Part 4 — 1999

21 years ago, in November 1978, I introduced the first article of this series, at the Fifth Convention of Perfumers in Spain. I was then a member of the Spanish Society of Cosmetic Chemists and The Professional Group of Perfumers, organizations that I quit some years later. I started talking about the word "evolution" as a key hallmark to understand our profession. At this time I described products like α-damascone, β-damascone, damascenone, calone (watermelon ketone), all virtually unknown in 1978 by almost all the perfumers in the world. I stated that these chemicals were going to be the elements making the forthcoming evolution of perfumery possible, an evolution that was a real revolution already looming over the horizon. Well, I was right. In 1978 there was not a perfume with calone in it. Now, it is one of the most successful ingredients, one without which perfumers could not work. Damascones and damascenone were known only through the patents, through scientific papers describing minor ingredients in Bulgarian rose oil such as rose oxyde, neroloxyde, rose furan and p-menthen-9-al. At the time, these were used in bases such as cetylia, dorinia or damascenia. Most perfumers, except those working with the company that patented them, used these bases without knowing which chemicals were responsible for imparting the sought-after effects of radiant, fruity and rosy nuances.

However, I said something wrong. I said that this evolution did not mean any break with perfumery's past. Unfortunately, and at that time I did not see it, there has been a major break. Perfumery of the past, the technique used by the most excellent perfumers, including Jean Carles, Edmond Roudnitzka, Ernest Beaux, Maurice Maurin, Paul Vacher, and Guy Robert, men and women that spent their lives expressing themselves through combinations of essential oils and chemicals, were going to be hampered by several organizations that began telling us what ingredients we could and could not use—if it was allowable to use 0.1% of costus or not, even in limited amounts, for example. Italian bergamot oil, styrax, Peru balsam, cinnamon or chenopodium oils were treated as harmful. According to the logic

of these organizations, the crusaders of human health, we found out that almost all essential oils were advised not to be used except in light touches. Clary-sage, black pepper, juniper berry, frankincense and laurel-leaf oils were allowed—blessed generosity by those concerned with the health of the world. Many chemicals discovered by enthusiastic young chemists cooperating closely with me were often stalled for years and years by these organizations and could not be used at all.

Another branch of what I call crusaders of human ethics, those defending the rights of animals, started fighting civet, castoreum and all the rest of the animal products for the sake of saving animals from cruelty. This appears to be a noble target, yet, like most of us, these people eat meat every day without qualms.

We perfumers have been left almost without essential oils, without animal products and with the marketing and evaluation boards of every company acting as "divine judges" whose final say is pure dogma to be followed without so much as a whisper.

I remember one day, after having worked a combination of honeysuckle, musks and sweet balsamic notes for a long time, a combination that I judged as beautiful, full of harmony, warmth and creativity, I was met by one of the heads of the marketing department who, after smelling my work for about one or two minutes, told me that it was "not bad," but I was missing 0.1% of aldehyde C.12 MNA to finalize my creation. Knowing my weakness in front of him, I agreed, showing him after half an hour the "modification" that was found to be perfect. I had not placed the aldehyde as suggested. I showed him the exact same product, and it became a big hit in the market.

Preserving the Art

Van Gogh, Matisse, Chagall, Picasso, Renoir, and Gaugin were revolutionaries in the art of painting when compared with the classics. I won't say they are better or worse than Rembrandt, Rubens, Leonardo da Vinci, Giotto, El Greco, Zurbarán or Velazquez, but many people prefer their work to the classics, finding their art closer to our present realities, joys and worries. Can anyone imagine a review board telling Van Gogh not to use yellow, or red, because after testing they had found that touching those colors would cause harm to one's hands? Or what if the intensity of a painting is too bright, using too much red as in "The Harmony in Red" by Matisse, and will harm the eyes of the viewer? It is an exaggeration but not far from the reality of our profession.

