



SELF fragrance awards

We spritzed, sniffed and dished. The task: Test every scent launched in the past year to find the best-smelling stuff out there. Read on to discover your new favorite(s).

By Joanne Chen Still lifes by Devon Jarvis Panel photographs by Donna Alberico



SNAP TO WIN!
One of 10 bottles of
Reb'l Fleur by Rihanna
(on the next page)
Details at Self.com

SELF fragrance awards

Here's how we sniffed out the winners: We sorted 248 bottles into 26 scent categories (citrus, floral, fruity and so on), then set up a blind test. Panelists jotted hundreds of pages of notes, and we tallied the results. And the winners are...



We cut 22,160 inches of ribbon to spray with scents.

BEST MOOD LIFTER



Eau de Nous—Citrus Charm, \$35. Remember the most amazingly fun beach bash

you've ever been to? Based on panel comments, this energizing orangy-grapefruity aroma—the winner in the citrus category—might bring you back there. **"Beachy,"** said one. **"Summery"** and **"It makes me so happy!"** others added. Smile on.

BEST NATURE-INSPIRED SCENT



Emilio Pucci Vivara Variazioni Verde 072,

\$59. Lush notes such as grass, dew and bamboo mark the "green" grouping. This favorite among them stood out for its **"subtle"** yet **"clean"** (thanks to a mint-leaf top note), **"outdoorsy"** vibe. Testers said they'd wear it when dashing to **"a casual lunch with friends"** and agree that it would **"work wonderfully if going to a picnic."** In a Pucci wrap dress, natch.



SNAP TO WIN!

One of 15 autographed bottles of Kim Kardashian Gold (on this page) Details at Self.com

BEST FRESH SCENT



Clean Skin, \$69. If you heart taking a stroll right after a sun shower or smelling

just-washed towels pulled straight from the line, this is the scent for you. With lotus blossom and honeydew, white musk and creamy vanilla, plus fresh air and aquatic notes, it's no wonder testers deemed this fragrance **"super fresh"** and **"springy."**

BEST SEXY-WITHOUT-EVEN-TRYING SCENT



Reveal by Halle Berry, \$35. Slip into this must-have musk just as effortlessly as you would your

go-to jeans and a silky tank. Its blend of mimosa flower, peach and neroli petal notes dries down to sultry cashmere woods and skin musk—exactly why one panelist said it would be perfect for a first date: **"very sexy"** but **"not overbearing."**

BEST MAKE-A-STATEMENT SCENT



Tocca Colette, \$68. The standout among the spicy

scents flaunts bergamot and violet, zesty pink peppercorn and juniper berry, all of which will **"get you noticed when you walk into a party."** But be warned: It's **"confident and assertive—not for the meek!"**

MISS CONGENIALITY



Mariah Carey's Lollipop Splash The Remix—Never Forget You, \$35. This fave among the sweet

scents proved **"warm and inviting,"** evoking **"a soft woolen shrug Grandma knit."** Notes of pineapple sorbet, jellybean and sugared wood reminded one panelist of her local ice cream shop and the **"sweet smell of candy."**

MOST PLAYFUL SCENT



Reb'l Fleur by Rihanna, \$59. Research shows smelling fruity notes can actually make you friendlier.

So it's no surprise that the number-one fruity fragrance elicited feelings of being **"carefree"** and **"happy."** Plus, Rihanna's eau has luscious red berry, purple plum and peach notes that made testers call it **"delicious."**

MOST BOLDLY SEDUCTIVE SCENT



Kim Kardashian Gold, \$65. The reality star's scent won in the spicy-floral

group and lends you a bit of her man-catching mojo. **"Let's dress up and go out now!"** one tester said. **"Sexy," "sensual"** and **"flirty,"** this mostly floral formula is spiked with sparkling citrus and pink peppercorn—a concoction **"guaranteed to bring the boys to the yard!"**

BEST UNISEX SCENT



Bond No. 9 I Love New York for All, \$105. Although it's named after

the Big Apple, this works-for-all scent reminded one panelist of the **"warm Tuscan sun."** Others said its exotic blend of ginger, cardamom, teakwood and musk notes made it **"warm"** and **"vintage-y."**

