



## ***Natural Perfumer's Corner***

1September2008

*This following interview is also a part of our **new series** with interviews with Natural Perfumers. It is my intention to cover all areas of perfumery, including supporting all our natural perfumery friends. If you would like to see your favorite natural perfumer here, [please email me](#). Interviews have been sent out to many, with many more planned and we will keep you posted with a new interview every two weeks! -RB*

### **An Interview with Canadian Natural Perfumer Lyn Ayre**

#### **"Passion For Perfume"**



Hi, Raffaella, and thanks so much for asking to interview about my passion for perfume.

#### **1. Can you tell us briefly about yourself?**

Early in life, I learned that scent had the power to heal, soothe, capture the imagination and make my spirit soar. I've been hooked ever since.

By nature, I am a teacher with a creative soul at my centre and a strong Spiritual connection to both Source Energy and to Gaia, our Mother Earth.

Over the last thirty years, I have taught hundreds of people worldwide a variety of spiritual and holistic-based modalities through the sixteen courses developed through my personal training and experience in this field. I hold several dozen certificates in the Healing Arts and in 2005, I earned a Ph.D. in Energy Healing.

Working from my home office in British Columbia, I teach several dozen students at any given time, both through correspondence and in-person courses, on various subjects including Natural Perfumery.

Each day is different as life is very full and eclectic. I start off with meditation and Reiki self-healing, have breakfast and a shower then check on my brews to see how they smell today. I may go out and harvest then dry some herbs to make a herbal remedy for a client I'm seeing that day; I spend about two to three hours in the morning answering email from my correspondence students; clients may come for energy sessions; a student may be here for the day. Or, I may end up writing, creating an Energy Fractal or a CD of the sounds of the Tibetan Singing Bowls. There's never a dull moment around here. Life is full of people and purpose and I love it. Having gone through several severe health issues over my lifetime, every moment I'm given is appreciated and life is lived it to the fullest, squeezing out all the joy, love, peace, and light therein. Continuing with my education, I am a quarter of the way through a three-year Master Herbalist diploma program.

I am married to a great guy and we live with our wee dog. We have three children and six grandchildren.

**2. Could you please tell us a bit about your background leading up to your career in natural perfumery?**

I was introduced to Natural Perfumery through a course I took on Aromatherapy in 2003. I enjoyed several more courses on that subject and read over a dozen books. One of my teachers told me that my remedies smelled more like perfumes. (My thinking was - if it smelled good, the clients would be more compliant. I continue on in this view with the Herbalism – if it

tastes good, they will take it... lol ...). This idea got me to thinking about making my own perfumes.

It literally became an obsession. I could not sit still to watch a movie on TV. I had to get up and get playing with my oils. I began to amass a wonderful collection of essential ingredients and tincturing various botanicals. I published a new page to my website and began to receive orders. I put together a little half-day course on making perfumes.

My friends and family were delighted as several of them were no longer able to tolerate commercial scents and were saddened to have to give up their favourite perfumes. Knowing there was a more natural way to go gave them a great feeling. Those same people keep coming back for more.

Naturally, the more I've read, studied, and practiced my technique has improved and today, almost six years later, I consistently get good reviews from my clients. I now have a dedicated website and a blog, though with all the herbal studies, I don't get a lot of time to write on it.

I've also created a six-month course (though some are taking longer), which can earn continuing education credits for Professional Registered Aromatherapists in BC. When the student achieves his or her Certificate of Completion for the course, it will satisfy the requirements for their CEC's.

### **3. Can you tell us about Natural Perfumery and how you relate to it?**

Whatever my pursuit, I do it from a spiritual perspective and perfumery is no exception. I am not interested in becoming a commercial perfumer rather, I appreciate small limited contracts. I do not necessarily consider myself to be a professional nose, though I do have a particularly good one. Nor am I trying to prove that naturals can be as good as synthetic perfumes. They are different, that's all. Some people can appreciate the naturals and some enjoy the synthetics, which also use natural ingredients; some love both. There is no judgment here.

When I decide to create a new scent, at some point early on I will connect to the spirit of the plants I want to use. I see them in their natural habitat – in the heat, the humidity, the cool breezes, the wetlands, or the mountains. I imagine their aroma and how one would go with another. I make some notes.

I might create an Energy Fractal or play a song on the Tibetan Bowls. I may even write a story or a poem. I might just dive right in and begin playing around in a carefree manner. Usually, though, the perfume is all created in my mind before any bottle is uncapped. Because I can imagine the smells in my mind, even if I were to develop Anosmia I would still be able to create perfume. (personal note: A dear friend of mine has lost her sense of smell due to Parkinson's Disease, which has caused me to think about this.)

