

A SCENT TO SUIT

A brand's signature scent should embody its character, while offering a point of difference or evolution, advise **Sarah McCubbin** and **Tori Snowball**

In pebble&co's last feature for SPC, 'Crafting the Expected', in June 2015, we explored the transitioning of brands into the lucrative and limitless category of fragrance and beauty. We're now delving deeper and exploring how we at pebble&co, as creators of bespoke fragrance collections, interpret a brand into scent – how we define and create what a brand smells like.

Scent is a complicated, immensely personal sense; it has the ability to make us fall in love or recoil in horror. It is malleable, altering from person to person and scenario to scenario – ever-changing throughout our own lives as we grow and evolve.

Defining a brand's scent is a journey; designing something that is unique but not intimidating, decidedly different but carrying a commercial reality – ultimately crafting a scent that speaks to the brand and is of its world. One which will embody the brand and conform to the ideas that consumers hold of the brand.

At pebble&co, the journey to create a brand's fragrance is a series of 'tasting' exercises: comparing and contrasting, defining and refining the fragrances we create, always taking into consideration the delicate balance of ingredients, fragrance notes and the products the scent will sit within. We're constantly examining a scent's equilibrium of harmony and contrast to create something special that truly reflects the brand, but also offers a point of difference and evolution. Exploring varied touchstones – culinary, textiles and textures, as well as the obvious scent benchmarks – the practice becomes as much a psychological exploration of a brand as anything else, working out its likes and dislikes. A fragrance's physical strength is also a key contemplation. Is your brand loud and bold in scent, leading from the nose? Or is it subtle, diffusing its presence into your day without you even noticing it – ever present, yet missed when gone?

Research and development also plays a role within the creative process, exploring market trends and influences from the wider world. Believe it or not, news such as who is hosting the football World Cup to the latest fashion trends all influence fragrance.



pebble&co undertakes a variety of 'tasting' exercises when developing signature fragrances for brands including Gieves & Hawkes and hush

Brazil's emerging market and presence has reintroduced fruity exotic tones, and fashion's androgynous flavour has awarded us a plethora of unisex, gender-swapping scents.

A strong profile comes from the very essence of a brand's integrity, history (however young or historic), look and feel. The strength of these characteristics is what makes a brand so amenable to moving into the world of fragrance, and they become the pillar stones when defining a scent. Character defines the scent.

When creating the first fragrance for Savile Row veterans Gieves & Hawkes we had to consider both the heritage of the quintessential Gieves & Hawkes gentleman and their journey to their modern man – drawing from the brand's archives, its recent collections and inspiration, as well as looking forward to create a scent that transcends the decades. A scent for the elegant, stylish and sophisticated, Gieves & Hawkes' fragrance, No.1, was created to live within the brand's newly launched No.1 Savile Row flagship store. No.1 retains a quintessential British heritage with a very modern and international point of view. It has the ability to conjure up ideas of cosy weekends in the Highlands to complement the sumptuous, rich fabrics of a winter collection with the grace and elegance of a sharp tailored suit. A sophisticated blend of green vetiver, rich spices and delicate jasmine lifts, while curls of wood smoke and soft leather add depth.

Another hurdle we've overcome at pebble&co is defining and creating a fragrance for the online world. We worked with online cashmere and loungewear brand hush (www.hush-uk.com) to create a home fragrance collection of four scents, spanning candles, diffusers and linen & room spray. The hush fragrance family was designed to capture the essence of the brand, expressed through scents which are automatically compelling to the hush customer. Scents that instinctively resonate and become synonymous with the irresistible textures and patterns inspired by the hush clothing palette.

While that sweet smell of success can be as elusive as finding your own perfect perfume or cologne, developing a scent for a brand provides a new canvas for brands to expand their image, a creative outlet that brings a new dimension to an experience and can help solidify a brand image.



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