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THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF ART AND CULTURE

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The first ever Eau de Cologne from Farina House, Cologne

Scent packing

The world's most expensive perfume is No1 by Clive Christian, at £2,700 per bottle. Their Imperial Majesty edition of this fragrance is presented in a bottle made of Baccarat crystal set with a superlative diamond on the neck. A bottle of Imperial Majesty No1 will set you back over £100,000, but only if you can get hold of one of the only ten bottles ever produced. The British designer famously said: 'Perfume is an art form—in the same genre as music and painting. It requires talent, expertise and most of all, passion.'

Christian's art form, however, costs only a fraction of the most expensive perfume bottle sold which was auctioned by Christie's in 2009 for a bottle that never actually held perfume. Designed by Marcel Duchamp with Man Ray in 1921, it was based on the bottle for bestselling *Un Air Embaumé* by Rigaud. The bottle features a picture of Duchamp's female alter ego Rose Selavy. *Belle Haleine: Eau de Voilette (Beautiful Breath: Veil Water)* was sold as part of the Collection Yves Saint Laurent et Pierre Bergé in Paris, realising €8,913,000 (£7,083,828).

The Baccarat glass scent bottles Christie's offered on March 1-2 in New York were a snatch in comparison, realising \$1,875 at auction.

When the Egyptians invented glass, it was largely used for perfume vessels. The very wealthy citizens of ancient Egypt kept their perfume in hand blown glass bottles. Several fine examples found in tombs can be seen in the Pitt Rivers museum, Oxford.

Glass has continued to be a popular vessel to store perfume. Venetian perfume makers from the seventeenth century onwards have specialised in using a type of glass called aventurine, flecked throughout with sparkling metallic particles. They used coloured glass for flacons, not only because it was decorative, but also because it protected the perfume from deterioration through exposure to light.

The most iconic examples of perfume bottles from the last century include the simple clear glass Chanel No.5 bottle, designed in 1924. It was the subject of Andy Warhol's pop art works and features in various galleries around the world, not to mention the enormous sequined silhouette of the famous bottle shown on the exterior of the Musee d'Orsay, Paris earlier this year.

The essence of liquid gold

Perfume has always been associated with seduction and up until the mid-nineteenth century, has been restricted to royalty, nobility and the very wealthy.

The oldest fragrance factory still standing is now a museum. Farina House is home of the first Eau de Cologne, founded by Johann Maria Farina in 1709, Cologne, Germany. The family is still producing the original bergamot and lime-scented cologne today.

By the twentieth century, perfume followed a clear parallel with the trends of society and fashion. In the early twentieth century, the mood in fashion and society is expressed as oriental escapism, reflected with floral oriental perfumes such as *L'Origan* by Coty and *Après l'Ondée* by Guerlain.

By 1918, when the suffragette movement was in full swing, a new blend of perfume was developed by Coty, *Chyphre*. Bypassing the traditional floral scents, the blend was controversial at the time. Post-war fragrances and fashion were revolutionised by a woman: Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel; with the

When essence becomes art

Collecting vintage perfume or scent bottles has been popular for some two hundred years yet more prized was what was in the bottle itself. But no doubt even modern scent bottles will, in time, have their place in the collector's cabinet. For the perfume itself, gold is a popular and traditional inspiration for luxury scent. The latest gold-inspired perfumes come from Zero Otto. This is '1528' Parfums, fragrances inspired by CEO Anna Carla De Leonardis' own gold leaf paintings. Anna says that perfumes become sought after through being unique: 'When perfumes have high quality essences and exclusivity, and through being a limited edition, they become collectible and valuable.'

The inspiration for the name Anna's '1528' fragrance was this landmark date itself, the year her noble family name was established. And the elegant perfume bottle, decorated with a coat of arms, makes it doubly collectable.

These '1528' unisex fragrances are available in the three shades of gold: Or Blanc (Seductive), with lavender, lily of the valley and patchouli, Or Rose (Aphrodisiac), with a heart of geranium, jasmine, iris and violet, and Or Jaune (Erotique) with amber and vanilla.



Baccarat perfume vessels