

# Le Parfumeur Rebelle

**Working the Bench: Interviews With Alternative Perfumers**

**Lyn Ayre & Tonie Silver take a Rebelle Rendezvous**

**4August2008** (posted 11Sep08)

[http://www.leparfumeurrebelle.com/working\\_the\\_bench.html](http://www.leparfumeurrebelle.com/working_the_bench.html)

**Hi Lyn, & welcome to LPR~**

Thanks so much, Tonie, it's great to be here on such a sunny summer day.

**You teach Natural & Botanical Perfumery; tell us about what kind of students you're seeing.**

My course is called "Natural Perfumery ~ a path to the Heart of Spirit". Coeur d'Esprit means 'heart of Spirit'. This course involves working with spirit energy and being in touch with the spirit of the plant while making perfumes. When students inquire about the course, this aspect is often brought up as people find the concept very attractive. For me, it is not about mimicking what has already been done in the marketplace. It is not about making French perfumes or becoming a commercial perfumer (French or otherwise) or even a 'nose'. It is about connecting to our inner spirit, connecting to the spirit of the plant, then using perfume to connect to our higher self in a safe and pleasing way. It is a gentle course with no pressure to win or succeed or be the best. It is fine to just go along and learn at your own pace and become more of who you were meant to be.

My students come from all walks of life. They are teachers, students, spa-worker, a nun, an artist, an Aromatherapist, a retired senior, world traveller, someone looking for a new career in perfumery, and so on, ages 22 to 78, from Canada, US, Australia, Israel, France, and so on. Some have worked with the essences for years and others have only always wanted to.

When they first contact me, they are each asked to write a letter of introduction detailing why they would like to take this course on perfumery, how they came to find me, and what they hope to get out of the course. The essays are poignant, exciting, hopeful, and as varied as the people who write them. They are required as a starting point so that the student can see, in black and white, what they are about to do and evaluate whether or not they would like to proceed. It seems to me that all kinds of people are interested in learning more about Natural Perfumery.

**Nature/Nurture: How important is the education side of the art? Are there certain nuances that you feel simply cannot be taught?**

I am a teacher by nature, as well as a life-long student of my personal passions – writing, art, music, and all the gifts from Mother earth, which, of course, includes perfume. Teaching this course was a natural progression, for me, from all the learning I'd done to that point. My passion carried me forward to become the independent perfumer I am today. I am self-taught, nurtured by the thousands of perfumers who have gone before me, the hundreds of writers who have written about perfume, the dozens of perfumes I have created, and the feedback I've received from my clients. I did the work, and part of the work involved writing this course so I could make sense of what I'd learned so far about perfume. I put in my time, all the while seeking a mentor but found no one. What I did find were a group of people who were in constant competition for their place in the sun and who wanted to wield power and control over others. This is not something I am into as I don't believe in competing with anyone. I wish I'd have had the benefit of an affordable correspondence course like mine but there wasn't one to be found. So I wrote it. ...lol... (big grin)

For some people, formal training is key, and the structure of a course, such as mine, is required. Others learn best when they are propelled by their own steam with little input from teachers. Still others enjoy the one-on-one or a classroom situation. Learning is a personal journey that each of us must make, as we will. I offer opportunities for learning with as little or as much input as the student needs, always willing to answer questions and make suggestions. In the

end, should they complete the twenty-six assignments, send along sixteen samples for evaluation, and write the proctored exam of fifty-six questions, they will have earned a Certificate of Completion for their efforts of personal dedication and commitment to the craft. I don't 'create Natural Perfumers' rather people grow themselves into that way of being in the world, should they choose and should this be something they want for themselves.

We each bring to the table a variety of inherent gifts. We can all sing but we don't all have a voice that is pleasing to others. This does not mean we shouldn't sing. Some of us have a great ear for music but not all of us are musicians, composers, or conductors. We can all take photographs but that does not mean they will end up in the National Geographic. The thing that sets one of us apart from another, in a particular endeavour, is the passion that is lit in us when we are first exposed to the topic matter. If something resonates with us on a spiritual level, then it becomes our passion. This passion gives us energy to pursue that which feeds and nourishes us. Spaces open up in our minds and in our hearts that allow room for an extraordinary amount of knowledge to be gathered, sorted through, and put into practice. I know that at some point, a student may decide they want to take this course, and may actually go ahead and purchase it, but not pursue it because they lack the energy of passion to carry them forward through all the hard work and learning. Should they have a passion for perfume, they will also have instilled within them all the finesse they need to create beautiful aromas with the all nuances present to create life's great tapestry, however that unfolds.

