FAYTELL

A Tome of Perfumers

Chapters from The Sensory World

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Christophe Raynaud

A vice-president perfumer at Givaudan, and one of three names on Paco Rabanne's 1 Million, on the scent that, he says, transformed his life.

Christophe Raynaud was born in Paris on 18 February 1968. He did not grow up in a house of perfumers. In a 2024 interview with Richard Goller for Fragroom, he recalled that his mother, after some research, discovered ISIPCA, and that he studied chemistry in order to enter the school. After internships in chromatography in Switzerland he joined Drom in Paris, set up a laboratory, and became a junior perfumer. He is today a vice-president perfumer in fine fragrance at Givaudan.



Ink illustration for the Tome · not a photograph, and not a likeness study.

The work that changed the scale of his career is Paco Rabanne's 1 Million Eau de Toilette, launched in 2008. Parfumo names three perfumers on that formula: Raynaud, Olivier Pescheux and Michel Girard. Asked by Goller whether the success of the scent brought pressure to repeat it, Raynaud said the opposite. "1 Million completely transformed my life. We never anticipated the level of success it would achieve." As that success grew, he said, it opened doors.

> *"1 Million completely transformed my life. We never anticipated the level of success it would achieve."*
>
> CHRISTOPHE RAYNAUD, TO RICHARD GOLLER, FRAGROOM, 28 OCTOBER 2024

Before the hit

The earlier trail is already a working perfumer's. Fragroom lists Eau de Cristobal in 2003, Belong in 2005, Chrome Legend and My Insolence in 2007, before 1 Million. Later work attributed to him includes Lancôme's La Nuit Trésor, Jean Paul Gaultier's Scandal and Yves Saint Laurent's MYSLF. His present house is Givaudan.

A list of materials, not a formula

The published pyramid for 1 Million Eau de Toilette, on Parfumo, is concise: red mandarin and peppermint at the top; cinnamon and rose absolute in the heart; Amberketal and leather in the base.

Architect, then craftsman

Profiles of his work often lean on a craftsman-and-architect metaphor. The hit of 2008 sits in that sequence, not outside it: a shared formula, three names, and a scent that, he says, opened the doors that followed.

THE YEARS

1968	Born in Paris, 18 February, per Le Chercheur de Parfum.
ISIPCA	His mother found the school; he studied chemistry first, he told Fragroom.
Drom	Junior perfumer in Paris, after chromatography internships in Switzerland.
2003–2007	Eau de Cristobal, Belong, Chrome Legend, My Insolence.
2008	1 Million Eau de Toilette, with Olivier Pescheux and Michel Girard.
2024	Vice-president perfumer, fine fragrance, Givaudan, in the Fragroom interview.

Le Chercheur de Parfum gives his birth as 18 February 1968, in Paris. He is today a vice-president perfumer in fine fragrance at Givaudan, according to a 2024 interview with Richard Goller for Fragroom.

FOUR SCENTS

1 Million Eau de Toilette
Paco Rabanne · 2008
Red mandarin and peppermint; cinnamon and rose absolute; Amberketal and leather.

La Nuit Trésor
Lancôme
Later work attributed to him.

Scandal
Jean Paul Gaultier
Later work attributed to him.

MYSLF
Yves Saint Laurent
Later work attributed to him.



Generated illustration: mandarin, peppermint, cinnamon, rose and leather. An evocative still life of the materials, not a reconstruction of a formula.

The Sensory World is a Gazette portrait series on noses and the scents that changed how we smell.

SOURCES

The outsider at the long table

A Dutch chemist learned perfume in Grasse, learned teamwork in New York, and found his voice selling to the edges of Europe. Then Vivienne Westwood asked him for a boudoir.

In New York, Martin Gras remembers, the perfumers sat around one big table. They smelled one another's trials and handed out advice across it. Paris, when he got there, was different. It is a good trade, he said in a filmed interview for the Per Fumum foundation in 2017, recorded in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, but a very competitive one, and hard above all in France, where perfumers still work too much alone. The craft, as he described it, needs three things at once: an idea, a memory, and a good nose; working as a team makes it easier.



