



# SEDUCTIVE REASONING

Can an after-dark fragrance sex up an otherwise sucky Saturday night? CAITLIN KENNY puts one nuit newbie to the test

**S**ilent, strenuous chewing. That's how my boyfriend and I spend a recent Saturday dinner, not speaking after a spat over budgetary matters and struggling to gnaw our overcooked steaks. We don't fight often, so I'm torn between standing my ground (I'm right and he's wrong, obvi) and making amends, especially since we have plans to go out for a friend's birthday later.

Fortunately, apologies flow as the kitchen sink fills with water, and by the time the dishes are clean, our slate is too. And so, here I am in front of the bathroom mirror, searching for some sort of defibrillator paddle to zap the romance back into our night. I curl my hair and put on dark eyeliner, then reach for a black and pink diamond-shaped bottle hiding in the shadow of my cupboard. It's Lancôme's latest fragrance, La Nuit Trésor, which I brought home from the press event in Paris a few months ago.

Everybody remembers the original Trésor, that powdery rose and lilac blend our moms wore back in the '90s (the iconic perfume turns 25



**LANCÔME**  
La Nuit Trésor Eau de Parfum, \$98, has all the notes of a classic nighttime scent: rose, praline and vanilla

**FROM A.M. TO P.M.**

*Time-scentisitive perfume picks*



**RISE AND SHINE**

Wake up your senses with a jolt of green tea blended with energizing bergamot and jasmine.

**MAISON MARTIN MARGIELA**  
 Replica Tea Escape  
 Eau de Toilette, \$115



**MIDDAY DELIGHT**

With freshly picked lemon, freesia and apricot, the latest incarnation of La Petite Robe Noire is fit for a garden party.

**GUERLAIN**  
 La Petite Robe Noire  
 Eau Fraîche Eau de Toilette, \$82



**3 P.M. PICK-ME-UP**

This sweet spritz's bright mandarin orange and creamy wood base satisfies afternoon sugar cravings.

**MARC JACOBS**  
 Daisy Eau So Fresh Sorbet  
 Edition Eau de Toilette, \$95

this year). But this new one holds an edgier, what-happens-at-2 a.m. promise. "It's dark, deep, animalic, narcotic and very sexy," announced Christophe Raynaud, one of the perfumers, at the event. In the past few years, more and more fragrance houses have released after-hours versions of their classics, mostly in mysterious black bottles. Inside, the notes are dense and dramatic: oud, spices, amber. No juicy white florals or plucked-from-the-beach nauticals here.

I spritz a cloud into the air and step into it, giving my long hair an extra pump. *Vanilla*. Not the sugary ice-cream sort, but something sultrier, more raw. Raynaud explained that this "real" characteristic is produced using a state-of-the-art extraction method involving carbon dioxide, high pressure and low temperatures. (Traditionally, chemicals and extreme heat strip scent molecules from the vanilla bean, destroying its natural essence.)

Then, rose—the star ingredient in both juices. It's far less powdery than the original, thanks to a chaser called cypril, a smoky, leathery note related to Indian papyrus. Mental image: a bondage rose dragging on a cigarette.

And, finally, a kick of chocolatey praline "to give it an addiction," I recall Raynaud saying in his heavy French accent.

I emerge from the bathroom, feeling a newfound secret sexiness.

"Sorry the steak sucked," my boyfriend says.

I walk past him and give my hair a shake. Nothing. Ditto for round two in the confines of our elevator.

We get to the bar, a college hangout we're arguably too old for. After 10 or so hello hugs, a female friend finally indulges me: "You smell good," she says, picking out the vanilla note. I don't bother explaining its CO<sub>2</sub> extraction.

Moments later, a group of girls squeezes past us, and I hear a voice say, "Someone smells really good here."

"It's her!" my friend says loudly, pointing to me.

"It's f-cking delicious!" adds a cute brunette with a huge smile.

The night goes on, and I cozy up to my man again and again, but he's seemingly oblivious to my perfume's power. When I jimmy myself between two guys to grab another round at the bar, they're taken only by my ability to carry four drinks back to our table. I guess it's like how your girlfriends will fawn over your new highlights while it'd take a buzz cut for your beau to notice.

The night ends without any movie-worthy moments of passion. But the next morning, as I catch a whiff of that heady perfume still lingering in my hair, I'm reminded of the reason I doused myself with it in the first place. I gently reach my arm around the muscular torso slumbering beside me, kissing the back of his slightly sweaty neck. So what if his nose is sensorially challenged? Maybe the fragrance's true transformative power begins with me. ♦



**DINNER DATE**

Almond-esque heliotrope blooms and soft sandalwood soothe the senses like a snifter of brandy.

**BULGARI**  
 Le Gemme Calaluna  
 Eau de Parfum, \$347



**ON THE TOWN**

Oud, amber and musk ooze sensuality in this perfume oil necklace, which doubles as a blingy accessory.

**HELENA CHRISTENSEN**  
 Dead of Night  
 Perfume Oil Necklace, \$369



**FOR DEUX**

Spice up sundown with notes of cumin and ylang-ylang (an aphrodisiac!).

**MAISON FRANCIS KURKDJIAN**  
 Pour le Soir  
 Eau de Parfum, \$245