#### **4. What led you to perfumery, especially natural perfumery?**

I was led to this path by that simple original comment my teacher made and, once finding it, there was no turning back no matter what. Learning to appreciate essential oils through the art of Aromatherapy, then realizing that I could make perfumes that would also work on a healing level fit right in with who I am in this world. Throughout my life, all the delicious smells in my world conspired to take me to the depths of their soul and expose me to the rich olfactory tapestry that life offers. I cannot imagine a life without scent.



#### **5. What differentiates your fragrance from other natural fragrance lines?**

It has been said my perfumes are well-constructed with proper proportions between the base, heart, and head notes; contain some interesting accords and background notes due to my personal tinctures, some of which come right out of my organic botanical garden; last a long time as a result of my way of formulating and what I've come to learn about the secret of a great perfume; and are different because of the way I use bridge notes and accessory notes. I use cruelty-free ingredients and as I replace the spent oils, organic choices are made.

It is important to me that I trust the essences I use. Sourcing the botanicals from reputable suppliers is crucial in creating safe and natural products. I have created several dozen tinctures to use as the basis for my formulae. This makes them unique. All of these ingredients are used in a way that won't harm another. As we all know, just because something is natural does not mean that it is totally safe. I keep the drops of essences to safe levels and stay true to my first rule, which is Do No Harm.

Probably any perfumer worth his or her salt could say all this about their perfumes. What I have been told time and again is that there is a special energy the wearer feels when they use my perfumes. It makes them feel delicious, like they have a naughty secret; like - if only you'd come closer you would be able to smell the real me; and, it calms them down, takes away their pain, relieves them of their cares and worries. These are some of the comments I receive.

Each completed perfume is placed in the bottom of a Tibetan Bowl with a circle of crystals surrounding it and infused with sound and light energy for a period of time while it matures. It's the love-element of Spirit Energy that infuses my perfumes, the depth of the aroma, the feelings that are experienced, the memories that surface, and the lasting qualities that set them apart.

That being said, each person will find the perfumes and perfumer/s that is right for them. My perfumes may not please everyone and that's okay.

## **6. Tell us about the fragrances you've created.**

Honestly, I am not the type of perfumer who spends years creating a single fragrance and putting my heart and soul into one scent. That's just not me in anything I do. What about all those other perfumes in the ether that are crying out to be manifested onto the planet?

My top three favourites so far are:

*Afterglow* - includes a raunchy accord of Hyraceum, Jasmine, and Orange Blossom absolute, heart notes of Frangipani, Orris, and Rose, and head notes of Turmeric, Pink Pepper, and Bergamot. Deep, complex, sexy.

*Citrance* - features Lavender absolute accompanied by Chamomile, and Litsea. Some of the top notes are Bergamot, Key Lime, and Ginger. Base notes include Cedarwood and Vetiver, among others. Fresh, herbal, long-lasting.

*Angel Whispers* - begins with a feathered brushing of Bergamot, Orange, and Black Pepper, which leads the way to an open powdery field of French Lavender and Geranium as well as fruity notes of Davana, Caraway, and Osmanthus, and a delightful dash of chocolate. Etheric, edible, yummy.



### **7. What is the oddest ingredient that you have used in perfumery?**

If I am using it in a perfume, I don't really consider it odd. As long as it is safe, can add something to the mix, is an ethically harvested animal-essence like ambergris, honey beeswax, or hyraceum, and is a non-poisonous botanical, it's okay to use.

For those readers who do not much about perfume ingredients, I would say that Hyraceum would be the most unusual ingredient in my formulae. It is the petrified excrement stones of the Rock Hyrax in East Africa. It is used in African medicine and can be purchased at Pharmacies that specialize in this component. Collecting these ancient stones, long-since separated from its owner, does no harm to the current-day Hyrax. The aroma is somewhere between Civet and Castoreum and, used highly diluted and sparingly, offers a musky, sexy, animalic scent to a perfume. It cannot be detected in the final product.

### **8. As a perfumer, where do you find your inspiration?**

I sometimes feel like a channel for some disembodied mad scientist cum perfumer who must and must and must make another perfume. So, I have literally made dozens of perfumes. I sometimes go back to them and toy around but mostly, when it's done, it's done. I write, paint, and create music

the same way – it just comes through me. The process of creating a natural perfume is birthed through me not by me.