Ink illustration for the Tome · not a photograph, and not a likeness study.

Gras, born in the Netherlands in 1941, came to the table sideways. While studying chemistry he joined the Dutch house Polak & Schwarz, later part of IFF. Deciding he wanted to compose rather than analyse, he moved to Grasse in 1970 and entered the Roure perfumery school, then spent six years with Roure's teams in New York under Jean Amic, according to Per Fumum's account of his career. He would have stayed. His wife did not want to stay in the United States, he said; otherwise he would have remained there.

> *"Each one of those old fragrances was so beautiful and so complete. I wanted a fragrance like that but more modern."*
>
> VIVIENNE WESTWOOD, ON BOUDOIR, 1998

A foreigner in Paris

Paris was crowded with talent. Gras named Pierre Bourdon and Édouard Fléchier among the perfumers already there, with Michel Almairac wanting to come too, and the evaluator Jean-Louis Sieuzac, who had the knack of finishing a perfume. The big projects went to them, he said, and it was very hard for a foreigner like him to make his way in Paris.

His way out was languages. He spoke five, and asked to work for export. The opening came at Dragoco, the German house that would merge with Haarmann & Reimer in 2003 to form Symrise. There he worked for the Paris market but also for Spain, England and Scandinavia, which, he said, is how he came to work for Vivienne Westwood. He found it easy, he added, to work with the English, the Spanish and the Scandinavians. When he retired in 2004, Women's Wear Daily put his time with Dragoco and Symrise at 23 years.

The men’s decade

The work that made his name came in the second half of the 1980s and arrived in men’s bottles. Lapidus pour Homme (Ted Lapidus, 1987) is a fougère in the old aromatic register: lavender, thyme, basil and petitgrain at the top, juniper and artemisia beneath, and a base of oakmoss, incense, amber and sandalwood, on the pyramid Parfumo publishes. 1881 pour Homme (Cerruti, 1990) is drier and greener: cumin, blackcurrant and basil, then lily of the valley, rose and ylang-ylang, settling on balsam fir, musk and patchouli. One is bark and herbs; the other a linen shirt with a little sweat at the collar. WWD’s notice of his retirement listed them first, with Bleu Marine for Pierre Cardin.

Westwood’s boudoir

Boudoir was Westwood’s first fragrance, made under a licence with Lancaster; in June 1998 WWD reported it would be introduced at Harvey Nichols in London and Leeds on 1 September. In the same report Westwood told WWD’s James Fallon what she was after: the sexier edge of the classic perfumes of her youth, Schiaparelli’s Shocking among them. “Each one of those old fragrances was so beautiful and so complete,” she said. “I wanted a fragrance like that but more modern.”

Gras, then senior perfumer at Dragoco, said he built it by dissecting her career: clothes that exaggerated the wearer’s femininity, constant borrowing from fashion history with a twist, and “the surprise, because everything Vivienne Westwood does is unexpected”. He put viburnum in the top note, a material he said had never been used in perfumery before, to pull the scent between green and oriental. The heart was red English roses with cardamom, coriander and cinnamon; the base, what Westwood called an “animal” element, amber, vanilla and sandalwood. Parfumo’s pyramid adds aldehydes, orange blossom, marigold and hyacinth above, carnation, jasmine, narcissus and orris in the middle, and tobacco flower and patchouli below. It reads like a dressing table with the drawers open: powder, spice and a warm skin note that Westwood was right to call animal.

Two years later he made her Libertine (2000), a fruity chypre that opens on pineapple, grapefruit and passion fruit and closes on oakmoss and labdanum: Boudoir’s younger, brighter sister.

After the lab

In 2004 Gras left Symrise. Per Fumum records that he then went back to school, studying genetics and molecular biology as they apply to perfumery, which is an unusual retirement for a man who had spent four decades on the other side of the bench. The interview leaves a plainer portrait than the bottles: a chemist who wanted the long table, didn’t find it in Paris, and built one of his own out of export markets and other people’s languages.

