

SPECIAL: THE NEW TASTEMAKERS

HOUSE & Garden

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PRODUCT DESIGN

CHAD LAVIGNE

THE SENSUALIST

"Having no technical background is the best thing that happened to my career," says Chad Lavigne, the packaging designer behind perfume bottles for DKNY's Be Delicious, Sarah Jessica Parker's Lovely, and Marc Jacobs's Blush. "I've come up with bizarre concepts that others would immediately rule out for being too tricky to make." Lavigne may be unschooled in the minutiae of mold making and spray-actuator mechanics, but he's not an industry outsider. Before launching his own studio in 2002, the Rhode Island School of Design graduate logged 11 years at L'Oréal and 4 more at LVMH. He has built a portfolio of quietly subversive designs with a refined yet streetwise edge—and, yes, with a certain technical complexity. His bottle for Michael Kors's Michael collection, for instance, features a pointed V-shaped interior, a near impossible feat to achieve in blown glass. "It can be hard-core stressful getting things realized," he says. "I drive engineers crazy."

Nothing he should apologize for. In fact, Lavigne's creative approach has recently resulted in commissions from mass-market brands like Bath & Body Works and American Eagle. "Whether I'm working in the upscale niche or the higher-volume end of the business," he says, "it's all about creating a design that elevates the consumer's world a bit."

[chadlavigne.com] —JEN RENZI

Lavigne builds a tower of powerful scents from fragrance bottles he has designed for such lines as Marc Jacobs and Michael Kors.

