

## COLOGNE MAKING

FLY TO DÜSSELDORF (WEEZE) FROM 45 DESTINATIONS, INCLUDING ✈ AGADIR | ✈ ALGHERO | ✈ BYDGOSZCZ | ✈ CAGLIARI | ✈ LARNACA | ✈ LEEDS BRADFORD | ✈ MARRAKESH |



At Cologne's famous 4711 perfume museum anyone can create a signature scent, says **Lucille Howe**. Photography by **Natalie Hill**

# BOTTLE IT

**L**et's face it, you're nobody until you have your own perfume. Beyoncé, J.Lo, Sarah Jessica Parker, Britney, Kylie, Katy Perry, Christina Aguilera – and the list goes on. With this in mind, I'm keen to attend a workshop to create my own fragrance at the famous 4711 headquarters in Cologne, Germany.

The 4711 fragrance has been housed in the same place since 1794 when, under French occupation, house numbers were introduced and the merchant family of Wilhelm Mülhens became residents of 4711 Glockengasse.

The back story to how Mülhens became a perfumer is that an Italian Carthusian monk had

made a gift to his family of a list of ingredients to make the perfect concoction of "Wonder Water". This Wonder Water was originally a medicinal liquid, a drink containing, among other things, rosemary and alcohol to fight infection. When Napoleon demanded that all medicinal recipes be made public in 1810, Mülhens protected his secret recipe by declaring his "Echt Kölnisch Wasser" ("Original Cologne Water") a healing scent for external application. Applying the liquid to the skin as a scent caught on, and so a classic fragrance was born.

Today, the 4711 building is still magnificently historical on the outside, but all sleek, white ➤









## SPLASH ON SOME COLOGNE

Perfumer Alexandra Kale gives her tips on some of the city's other must-dos

➤ "I like to go to Cologne Beach Club, on the other side of the Rhine, for a sundowner. A seat in the sand gives you a great view of the cathedral."

KM 689 COLOGNE BEACH CLUB, 1 RHEINPARKWEG, TEL: +49 (0)221 650 0430, [WWW.KM689.RHEIN-TERRASSEN.DE](http://WWW.KM689.RHEIN-TERRASSEN.DE)

➤ "Salon Schmitz is a great place for brunch. It used to be a butcher's and it still features the old tiles. My order is fried eggs, sunny side up, on bread, with ham and cheese – that or Birchir muesli."

SALON SCHMITZ, 28 AACHENER STRASSE, TEL: +49 (0)221 139 5577, [WWW.SALONSCHMITZ.COM](http://WWW.SALONSCHMITZ.COM)

➤ "If I want some culture there is always an interesting programme at the Philharmonie. Recently I saw some classical ballet but set to contemporary music. It was amazing."

KÖLNER PHILHARMONIE, 1 BISCHOFSGARTENSTRASSE, TEL: +49 (0)221 204 080, [WWW.KOELNER-PHILHARMONIE.DE](http://WWW.KOELNER-PHILHARMONIE.DE)

## Heady notes of bergamot, rhubarb, verbena, sweet orange and green tea tickle my senses

and contemporary on the inside. When I enter I bump into a group of eight excited women on a perfume pilgrimage, posing for a photo around a fountain of 4711 cologne that you can splash freely onto your wrists. I also find there is an original bottle dating back to 1807 on display. On its yellowed label is an ornate illustration of the city's horizon and "Eau de Cologne Double" is penned in calligraphy. The bottle is stopped with a cork and a red wax seal of the house. It's a treasure that will excite anyone who has read *Perfume* by the German author, Patrick Süskind.

The brand later adopted the "Molanus" hexagonal bottle because it was easy to transport, and allowed for a large label. The ornate logo was applied in a special blue pigment, with gold to signify high quality.

Already, heady notes of bergamot, rhubarb, verbena, sweet orange and green tea tickle my

senses and lead me seductively to the heart of the building where the workshops take place.

Here, there are yet more treasures from the vaults, including letters requesting cologne supplies from German cultural giants such as composer Wagner and the writer Goethe. There are gorgeous illustrations from early advertising campaigns, and a 4711 bottle in which it is said Heinrich Göbel invented the first electric light bulb.

The "nose" for the workshop session I'm attending is perfumer and Manager of Fragrance Development Alexandra Kale. When she joined the company she took its official smelling test and was soon being trained in fragrance development.

"When I found out my test result, I talked to my parents about it and my mum admitted that as a child I would refuse to go some places, saying: 'It stinks!'," says Alex. "My dad always ➤



### SHOP FOR A DROP

- 📌 Picking up some 4711 souvenirs in the shop
- 📌 Some historic cologne

## COLOGNE MAKING

FLY TO DÜSSELDORF (WEEZE) FROM 45 DESTINATIONS, INCLUDING ✈ TENERIFE SOUTH | ✈ TRIESTE | ✈ VALENCIA | ✈ ZADAR | VISIT [WWW.RYANAIR.COM](http://WWW.RYANAIR.COM) FOR MORE INFORMATION



smells food before he eats, so I think I get it from him. I've invented a sort of vocabulary for the scents and associate them with colour codes. One might be a springtime green, another a forest green. Other perfumers may use mathematical percentages or feelings in their body, whatever speaks to them."

