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SCENTS OF PLACE

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Heaven Scent

The light, colors, sights and sounds of Monaco and the South of France have captivated artists and travelers for centuries. For fresh inspiration across the region, we suggest you follow your nose on an aromachology adventure.

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Gleaming yachts in Port d'Hercule remind you why Monaco is one of the most glamorous destinations on earth.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
The unmistakable entrance to the legendary Casino de Monte Carlo; a sunseeker on the rocky shores of Nice; freshly picked mimosa greets visitors to Fragonard perfumery; Riviera beauties in Monte Carlo (bottom right) and Nice.



IS IT TIME TRAVEL OR SOME ALCHEMICAL MAGIC? ONE MOMENT I AM 34 years old, stepping through a bed of soft moss in a cedar forest of the Pacific Northwest. In the next, I am six, in my grandmother's garden, eating sun-warmed cherry tomatoes from the vine. Now I am 28, escaping the oppressive Japanese summer heat in a cool stand of bamboo amid the electric hum of cicadas. Yet, while my mind may be a thousand miles away, my body is firmly in the South of France, in the medieval village of Eze, seated at a perfumer's organ.

Before me lays a selection of 160 bottles of liquid arranged, as this elaborate desk's name suggests, in a multi-tiered semicircle like keys on an instrument. "Organ," I will discover, is just one of many words that the art and science of perfumery borrows from music. One by one, I unscrew the amber bottles and release a few drops of their essences onto paper blotters. Some will take me places. Others give me

nothing. But it's only those scents in the first category in which Sandra Dziad, a professional perfumer, is interested, as she guides me through the creation of my own custom fragrance.

The experience is part of the Magic of Aromachology program developed by Fairmont Monte Carlo and Galimard perfumery as one of Fairmont Hotels & Resorts' international apprenticeship packages that provide local learning experiences to the curious, engaged traveler.

Glittering Monaco is the legendary land of Prince Rainier and Princess Grace, where every café is a catwalk and every traffic light a showcase of the world's finest automobiles. At dusk the salmon-pink villas rising from Port d'Hercule take on a deeper, terracotta hue and yachts, freshly rinsed of the day's salt spray, gleam white on the dark water. Even without a visit, I knew its appeal by heart. But not so well known

is that the historic center of perfumery lies just a short drive down the highway.

Nowhere is scent and memory more closely linked than in travel. Our brains are wired for it: the olfactory bulb is closely connected to both the emotional-response processor (the amygdala) and the center of autobiographical memory (the hippocampus). So while I didn't realize in those moments in Oregon, Barbados and Hiroshima that I was *smelling*, my most primitive and forgotten sense was carefully linking sight, sound, taste and touch in memories more vivid than any of the other senses could have achieved alone. It's that lesson I'm here to explore along the French Riviera, where the air's perfume is the brine of the Mediterranean, fields of lavender and mimosa, and a bounty of olives, honey and wine.

Dziad surveys my selections, urging me to forget any preconceived notions of what I think I like and just allow myself to be carried away by scent. "The best way to cre-

ate is to return to the state of childhood," she says. "Forget the reason." She assists in narrowing down a selection of single notes (again, like music): we start at the bottom of the organ with the base notes – those musky, woody fragrances that linger on the skin. From the middle, I select from the floral and fruity heart notes. From the top, I sample those scents with the greatest volatility, citrus and greens.

Dziad determines the quantities of alcohol-diluted essential oils that I will measure into a glass beaker. Eyes closed, she performs silent calculations, tapping into an internal library of thousands of scents, creating imaginary accords. Slowly my perfume emerges: a heady base of woods and ambers, a light heart lily of the valley and geranium and a fresh top burst of green tea. Dziad bottles the golden liquid and I dab it on my wrist, taking a deep breath. Alone, its notes conjure happy memories; together they have made a new one. ▶



“ Along the French Riviera, the air’s perfume is the brine of the Mediterranean, fields of lavender and mimosa and a bounty of olives, honey and wine. ”



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
A perfumer's organ at Galimard; fragrant materials at Molinard; the scent-capture process of *enfleurage*; a Monte Carlo shop pays homage to Princess Grace.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
The waxy residue of narcissus concrete after its transformation into absolute; two steps in preparing olives for the press at Huilery Sainte Anne in Grasse; Molinard perfumery's airy boutique.



