



The Secret of Scent: Adventures in Perfume and the Science of Smell

By Luca Turin

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One man's passion for perfume leads him to explore one of the most intriguing scientific mysteries: What makes one molecule smell of garlic while another smells of rose?

In this witty, engrossing, and wildly original volume, author Luca Turin explores the two competing theories of smell. Is scent determined by molecular shape or molecular vibrations? Turin describes in fascinating detail the science, the evidence, and the often contentious debate—from the beginnings of organic chemistry to the present day—and pays homage to the scientists who went before. With its uniquely accessible and captivating approach to science via art, *The Secret of Scent* will appeal to anyone who has ever wondered about the most mysterious of the five senses.

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Editorial Review

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Scientists who can poetically convey the worth of their research are rare individuals indeed. Many, in fact, migrate to the professional writer's life, such as Oliver Sacks and Michael Crichton. Turin, already the subject of a previous book (Chandler Burr's *The Emperor of Scent*, 2003), not only demystifies the "hows" of smell but also chronicles his own discoveries and pays generous homage to others'. Curious beauty noses will sniff out the origins of such famed fragrances as Chanel N5, Opium, and the ever-widening world of musks. [...] The writing, when not tangled up in chemical-compound jargon, sparkles; who could not chuckle at his description of an allergy waiting to happen: "soap powder is, this side of a blowtorch, one of the harshest environments to put fragrance"? *Barbara Jacobs*

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Review

The best science book of the year so far. (BBC Radio 4)

A rich sensory trip ... this indispensable guide to all things smelly is as good as it gets. (Sunday Telegraph)

Turin writes brilliantly, with the easy confidence of the expert and the infectious enthusiasm of the true amateur. (Tim Radford, The Guardian)

About the Author

Luca Turin holds a Ph.D. in biophysics from the University of London. Since 1996 he has worked on primary olfactory reception and the prediction of odor character. In 2001 he became chief technical officer of Flexitral, where he uses his theory of olfaction to design new fragrances and flavor molecules.

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