MEN'S FRAGRANCES
From Koeln to Florida

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With typical American conceit, most of us like to regard men's fragrances as an exclusive American invention. While it is true that the mass production of this fragrance type is an American phenomenon, we owe an immense debt to our European forbears for its origin and subsequent development. They were producing and using these products before our country was founded.

The grandaddy of men's fragrances is the Koelnisch Wasser (Cologne Water) first manufactured in the German city of Koeln (Cologne), from which the present class name of "cologne" is derived.

Essentially this water was a citrus bouquet blended with rosemary or lavender, or both, and distilled with potato alcohol to produce a clear solution. By today's technical standards it was a rather crude product. But, in its time it was an important article of commerce sold at a good price.

As time passed and the essential oils were developed, this general formula was extended to include other materials such as neroli, petitgrain, the herbals—marjoram and thyme, the spices—cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, and, eventually, the assorted florals—rose, jasmin, mimosa, and the like.

Today, in American usage, the word "cologne" is misapplied. It is used to indicate a diluted solution of a fragrance oil in an alcohol-water mixture. Therefore, in this article we use the term "classic cologne" to indicate the extended Cologne Water type of fragrance already described.

At first, the classic colognes were used by both men and women. But, as technical advances in perfumery were made, the classic cologne became associated with men, while the newer and more flowery variations attracted women.

When the English popularized the lavender colognes, or "waters" as they were first called, a masculine fragrance type was established which has continued in preference to this day. Anyone who has been fortunate enough to smell true Mitcham lavender can readily understand the Englishman's fondness for his favorite cologne.

In the early days of our country, fine fragrances were luxuries imported at great cost to be enjoyed by only a few. But, human nature being what it is, substitutes were ingeniously devised using the domestic raw materials then available in this rugged colonial area. It is from these efforts of substitution that the style of American men's fragrances arose.

Our English heritage showed itself in the early efforts to prepare lavender products. Every household had its lavender garden from which "tinctures" were seasonally made. But unfortunately the lavender plant did not adapt itself too well to the American soil and climate. Its fragrance was far from comparable to the European variety. Too much cam-

phoraceousness, too little floweriness.

Rosemary was similarly grown, and with much better success, for flavoring as well as for fragrance. Both rosemary and lavender tinctures were standard items in colonial pharmacy.

This pharmaceutical property brings out a curious fact. American men's fragrances seem to have originated from quasi-medical applications. Tom Boyle's Balm illustrates this point.

This Balm, although unknown today, was probably one of the first truly American masculine fragrances prepared from native raw materials.

The real personality of Tom Boyle is a moot question. Some sources claim that he was a southern plantation owner with an inventive flair who created the Balm for use on his estate. Others say that Boyle was an itinerant "herb doctor," who ultimately donated his formulation for the welfare of posterity. Whatever his origin, Boyle created a product that filled a need in his times, and certainly set a style that runs like a bright thread through the fabric of American perfumery.

The Balm was simplicity itself—an infusion of the crushed leaves of the Oswego bee balm in witch hazel extract. Oswego bee balm is a plant still grown in modern gardens for its scarlet flowers. Its leaves were once highly regarded for use in a poultice for bee stings and various skin lesions.

These crushed leaves contributed a powerful lemon-bergamot fragrance to the witch hazel extract, making it resemble the classic cologne. In fact, some versions of the Balm actually included a touch of rosemary, apparently to simulate even more strongly the familiar European cologne odor. Oswego bee balm must not be confused with the wild bergamot.

Tom Boyle's Balm enjoyed widespread popularity, especially on the frontier, where it could be produced from the witch hazel plant and Oswego bee balm which grew so profusely. Alcohol from local fermentation and distillation was no problem. In many localities the Balm could not have been much more than raw whiskey with herbal extractions.

The Balm was a versatile product in those early colonial times. It served as a shaving lotion, a use quite understandable if you have ever seen antique, straight-edged, hand-honed razors. It was a standard treatment for insect bites and localized inflammations. It was used as a hair tonic, but for purposes of vanity as well as necessity. There are a number of recorded instances of its use to create a fragrance appeal to women—the colonial version of sex appeal.

The Balm was even recommended in teaspoonfuls for internal use as a "digestive and carminative."

But its largest use was as a kind of body lotion. It should be remembered that this was an era when hot water was a luxury and frequent bathing regarded as sinful!