THE YEARS

1941	Born in the Netherlands. As a chemistry student he joins Polak & Schwarz.
1970	Moves to Grasse and enters the Roure perfumery school.
NY	Six years with Roure's teams in New York, under Jean Amic.
Paris	Joins Dragoco and works for export: Spain, England, Scandinavia.
1987	Lapidus pour Homme; 1881 pour Homme follows in 1990.
1998	Boudoir, Vivienne Westwood's first fragrance; Libertine in 2000.

FOUR BY GRAS

Lapidus pour Homme
Ted Lapidus · 1987
Lavender, thyme, basil; juniper, artemisia; oakmoss, incense, sandalwood.

1881 pour Homme
Cerruti · 1990
Cumin, blackcurrant, basil; lily of the valley, rose; balsam fir, musk, patchouli.

Boudoir
Vivienne Westwood · 1998
Viburnum, aldehydes, orange blossom; rose, cardamom, coriander; amber, vanilla, sandalwood.

Libertine
Vivienne Westwood · 2000
Pineapple, grapefruit, passion fruit; honeysuckle, rose; oakmoss, labdanum, amber.



Generated still: viburnum, red rose, cardamom and cinnamon, the materials of Boudoir. An evocative still life of the materials, not a reconstruction of a formula.

The Sensory World is a Gazette portrait series on noses and the scents that changed how we smell.

SOURCES

Perfumer, thy name is nobody

Born in St Petersburg in 1914, Yuri Gutsatz is said to have scented the Paris Opéra, built perfumes for India and spent decades arguing that noses deserved their own names. At 61 he planted a garden of his own.

Yuri Gutsatz spent most of his working life making scents that carried other people's names. He was born in St Petersburg on 6 July 1914, into the last years of the old empire, and by the time he died in Paris in April 2005, at 90, he had lived in Russia, Germany, France and India, set up an ingredients factory in Bombay and, by his biography's account, scented a production at the Paris Opéra. He left behind some two thousand formulas. Very few of them bear his name. That was the point he spent his later years making.



Ink illustration for the Tome, after a 1936 photograph · Wikimedia Commons / Yurigutsatz, CC BY-SA 4.0 ↗ the plain world · this drawing is likewise shared under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Two exiles

The revolution took the family west in stages. In 1924 the boy left for Berlin with his mother and his father's parents; his father, David, a chemical engineer, stayed behind in St Petersburg. In 1933, with the Nazis in power, Berlin was no longer safe either, and Yuri moved on to Paris, about nineteen years old and without a trade. The family story holds that in 1934 father and son, more than a thousand miles apart and out of touch, were both working on perfumery without knowing it of each other.

> *"An absolutely extraordinary phenomenon which in my 35 years of practice I have never encountered."*
>
> YURI GUTSATZ, ON ESTÉE LAUDER'S SKIN, 1969

In Paris he found work at Parfums de Mury, the house that owned Paul Poiret's perfumes, and was asked to bring forty of the old Poiret scents up to date. The war ended that. He also met two of the great figures of French perfumery, Jean Carles and Louis Amic, and the formulas his family keeps today go back to 1935. When war came he joined the Foreign Legion and served in Algeria. By the early 1940s he was in Marseille, in the unoccupied zone, working for the Société Française de Parfumerie, and carrying a safe-conduct pass that let him travel to Grasse to call on its perfume houses. The pass survives.

Roure, and the Opéra

After the war he went to Roure Bertrand Fils et Justin Dupont, the Grasse house, as a chief perfumer under Louis Amic, a post his son Michel says he held for some thirty years. The work was anonymous by design. A perfumer at a supplier house wrote formulas; the couturier on the label took the credit. In 1950 one of his formulas became Chasse Gardée for Carven. In 1952, by the account in his biography, the Opéra's director, Maurice Lehmann, asked him to scent the house during Les Fleurs, the third entrée of Rameau's Les Indes galantes, in its new production.

Then Roure sent him east. From the mid-1950s he spent about six years in Bombay, where he set up an ingredients factory; by the account in his biography it was Industrial Perfumes, run with the Tata group, and he created the perfumes for Lakmé, Tata's cosmetics brand. He came back with an interest in Indian materials. In 1969, working on a first perfume for Emanuel Ungaro with Estée Lauder, he built keora, the screw-pine flower prized in north Indian attars, into the accord for its odd green, metallic note.