**Tell LPR readers what you teach your students about suppliers; in my experience, the dish is only as good as the ingredients. Do you believe a good, trusting relationship with your supplier is important?**

In Project twenty-five, students are asked to write out their Ethics, Mission Statement, and Personal Credo, including their philosophies on life. They need to do their homework, developing ethical guidelines that will take them through the pitfalls they may encounter during this journey of finding their own trusted suppliers in the area in which they live and abroad. They need to learn how to trust their nose and speak their heart when they are unhappy.

In the meantime, they are given my 'Trusted Suppliers List' in their manual. It is also located on my links page on the website. These suppliers ship to Canada and the US; many ship overseas, as well. My Australian students have their own list they have gleaned over time. My list is not complete and is constantly being refined as I go about my daily round.

It is important that I have a trusting relationship with my suppliers and that they follow through with what has been agreed. If they don't, they risk losing my trust and are not put on the updated list.

The companies on my list have a variety of good qualities: they are environmentally conscious, don't approve of animal testing, are cruelty-free, have a generous heart and donate to worthy causes, don't have a minimum order amount, include free samples, and some sell organic or certified organic ingredients. Their product is top of the line and I've not yet been unhappy with the dozens of items I've purchased from any of them. Also included on the list are those that supply cosmetic ingredients, containers, waterproof labels, boxes, and bottles. These companies resonate with me and hold similar values to my own, so I am happy to support them.

**Lyn, please give readers a skeleton of your curriculum.**

Yes, of course... Here is the Table of Contents

Preliminaries, Processes, & Introductions

Section One

- o The psychology and physiology of how we detect aroma
- o The four mediums for carrying a perfume
- o The precautions for using these highly concentrated botanical ingredients
- o Shelf-life and storage of oils
- o Working with Spirit Energy
- o Data Tags
- o Dilutions
- o Methods of Extraction
- o Perfumery terms
- o Music by any other name would be called perfume. Learning the notes.
- o What are Horizontal and Vertical Accords
- o Building Accords

## Section Two

- o Learn about seven base notes
- o Fixatives
- o Describing a Perfume
- o Scent Profiling
- o Descriptive words
- o Setting up your atelier
- o Your safety

## Section Three

- o Learn about seven Heart Notes
- o Body Chemistry and Skin Types
- o Rate of Evaporation and Odor Intensity
- o Fragrance Families

## Section Four

- o Learn about seven Head Notes
- o Formulation
- o Formulation Sheet

## Section Five

- o Creating tinctures, infusions, and macerations
- o Creating scent similars
- o Scent Songs - the work of Piesse
- o Perfumes from the inside out
- o Colour of essential oils

## Section Six

- o Create perfumes in all four bases
- o Perfume pyramid
- o What's in a name
- o Questions & answers
- o How to market yourself and your product

## Resources & References

### Review of Suppliers

### Completing this course...

### Perfume Projects

## **What's the best advice that you feel you offer your students Lyn?**

Determine what your ethics are and stick to them.

Create a safe work environment so you can do perfumery for the long-term.

Create safe perfumes and remember we are dealing with very powerful substances.

Stay curious and open to new learning and opportunities.

**Best perfumery advice you ever received?**

I've not yet had the blessing of a Mentor and no one around to teach me other than the books I've read and my own diligent research and practice. But I take all of the advice I've given to my students (as above).

**Tell us how you marry the business side of perfumery with the art.**

It's one and the same to me. There is an art of making good perfumes and an art of dealing with people in a business sense. In both cases, I ground to Gaia and connect to Source, becoming a channel of energy flowing into the situation and watching it unfold before me.

I know this may sound goofy to a lot of people but it is how I've operated my whole life. For 23 years, I did Credit & Collections. Most people loved to hear from me, and put our company at the top of their payables list, as I never made them feel bad about themselves. I knew that most people wanted to pay their bills and if I was pleasant and present, I could help them to do that (some didn't and they got re-possessed).

I worked for a few different companies and in each case, the receivables went to a good place. In the last position I had before I was 'downsized' (due to MS and Lupus), I took the receivables from 170 days to 96% current. You don't get results like that by treating people poorly. It's the same in any business: create a set of ethical business practices and stick to them. That's what I do in the perfume realm when I'm dealing with suppliers, customers, and students.