire Dance"* is in an alcohol base.

**Notes:** Himalyan Cedarwood • Patchouli • Litsea • Rose Maroc • Jasmine Sambac • Pink Lotus  
Osmanthus • Golden Champa • Howood • Star Anise • Yuzu

**Vision:** An Oriental perfume is my favourite type of perfume and the one I tend to automatically create. "Fire Dance" is a sensual scent that evokes the mood of the autumn season. Its dark amber colour is reminiscent of the blaze of jewel-like colours on the trees and on the ground during this time. Fire Dance is a vibrant scent of earthy woods, luscious florals and just a hint of citrus and spice that provides nourishment for the soul and illuminates the spirit during this time of darkness. A voluptuous fragrance that wraps you in warmth and luxury like a beautiful cashmere sweater on chilly Autumn days is the vision I had in mind when I created Fire Dance.

**Bio:** I believe that essential oils embody the soul of each plant. Perfumery to me is more than just blending oils, it is a spiritual practice not unlike the art of alchemy. The creation of natural perfumes is how I express my vision of beauty. This artistic expression allows me to get into a calm and meditative state where I can access my intuition to create beautiful scents from Nature. Each radiant bottle of HeartNotes perfume is created drop by drop with intention, love and gratitude and is lovingly blended by hand to ensure the highest quality natural perfume in both character and sophistication.

**Review:** *"Fire Dance opens with a zingy note likely due to the Star Anise. The general overall impression is of Cotton Candy with a lemon fizz to it; very amazing to my nose. The scent is consistent for four hours then dries down to a very sweet floral. Gabriella's close attention to detail played out in this competition. She sent a beautiful rusty leaf Data Tag (shown above) with her perfume sample attached inside. This was enclosed in a natural tan craft box complete with see-through labels and tied together with a lovely green ribbon. I was impressed when I opened the envelope. This perfume lasted overnight on me."*





5. *Janice* Van Dijk, Canada

*“Green Chí”* is in a jojoba base

**Notes:** Vetiver • Vanilla • Sandalwood • Rose moroc • Ylang Ylang • Litsea • Cardamom • Black Pepper • Lime (distilled) • Rosewood • Galbanum

**Vision:** The goal was to create a fresh sweet spicy blend that reflects a feeling of fun, freshness and aliveness...yet still being grounded. In my vision there is a gentle breeze. The sun is shining with blue sky and fluffy clouds, flowers and grasses. As the flowers and grasses sway with the breeze, I take in a deep breath. Once again I am filled with gratitude and know that is a great time to be alive.

**Bio:** As a youth growing up on the family farm, countryside adventures were a real escape from required chores. The adventures involved investigating all the textures, scents and colours of nature. My artwork (painting & photography) reflect my ongoing love of the natural world. With over 30 years in the health care field and more currently in the world of complementary health, I have come to appreciate the important role of the natural world in maintaining our balance and harmony...our health. My interest in natural perfumery and role as a natural perfumer is an extension of the above – to bring the beauty and power (essence) of the natural world to mingle and/or merge with us with the purpose of creating balance and harmony and therefore health in our lives.

**Review:** *“Green Chi was a delight to inhale; it had lift, diffusion, and a great sustain on my wrists. I sniffed it for a whole day then it lasted overnight, too. It opens very light, airy, and green then mellows to a rosy deep heady floral and dries down to a sweet woody note. The Data Tag (shown above) features one of her amazing fresh leaf/flower Mandala created from her garden plants; a new one is done for each new perfume and data tag giving the overall impression of freshness and wholesomeness, all good things in a Natural Perfume.”*



6. *Amanda* Feeley, United States

*“Gaia”* is in an alcohol base.

**Notes:** Cepes Absolute, \* Hyraceum, Tonka Bean, Vinyl Guaiacol natural isolate, Styrax, Guaiacwood, Clary Sage, Lavender, Nutmeg, Rooibas; \*Hyraceum is a natural perfume ingredient that allows one to get a musk smell without hurting any furry friends.

