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What to Do When You Love a Perfume But it Doesn't Like You + Unrequited Love Draw



Introduction:

"Scrubber"; the dreaded word of every die hard perfumista . We want to love you Guerlain's Vol A Nuit, but you can be a swamp thing on our our skin, Carnal Flower by Dominique Ropion can be a venus flytrap, Chanel No 5 is an adehydlic nightmare and Fairchild by Anya McCoy is an unloved-child. So what do you, if you love the fragrance but not on you? You ask a perfumer who created a difficult scent to wear...(Disclaimer: On Editor's skin all of the above people have been known to run away in fear).



Anya McCoy of Anya's Garden: When you go to a department store, perfume boutique, or buy a perfume sample online, the first thing you should do, after smelling the perfume out of the bottle or on a scent strip, is conduct a skin test. Most of us just dab or spritz on our wrist and pulse points, then wait an hour or so to see how the perfume intermingles with our personal skin chemistry. The more careful among us do a "patch test" on our inner elbow, cover the perfume with a band aid, and wait 24 hours to see if there is redness or irritation.

One possible outcome is that disappointment will roll over you, like a dark cloud on a sunny day, when a perfume your nose loves, hates your skin. Maybe it has a musty, urinous, or just plain horrible scent that develops on your wrist. These are commonly called "scrubbers" – you can't wait to scrub them off your skin. The dilemma is that your nose craves the scent from the bottle!



Or, in another scenario, you love vintage perfumes, perhaps have a leaning towards Chypres, but are cautious because of the dire warnings of the International Fragrance

Association (IFRA) about the bergamot and oakmoss in Chypres (and other alleged allergens in most vintage perfumes) IFRA is a nanny-state doom and gloom organization that has forced the reformulation of most vintage perfumes into pale ghosts of their former selves. You've consigned your vintage bottles to a back closet, and are afraid to wear them. What can you do?

Although many classic perfumes have been ruined when they were formulated to comply with IFRA standards, classic perfumes in the chypre family have been especially hard-hit due to two of their most-glorious aromatics being drastically restricted by IFRA (only members of IFRA are required to submit to their restrictions, but that includes all the big houses – small indie perfumers need not comply). Bergamot, that luscious citrus top note made from the rinds of the Bergamot orange, is limited to 0.4% in skin-contact cosmetics. (Index of IFRA Standards 46th Amendment) Oakmoss, that deep, delicious base note, is now limited to .02 to .5%, depending upon the cosmetic. (Index of IFRA Standards 46th Amendment). Bergaptene-free bergamot is not available, since the "offending" chemical constituent was discovered, but it smells flat compared to the true bergamot. An anthrole-free (or lowered anthrole) oakmoss is also available. But what if you own vintage chypres, or other perfumes that contain these or other "offending" aromatics?

Bergamot can be a real problem on the skin, and a disfiguring scar, known as Berloque dermatitis, can result. (photo attached, used by permission). Bergamot oil on the skin, when the skin is exposed to sunlight, can cause this. The scar lasts for years, so you don't want bergamot on your skin, unless you're wearing the perfume under clothes, or at night. Not to worry, there are sunlight and daytime solutions that are available to overcome this problem.

There's another way your skin can hate your perfume: it can cause the perfume to evaporate off prematurely, leaving you scentless an hour or so after application. This may be a problem related to skin chemistry and body heat. This article will show you ways to overcome these three problems that you may have wearing perfume.

So, when the perfume smells wonderful on you, and there is no rash, it's a great outcome, but there are two possible negative outcomes, and we've all been there: the perfume our nose loves hates our skin and becomes rank smelling on some level, or, we get a rash where the perfume was applied. Disclaimer: I'm sensitized to oakmoss. I love oakmoss, so what to do? I love my Temple perfume, but it smells awful on my skin. What can we do?

—> Keep the perfume near, but off your skin.

There are some simple, and sometimes aesthetically beautiful ways to do this.

One important point to emphasize is that the perfume, especially natural perfume doesn't "evolve" so much when you use these methods. Yes, the topnotes evaporate off first, but you may find they last longer than with conventional skin application of the perfume. The great news – the middle and base notes go on f.o.r.e.v.e.r. – without the heat of your skin volatilizing them, they last very, very long.

Disclaimer: during a summer heatwave, all promises of longevity are off. 100F temps plus high humidity will even wilt the flowers growing in your garden, so don't expect any perfume to survive, despite any efforts to prolong the scent.

