

NOSE

SCENTS OF SENSIBILITY

Paris-based niche perfume store Nose, with its unique diagnostic tool, has won international acclaim. Annemarie Kruse finds out more

Niche perfumery Nose was founded by French-Canadian Nicolas Cloutier in 2012 together with six other partners, including perfumers Mark Buxton, Romano Ricci, Silvio Levi and Claire Delahaye de Villiers. The store is located in the elegant 2nd arrondissement of Paris, and at first glance, Nose looks like your average high end perfumery.

But what has garnered the retailer international press acclaim is not just the spectacular selection of niche and rare fragrance labels on offer, but also Nose's unique perfume diagnostic tool: a complicated algorithm-powered software to help narrow down fragrance preferences.

Customers fill in a three-step online questionnaire. The first screen asks them for basic information like name, age, gender and postcode. The second step requests individual perfume history – which three perfumes they have worn in recent years or, if the box “I’ve never worn perfume” is ticked, customers can list which fragrances or scent notes they are most drawn to. On the basis of this information, the software draws up an individual olfactory portrait and then gives a list of recommended fragrances.

If the questionnaire is filled in online, a sample kit of the five recommended fragrances can then be ordered for €10. After trying out the fragrance at home, clients then fill in the questionnaire again, narrowing down their preferences even further.

Retail store

Nose comprises some 1,800sqft of elegantly designed retail space. It carries over 45 international niche and super luxe brands; mostly perfume labels but also cosmetics and home fragrances.

Among the brands are well-known favourites like Acqua di Parma, Comme de Garçons, Costume National, Penhaligon's, L'Artisan Parfumeur, Floris, Etro and Miller Harris. However, Nose is listed in practically all international design and lifestyle shopping guides to Paris for its fantastic selection of lesser-known niche brands, including Biehl.Parfunktwerke, Atelier PMP and Friendly Fur from Germany; Juliette Has a Gun from France; Mark Buxton Perfumes from the



British-German nose; Italian brands Nu_Be and Calé Fragranze d'Autore; Heeley from the UK; and D.S. & Durga and Keiko Mecheri from the US.

Skin care brands include Malin + Goetz, Bloom & Blossom, REN, L:A Bruket and Zenology, while the home fragrances line-up includes Diptyque, The Laundress, Linari and Birch & Brook.

The store features a fragrance bar which doubles as a café counter, allowing the customer to order while filling in the fragrance diagnosis on iPads supplied by the store. After the questionnaire is finished and the olfactory portrait drawn up, fragrance consultants spray samples of the recommended fragrances on strips of paper and ask the client to rate them on a scale of one (best) to five (worst). This process is repeated until the selection has been narrowed down to two or three fragrances.

L'Air de Panache

Nose also organizes monthly events together with Parisian hair salon Monsieur-Dames, and partners with niche florist Baptist Fleurs. However, one of the things that really helped to put Nose on the international perfumery map was the launch of L'Air de Panache in early 2014. The fragrance, famously featured in last year's blockbuster film *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, was created by Nose's co-founder Mark Buxton, of Mark Buxton Perfumes.

The retailer also offers a range of services including perfume workshops for companies and the Perfumed Aperol, an evening which can be booked by individuals, couples or small groups and includes a bottle of champagne or wine, a presentation about the work of a professional nose, a fragrance diagnosis and a perfume, beauty and home fragrance consultation.

Nose also publishes an online fragrance news magazine, www.nose.fr, where customers can read interviews with perfumers and professional noses, and about new launches and other perfume news.

As Nose's founders include Mark Buxton and Romano Ricci, grandson of designer Nina Ricci and the founder of Juliette Has a Gun, Nose already has a high glamour factor. Its stylish retail environment, fragrance consultation software and spectacular selection of fragrance and beauty labels has ensured high profile press coverage: articles about Nose have appeared in the French and Italian versions of *Vanity Fair*; French and Japanese *Elle*; the UK's *GQ*; Italian, German and US *Vogue*; *USA Today*; and *Madame Figaro*, as well as many lifestyle, luxury and shopping guides to Paris.

Nose, co-founded by Nicolas Cloutier, above, has garnered critical acclaim for its unique perfume diagnostic tool, which narrows down fragrance preferences

Fact file: Nose

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Address Nose, 20 rue Bachaumont, 75002, Paris, France

Contact telephone number +33 1 40 26 46 03

Website www.nose.fr