GRASSE IS GREENER

The treacherous cliffside roads of the Cote d'Azur demand frequent stops to take in the scenery: in seaside Nice, glamorous Cannes and charming Grasse, the birthplace of French perfumery. In the 16th century, Grasse was home to the finest glove-makers in Europe. But the leather carried a pungent odor. To mask it, the craftsmen began wrapping the gloves with fragrant flowers and later essential oils. By the mid-18th century, perfumery had supplanted glove-making in Grasse altogether.

Once, the fields around this city lived with color: blossoms of jasmine, lavender, rose, violet and sun-yellow mimosa. Today, luxury villas are the area's fastest-growing crop. But Grasse's three oldest fragrance houses are still based here: Galimard (mother facility to the Eze location), Fragonard and Molinard. The latter, in founder Hyacinthe Molinard's 19th-century distillery, tells the company's story in bottles. First, Molinard's original single-note fragrances, one for each local flower, in Baccarat crystal. Then its most enduring flagship scent, the sultry Habanita, launched in 1921 as a fragrance for cigarettes and rereleased in 1924 as a perfume proper, in an opulent Lalique bottle. Molinard's boutique proves another sensory delight, not just for perfume, but also for flower-water tonics, cone incense, candles and fragrant oils. Amber light from a stained-glass skylight pours into the large golden space, evoking an incense-steeped cathedral.

I could spend all day here, but the nose tires quickly and I've one more stop. Ten minutes along the highway, among the factories and warehouses, I find Laboratoire Monique Rémy; my guide to this olfactory experience is the lab's "nose," Fabien Durand. His work represents the purest form of perfumery: producing the raw materials for the world's most celebrated fragrances. Amid the factory's stainless steel drums the air hangs with the aromas of basil, rose and jasmine. Here, botanical concretes (waxy solids) from around the world are transformed into absolutes (concentrated oils).

These forms represent the most pragmatic way for natural ingredients to travel. It takes 700 kilograms (317 pounds) of rose petals, for example, to make one kilogram of absolute. Plus, flower scents are not stable. Their extraction is a race against time. "Jasmine does not survive for more than a few hours," says Durand. "The pickers start the harvest at 6 a.m. and what is not processed by noon is lost."

Durand's eyes light up when he talks about the difference in fragrance between a bloom in the morning (when insect-pollination activity is highest) and one in the afternoon (when insects hide from the sun). It's his job to work within a single essential oil — be it jasmine, oakmoss or orrisroot — to identify notes within the notes. Even rose can have a woody or mossy element that may be undesirable to a perfumer. As one colleague jokes, "He makes sure Trésor smells the same year after year."

That work takes Durand from farm to factory, around the globe. He tells me of the night he spent in a Moroccan orange-blossom distillery. To cool themselves, the men dipped their hands into the orange-blossom water, a distillation byproduct. He did the same and, seeing his interest, a worker explained that the word for "flowers" in Arabic is *zahr*, which also means "luck." For Durand, that treasured memory would thereafter form his ideal of how a perfect orange-blossom oil should smell. Then there was the time in India when, sent to oversee the production of jasmine sambac, his visit coincided with wedding season. The flower, with its scent of fresh-cut grass, was everywhere: in offerings at temples and in garlands around the necks of the betrothed. That joyful scent memory would again become his standard.

"For me, these products are alive," he says. "There is a story and people behind them. When I come back, that's what's in my head." That night, after dinner at Fairmont's L'Argentin restaurant I'm drawn to a light tangerine-colored marshmallow on my plate of petits fours. "Flavored with orange-blossom water," the waiter informs me. I think of Durand's story as I give in to its lingering sweetness.

THE MAGIC OF MONACO

The next morning brings part two of the Magic of Aromachology. In the sun-drenched relaxation room of the hotel's Willow Stream Spa, I sip mint iced tea while select-

ing from four aromatherapy massages, themed by color. I opt for the Reflections of Midnight Blue, featuring the elevating fragrances of lavender, geranium, frankincense and rose. The treatment opens with a lavender-steeped breathing exercise and an all-over coating in rose gel before a full-body pressure-point massage. My therapist explains that, together, scent and color evoke a mood and lift the spirits.