**Vision:** Gaia Botanical Perfume was created in honor of this small blue ball *ALL* - humans, animals, plants, fungi, minerals - all life inhabits. It is reflective of Mother Earth during the harvest and evokes all of the bounty of the season. It is a spicy and enticing blend, which brings ‘walks through the forest’, ‘good food’, ‘warmth of the hearth’, to mind. Gaia gives you pause to be mindful that, though full of largesse, the time for sleep and renewal will soon be upon us. There is a hint of the cold to come.

**Bio:** As a Natural Perfumer, I want to evoke the emotion and spirit in my perfumes. I have just started practicing Intention in my perfumes. I want my perfumes to bring meaning into people’s lives, and their spirits. I hope to lift up emotions and spirits for the highest good. I want to bring spiritual intention back into the larger scope of the human experience, since perfume used to be an offering to the gods.

**Review:** *This perfume opens with a very spicy note and a smoky heart drying down to an earthy base note, then taking me deeper. It is a lovely green colour. Gaia grounds me and sends my roots deep into Mother Earth. I enjoyed this experience very much. I would use this perfume as a start to my morning meditations.”*



7. *Maggie* Mahboubian, United States

*“Saqh’i”* is in an alcohol base.

**Notes:** Gulab (Rose Otto, Iran) • Gulab (Rose Absolute, Bulgaria/Turkey) • Yasaman (Jasmine Sambac Absolute) • Ambar (Amber accord) • Ambar (Ambergris tincture) • Moshk (musk ambrette CO2) • Zafaran (Saffron Absolute) • Tokhme-Geshniz (Coriander Seed EO) • Portaghal (Orange EO) • Hel (Cardamom EO) • Labdanum Absolute

**Vision:** My vision is to create a light Persian rose oriental perfume using the natural essences of ancient Persia that have been written about in classical literature and poetry. The name “Saqh’i” refers to the women who served wine to the Sufi poets and helped them attain their ecstatic experiences. The essence of rose would have undoubtedly been a part of this ceremony, especially for the washing of hands and ablution perhaps augmented by the sensuous notes of amber, ambergris and musk. Layered would be the gourmand notes of saffron, cardamom and orange, that would have been used to cook a traditional sweet rice made for the winter festival honoring the shortest day of the year, Shab-e-Yalda. I imagine this holiday would be the best time for a Sufi poet to spend the longest night of the year engaged in mystical reverie.

**Bio:** Maggie Mahboubian has studied natural perfumery with Lyn Ayre and is seeking to complete the course in the coming year. She is an architect by profession, but has decided to pursue her passion of working with natural ingredients to create skincare and perfumes instead. She maintains a blog, The Architecture of Perfume, where she writes about the intersection between her past as an architect and her present work as a perfumer. Fundamental to her work as a perfumer is her garden where she grows many of the plants she tinctures or macerates for their scent and medicinal value. In the coming year, Maggie hopes to launch her company, Lalun Naturals, Inc. which will carry her Natural Perfume line, Parfums Lalun, as well as her Seasonal Skincare.

**Review:** *“Saqh’i opens with a lovely orange note leading the way to sweet rose heart and drying down to an ambery base. This perfume captured my heart as its rosy petals filled my nose. I could feel the heat in*

*the room as the candles flickered and the poets wrote their amazing words of life. Maggie has a wonderful writing style that sets the scene so it is easy to walk into her fantasy.”*



8. *Dabney* Rose, United States

*“veil de Violette”* in an alcohol base

**Notes:** tobacco • labdanum • vanilla CO2 • violet leaf absolute • flauve absolute • lavender absolute • ambergris • ylang ylang • petitgrain sur fleur • nutmeg • sweet birch

**Vision:** Sweet violets have always been a favorite flower of mine. As a quiet person, I am attracted to their humility, simplicity, and unpretentiousness. I wanted a perfume that was soft and companionable. A perfume that would take me to the sun-dappled, mossy woods, even as I worked at my desk. So be with me now, in late February, as the sun, the birds, and the violets warm and rise in their singing.

