



DOLLARS & SCENTS

In the all-you-can-eat world of celebrity branding, perfume is the new fries on the side.

WORDS **SUSAN SKELLY**

1. Kim Kardashian 2. Beyoncé
3. Justin Bieber 4. Madonna
5. Truth Or Dare by Madonna
6. Lady Gaga 7. David Beckham
8. Closer by Halle Berry 9. True Reflection by Kim Kardashian

COLLAGE: STEPHANIE PEMBROKE; PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

THIS CHRISTMAS it's no holds barred as pop's princes and princesses battle for pole position, not in the music charts, but the perfume charts. And as with music, YouTube is as often as not the gladiatorial arena, as video commercials market direct to the fans and beauty vloggers compete to be the first to show them how to open a box and say "wow" in a dozen different ways.

See Lady Gaga slither and slide in what looks like a sea of viscous black blood, complete with trademark monster claw and vampire teeth that could slice through a high-tension wire. It's a brittle, glassy and highly stylised video of mayhem and menace as the pop star seeks to suggest what Fame might smell like.

See Madonna primp and preen in a lingerie ad-style seduction scene as she spruiks Truth Or Dare. Meanwhile, Britney Spears channels both her inner Egyptian

and Hollywood screen siren in golden-hued advertisements for Fantasy Twist (a twist-apart of two previous scents, Fantasy and Midnight Fantasy), the latest contribution to a personal perfume empire that, since the launch of Curious in 2004, is worth an estimated \$1.5b.

Kylie Minogue notches up her 10th fragrance release with Music Box, whose print ads have a cabaret aesthetic. And Justin Bieber does his best to look as if he is finally old enough to date someone who would wear Girlfriend.

Fashion figureheads and Hollywood hot shots are getting in on the act, too. Hoping to hear the tills ringing this year are Sarah Jessica Parker (Covet), Nicole Richie (Nicole), Beyoncé (Pulse Summer Edition), Katy Perry (Meow), Halle Berry (Closer), David Beckham (Essence), Kim Kardashian (True Reflection) and JLo (Glowing). Department stores and airport duty-free halls are in overdrive with armies of bottle-wielding salespeople >

1. Curious by Britney Spears
2. Nicole by Nicole Richie
3. Glowing by JLo
4. Kinski by Klaus Kinski
5. The Essence by David Beckham
6. Fame by Lady Gaga
7. White Diamonds by Elizabeth Taylor
8. Covet by Sarah Jessica Parker
9. Music Box by Kylie Minogue
10. Liabelle by Kate Moss

SMELLS LIKE TWEEN SPIRIT
WHAT DOES CELEBRITY SMELL LIKE? BEAUTY BLOGGER MICHAELA WILLIAMS ROAD-TESTS THIS YEAR'S CELEBRITY SCENT RELEASES AND NOMINATES FIVE CELEB CLASSICS.



PHOTOGRAPHY: PABLO MARTIN; ART DIRECTION: STEPHANIE FEMBROKE.



NEW & NOTED 2012

Justin Bieber Girlfriend

Proof that the Biebs could sell ice to tween girl Eskimos. Buy this flaçon of overwhelmingly sweet fruit punch for a daughter or niece and forever bask in her adoration.

Selena Gomez Selena Gomez

This originally named effort from Mr Bieber's sometime love features raspberry, vanilla and freesia, with all three note choices voted for by fans. Somewhat predictable? You betcha!

Lady Gaga Fame

After back-peddalling on her original claims of using her own blood, Gaga's first scent is a tamer floral, relying on a heavy dose of tuberose for its grunt. The star note of tears of belladonna is catnip to a sulky teen.

David Beckham The Essence

You may not look like Becks, but at least you can smell like him with this fresh cologne, featuring a sweet grapefruit note and effervescent apple and lavender.

Madonna Truth Or Dare

Alternative name: "Fracas For Dummies". A paler version of the pulsating original, introducing steamy white florals to a younger market.

Kim Kardashian True Reflection

The print ad portrays the reality star gazing at her image in the mirror, her reflection staring adoringly back. Self-image has never smelt sweeter, with notes of peach, coconut and chocolate orchid.

Kate Moss Lilabelle

A new scent for the evergreen Brit clothes horse counts osmanthus, heliotrope and creamy suede among its notes. It's really light – not half as enduring as Ms Moss.

