



MEET THE PERFUMERY DIRECTOR:

Edward Bodenham

The fascinating history of J Floris Ltd, the oldest retailer of fragrance in England, is as compelling as its high-quality scents. *Dream Escape* speaks exclusively to perfumery director Edward Bodenham, 9th-generation Floris family member, about everyone from Marilyn Monroe to David Bowie walking through the shop door

Words | Karyn Noble

Did you know Sir Winston Churchill and Eva Perón both wore the same Floris fragrance? This and many more scintillating anecdotes are guaranteed to whet your appetite for an exclusively curated visit to the historical landmark of Floris London, which has been the custodian many celebrity aromatic secrets in the heart of St James's for almost 300 years.

Here, amid sublime surrounds, *Dream Escape* guests can create signature scents with the assistance from the only perfumer to hold a Royal Warrant. We were fortunate to chat to Floris' perfumery director Edward Bodenham about what is in store when you step below the oldest coat of

arms in the world and into the magic of a perfumery where James Bond's cologne was created and Oscar Wilde was a frequent customer.

Edward, you have a fascinating job. Tell us a little about how you became interested in perfume – was it a given, since it's the family business?

When my father used to arrive home from working at 89 Jermyn Street, I distinctly remember the smell of his briefcase, which was a wonderful mixture of all the Floris fragrances that were always in the air in the shop and perfumery in the 1970s, as all the fragrance compounding was carried out in the sub-basement; or 'the mine' as my grandfather used to jokingly refer to it, as there is a trapdoor leading to

it and it contains no windows. Visits to the shop and perfumery to see my father and grandfather were always one of the most exciting and joyful experiences as a child and the smell of those fragrances that I have grown up with have stayed with me and are incredibly nostalgic and moving. They're almost like old friends or relatives, so fragrance has always interested and fascinated me.

Floris has quite a history, established in 1730 and with some royal connections that go way back, not to mention celebrity customers. What impressive anecdotes can you tell us?
Yes, our first Royal Warrant was granted in 1800 by the Prince of Wales, and then the first Royal Warrant from a reigning monarch was granted in 1820 by King George IV. It is his royal coat of arms that is displayed above our shop at 89 Jermyn

Street and, according to a historian from the Victoria & Albert Museum who came to visit us, it is the oldest coat of arms on display anywhere in the world, which we were not previously aware of.
We have had quite a few well-known customers over the years, like Marilyn Monroe who bought a few bottles of our Rose Geranium perfume, Sir Winston Churchill and Eva Perón who both actually wore our Special No. 127 fragrance. Oscar Wilde used to visit the shop regularly to purchase his Malmaison fragrance and chat to the family and staff whilst wearing a green carnation in his lapel. Admiral Lord Nelson used to lodge in one of our rooms in the building with Lady Emma Hamilton who used to wear our White Rose fragrance. It is even rumoured that Beau Brummel used to often play cards in the back room with Joseph Floris.
More recently, my uncle, Patrick Bodenham, once helped

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David Bowie in our shop with his chosen fragrance from the collection, which was Elite. Also, I once had the pleasure of serving Liv Tyler who was very charming and unassuming.
Some other well-known regular customers are Michael Caine, Bill Nighy, the Queen of Denmark, Hugh Laurie, Donatella Versace, Stephen Fry and Kit Connor, to name just a few.

Talk us through a visitor's first-time experience at Floris. In particular, the 'heritage room' and what occurs there.
The shop itself was furnished with its Spanish Mahogany showcases in 1851, as they were acquired from the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, organised by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, so it hasn't changed very much at all since then, apart from some improved lighting and a central fragrance island, which allows customers to try all of our collection, all in one place.





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Through the back of the shop, sits our perfumery, which also serves as a small family museum, as it has a curated collection of assorted perfume bottles, photographs, formula books, customer ledgers and other interesting artifacts spanning the decades and centuries from the 1700s up until today.

The perfumery is a lovely, tranquil room, where ‘the magic happens’, as we like to say. We work on all of our new fragrances in there, I can’t help feeling inspired being in the very room that so many of my ancestors have spent time

composing their fragrances and where the comings and goings of so many people have taken place.