**Bio:** Way back in childhood is where the stirrings for flowers and the Natural World began. At age 11, I made my first 'fragrant product'; incense from the Wild Plum Blossoms growing in our back yard. Unlike most girls and young women, I had no clue about the commercial perfume counters, bottles, and famous names; they were just not a part of my world. Discovering Aromatherapy in the young 80's was like switching my life from B&W to color. As a healer and an artist, fragrance is my medium, my palette, and my language.

**Review:** *veil de Violette startled me with its aroma; like tiny purple violets opening, with trust, on a freezing cold day. The package was tied with a lovely organza violet bow. The perfume itself is a deep green colour. Dabney has done what we all want to do – make a perfume that captures that delicate sweet violet aroma and sends us back into simpler times of faith, home, and family. This was a real treat to evaluate.”*



9. *Lisa* Abdul-Quddus, United states

*“Ylang Ginger Lily”* is in an alcohol base.

**Notes:** Amber accord (vanilla bean tincture, labdanum, liquidambar, tonka bean) • Sri Lankan Sandalwood • Clove Bud • Fresh Ginger • Petit grain sur fleur • Clementine • Ginger Lily • Ylang Ylang

**Vision:** My intention, when formulating this oriental perfume, was to accentuate the spicy note. Having blended several compositions using jasmine, that all seemed to fall short of what I wanted, I decided to change directions, focusing more on florals and less on spice. I also wanted to move away from the heavy sweetness of jasmine and opted for ylang ylang and ginger lily. I wanted a fresh yet delicate scent, still full of warmth. With the headiness of ylang ylang and the sharpness of ginger lily, I think I accomplished that.

**Bio:** My journey into natural perfumery began with an interest in aromatherapy. As I studied essential oils more in depth and made simple blends, I began to be drawn more to the smell of my blends and away from the therapeutic aspect. At the time, I had no idea what natural perfumery even encompassed. The more I studied, the more I wanted to learn. Today, over 4 years into this journey, I’m still learning and actively seeking out more and more information.

**Review:** *“Ylang Ginger Lily opens with a wonderful spicy/floral accord drying down to an ambery finish. This perfume is very well blended and would be lovely for day wear to pretty much any event. It is not sassy and does not intrude. Lovely.”*

## *The Results Are In*

The *Grand Prize Winner* is: *Janice Van Dijk*, with 98/100

Close runners-up: Gabriella Berran, Lorraine Scott, Rachel Fentiman, and Dabney Rose, who were only a couple of points behind.

Honourable mention: Maggie Mahboubian, Lisa Abdul Quddus, Amanda Feeley, and Karen Maniapoto, who were a few points behind that; it was a very close contest.

I am sending this to you in advance and will be making a Blog Post tomorrow.

You all did so well and I appreciated every one of your compositions. It was an interesting and in-depth journey into what makes an Oriental Perfume live up to its name: mysterious, captivating, inwardly moving, inspiring, and beckoning us to have some deep and meaningful time with our loved one.



*Congratulations to each and every one of you with my heartfelt gratitude for making this journey an olfactory adventure that I will never forget.*



**I had so much fun this time that** I am planning to do three

perfume challenges next year, ending every fourth month:

Beginning in March 1; ending on April 30; category Fougere

Beginning in July 1; ending on Aug 31; category Soliflore

Beginning Nov 1; ending on Dec 31; category Chypre

*Winner of the 2010 Challenge for best*

*Oriental Perfume*

*Janice Van Dijk*

*for Green Chi*

*with my thanks and congratulations, Janice.*

*Your composition captured the essence of what an*

*Oriental Perfume is;*

*and you excelled in all named categories.*

*Dated: 18 November 2010*

*Signed: Lyn E. Ayre, Natural Perfumer*

*Coeur d'Esprit Natural Perfumes*