

how to spend it

Sultry fragrances for a scented bath

A few drops turn a simple ritual into a decadent pleasure, says a guest perfume blogger



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Estée Lauder loved to share the story of her great triumph, Youth Dew (£45 for 67ml). “One evening at a dinner party, staring at one more dresser tray with three unopened pretty bottles of perfume, I had an idea. I would convince the American woman to buy her own perfume, as she would buy a lipstick.” At the time, fragrance was given as a gift, like a bouquet of red roses for Valentine’s Day. Lauder’s brilliant concept was to develop a scent of such rich concentration that it could be sold as a bath oil. Youth Dew was a runaway success, and this year the Lauder classic celebrates its 60th anniversary.

Youth Dew has fascinated me ever since I learnt its story, but the sultry fragrance put me under its spell only when I first tried it in the way that Lauder intended — as a bath oil. I dissolved a few drops in water, and almost immediately the dark aroma of patchouli, clove and sandalwood seemed brighter and warmer. Applied full strength on skin it’s a dramatic, big-statement fragrance, but in the bath Youth Dew mellowed into a comforting scent. The soft aroma lingering on my skin had the cosy warmth of a cashmere wrap.

I treat myself to perfumed baths whenever I feel tired or simply in need of some pampering. It’s an indispensable indulgence and one of the most satisfying scented pleasures. To feel as if I’m floating on rose petals, I turn to Red Roses Bath Oil by Jo Malone (£52 for 200ml). It leaves skin soft and redolent of lemony tea roses. L’Artisan Parfumeur’s La Chasse aux Papillons Dry Body Oil (£40 for 100ml) is perfumed with the sweetness of tuberose and linden blossom, and while it can be used instead of moisturising cream, in the bath it feels especially luscious.

Taking a page from Mrs Lauder’s savvy tactic with Youth Dew, I also try my other favourite perfumes to scent my bath. The warmth of the water helps diffuse the aroma and makes it blossom, revealing its full complexity. Two drops of Guerlain Shalimar (from £43 for 30ml) is all it takes to turn a simple evening ritual into a decadent pleasure perfumed with spicy bergamot and creamy vanilla.

For the ultimate rejuvenating treatment, I turn to the French beauty classic — a cologne bath. I fill up the bathtub and add a couple of generous splashes of any citrusy cologne, such as Ô de Lancôme (£31 for 75ml) or Roger & Gallet Extra Vieille Jean Marie Farina Cologne (£32 for

100ml). The zesty brightness of citrus is refreshing and bracing, and as I dream of Provençal summers and orange blossom groves, all of the tension accumulated during the day vanishes. It's the next best thing to a real holiday.

L'Artisan Parfumeur, 020-3040 3030; www.artisanparfumeur.com. **Estée Lauder**, 0870-034 2566; www.estelauder.co.uk. **Guerlain**, www.guerlain.com. **Jo Malone**, 0800-054 2939; www.jomalone.co.uk. **Lancôme**, www.lancome.co.uk. **Roger & Gallet**, 0800-169 6193; www.roger-gallet.co.uk.

Victoria Frolova has been writing her perfume blog, boisdejasmin.com, since 2005. It began as a hobby – her interest in perfume had been kindled while growing up in a family of chemical engineers – but it quickly turned into a full-time undertaking. Since receiving her professional perfumery training, she has been working as a fragrance consultant and researcher.