Apparently the Balm was considered as good for beast as man; there are notes indicating that it had a beneficial effect on "ye swellings of ye cowes udders." Presumably this was a reference to the mastitis of modern veterinary medicine.

Regardless of its assorted uses, the Balm was a highly popular product. Men seem to have employed it sparingly on their faces but liberally elsewhere. The witch hazel gave it a legitimate therapeutic claim, but its bergamot-like odor gave it the fresh fragrant appeal of the classic cologne. Tom Boyle's Balm set the pattern of appreciation for the classic cologne fragrance which continues today, even though his Balm has long vanished from the scene.

Another strictly American fragrance contribution was the familiar jar of dried rose petals and spices that stood on colonial mantelpieces. While its contents were largely used for feminine purposes such as sachets, handkerchief boxes, and linen storage, they occasionally turned up in a powdered form for perfuming the voluminous men's wigs of those times.

Although this roses-and-spice product won a considerable popularity in its time, there was never a hint that its fragrance might become the pattern for a men's cologne. It remained dormant as a possible cologne fragrance until a series of circumstances led to its selection as the prototype of the fantastically successful spiced men's cologne of today.

The nearest approach to the translation of the rose-spice jar of colonial days into a cologne type of fragrance was the so-called Florida Water series.

Florida Water seems to have originated in the Caribbean Islands where it became a thriving article of commerce. Later, its production was taken up in the South, with New Orleans as the principal point of its manufacture.

How the name "Florida Water" became assigned to this particular product is shrouded in mystery. Colognes of that era were often described as "waters,"

(Continued on page 672)

CULVER SERVICE PHOTO

(*Continued from page 611*)

which accounts for that word. As for "Florida," in Spanish it means "flowery;" however, New Orleans was predominantly French. A more plausible explanation for it is that the fruit products used in Florida Water came from nearby Florida. Hence the name of origin was adopted.

The original Florida Water was compounded of the peels of wild bergamot, lemon, orange, and lime, blended with various Caribbean spices, Jamaica rum, flower petals, and tobacco leaves. This water developed into quite an export to Europe, and its popularity in the United States lasted for almost a century, until the English dandies set the lavender fad going. Although Florida Water is not well known in the United States today, its popularity continues in other parts of the world, notably South Africa, South America, and some parts of the Orient. A substantial quantity is still made in this country, but for export purposes. And, of course, the original formulation has long since been replaced with modern synthetics and essential oils.

Another important men's fragrance of the early Seventeenth Century was Bay Rum. This could be either an infusion of native Jamaican rum with crushed bay leaves, or an actual distillate of fermented molasses containing bay leaves and berries. The latter procedure was probably most common because Bay Rum was apparently originally created for topical rather than potable application. Like most of these early fragrances, it had a medical use, understandably so because of its eugenol content. It was a common remedy for burns, bruises, and cuts. There are even recorded instances of its purchase for use on pirate ships as a treatment for the casualties of war.

Bay Rum achieved greater popularity at a later date as a "dandruff" cure, and as such set the groundwork for its much later popularity as a hair tonic. As time went on, Bay Rum came to be regarded more highly for its fragrance than for its medical properties. Its odor became a symbol of masculine ruggedness—so much so that the clever musical phrase "Shave and a haircut—Bay Rum" (with the last two words emphasized by drum beats) was a melodic signature to mark the end of a single dance and the change of partners. In the Ninties, this orchestral signature spaced the dances, while "Good Night, Ladies" ended the party.

Bay Rum had a long run as a favorite, but its use began to decline after World War I. The advent of a now famous spice cologne sounded its death knell in the Thirties.

The state of men's fragrances remained rather static until after the War between the States (Ah'm a suthunuh, Suh). This Victorian period witnessed such technical developments as the high-speed pressed glass technique for producing fancy bottles, the improvement of the quality of essential oils, and the introduction of synthetic chemicals to the perfumer's art. Sociologically, the Spartan frugality of frontier days gave way to indulgence in luxuries, and the recognition of elegance.

The trend towards luxurious living was, of course, opposed by the clergy and the great sinfighters of that time. The use of imported colognes by men was attacked as "effeminacy," a violation of Divine Law punishable by hellfire and eternal damnation.

