

Article 2

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1. The craft of perfumery has an ancient and global heritage. The art flourished in Ancient Rome, where the emperors were said to bathe in scent. After the fall of Rome, much of the knowledge was lost, but survived in Islamic civilizations in the Middle Ages. Arab and Persian pharmacists developed essential oils from the aromatic plants of the Indian peninsula. They developed the processes of distillation and suspension in alcohol, which allowed for smaller amounts of raw materials to be used than in the ancient process, by which flower petals were soaked in warm oil. This knowledge was carried back to European monasteries during the Crusades. 2. At first, the use of fragrances was primarily associated with healing. Aromatic alcoholic waters were ingested as well as used externally. Fragrances were used to purify the air, both for spiritual and health purposes. During the Black Death, the bubonic plague was thought to have resulted from a bad odour which could be averted by inhaling pleasant fragrances such as cinnamon. The Black Death led to an aversion to using water for washing, and so perfume was commonly used as a cleaning agent. 3. Later on, the craft of perfume re-entered Europe, and was centred in Venice, chiefly because it was an important trade route and a centre for glass-making. Having such materials at hand was essential for the distillation process. In the late seventeenth century, trade soared in France, when Louis XIV brought in policies of protectionism and patronage which stimulated the purchase of luxury goods. Here, perfumery was the preserve of glove-makers. The link arose since the tanning of leather required putrid substances. Consequently, the gloves were scented before they were sold and worn. A glove and perfume makers' guild had existed here since 1190. Entering it required 7 years of formal training under a master perfumer. 4. The trade in perfume flourished during the reign of Louis XV, as the master glove-and-perfume makers, particularly those trading in Paris, received patronage from the royal court, where it is said that a different perfume was used each week. The perfumers diversified into other cosmetics including soaps, powders, white face paints and hair dyes. They were not the sole sellers of beauty products. Mercers, spicers, vinegar-makers and wig-makers were all cashing in on the popularity of perfumed products. Even simple shopkeepers were coming up with their own concoctions to sell. 5. During the eighteenth century, more modern, capitalist perfume industry began to emerge, particularly in Britain where there was a flourishing consumer society. In France, the revolution initially disrupted the perfume trade due to its association with aristocracy, however, it regained momentum later as a wider range of markets were sought both in the domestic and overseas markets. The guild system was abolished in 1791, allowing new high-end perfumery shops to open in Paris. 6. Perfume became less associated with health in 1810 with a Napoleonic ordinance which required perfumers to declare the ingredients of all products for internal consumption. Unwilling to divulge their secrets, traders concentrated on products for external use. Napoleon affected the industry in other ways too. With French ports blockaded by the British during the Napoleonic wars, the London perfumers were able to dominate the markets for some time. 7. One of the significant changes in the nineteenth century was the idea of branding. Until then, trademarks had had little significance in the perfumery where goods were consumed locally, although they had a long history in other industries. One of the

pioneers in this field was Rimmel who was nationalized as a British citizen in 1857. He took advantage of the spread of railroads to reach customers in wider markets. To do this, he built a brand which conveyed prestige and quality, and were worth paying a premium for. He recognised the role of design in enhancing the value of his products, hiring a French lithographer to create the labels for his perfume bottles. 8. Luxury fragrances were strongly associated with the affluent and prestigious cities of London and Paris. Perfumers elsewhere tended to supply cheaper products and knock-offs of the London and Paris brands. The United States perfume industry, which developed around the docks in New York where French oils were being imported, began in this way. Many American firms were founded by immigrants, such as William Colgate, who arrived in 1806. At this time, Colgate was chiefly known as a perfumery. Its Cashmere Bouquet brand had 625 perfume varieties in the early 20th century.