According to Alex, the decoding of smells happens in the same part of the brain that registers emotions, which is why we often associate particular fragrances with a feeling or memory.

The other three beginner perfumers and I take a seat at our mixing table, ready for some alchemy. There is an old photo on the wall of some 4711 labourers from the 1920s, tirelessly extracting oils from a harvest of lemon peel. The oils were stored in special sponges. Fortunately, we already have our booty of essential oils, ready in large jars.

The ingredients of the house perfume are no longer kept secret – they include grapefruit, lemongrass, lemon, mandarin and green tea – but their respective quantities are. Alex explains that the key is to combine fruity top notes that reach your nose straight away, and botanical heart and base notes that linger. Cologne is traditionally a light scent that you apply regularly as a refresher,

## I love the sweet mandarin, which makes the back of my throat tingle the same way my first perfume did



because there is less fragrant oil content than eau de toilette or eau de parfum.

There are so many ingredients to choose from, and nobody wants to make a mistake and ruin a delicate mix. We have a 30ml bottle each, a 2ml pipette and a million ideas of combinations, some of which Alex politely advises against. She recommends we start with the fruits first – around 4ml of something we like – and build on that. ▶

### NOTE TAKING

- ☑ Paying attention in class
- ☑ There are plenty of ingredients to choose from

## GOOD SCENTS

Cologne isn't the only destination that smells good. Here are more perfume workshops.

▶ Meet with an artisan perfumer in Florence to create a bespoke fragrance just for you. The experience takes place in a *palazzo* with stunning views over the Florentine rooftops, and past clients have included Sting, Linda Evangelista and Billy Joel. [WWW.ITALY.ARTVIVA.COM](http://WWW.ITALY.ARTVIVA.COM)  
✈ FLY TO PISA (FLORENCE) FROM 46 DESTINATIONS, INCLUDING DUBLIN AND FEZ. [WWW.RYANAIR.COM](http://WWW.RYANAIR.COM)

▶ Visit the International Perfumery Museum in Grasse, the Provence town where parts of *Perfume* were set. Take a tour to learn about fragrance families, how perfume has evolved, and how to create your own scent.

€35 PER PERSON (GROUPS OF 10–25). [WWW.GRASSE.FR](http://WWW.GRASSE.FR)

✈ FLY TO NICE FROM DUBLIN. [WWW.RYANAIR.COM](http://WWW.RYANAIR.COM)

▶ Parisian women know the value of a seductive perfume. This workshop teaches you the history and techniques behind perfume making.

€109. [WWW.ISANGO.COM](http://WWW.ISANGO.COM)  
✈ FLY TO PARIS (BEAUVAIS AND VATRY) FROM 42 DESTINATIONS, INCLUDING BARI. [WWW.RYANAIR.COM](http://WWW.RYANAIR.COM)





## HERE WE EAU

Perfumer Alexandra (left) and our writer ponder some scents  
Smells good, trust me

I love the sweet mandarin, which makes the back of my throat tingle in the same way that my first perfume did (it was The Body Shop's "Dewberry"). Orange sass is slightly bitter and makes a sexy, fruity bedfellow. Now that I have my top notes, I am torn. Green tea isn't for me, basil is too strong, but bergamot is a contender. I've smelt so many samples that I can no longer differentiate as clearly. But if you smell your own skin at the crook of your elbow, it neutralises your nose (insider tip!).

Apparently, lavender is traditionally used in more masculine scents and iris is the most expensive product because it is sourced from the root, not the flowers – and has to be one year old and dried for three years. Patchouli is also a premium ingredient because it's sourced from Indonesia and the harvest has suffered from forest fires a few years ago.

I decide that mandarin, orange sass and bergamot are my magic trinity. "If it works, don't mess with it," advises Alex. Branding my scent "Eau de Lucille", I affix my pretty label and proudly spray it onto my pulse points. Move over ladies, there's a new celebrity scent in town, and it smells of success! 🍷

FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE MUSEUM AND PERFUME-MAKING SESSIONS, VISIT [WWW.4711.COM](http://WWW.4711.COM)

## BUY THESE SCENTS ONBOARD

Here are just some of the perfumes that we sell at great prices



Giorgio Armani Code Lady  
€41 / PAGE 153



Givenchy Play For Her  
€50 / PAGE 149



Armani Diamonds He  
€40 / PAGE 153



## Fast facts

### GETTING THERE:

Airport Weeze is located near the town of Weeze, about 70km from Düsseldorf. Buses to Weeze, Cologne and other German and Dutch cities leave from outside the terminal. For car hire, Hertz ([www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com)) is Ryanair's exclusive rental partner, with special rates for passengers when you book your flight.