Among those who thundered from the pulpit concerning the iniquities of mankind (including the sinfulness of indulgence in masculine fragrances) was the evangelistic team of Moody and Sankey. It is hard to believe that this pious pair, who were responsible for the composition of so many inspiring hymns like "What a Friend We Have In Jesus," once loudly invoked the wrath of God upon a product of our trade. But so it was. And the principal target was, of all things, the fad of perfumed beard pomades! Beards were then considered a proof of masculine virility, as noted in the Bible. The use of a "beauty product" on them was effeminizing and therefore "an abomination in the eyes of the Lord."

All the bellowing of M & S and their tearful pleading with the "sinners" didn't seem to meet with much success—in the latter part of the century the barber shop flourished mightily as the center of informal masculine contact and early attempts at beautification. It became a kind of super club, for men only. Woman's place was in the home.

Elegance became the motif. Shops were equipped with "fancy, new-fangled, plush covered hydraulic chairs." The walls were lined with huge plate-glass mirrors and exquisitely carved, mahogany panelling. The windows were fitted with luxurious drapes. The service shelves were filled with gold monogrammed mugs holding the favorite brush and soap of each patron.

Every shop had some musical equipment for the pleasure of its clients, varying from a reed organ to a humble pitchpipe. Thus the origin of the Barber Shop quartettes and harmonies. They passed the time for the waiting customers.

But, most interesting to us is the tremendous array of fancy bottles of "treatments" and lotions, and the jars of pomades. There were bottles of Sandwich glass, of the exquisitely colored and ground Bohemian glass, and the fragile, hand-decorated Venetian ware. In the smaller shops, pressed glass in imitation of the more costly cut glass was more common.

The fragrances were equally spectacular: lilac, rose, rose-geranium, English lavendar, carnation, mimosa, jasmin, and a variety of fantasies. The fougere (fern) was introduced at this time as a compromise between the popular lavender and classic cologne fragrances. It became highly successful. Remember one thing: Most of these fragrances were expensive to make because our modern range of synthetics was not yet available and costly natural raw materials had to be used. For example, the amyl cin-

(*Continued on page 686*)

(*Continued from page 672*)

namic aldehyde that we take for granted as a jasmin raw material was not even a chemist's dream at that time.

But, because men were so terribly sensitive that their masculinity might be questioned if they smelled too sweet and flowery, certain concessions in fragrance design were made. Herbal effects were blended into the floral bouquets to create a slight dissonant "medicinal" note, thereby giving men the plausible excuse that they used the product as a "treatment" and not as a perfume with feminine implications. Thus masculine pride was soothed, and a series of herbal or "vegetal" fragrances were created. Lilac Vegetal, for example, is still in existence today.

Men were vain, then as now, and liked to use fragrant products, but they feared to demonstrate this liking publicly. So, a compromise was devised. The prevalence of beards eliminated the need for shaving lotions as we know them today. But hair tonics perfumed with the above noted concessions were liberally applied for scalp "treatment." Thus, men could "smell pretty" while maintaining the illusion of virility with an acceptable alibi. This custom of hair tonics eventually became a traditional use, which lasted well into the Nineteen Thirties.

Men's extreme touchiness about possible aspersions on their masculinity slowed the progress of men's fragrances for almost half a century. It seems ridiculous today, but was a very real thing in its time. Those were the days of roaring, brawling, rugged individualism. Men would fight at the drop of a hat over trifling differences of opinion. In fact, the throwing of one's hat on the floor was an invitation to battle. The charge of being a sissy required a man to fight to protect the "honor" of his masculinity. This pugnacious attitude existed even among the youngsters. Many a time Junior came home with a black eye and bloody nose because he had been called a sissy.

The word "sissy" was derived from Narcissus, the Greek god of mythology who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. Strange, isn't it, that a combination of Greek mythology and the name of a fragrant flower should be responsible indirectly for the delaying of a phase of our trade?

From another angle, Oscar Wilde, the great English poet, exerted an unexpected and unwelcome influence on men's fragrance fashions. He was a well-publicized, liberal user of the superb English lavender "water." The name "Wilde" was at one time strongly associated with lavender. But his trial on morals charges created a prejudice against the masculine use of lavender that persisted in the United States until shortly after World War I.