BEST WEAR-IT-ANYWHERE SCENT



Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Promise Me, \$59. This **"very girly"**

floriental winner blends uplifting citrus notes such as blood orange and mandarin with full florals like pink peony, wild orchid, rosewood and white patchouli, then dries down to a rich musk. The result: a **"strong"** and **"bold"** yet **"feminine version of cologne"** that some testers would wear **"everywhere,"** others when heading to a festive affair. Another reason to give it a spritz: A minimum of \$1 million from sales will go to its namesake charity to benefit breast cancer research, education and treatment. Now that's what we call pretty in pink.



Panelists inhaled the aroma of coffee beans between scent groups to "cleanse" their sense of smell.



Visit SELF's Facebook page the week of October 31 for a chance to take home even more of these fragrance award winners.

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Behind closed doors, we numbered bottles and matched them up to their ribbons.

“Fragrance is one of the quickest ways to change your mind-set.”

—Leslie Vosshall, Ph.D., professor of neuroscience at Rockefeller University

Every category had a specific ribbon color (pink with polka dots equals fruity floral).



BEST PLANET-FRIENDLY SCENT



Liv Grn—Natural, \$60. A blend of lime, neroli and orange-flower top notes, with hints of geranium, Egyptian musk and pear, gives this best-smelling eco-savvy scent its “graceful,” “sophisticated” aroma, “great for work or a special event.” Spray away, knowing that it has all biodegradable ingredients, and 10 cents of every dollar from sales goes to the Global Green USA charity.

FLIRTIEST SCENT



Someday by Justin Bieber, \$45. “This totally popped!” said a tester, who picked out the teen singer’s fruity floral from 25 other candidates. Bursting with scents of pear, mandarin and wild berries, this perfume made panelists think of “lively,” “flingy” “fun,” and some found it as addictive as Bieber’s “Baby, baby, baby, oh....”

MOST ROMANTIC DAYTIME-DATE SCENT



Hanae Mori No. 4, \$95. “Sexy” was the verdict on this powdery floral—but in a “light, fresh, clean” way. Testers used words like “peaceful” and “content” (exactly how you want to feel with your honey!), perhaps reacting to the soothing wild strawberry, toffee, white peach and vanilla notes. It’s like brunch in bed—for two.

BEST SMELLS-LIKE-VACATION SCENT



Laugh Often by Reese Witherspoon, \$23. “Where’s my mojito?” said a panelist who couldn’t get enough of this “tropical getaway” of a scent. Our top-rated citrus-floral combo is ripe with mandarin and green and white tea notes, as well as peony and rose bulgare.

BEST I'M-SUCH-A-GIRLY-GIRL SCENT



Laughter Jour, \$60. The citrus notes of this floral chypre (a blend of citrus, floral and musk notes) may hail from the Mediterranean, but the vibe is totally English countryside. “Feminine,” agreed our panelists—clearly detecting the lily of the valley and fresh jasmine—adding that they’d spritz it on when “shopping with friends.”

YOUTH IN A BOTTLE



S by Shakira Eau Florale, \$28. Take a time machine back to the “fun days of college” with this sweet-floral category winner. Both “playful” and “demure,” it radiates cassis, three kinds of berries plus a vanilla note, and it reminded judges of “a candy necklace.”

MOST LIKE A FIELD-OF-FLOWERS SCENT



Gucci Flora Eau Fraîche, \$80. No new blooms on your desk? Don’t scold your cutie yet. Close your eyes, and enjoy a bouquet in a bottle with the winner of the fresh-floral category, deemed undeniably “pure” and “clean”—“like an outdoor garden party!” Bergamot, kumquat and green notes such as rose leaves and osmanthus (a shrublike plant), followed by powerful patchouli, made testers say this scent has a “feisty kick” that just may “put a pep in your step.”

BEST GIRL-NEXT-DOOR SCENT



Peace, Love & Juicy Couture, \$52. As comfy as Juicy’s trademark sweats (we know you still love lounging around the house in them!), this musky floral had testers thinking of “frolicking in the backyard” and even a little of “the beginning of fall.” A burst of honeysuckle and Malibu poppy at the heart of this scent, along with notes of Meyer-lemon-tree blossom and sweet apple, makes for a “sweet” yet “confident” finish.

