

Scents & Sensuality: A Fragrant Immersion at Andaz Amsterdam Prinsengracht Hotel

Posted on April 1, 2019 by Tiffany Leigh



When a scent journey is afoot in [Amsterdam](#), you can practically smell the excitement in the air. More specifically, aromas of heritage, hallmark Dutch playfulness and dry-witted humor permeate the spaces of the [Andaz Amsterdam Prinsengracht](#) hotel. And a dynamic duo of noses from [The Society of Scent](#), co-founders and renowned perfumers Frederic Jacques and Jean-Claude Delville, are apparently up to the task of capturing this very spirited essence.

In fact, Andaz Hotels and Resorts recently announced an exciting collaboration with the agency: In their travels to each of the key properties around the world, these gentlemen will create a series of custom scents and experiences to weave into the storyline of each hotel, its culture, and enriched surroundings – thereby bringing to life one of the five senses of [Andaz](#) in immersive and unexpected ways.

We had an opportunity to be on the ground in Amsterdam with the team, and to relish in their raw research, moments of inspired talks with creatives, and the way smell can achieve more purposeful applications in the hospitality/tourism industries.



The adventure began upon our arrival, where we were wonderfully wooed by our stay at the Andaz Prinsengracht property itself. Formerly a public library, designer and art director [Marcel Wanders](#) was tasked with transforming the space along with its current 122 rooms and 5 suites. Described as the “Lady Gaga of Design,” we chatted with his creative team, who explained that the hotel is infused with a charmed sentiment that honors elements of the past, but are depicted with a contemporary sensibility.

Delft blue, the Dutch Golden Age, navigation and adventure all helped inform the vision for the property; these classic components were then interlaced with quirky wallpaper and furniture, mixed media art, 50 video installations (the largest collection of its kind found in any European hotel), and overlaid with a kind of Alice in Wonderland aesthetic. In striking this fine balance of sophistication and whimsy, Wanders activates the imagination all while offering guests a meaningful sense of place.

Once settled in, the narrative of the nose continued with the Society of Scent team fulfilling an essential standard by chatting with the lifeblood at each Andaz – the staff – who live and breathe the property everyday; and here, they spoke with bar manager Martin Eisma and Chef Sander Bierenbroodspot. Both are innovators who nudge boundaries and dazzle the senses with their [food](#) and [beverages](#), so it was apparent that scent and memory deeply informs their philosophies and practices. For instance, Eisma makes a potent expression of the four seasons with his Where Everything Grows cocktail. For him, the drink gives provenance to the natural beauty of the city at different times of the year. Just before serving, he sprays the drink with a tincture of whiskey and beetroot to prime your senses and to bring you a taste (and earthy smells) of his memories of the Dutch outdoors.



Chef Sander brought us a humble yet heartfelt palette cleanser of amarena cherries, homemade yogurt dashed with lime, and meringue shards during our multi-coursed dinner. As the syrupy-tangy aroma wafted up into our olfactory cortices, he explained that the smells of these ingredients remind him of his childhood which inspired him to make this creation. For The Society of Scent, it's experiences such as these that incentivize them even further to “push that needle forward” in regards to harnessing this powerful relationship of scent encoded memories.

To take it a step(s) further, they ultimately wants to implement scent for restorative/holistic purposes, which venture into health and wellness realms, and [The Society of Scent](#) explain that these thoughtfully crafted and meaningful expressions will be more appreciated by the well-versed travelers. Although there is nothing wrong with simply introducing a lobby with fragrance, to instead use scents to add value to people's lives which include opportunities to soothe jet-lagged travelers, to quell anxiety, and to boost energy levels – as an alternative to, say, caffeine – to give a few examples.

Above all else, for the duo, it was necessary to integrate individual signature scents (at each property) in a natural and organic manner. “It must harmoniously mingle with the environment rather than intrude upon it,” Delville explains. “Scent will always be present wherever you go. Here, we’re harnessing its capabilities to transform spaces, but it has to be done with a purpose and fit with the narrative of the hotel and its surroundings.” With this framework in mind, it is about providing options to enhance experiential stays, rather than have the scents feel forced, gimmicky, and/or disingenuous.



We also ventured outside for more “scentspiration”: foliage, forestry, and crisp air first greeted us as we rode our city Stadtsfiets bikes through the city. Then our senses were tingled from the saline-salty seas during our canal ride on a vintage salon boat with [Stichting Maritieme Zaken](#). Our visit culminated in sensory sensational florals, with a stroll through [Keukenhof Tulip Fields](#), followed by a chat with famed Director and Head Florist Alexander Posthuma at [APBloem](#).

Both experiences had our master perfumers in a giddy euphoria; and while it was obvious that in The Society of Scent's 120+ combined years of experience and work with a plethora of flower species (which serve the formulae basis for their scents and fragrances), Jacques and Delville continue to exude a childlike sense of awe and admiration – behaving as though they were smelling these blossoms for the first time and falling in love all over again.

We're excited to see this joy and passion translated into the Andaz scents, and The Society of Scent add, “at the conclusion of our research, we'll develop one custom scent and experience for every hotel and also one ‘product’ that's brand-wide, in each hotel's scent.”

Amsterdam carries a special place in our heart, but our trip this time was significantly enhanced by being given a rare glimpse of these artisans in action, as they delighted, played, and gathered their inspired ingredients in the field. We're in great anticipation to smell the final fruits of their labor.



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