The perfumery is where customers visit us for the Bespoke Perfumery Service, where one of our perfumers helps them to create their own custom-made eau de parfum. Once the fragrance is created then the customer names their fragrance and we keep their formula privately in our formula books for whenever they require us to make up another bottle for them.



Do you have a favourite bespoke scent?

I have my tried and tested fragrances and tend to wear our Jermyn Street fragrance in the summer, or our No. 007 eau de parfum, which we were proud to create at the request of AON Productions and the Broccoli family in celebration of 60 years of James Bond films since Dr No, launched in October 1962.

Are there any secrets to wearing perfume correctly? Where to apply/how regularly to apply, etc?

How to wear a fragrance really does come down to personal preference, and I am fortunate enough to have spoken to many fragrance enthusiasts in many parts of the world and to hear how they prefer to wear their perfumes and how much they like to apply, which varies greatly.

One widely accepted view is that to truly appreciate all the subtle notes of a scent, you should avoid rubbing your wrists together as that will mute the volatile, light top notes of the fragrance and will take you quickly to the heart notes and will speed up the olfactory journey of the perfume.

Some people like to create a cloud of fragrance and then walk through it, which is quite effective as it will scent the hair which is very porous and carries the perfume for a long time, as

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will the clothes. A good way to wear a fragrance and help it to project is to wear it on the pulse points; so typically, on the wrists, either side of the neck and often the backs of the knees.

If you like to be aware of your fragrance throughout the day, then a good place to apply it is to your chest as it radiates warmth, which allows the scent to gently rise towards your nostrils.

What inspires the invention of a new range for Floris? Can you tell us about the latest scent and how it evolved from conception to creation?

We are inspired by so many different things, such as people, places or experiences which have had a special lasting meaning and have stirred our emotions.

Our latest scent, Wilde, was inspired by the life and work of one of our previous customers Oscar Wilde, and hints at some of the notes contained in our original Malmaison Carnation perfume that he used to wear.

If we could capture the scent of summer in London, how would you describe it and which Floris fragrance would encapsulate it?

We have a very clear and clean citrus fragrance in our collection called Limes, which dates back to the 1700s and was originally created for London in the summertime when people's hygiene was not what it is now and there were some fairly unpleasant odours around, so Limes was created to uplift the spirits and to allow you to feel clean, refined, and stylish on the hottest of days.

Our Jermyn Street eau de parfum was also composed with London and specifically Jermyn Street and St James's in mind and is a nod to many of our longstanding neighbours in the area like Berry Brothers & Rudd, reflecting some of the notes of the botanicals contained in their house gin, No.3.

Mulberry Fig is inspired by the beautiful St James's Park in full bloom, which apparently contains the largest fig tree in the UK. 🍷

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A FLORIS-INSPIRED AFTERNOON TEA AT GREAT SCOTLAND YARD HOTEL

The perfect place to unwind after your Floris-fragrance experience

We suspect you will be abuzz after creating your exquisite signature Floris fragrance and looking for the most idyllic location to not only relax and refresh but to put your newly minted scent-detection skills to the test. We have just the place: the 19th-century, luxurious Great Scotland Yard Hotel in Westminster hosts special Floris-inspired afternoon teas. In the gloriously whimsical Parlour tea lounge, you can enjoy the skilled creations from head pastry chef Verónica Garrido Martínez that incorporate the essences of Floris' esteemed perfumes, such as honey, white tea, pistachio, roses ylang-ylang and almond.

Indulge in tiers of both sweet and savoury delicacies, such as finger sandwiches with smoked salmon, caviar and horseradish cream on malted bread; or pastries (ylang-ylang and honey petit gateaux); as well as the classic British treats of scones and tea cakes. Bottomless Veuve Clicquot is also available, if you are feeling particularly triumphant.



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SALLY STRANGE
CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGER

Peigin's journey from a spa to a holistic wellness curator's story is inspiring. It shows that even from the smallest of beginnings, great things can arise. In the winter months, we all need a BARROG and should take some time to care for ourselves. GROUND's range of sustainable products are a great way to create a haven for yourself and bring balance and restoration. Although we cannot change our circumstances, we can control and create a serene environment. Investing in a few of GROUND's products can help you find inner calm and remind us that self-care is essential to our wellbeing. With a little help, we can improve our. sally@dreamescape.co.uk