When I get inspired by an aroma, poem, tree, person, cake, movie, ancient character, and so on, I use the formulation sheet I created and jot down what I would like to accomplish. Almost anything can inspire me at the right time.

Then, connecting to the plant spirit gives me more ideas and I begin to flesh it out. Sometimes, I'll do a journey or meditate, say with a flower, a coffee bean, a cinnamon stick, or a piece of coloured cloth. Inspiration means *In Spirit*. As long as I stay there, I am brimming with ideas.

**9. There must have been a defining moment that led you to become a perfumer. How did that happen?**

I didn't start out life dreaming of becoming a perfumer. I was just a regular girl with a regular life that had some horrid spots and some awesome parts, just like most other people.

I adored the natural world and yearned to know more about plants and flowers. When troubled, I often picked up a leaf, flower, pine cone, or sticky bud, and become a part of it. My mood would instantly change.

Scents were a huge part of my early life but not in the sense of perfume, as that came later. I have five siblings, so the smell of a baby's head is one of my first olfactory memories. The smell of the other end is still in my memory, too, but I think Eau de Poo would not be well-received somehow... lol ...

We spent our summers at the ocean beaches in South Surrey, BC and the scent of salty seas filled me with energy and galvanized me into action. I loved snow and could always detect when it was on the way. The forest, especially after a rain, opened deep inner desires within me. All of these, I wrote about and photographed. That I can now create scents that are similar to these fills me with a feeling of deep humility and gratitude.

We all create the *Perfume of Life* as we go through our daily rounds: our parents cooking a savory meal and the smell of it rising up to our rooms as we do our homework; incense taking our prayers up to Spirit; the corner bakery venting their enticing aromas into the neighborhood; everything filling the air with their perfume.

Aromas of my younger years included coffee in the morning, the bright smell of orange juice, the bite of cinnamon toast, the smoothness of hot chocolate with tiny marshmallows, the zest of grapefruit, the saltiness of a big bowl of popcorn, (*Okay, anybody else getting hungry.*) *Others include* Lavender and Lilac sachets in my panty drawer, the roses, lilies, and lavender blooming out the window, creamy pearlescent bath beads, and on and on.

Writing this makes me want to go and blend some smelly bits... ambergris, seaweed, coffee and chocolate absolutes, lavender, rose, orris, cinnamon, grapefruit, bergamot... yummm. I have always been on the scent trail. I am the first one to smell smoke and I can also tell who has been in the room just by the scent they leave.

With five girls in my family, perfume was a big deal and we all like different scents. I remember my Grandma wore Evening In Paris and Chine and my Mom wore Roses Roses and Topaz. I wore Charlie, Tabu, Evening In Paris, and Navy, and when I grew up – Oscar, Opium, and Obsession. Now, instead of Obsession being my perfume, perfume is my obsession.

As a teen, I sold Avon as well as Vanda Beauty products. It amazed me that these little vials contained a liquid that smelled so good. It was when my husband bought me Neige, for Christmas a few years back that I knew I had to take my perfumery to the next level of perfumery and expand out, and so I have.

To answer your question, there really was no one defining moment and no one person inspired me to pursue perfumery. The scents that abound inspired me to explore their depths and make my best attempt to create something new from them. I am growing into this role as natural perfumer.



## **10. How do you tie in your artwork with your fragrances?**

To explain a moment about my fractal artwork: A fractal is generated from a mathematical formula called an algorithm. Each one is unique. Fractals go deep into the details of everyday life. They are reminiscent of commonplace objects that we know intimately such as coastlines, ferns, cones, tree branches, and snowflakes; repeating and repeating their particular pattern.

Fractals speak to us on an intuitive level. Fractals remind us that around our finite body is an infinite self. They bring energy into a space and can be used as a Feng Shui tool. Each art piece is done while in a meditative state and is imbued with the intention of freshening, harmonizing, and brightening the Ch'i of the observer and the area in which it is placed.

Fractals relate nicely to perfumes as, like perfumes, they are full of colour and cover the entire spectrum. At times, the urge to marry my art and perfume is overwhelming. I might create the fractal first that inspires me to build a perfume. It could also work the other way around.

Scents, colour, form, shape, depth, height, whirling, winding, dancing, spinning, spiraling, all of these are found in perfume as we take the olfactory journey through the head, heart, and base notes, evolving all the way to dry down. Some make my head spin and I see a lovely woman holding and twirling scarves above her head. Some scents make me feel clear and focused - I see blue, like the sky. Some aromas overwhelm me and make me want to explore the depths of heated human passions. Some I feel like eating; they remind me of food.