Polysantol, ebanol, firsantol, sandal Mysore core, brahmanol, sandalore, sandela, candalum and bacdanol are extremely interesting sandalwood chemicals, but sandalwood oil, the rich, milky, long-lasting oil from Mysore, is really something. It is an extremely good element to combine with those chemicals. Now, there is no sandalwood oil. It is not possible to replant trees; it is not possible to re-exploit the ground to keep having the oil. We are told the oil must be forgotten. An excellent decision to save the planet, but could we imagine great creations like *Madame Rochas*, which have been re-orchestrated because of the natural product, or *Herrera for Men* without the oil? Could we make them with only the chemicals? Have we the right, while trying to create new olfactive accords with epimerized Hedione, isospirene, florhydral, Iso E Super, Tonalide, Cedramber, nor limbanol, muscenone δ, helvetolide, habanolide, muskolon or okoumal, to outlaw the beauty found in original *Madame Rochas*? Have we the right to ban this lovely olfactive accord? My intimate thinking tells me simply, no. The creative work of the past, accords that were lovingly blended with months or years of effort to achieve perfection and beauty, have been replaced by mixtures of chemicals that consumers say all smell the same.

What I mean is that imposing on the artist when it comes to the expression of feelings is simply nonsense. I am a strong supporter of research. I am eager to smell any new chemical resulting from the research, to test it, to blend it, to try to use it because it is a new treasure, a new element that could enrich our sensations and our capacity to express beauty felt through the sense of smell, but it is sad the way modern perfumery is handling this.

This approach to our profession is already a reality, and it will affect our way of working forever. In my personal laboratory in Cabrils, Spain, where I can see the beauty of the Mediterranean coastline, I spend many days and nights expressing myself and creating nice accords without worrying about guidelines that kill the spontaneity of our work. I smell many new creations and have never gotten sick. This is my way of saying to the world, "I am a free man." Is it just a dream to keep being free today as a professional perfumer? Maybe, but in recalling Michaelangelo's beautiful phrase: "The future belongs to those believing in their own dreams."

Recent Progress in Perfumery Elements

When trying to analyze the evolution of research and the procurements of new chemicals to be used in modern perfumes, I classify them in various olfactive families, as I did in the past. Although I know the sense of smell is individual and that everybody smells differently, I have no other option to describe chemicals than using my own sensations, logic and classifications.

Through my long trips exploring the countries of Asia, I found many essential oils and interesting "attars." However, there is no time in this work to talk about these lovely natural ingredients. I primarily use products like motia, moulshri, gul hina, kewra, champa, shamama, saffron, and agarwood oils from India, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Kapoor Kachri. Ciperious scarious, balchar, brahmi, mantri and many more extraordinary products will be described in Part V of this work along with other chemicals too numerous to mention here. One of my greatest professional satisfactions has been the ability to combine this Asian knowledge of traditional Indian perfumery, introduced in Arabic countries by Indian perfumers long ago, with our Western methods of perfume formulation. The creations are fantastic, and the addition of these rare materials increases the quality of most of our accords, giving them more body, more warmth and more intimacy. A sense of feeling that can be achieved only by the charm of natural ingredients. Most of these attars are codistillations of exotic flowers and rare roots and woods over sandalwood oil, but today we find many of them codistilled over diiosoctyl phtalate, a new beautiful replacement, I suppose, for the natural oil from the jungles south of Mysore, the lovely capital of the old maharajahs of this Indian state.

I will start with the agrestical olfactive family, and I will include the list of chemicals described in Parts I–III from the top before the descriptions of new aromatic products. It is understood that when talking, for instance, about the floral-rose chemicals, I know β-phenylethyl alcohol, citronellol, nerol and geraniol, but I do not mention these products because they are well-known by everybody, and it would be wastefully redundant. These chemicals made the evolution of perfumery possible at the beginning of this century and although we are in 1999, we use them more and more. When I describe accords, I never mention those classical popular and old chemicals that, of course, I use, but the heart of accords made with rare ingredients to achieve novelty—the novelty making possible perfumery today and in the future.

Agresticals

The Agresticals — Herbaceous/Lavender/Clary/Sage were widely mentioned in my past works, and to those described previously, I would like to add six more chemicals, those being:

Tetrahydro-4-methyl-2-pyran-4-ol called **Clarycet** is a small "jewel," having a lot of nuances like rosy and herbal, with a beautiful clary-sage note than combines extremely well with all kind of citrus accords and with jasmine, making a revolutionary twist when mixing it with octenyl