BEST EDGY SCENT



Creed Royal-Oud, \$300. There’s something oddly intriguing about a scent reminiscent of a “three-day outdoor music festival” or a “camping trip.” Oud, an up-and-coming fragrance type, conjures a woody, sweet and incense-like aroma from the resin of moldy agarwood. This high scorer has Regal oud from India as well as Calabrian lemon, Sicilian bergamot and cedar notes and is intended for both sexes (even if one panelist admitted that it made her think of a “lumberjack”?!?!).

BEST A-LIST-CELEBRITY SCENT



Beyoncé Pulse, \$49. The Grammy-winning singer hits all the right notes. Testers singled out her musky citrus-floral from among the 19 celebrity debuts. (We pulled them from the other scent categories into their own star-studded grouping, simply because it would be fun to see who won!) “Like a diva” is how one panelist felt after smelling the blend of blue curaçao (inspired by the liqueur), bluebird orchid (the mom-to-be’s favorite flower), midnight-blooming jasmine, plus pear and bergamot notes. Wear it and shine.



SNAP TO WIN!
One of 10 bottles of Peace, Love & Juicy Couture (on this page)
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Let's hear it for the boys

Be honest. If we don't like it, they're not gonna wear it. Take note of the best-smelling buys for the guys in your life.



BEST GUY'S-GUY SCENT

Ralph Lauren 1 The Big Pony Collection Deodorizing Body Spray, \$15. Our panelists called the must-have in the men's citrus grouping "**crisp**," "**fierce**," "**extremely bold**," "**sexy**." One confessed, "**I would tell a guy to wear this to bed.**"



BEST BOLD SCENT

Tattooed by Inky—Drako, \$6. Some testers definitely like it hot. They gave this body spray top billing in the men's spicy category. "**Masculine**" in "**a metro way**," it even persuaded one to suggest it to her man but only "**if he wants to try something daring.**"



SEXIEST SCENT

Flight Michael Jordan, \$35. Were our panelists psychic? "**Reminds me of a hot athlete with nice abs and a cute smile**," wrote one, who had no idea she was smelling the basketball star's eau. Cedarwood, vetiver, sea moss and citrus give the top *fougère* (scent translation: fernlike) a "**musky**" air. It's a slam dunk.



BEST BARELY THERE SCENT

Pure Nautica Discovery, \$65. What's a breath of fresh air? A guy who calls when he says he will—and one who wears this scent. This men's fresh-fragrance winner "**feels like a cool breeze.**" Lemony basil and other spices mixed with cedarwood surprised testers with a "**just-out-of-the-shower**," "**sexy clean**," that would have the power to "**make a guy irresistible.**"



BEST CLASSIC SCENT

Lacoste Blanc, \$62. Descriptions such as "**winter-crisp**" seem fitting for this fragrance, named after the white Lacoste polo shirt. This eau de toilette garnered the most votes by testers among the men's musks. Notes like cedar leaf and cedarwood meld with grapefruit, natural tuberose and ylang-ylang to deliver a "**complex**" scent that panelists labeled "**girl-meets-boy sexy.**"



SCENT YOU MIGHT STEAL

Prada Amber Pour Homme Intense, \$75. One tester, who also admitted loving the women's version of this scent, announced upon smelling this leather- and barbershop-inspired spray, "**I'm taking this home!**" (And we're betting you would say the same about a man wearing this sexy fragrance.) "**I'd spritz it on my boyfriend—and wouldn't mind if it rubbed off on me, too**," another said. "**Refreshing yet warm**," this complex amber-based aroma, laced with Italian bergamot, Somali resin and Indonesian patchouli, "**would smell great on a guy during the day for work or at night on a date.**"



SNAP TO WIN!

One of 10 bottles of Mariah Carey's Lollipop Splash The Remix—Never Forget You (on page 58)
Details at Self.com



The beige ribbons were for the 15 floral chypre contenders; black ribbons were for the 10 in the unisex category.