## **11. Why do you think so many women and men are part of this fragrance explosion, especially the natural trend?**

From my point of view, I think we are overwhelmed with scents from everything thing around us from morning to night and are living a life of olfactory fatigue, chemical sensitivities, allergies, asthma, and the like, and being very dissatisfied with it all. The list of scented products is endless.

For a while, the trend went right the other way to 'un-scented' and now it is going more to center and the use of natural botanical scents.

I still don't feel it is necessary that every house, bath, and beauty product we use be scented. Every person, pet, and household has its own scent, and the 'naturals' can cause olfactory fatigue just as well as the synthetics.

That being said, it seems the last thing we are willing to give up is our perfume... we must have it. It is as important to some as toothpaste, shampoo, make-up, and deodorant. It is part of our personal grooming.

What I'm hearing from my clients is that it is nice to have a choice. When we offer people choices we empower them to take back their lives and do what *they* want to do. Choice is a good thing.

**12. Where are your fragrances available? What is your website address?**

My perfumes are sold exclusively from my website at

[www.scentofnature.net](http://www.scentofnature.net)

Raphaella, thank you so much for allowing me to share my perfume journey, as I tread this scented path to the Heart of Spirit.

Be well; be at peace.

Warmly, Lyn

(sent: Afterglow, Angel Whispers, Lovely, Passionate, Subtle Inspiration, and Wonder)

## Reviews by Raphaella

Lyn Elizabeth Ayre is an independent Natural Perfumer who makes perfumes that are made with 100% pure essential oils and absolutes. She believes that in today's time, with all the sensitivities that we have developed due to the overwhelming of our olfactory organs; (because everything is now scented) where our sense of smell resides, many of us are choosing to go back to simpler times and that includes natural perfumery. I have to agree somewhat as we are all seeing this occur around us daily. Lyn believes in using ingredients from centuries ago, which I call the "art of alchemy", when perfumers were using all natural ingredients from nature including essential oils, concretes, attars, absolutes, animal essences, floral waters, tinctures, and so on. The exception is that she does not use animal essences that have been obtained using cruel methods. She states that "the animal essences (Ambergris, Hyraceum, and Honey Beeswax) have long since dissociated from the animal in question and been rendered pure through eons of the elements of sun, ocean, wind, and earth."

Here is a confession: I personally find myself becoming drawn to the naturals, especially after a bout of asthma, but I admit, I will never, ever, give up my fragrances, yet will concede that I understand the naturals and happen to love them, they are so grounded and goddess based. There is something sexy about the way they hug your skin and sink down into your skin. More on this at a later time...I then tried two of her natural perfumes...

**Afterglow** is described as "a sexy, raunchy riot with the indolic behavior of Jasmine, Hyraceum, and Orange Blossom. After some time, it settles down to a warm bouquet of Frangipani, Orris, and Rose. Top notes include Pink Pepper, Turmeric, and bright Bergamot." It is not the top notes that call to me or the jasmine but the middle notes are luscious and indeed warm. They are the notes that stay with me and I feel as if I am in an "afterglow" of the Frangipani, Orris, and Rose. This is a beautiful fragrance and I am bathed completely in its *afterglow*.

**Passionate** is described as "a seductive blend of seeds, nuts, and fruits with heady floral Jasmine, on a thick bed of oak moss (steam distilled), sandalwood, and cedar wood". This is another favorite and as I take it in, I have images of autumn approaching and leaves falling, fall scents mixed with a heady luscious floral. The jasmine shines through and the gorgeous sandalwood and cedar wood anchors it all effortlessly. This is my favorite by far and I commend Lyn for creating such luscious images in my mind.

Thank you Lyn, Sniffapalooza Magazine wishes you the best of luck!

[Click here for more reviews of her fragrances on her website.](#) [Click here for sample program](#)

Comment of Snifapalooza guest book

**Dorothy Mccall**

Monday, 9/1/08, 10:46 AM

Raphaella, spectacular job. I particularly enjoyed your wonderful interview with natural perfumer Lyn Ayre! Additionally what a treat to encounter the bouncing letters spelling out Sniffapalooza magazine at the bottom of the Mag. You are having fun for sure!! Thank you for such a beautiful, rich, entrancing visual read.

From: Pittsburgh, PA

Web Site: [Kingsbury Fragrances](#)

Email: [kingsburypa@earthlink.net](mailto:kingsburypa@earthlink.net)