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We pay a visit to Florentine fragrance fair
Pitti Immagine Fragranze

Words **LAWRENCE ROULLIER WHITE**

I am writing this month from the enviable position of a hotel room in Florence where I am attending Pitti Immagine Fragranze, the Florentine fragrance fair. The perfumes showcased at this remarkable exhibition are described by numerous collective nouns: niche fragrances, luxury fragrances, artisan scents, cult perfumes - Pitti Immagine accurately refers to them as artistic perfumes. These are the fragrances which do not earn a place in a department store because the multinational brand-owning company has bought the shelf space, these are authentically produced, often hand-crafted perfumes, which are made in small batches from mainly natural, but always the finest ingredients. At this show I was lucky enough to preview many new releases and scents not yet seen or smelled on these shores. Here are just a fabulous few.

On this page I have previously



mentioned one of my favourite perfume houses, Houbigant, so I was delighted to see their latest fragrance; Iris de Champs [01], this is an elegant and very wearable iris is destined to become a classic. The genius blend uses creamy, buttery iris from the root as well as velvety iris from the petal, underscored with sophisticated sandalwood and sprinkled with pink pepper. Divine.

Gérald Ghislain, the brain behind the literary inspired Histoires de Parfums collection, displayed his latest masterpiece: Opéra [02]; a genius edit of five fragrances inspired by great operas after which the scents are named together with the date they were first produced. Each box is a music box which plays a refrain from an aria from the inspiring piece. 1831 Norma, 1875 Carmen, 1890 The Queen of Spades, 1905 Madame Butterfly and my favourite, 1926 Turandot, with jasmine, orange blossom, narcissus, patchouli, amber, leather and incense. It was wonderful to see the renaissance of Prince Murat, Napoleon's

brother-in-law's perfume house Le Galion Parfums, a company of provenance and pedigree whose nose, Paul Vacher, was responsible in part for one of the most revered perfumes of all time: Miss Dior. In the tradition of some of the most celebrated twentieth century aldehyde florals, Houbigant's Quelques Fleurs, Chanel Number 5 and Carven's Ma Griffe, Le Galion's Sortilège [03] from 1936 is powerful and idiosyncratic, instantly recognisable and will add an elegant flourish to any elegant woman.

The Different Company has a collection of highly desirable colognes, L'Esprit Cologne, and one I could not put down was Tokyo Bloom [04], named after Japan's fifth season - the time in spring when the blossom bursts forth. Also, in the collection, Sienna d'Orange is a unique and rather lovely blend of orange and carrot - try it you will buy it, South Bay is a sparkling grapefruit rendered robust with the surprising inclusion of grapefruit wood, White Zagora combines peach flower and orange blossom and finally another classic to be is Kâshân Rose, an ode to the Persian rose, celebrated during the Rose Festival in May in the city of Kâshân - this is a rose fragrance at its very best, modern and young yet steeped in history and skilfully crafted.

As I start to pack away my samples and head back to London, I am already looking forward to next year and more remarkable secrets from Pitti Immagine Fragranze. ♦



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