JLo Glowing

She of the bountiful backside knows what she's doing with her 18th scent, with the clean linen top notes concealing an amber and patchouli base. The light-up bottle also doubles as a fab cat toy.

Nicole Richie Nicole

Just like a warm pina colada, minus that fun rum buzz. A casualty of heavy-handed scent sugaring, its divinely

Joan Collinsesque turban-shaped flask shows that looks can get you anywhere.

Kylie Minogue Music Box

Our Kylie has previously cracked the key to scented success and continues her reign with a sugary sweet and overwhelmingly pink effort.

CELEBRITY CLASSICS

Britney Spears Curious

The pop tart's first fragrance launched a branding empire with its musky white florals and magnolia heart. Spritz me baby, one more time?

Sarah Jessica Parker Covet

With more depth than a Kardashian has front, a slightly dirty musk ribboning around a smooth lavender base, and nary a hint of syrupy fruit, Covet proves that Carrie Bradshaw knows her stuff.

Elizabeth Taylor White Diamonds

The grand dame of celeb branding, Ms Taylor wraps her signature aldehydes around heady tuberose and jasmine. Wear with red lips and an expertly arched brow.

Tilda Swinton Like This

A study in the idea of orange, the vivid turmeric, pumpkin and carrot seed guarantee this dark horse a place in "scent-robos" everywhere.

Klaus Kinski Kinski

This intelligent herbal cologne dabbles in the musty and dank, with a base of moss and vetiver anchoring the sweaty castoreum and vetiver top notes. Critically lauded and best appreciated by well-travelled noses.



ILLUSTRATION: STEPHANIE PEMBROKE; PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

“IN 1991 THERE WERE JUST THREE CELEBRITY SCENTS RELEASED, IN 2001, NINE, LAST YEAR, 73”

- 1. Fracas by Robert Piguet
- 2. Tilda Swinton
- 3. Like This by Tilda Swinton
- 4. Kylie Minogue
- 5. Selena Gomez by Selena Gomez
- 6. Kate Moss
- 7. Jo Malone dry body oil

brandishing blotter strips and pushing the spray button.

Celebrity perfume is one of fragrance’s fastest-growing categories, according to international perfume ambassador Michael Edwards, whose annual bible *Fragrances Of The World* lists and categorises each year’s releases. In 1991 there were just three celebrity scents released, in 2001, nine, and last year, 73.

But will any of them achieve the status of legend? Is there a Mitsouko, Chanel No.5, Shalimar, Opium or Angel among them? Too soon to call, says Edwards at his terrace in Sydney’s Paddington (he divides his time between there, Paris and New York), although Elizabeth Taylor’s White Diamonds has staying power as does Britney Spears’ Curious, he believes.

Perfume is, these days, part of the celebrity portfolio. Some stars are in it for the money, others see it as an extension of their style and image strategy. Says

Edwards, “Lady Gaga was intimately involved in the creation of Fame; Elizabeth Taylor - you couldn’t do anything without her OK. They are not perfumers, but they have a sense of taste and a sense of style, sometimes an off-the-wall sense of taste and style. You’d be a fool not to be involved. If you are just a name for hire, forget it, the perfume will fade, but if they are involved, wow!”

“Sarah Jessica Parker loves lavender and that was the starting point with *Covet*. Madonna wanted a tuberose note in *Truth Or Dare* because it evoked for her the scent of her mother [the powdery tuberose-fuelled Robert Piguet *Fracas*]. So she chose tuberose as the base, took it to the perfumers and twisted it with gourmand notes.” >



Marc Jacobs
Dot

Celebrity fragrances appeal primarily to the 14 to 25 age group, says Edwards, and for them the fruity florals have become the fashion, now with a touch of the tasty gourmand notes: caramel or chocolate, white flowers. Some verge towards the more floral orientals, with orange flower and a lily base.

A great fragrance, he says, must polarise. “Perhaps the key problem with celebrity fragrances is that they are tested by research and they need to have broad appeal. That in itself is a contradiction, because the moment you go for broad appeal you tend to dampen down any unusual notes. You are going to get the best of the worst and the worst of the best and end up with something very pretty, very nice – and perhaps forgettable.

