



The Diary of a Nose: A Year in the Life of a Parfumeur

Jean-Claude Ellena

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An intimate exploration of inspiration and creativity, from the "parfumeur exclusif" of the house of Hermès. A scent has incantatory powers, capable of transporting you to your past, of kindling fantasies, of creating a vivid *mise en scène*—literally out of thin air. In the hands of the truly great, perfume creation is a kind of alchemy. Where does inspiration for this visceral art come from? How does one capture the essence of emotions, of desire? Jean-Claude Ellena has a sublime gift. As "parfumeur exclusif" (or "the nose") for Hermès, he elevates fragrance to an art form. A "writer of perfume," his concoctions are as finely composed and evocative as a haiku. He is also a conjurer of sorts: "I create an illusion that is actually stronger than reality . . . you enter the scent and follow the path." The *Diary of a Nose* is a collection of Ellena's meditations on the world of scents, and what stirs his creation of some of the world's most desired fragrances. Inspiration can come from anywhere—a market stall, a landscape, or even the movement of calligraphy. Though each smell has its own distinct character, a gifted perfumer creates olfactory experiences that are intensely personal and unique, that blossom on the body and leave a trace of us lingering after we have left a room. Seductive, delicate, and elegant as any of Ellena's creations, *The Diary of a Nose* seeks to capture the most elusive facets of this rarefied and mysterious art.

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