The expression, "He has a touch of lavender in him," implying a suspicion of effeminacy, was a scornful statement whose origin is traceable to the public's reaction towards Wilde's conduct. In America, a highly ribald current song, "The Lament of the

Lavender Cowboy," was a roaring success on the burlesque stage when rendered by the smirking "comic" with appropriately dainty gestures.

At the turn of the century, a rash of competition among the hair tonic producers, coupled with the increase in the number of available synthetic materials, brought out a great number of cheap lotions. They were directed towards the cheaper barbershops which sprang up in this same competitive era—the 15 cent haircut boys, who needed a tonic comparable to their prices. These cheap lotions created the epithet of "barbershoppy," which still stands today as the description of a shabby, lound, cheap-smelling man's fragrance. The fougere type was probably the worst offender because it could be made very cheaply with the synthetics then available. Even today the "barbershoppy" fougere can be found in barbers' preparations.

As the early Twentieth Century moved on, improvement in the mechanics of the razor, the eventual introduction of the safety razor, and the diminishing romantic appeal of the beard brought about clean-shaven men's faces and created the desire for some kind of healing skin lotion. Bay Rum made a comeback for this purpose. It had a powerful "sting" when applied to a scraped skin surface, which, in some perverse manner, became psychologically associated with the efficacy of the lotion. So much so that "sting" became a requirement of subsequent shave lotions. Early products often contained a trace of capsicum to heighten this effect. I well remember my first encounter with the razor and my father's Bay Rum. We boldly splashed the Rum on my adolescent face after completion of my first debearding. And, like the story of the recalcitrant jackass and the appropriate application of turpentine, it was some time before I was caught and quieted down.

Following World War I, there was a violent reaction against the artificial restraints of Victorianism, a release of pent-up emotions, and a reassertion of masculine colorfulness. The male again put on his brilliant plumage. The drab Victorian uniform of the Sunday-go-to-meeting blue serge suit was doffed for a jacket of many colors, multi-colored sweaters, daring plus-fours, and Argyle golf socks. It was the Golden Age of sports. Sex came out from under the cabbage leaf for bold discussion in novels—remember "Flaming Youth" and "West of the Water Tower?" The Twenties became a roaring celebration of men's release form the straitjacket of goody-goodiness and stuffy feminism of the departed, unlamented Victorian period. Clerics clucked their clerical tongues at the "carryings on" of the Younger Generation, but the latter went right ahead full steam.

From the viewpoint of our trade, not many innovations were made in this era of wonderful nonsense. Such as there were, were more of a cosmetic nature.

Rudolph Valentino, the movie actor, created the greatest stir when he portrayed the sultry Latin

(*Continued on page 690*)

(*Continued from page 688*)

Lover with the dark skin and the glossy black hair sleeked down like a wet seal's hide. Greasy or pasty cosmetic products were created to achieve this slicked-down Valentino effect. Some of these preparations were horrible. They stained hats, picked up dust and dirt like a vacuum cleaner, and greased collars. Blonde men even tried dyeing their hair. Since the chemistry of hair dyes was then in its infancy, the results were occasionally picturesque, to put it mildly.

Men tried to darken their complexions with skin stains. A number of cosmetics for this purpose came on the market. And there were a number of lawsuits for damages from allergic reactions. What a "wow" the present fast-tanning compounds would have been in those days, especially because of their high safety factor.

All this fussing was done merely to affect that Latin Lover appearance. Vanity, thy name is Man.

Fragrances in the Twenties had changed little from the conventional pre-World War I standards. Hair tonics were obviously not as popular as formerly because of a change in style. A few shaving lotions were timidly offered through barbershops, but, again, without unusual fragrances. A well-known fougere enjoyed modest success as a men's cologne, but not especially as a shaving lotion.

In spite of all the upheaval of this era, only one precedent of fragrance was shattered—the wearing of a woman's perfume by a man. Among the more daring men it was the smart thing to wear a dash of Rigaud's Mary Garden fragrance under the jacket lapel, or even behind the ears, to "slay" the women, in the idiom of that day.

Men were eager to find a cologne-lotion fragrance that was as colorful and tradition-breaking as the era in which they lived. They wanted something with brilliance, verve, daring, something that would express their feeling of wild abandon. But Fate denied their wishes during these Terrific Twenties, reserving this fragrance event for the sombre Thirties.