Tactics to beat the skin love/hate relationship:



Wear your perfume in your hair

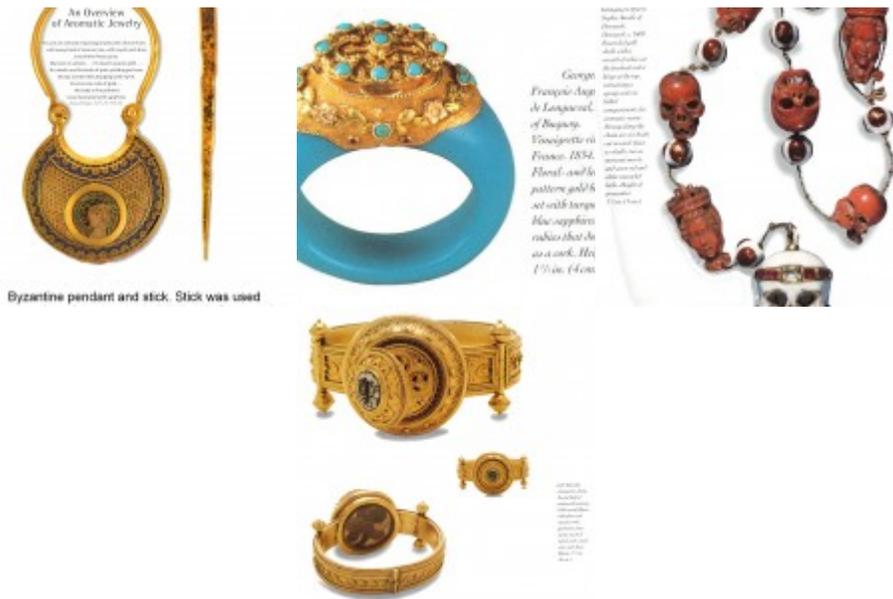
My hair is long, and sometimes I dab a drop or two on the tips of the curls framing my face. Every time I move, a waft of the pure scent of the perfume fills the air. This works well with short hair, too. Don't worry about a drop or two of alcohol; it won't be enough to dry your hair out.

Wear your perfume on your clothes

For this method, you have to do a test on an unseen, inconspicuous part of the garment or scarf. If it doesn't stain, you may like to apply some perfume on the collar or cuff or scarf. Wearing long pants? Take a tip from Greek philosopher Diogenes, who preferred to anoint his feet. He said "When you anoint your head with perfume, it flies away in the air and birds only get the benefit of it, whilst if I rub it on my lower limbs it envelopes my whole body and gratefully ascends to my nose." From Book of Perfume by Eugene Rimmel.



In his glorious painting *Fumée d'Ambre Gris*, artist John Singer Sargeant portrays a North African woman standing in front of an incense pot that is giving off scented smoke from chunks of ambergris being burned. The history of fragrancing clothes is not new, and a spritz inside of a sweater or jacket may give you pleasure for hours as the perfume gently wafts off the fabric as you move.



Wear your perfume in jewelry...

Locket, earrings, pins, bracelets and rings with "pierced" metal designs, or woven metal openings can allow you to spray or dab your perfume onto a cotton or felt piece of material and place the material inside the jewelry, allowing the scent to be released over time. History is rich with gorgeous aromatic jewelry made to adorn the wearer, and the aroma fills the "Scent Circle" around them. For the purposes of this article, we won't focus on perfume lockets that have caps and hold small amounts of precious liquid or solid perfume. After all, those are made for the wearer to open, and apply the perfume, and we're looking at jewelry that will give off the scent without any action on the part of the wearer; the scent is always wafting. This method also allows the wearer to avoid putting the liquid on their skin for the issues of perfumes that "hate" your skin (turn rank or horrible smelling due to your skin chemistry), or may cause a rash.

There are vintage and modern pieces available that can suit any aesthetic you wish to adorn your body with. In the 1800s, "viniagrettes" became popular for ladies to wear.



The point is – you can wear a perfume that might not agree with your skin chemistry, or one that you're afraid may cause an irritation on your skin, or one you definitely know irritates your skin because of previous episodes of rash or discomfort. You can look on eBay, or google "aroma jewelry", "aromatherapy jewelry" or "perfume jewelry", and start testing on your clothing, and spraying or dabbing fine fragrance in your hair. Welcome to the world of long-lasting, easy-on-the-nose, easy-on-the skin creative perfume alternatives.





MC: [A very modern way](#) is through the personal diffuser jewelry of Cathy Gins of [Aromawear](#), an award winning Professor at Fashion Institute of Technology (FI.T) that I first discovered when I was single. I carried two sets of business cards; one set of cards were for professional contacts and the second set was in her beautiful business card case when I hoped for close encounters. Lately, I am wearing my husband's fragrance close to my heart (yes he called after taking my business card).

Thanks to Cathy Gins we have a draw for two winners. In order to be eligible, watch the video and tell us something you learned and the favorite way you wear a perfume that doesn't love you and what perfume that may be.

Draw ends December 9, 2011 (specify gold or silvertone)

Article by Anya McCoy

-Michelyn Camen, Editor-In-Chief and Art Director