His 1969 report to Amic on that project holds the best surviving example of his own voice. Lauder, he wrote, had skin that ate perfume: "an absolutely extraordinary phenomenon which in my 35 years of practice I have never encountered. A perfume lavishly spread on the back of her hand or forearms loses its smell within less than 5 minutes, leaving after 10 minutes a faint and blurred odor!" The Ungaro project was abandoned; by the account of the perfume writer Denyse Beaulieu, who quoted the report on her blog Grain de Musc in 2009, its work later became Lauder's Chromatics in 1973. He also worked on projects for Mary Quant, Cartier, Dior and Van Cleef & Arpels.

A name of his own

On 12 December 1975, aged 61, he registered a trademark of his own: Le Jardin Retrouvé, the garden found again. His wife, Arlette, drew the logo and ran the sales. It was a small house with an idea larger than itself. The scents came in refillable bottles and were sold on the strength of their materials, not on a fashion name; his family remembers his rule that when an ingredient is truly good, you do not need much of it.

He became an advocate for his trade as well as a practitioner. In 1976 he took over the bulletin of the society now called the Société Française des Parfumeurs, and from 1978 to 1986 he was its vice-president. On 17 May 1979 he gave the talk that summed up his argument, « Parfumeur, ton nom est personne » — perfumer, your name is nobody. As his son later summed it up, the argument was that the noses who built the great French scents were treated as anonymous technicians while the houses selling their work took the glory. His daughter-in-law, Clara Feder, credits him with theorising a parallel perfumery, in which perfumers were free of marketing constraints and chose their own materials. Half a century later that is simply how niche perfume works.

In 1990 he was one of the founding perfumers of the Osmothèque in Versailles, alongside Jean Kerléo: an archive where lost and discontinued perfumes are rebuilt from their formulas and kept, so that they can still be smelled. It was the same instinct as his own garden, applied to a whole profession's memory.

The garden, reopened

He died in 2005. Arlette died in 2012. Le Jardin Retrouvé went quiet, but the formulas did not disappear. In 2016 his son Michel Gutsatz and Michel's wife, Clara Feder, relaunched the house in Paris from Yuri's archive. Michel has said that letting customers choose which of Yuri's formulas to revive was the best tribute they could pay to the work of his father, whom he describes as a perfume creator, a humanist and a cosmopolitan.

The revived house sells mainly his compositions, adjusted by the perfumer Maxence Moutte, who has also added four scents of his own since 2021. Tubéreuse Trianon was its bestseller in 2022, Michel said; he remembers his father saying it was meant for American women, because tuberose and America had a love affair. Cuir de Russie, the most personal, was made in 1977 to recapture a childhood memory of his father's leather uniform. Clara describes Yuri as a nomad who had finally settled in a garden protected by walls.

It is a fitting end for a man who argued that a perfumer's name should be on the bottle. For most of his career it was not. Now the house credits him by name on the scents it sells.

THE YEARS

1914	Born in St Petersburg on 6 July.
1924	Leaves for Berlin; moves on to Paris in 1933.
1940s	Foreign Legion, then perfumery in wartime Marseille.
1950	Chasse Gardée for Carven; by his biography's account, the Opéra's Indes galantes in 1952.
Bombay	About six years in Bombay setting up an ingredients factory.
1975	Registers Le Jardin Retrouvé on 12 December.

FOUR FROM THE GARDEN

Tubéreuse Trianon
Le Jardin Retrouvé
The house's bestseller in 2022, Michel said; in his memory, a tuberose meant for American women.

Sandalwood Sacré
Le Jardin Retrouvé
Second among the bestsellers Michel named in 2022.

Cuir de Russie
Le Jardin Retrouvé
His most personal formula: the memory of his father's leather uniform.

Oriental Sans Souci
Le Jardin Retrouvé
Fourth on the same 2022 list.



GENERATED STILL: A WORN LEATHER STRAP An evocative still life of the materials, not a reconstruction of a formula.

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SOURCES