In October 1929 came the Great Depression. Stockbrokers were leaping out of windows with such frequency that radio comics warned of the peril of walking down Wall Street: dodging falling brokers. Then, in 1932, came the long-sought fragrance to express men's freedom—an original, spectacular new cologne-shave lotion with a dramatic appeal to men's fancy, the famous spice cologne.

The timeliness of its introduction, the attractiveness of its early American theme, and the superb quality of its design, made it an instantaneous hit. Steadily it rose to leadership.

I well remember my own friends making their first comments on this cologne. We looked upon it as a brazen, showy fragrance which we wore with a touch of bravado. It constituted a morale lifter, a kind of thumb-to-nose gesture at the Depression. We used it for the same reason we whistled the popular tune "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?", a symbol of defiance towards the Depression.

This spice fragrance filled a desire that had been building up for several years, culminating at just the right moment in the depths of depression. The acceptance of this fragrance was one of the miraculous quirks of Fate—flawless timing. The combination of its nostalgic reminder of the gay Twenties, with its gesture of defiance, was an irresistible pressure.

Its fantastic success naturally invited a stream of "me too" competitors seeking to ride in on the wave of its popularity. Imitations were numerous, but, to this day, there has never been a truly satisfactory copy. Most efforts have resulted only in shabby caricatures, and for some time now there have been no significant attempts. A recent lone trial ended up rather sadly. It was an artistic travesty, keyed too heavily on oil of Bay, with apparently too low an allowance for the cost of materials.

Other types of men's colognes have appeared and given a good account of themselves. The nearest present competitor uses a heavy sweet fragrance of the Shalimar class.

A splended lavender effect has been with us for years, and is just now receiving the full promotional treatment which this excellent product has long deserved.

At one time a very fine "forest" fragrance seemed promising. Why this item fell into a decline has always puzzled me. It seemed to bear all the marks of a comer. Perhaps its individuality was lost when its manufacturer was merged with a much larger company.

A prominent house-to-house firm has brought out an interesting men's cologne with a clever nautical setting. It is a classic cologne style with a moderately sweet, delicately Oriental overtone, maintaining a beautiful balance between the citrus and the contrasting elements. I am not familiar with its degree of acceptance, but it is a beauty, well-packaged, and should go places.

Several noted perfume houses have attempted to market their feminine colognes to men, in a mannish package, but without much apparent success. So many of the ultra-fine women's colognes have been designed to create a specific aura of feminine sex appeal through the use of various sensuous animal products, that to expect a man to wear them is almost like suggesting that he adopt skirts.

We feel that, although this idea has good possibilities, it has not been well thought out by the sellers. They should revise the tone of their formulas before trying to touch the men's market. Men have strong prejudices towards anything, however trivial, that reflects on their mannishness.

Some of the smaller houses have made well-directed and imaginative efforts to move into the masculine field. One, in particular, uses a brilliant verbena fragrance in a clever package styled after a chesspiece. Another frankly copies the tropical lime

(*Continued on page 694*)

(*Continued from page 690*)

blossom odor, and is smartly packaged in a hand-woven wicker container. Both products show an effort to escape the commonplace.

A whole host of new fragrances have been introduced in the last few years in the hopes of catching a portion of the men's market. Some of them still exist only by dint of the "artificial respiration" supplied by their advertising campaigns. Sad to say, most of them have been unimaginative, often shabby, and completely lacking in the understanding of men's preferential reactions.

Today there is among men a longing for something new or different. Probably it is sparked by a combination of the rapid pace of invention and the social changes we are undergoing. But the unsatisfied desire for novelty exists, although, so far, no one seems to recognize it.

(*This is the first of three articles on men's fragrances by J. R. Elliott.*)

THE SKIN SURFACE FILM

(*Continued from page 619*)

review of all the work done on the surface fats from skin and hair. It is hoped, nevertheless, that it will prove a useful introduction for those cosmetic chemists who wish to ascertain the present position in this field.

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ACNE: SKIN DIABETES?

(*Continued from page 613*)

we combined the therapy with tranquilizing agents; 0.5 to 1 gram of meprobamate per day proved definitely effective.

As part of the treatment, we originally prepared a few creams with various concentrations of tolbutamide for use as a vanishing cream during the day. These were so effective that administration of tolbutamide tablets was discontinued in some cases.

We then experimented with the same cream, but with the addition of various percentages of carbutamide, and obtained even faster and definitely more specific results.