This idea resonates with me later that day, when I venture into Nice to visit the market in the Cours Saleya, an olfactory feast of fresh produce, flowers, spices, soaps, olive oils and confections. Henri Matisse once lived in a flat overlooking this square. The father of the fauvism movement (the portrayal of realistic subject matter in unnatural colors) discovered the Cote d'Azur at the age of 48 and, enchanted by the landscape and quality of light, remained here until his death.

His museum sits high atop the city on the site of ancient Gallo-Roman ruins, in a park fragrant with olive, cypress and carob trees. In this Genovese villa, one can follow the thread of the master colorist's development, from the 1905 paintings that mark his first tentative steps into fauvism to his seminal abstract 1952 *Blue Nude*. But the most captivating piece in the collection is the mural-size *Flowers and Fruit*, a large, vibrantly colored ode to this land that he loved. Was it dreamt up from his window overlooking the market? The meaning of inspire, after all, is "to breathe in."



CONCIERGE STAY

Fairmont Monte Carlo is one of the city's premier addresses for its location between the Mediterranean Sea and the legendary **Casino de Monte Carlo**. Its **Willow Stream Spa** won the 2010 Prix Villégiature for best hotel spa in Europe and the view from its rooftop **Horizon Deck Restaurant & Champagne Bar** is one of the best in the principality. Select from 10 experience packages, including the perfume-themed **Scent'sational** or the **Room & Vroom**, which includes a spin in a Ferrari 355 Modena or 360 Modena convertible.
fairmont.com/montecarlo

DO

Musée International de la Parfumerie in Grasse follows the history of the perfume trade, from antiquity to the present day. The facility's off-site gardens, **Les Jardins du MIP**, allow guests to view (and sniff) fragrant raw materials in their natural states.
museesdegrasse.com

Experience the life aquatic at the **Oceanographic Museum** in Monaco, which chronicles the pioneering expeditions of Prince Albert I of Monaco, aboard his vessels the *La Princesse Alice*, *L'Hirondelle* and *L'Hirondelle II*. The lower floor contains an impressive sea-life aquarium.
ocean.org

EAT

In **Fairmont Monte Carlo's L'Argentin** restaurant, dine from the steak- and seafood-suffused à-la-carte menu. For something especially Monégasque, reserve in advance to enjoy the Princess Menu: a three-course meal featuring the late Princess Grace's surprisingly simple favorite dishes.
fairmont.com/montecarlo/GuestServices/Restaurants/LArgentin.htm

For a casual option, visit **Moza**. Just a short walk from Fairmont Monte Carlo along rue du Portier, this modern Italian restaurant is a reminder that the top of the boot lies only a 20-minute drive away. Try the house-specialty starter of bufala mozzarella.
www.moza.mc



EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ROSE 31

A new scent experience awaits in every room. Fairmont has teamed with New York boutique perfumer **Le Labo** to create an exclusive line of in-room amenities, fragranced with the bestselling Rose 31. But don't let the fragrance's flowery moniker deceive you. Originally developed for men, Rose 31 caused an international sensation when it debuted in 2006, winning *Wallpaper* magazine's award for best perfume the following year. The scent has since become a must-have item among both sexes. Its secret: Grasse rose, a subtler, less fruity alternative to the bloom's Egyptian and Bulgarian counterparts. That, along with the perfume's complex blend of wood and spice notes, reveals itself as the essence of elegance.

"There is a classicism to this perfume and, at the same time, a true modernity that meets the two sides of Fairmont," says Le Labo co-founder Fabrice Penot. He and partner Edouard Roschi have spent more than a decade on the business side of scent, working with such names as Giorgio Armani and Hermès' legendary perfumer Jean-Claude Ellena, before opening their own retail atelier in 2006. Now their avant-garde signature fragrance will be part of your every stay at Fairmont Hotels & Resorts. It's one more sensory detail to fall in love with.

