

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

SATURDAY/SUNDAY, MAY 19 - 20, 2007

CCLXIX NO. 117

WEEKEND EDITION

\$\$\$ \$1.50

WSJ.com

PURSUIITS



© Copyright 2007 The Wall Street Journal. All Rights Reserved.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Saturday/Sunday, May 19 - 20, 2007 P2

Scent of a Woman — Sold for a Man

To market cologne to men, makers experiment with more exotic blends; notes of Champagne, juniper berries

By Ray A. Smith

RHUBARB. GERANIUM. Orange blossom. That lineup might sound better suited to a farmer's market, but some of the biggest names in fragrance are gambling that these seemingly unmanly aromas are the future of men's cologne.

Creating fragrances for men has always been a tricky business. Long averse to anything remotely feminine, many men prefer traditional woody or soapy scents, or better yet, nothing at all.

But a new generation of younger men has been fueling fragrance sales with a willingness to experiment with exotic ingredients. As the market gets more competitive, fragrance makers are becoming increasingly adventurous in their offerings.

The result: an olfactory free-for-all at the men's cologne counter that features scents often more evocative of women's perfumes than traditional male fragrances. A new Burberry scent has hints of mimosa and port wine. Key ingredients in John Varvatos's latest entry, Vintage, include crisp rhubarb, "artisanal" quince fruit paste and Albanian juniper berries. Kenneth Cole's R.S.V.P. boasts notes that include "wet grass" and "soft cashmere." And Tom Ford just started selling scents in his men's store called Tuscan Leather and Tobacco Vanille.

"You have to be careful," says Richard Herpin, a perfumer with fragrance and flavor company Firmenich, which has developed fragrances for Vera Wang and Bond No. 9. He describes the creative process as trial and error. "You don't want to overdo

it because then you get into something that's not wearable for men."

But makers aren't simply trying to appeal to men. One advantage of fruitier, more floral scents is their potential for sales to women, some of whom have long preferred men's cologne over those designed especially for them. Meanwhile, new so-called unisex scents -- Calvin Klein's ck one was one of the first when it debuted in 1994 -- are also launching.

Indeed, far from downplaying

men's colognes. Some used words like "feminine" or "romantic" to describe the aromas.

With that in mind, men might want to be careful about wearing the newest scents to the office. "For work, keep it clean and serious," says Samantha von Sperling, an image consultant in New York. Anna Soo Wildermuth, a consultant in Elmhurst, Ill., suggests men apply any scents lightly for work and choose "a soapy smell, like Irish Spring."

More than 100 men's colognes were launched last year, compared with 61 in 2005, setting a record, according to the Fragrance Foundation. In 2006, the fragrance with the highest overall sales among new launches

men's colognes. Some used words like "feminine" or "romantic" to describe the aromas.

With that in mind, men might want to be careful about wearing the newest scents to the office. "For work, keep it clean and serious," says Samantha von Sperling, an image consultant in New York. Anna Soo Wildermuth, a consultant in Elmhurst, Ill., suggests men apply any scents lightly for work and choose "a soapy smell, like Irish Spring."

How far men are willing to go is still a question. Some makers, including Gucci and Nautica, are hedging their bets, mixing new ingredients with woody oils such as sandalwood and myrrh. Giorgio Armani's Attitude is sticking with woody and spicy ingredients, albeit rare ones. "We're less interested in following a trend and more interested in creating a classic," says Serge Jureidini, president of designer fragrances for L'Oréal USA, which worked on Attitude. The bottle, shaped like a Zippo lighter, exudes old-school machismo.

Bob Roberts, a 33-year-old computer-security engineer in Jessup, Md., who took a chance with one of the newer scents, says it took some getting used to. When he first sprayed on Christian Dior's Dior Homme cologne, his wife said it smelled too flowery, "like a woman's perfume."

But after it settled in, the couple no longer smelled the iris and began to detect hints of cocoa and leather. Now, whenever Mr. Roberts sprays himself, he waits a half hour before getting too close to his wife.

Write to Ray A. Smith at ray.smith@wsj.com

Strong Enough?

Below, some of the newest men's fragrances, what they're supposed to smell like and what our testers thought of them.



their feminine side, some of the new men's colognes flaunt it. Promotional materials for Viktor & Rolf's Antidote, which is made with jasmine, call it a "dandy fragrance" for men who appreciate fine tailoring and sartorial wit. The name of Jean Paul Gaultier's new cologne includes the French word for flower: It's called Fleur du Male.

Men's colognes have their biggest following among men under 35, African Americans and Latinos, according to Mintel International, a market research firm. Last year, global sales of premium men's fragrances, those sold in department stores and high-end bou-

in department stores and boutiques, according to market researcher NPD Group, was a men's scent: Sean "Diddy" Combs's Unforgivable. Mr. Combs's cologne is heavy on citrus -- Sicilian lemon, Moroccan tangerine and grapefruit -- and has hints of sparkling Champagne, sage, cashmere, sea moss and sandalwood.

The scents themselves are substantially different from what many people expect men's cologne to smell like. When reporters asked men and women to blind-test some of these new fragrances on a recent afternoon near Wall Street in New York, most people in both groups identified them as women's perfumes rather than