“Every great fragrance creates a signature, a like or loathe kind of thing. Like Angel, like Poison. It’s very tough to come up with a fragrance that has broad appeal and a signature.”

Marc Jacobs’ Dot is one spawned by the research model that does succeed, says Edwards, praising renowned “nose” Ann Gottlieb, who has also directed most of the Calvin Klein fragrances. “She knows what she is looking for and she works directly with the perfumers. If you compare Dot to many of the other fruity floral celebrity fragrances, you start to see the sure touch. It’s the difference between ‘Hey, this is something really interesting’ and something that’s ‘well, OK’.

“You can’t ask people [in research groups] to tell you what they don’t know. That’s the job of an artist, to take you into a realm you don’t know. Otherwise, it’s painting by numbers. All you get are variations on what you already know. A good perfume is the marriage of two or three notes that create something we’ve not smelt before. It can’t be too different, it can’t be too avant-garde. But it can’t be just ‘me, too’. It has to shift us in a new direction.”

In an interview on *Good Morning America* when it launched in September, in trademark OTT glam, Gaga called her Fame excursion “a nice little artistic statement” and the perfume “sexy, for someone who wants to be seduced by someone”, adding that she wanted it to smell like “an expensive hooker”.

At Bloomingdale’s SoHo NYC store, Fame was lined up with the big guns. There were no other celebrity perfumes in sight – which would have pleased the singer no end. As she told *GMA*: “I have always felt disappointed by celebrity fragrances because they seem to ride on the air of amateur or cheap, like the fans don’t deserve the same as someone buying a fragrance at Chanel deserves,” she said.

So what does Fame smell like? For all its hype and claimed novelty – a “new fluid technology”, “the first ever black eau de parfum” and a marriage of “tears of belladonna, crushed heart of tiger orchidea with a black veil of incense, pulverised apricot and the combinative essences of saffron and honey drops” – it turns out Fame is not as avant-garde as you might expect. It is – heaven forbid – fruity floral. 🌍

“EVERY GREAT
FRAGRANCE
CREATES A
SIGNATURE – A LIKE
OR LOATHE THING”

WHEEL



FORTUNE

MICHAEL EDWARDS’ FRAGRANCE WHEEL IS USED BY PERFUME BUYERS AND SELLERS ALL OVER THE WORLD TO SEE WHERE THEIR FAVOURITE PERFUMES SIT AND WHICH OTHERS MIGHT HAVE SIMILAR APPEAL.

It has four key groups: floral, oriental, woody and fresh, and 14 families within those.

The 2013 volume of *Fragrances Of The World*, published next month, categorises more than 8500 scents (the *fragrancesoftheworld.com* database contains more than 13,000).

There are, Edwards maintains, fewer than 500 people in the world who can truly claim to be perfumers. He remains in awe of their artistry. “It takes more training than to become a neurosurgeon,” he declares during a trip back to Sydney in September when his “wheel” and a profusion of flowers were the window-dressing of David Jones’ annual spring flower show.

Edwards’ *Perfume Legends* (sadly, out of print) is a rare voyage around perfume, from Fougère Royale in 1882 to Angel in 1992.

While his job is to “understand” perfume rather than rate it, Edwards names among his most admired: Shalimar, “the ultimate oriental”; L’Heure Bleue by Guerlain, “an extraordinary symphony, its balance even today is incredible”; Chanel No.19, “changed now a little – some of the original ingredients are not available – but still magnificent to this day”. More recent wafts that impress are Narciso Rodriguez’s For Her, Prada’s Candy and Lancôme’s new La Vie Est Belle, with Julia Roberts as its face.

Edwards owes his love affair with perfume to the first two he ever bought: Eau Sauvage by Christian Dior (“[UK cosmetic queen] Jo Malone said, ‘It has the smell of money!’) and Habit Rouge by Guerlain (“It’s like a modern oriental for men. I love it, my wife loathes it”).

These days, wearing fragrance interferes with all the smelling of them he has to do. Edwards prefers eau de cologne: Hermès’ Eau d’Orange Verte, Jo Malone’s Lime Basil & Mandarin, Armani’s Eau Pour Homme.

But Edwards sees no reason to stop at skin. He uses the amazing and androgynous *Feminite du Bois*, by Serge Lutens, as a room spray.