

“Summer of Patchouli Love” – For The Record

By: Lyn Elizabeth Ayre, 2011

The Challenge: We were to create an EDP of only 15% strength, in an alcohol base, with at least 25% Patchouli and submit it to Monica Miller of the [PerfumePharmer](#) by June the 1st. Monica then decanted into small numbered bottles and sent off samples to several Perfume Bloggers and Celebrities. None of the perfumers knew which number they were. None of the Reveiwers knew either. It was a double-blind contest – nail-biting, sit on the edge of your seat type of thing. “Are they commenting on my creation?” “Gosh, I hope that isn’t my perfume they’re talking about.” Back and forth; very exciting. Here’s what happened with me:



Until this challenge, I had no idea just how much of a 60’s gal I am. I began to notice things around the house... a Peace Poster over our bed – it’s always just been there; all of my night attire – two pair of pj’s with the Peace sign on the front as well as a caftan, which is purple and paisley! Sigh... Am I becoming my Mother, as I turn 60. She was a peace-lovin’ gal, too. With her blond Afro, ‘flower child’ clothes, granny glasses, and peaceful nature, she had it all going on. I think it’s in-bred.



When I was a teen-ager, I loved tie-dying, and batiking. Creating my own clothes, such as scarves, tops, slacks, and shifts, as well as book jackets, wall posters, and head bands, was no different from other work I've done in the Arts. I began by blocking or sectioning off various areas of the cloth with ties or wax then I sunk the cloth into a big vat of dye laying down the first layer of colour. I used string to tie off areas or I applied wax and did it again, modifying what I'd already done. I always left tiny areas where I could add sparkling pale yellow highlights to give the illusion of brilliant light.



I have sung all my life – 18 of it years professionally, some of it 'on the road'. Writing songs with a bass line, melody, harmony, and chorus, creating the whole thing through inspiration, then orchestrating it, is truly an honour and an amazing process to me. At the end of it, I sometimes found myself wondering how I came up with it in the first place because the end result was so natural, like it had always been in this world. Nothing was contrived; everything flowed.

Everything I've learned and done has gone towards working and experimenting with plant essences to make Natural Perfumes. First, I must be inspired by something; then I must daydream about it. I sit and make notes as things come to me – combinations, accents, fixatives – all floating around me. I pick and choose then go to my Atelier and begin the trials. I use scent strips to get an idea of what the combinations or accords smell like. I may make up a dilution of the base, heart, or head chord and wear it for a while, seeing how it smells on my skin.

The point of the last three paragraphs is to detail that, no matter what the genre is, I have to 'get my hands dirty' and do it myself from scratch. Years ago, my husband and I decided to have only original art on the walls and on the shelves; we've stayed honoured that ideal and our home is an expression of who we are, as artists. Nowadays, I create my own bath and beauty products, herbal remedies, and so on... you get the picture.

Loving and creating Natural Perfumes is an true extension of Flower Power, of working with colour, and of working with sound, isn't it? To lay down the bass line with Patchouli, Musk Accord, Vetiver, and Oakmoss then modify that with a melody of Jasmine, Neroli, and Orange Blossom, finally highlighting with Sweet Orange, Petitgrain orange, and Black Pepper, and various other accords, is like painting a symphony of aromas that dance and sing across the stage of our nasal palette. I really love and enjoy creating natural perfumes.



The perfumes back in the 60's were basically Patchouli and Musk so that is where I began my journey this time. These were sold at the Incense and Bead stores in the downtown area of New Westminster. Walking into one of those dark and scary places, with half-naked men and clouds of smoke, was very rattling to a person of my young years. It made my head spin.

However, I needed some beads to put on the clothes I was creating so I took a deep breath and walked quickly, not speaking rather gathering my supplies and making a hasty get-away.

Natural Perfumes of today are quite different. There are now hundreds of essences to choose from and this number increases daily as more of us move into doing our own tinctures and macerations.

I'd originally thought to go with a powdery accord in the heart by using Lavender absolute, Geranium absolute, and Tonka Bean. My first 'round of trials' were too powdery and soft; no Patchouli Punch; and no way they would cover up anything, if you get my drift. LOL I called these three "Patchouli Peace" 1, 2, and 3.

Okay, back to the drawing board, so to speak. I created an accord between Jasmine grandiflorum, Rose absolute, and Ylang Ylang extra. The second trials were sweet, bright, and rosey. This was far too cheery for the task at hand. Where's the Patch? I could smell the Jasmine and knew that I was thinking in the right direction. These test runs were called "Patchouli Posey" 1, 2, and 3. All of these six are perfectly lovely perfumes, just not the one I was looking for at the time.

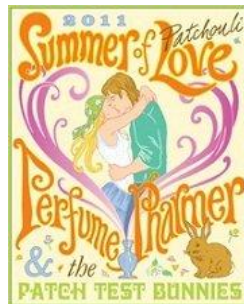


I was getting closer but not quite there. I created a white flower accord with elements high in indole such as Jasmine, Neroli, and Orange Flower. I combined this with a tiny amount of my musk accord, which is called "Essential Musk Fixative". I felt the indole components of these chosen florals, combined with the Musk accord, really brought to mind those times, back in the 60's – a sexy, raunchy riot; Bohemian nights, and bloodshot days. There were five trials using these combinations. Then, I felt I had a lovely floral bouquet that lasted a long time (9 hours on my skin, which is normal), smelled like Patchouli was in there, reminded me a bit of the 60's (in

a nice way), represented the florals of the flower children, and met all the criteria of the challenge.



Given all the paisley I had in the house, and all the products I'd made with patchouli. It was only natural, then to call this final creation "Patchouli Paisley Perfume". There are 22 ingredients in my perfume entry. I hope you enjoy it. It is now for sale on my website at www.scentofnature.net.



"The Summer of Patchouli Love" Challenge has been a wonderful adventure for me as I've sorted out all the details, applied myself to the discipline of 'perfume creation from a brief', begun relationships with people I'd not encountered before and strengthened the ones I'd already started. What a joy and a privilege it has been to be a part of this wonderful venture set about by Monica Miller and Friends. I am grateful to you all.

Some lovely comments have been made about my creation and I appreciate all the kind words. My "Patchouli Paisley", which was created for the Summer of Patchouli Love Challenge and was Entry #8, was in the top three for Marina Geigert, Davika Weston of Weston's Gallery, and Nava Brahe of the [Nava](#) Brahe of the Perfume Possee; and had a favourable mention from [Lucy](#) Raubertas of Indie Perfumes.

In closing this post, I would like to Congratulate all the Winners of this Challenge. I was in talented company with the following challengers: Dupetit, Liz Zorn, Shelley Waddington, Jane Cate, Tanya Bochnig, Ambrosia Jones, JoAnne Bassett, Dawn Spencer Hurwitz, Amanda Feeley, Kedra Hart, and Rodney Hughes.

To see who emerges as the winner of this challenge, pop over to Monica's site at <http://perfumepharmer.com/organic-perfume-skincare-remedies/>

[Batik](#) drying in the Sun; photo credit

[Orange](#) blossoms; photo credit

[Jasmine](#) flowers; photo credit

[Smoky](#) incense store; photo credit