

This Indo-French Fine Fragrance Label Promises To Be The Next Big Thing

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The scents of India are as distinctive as the languages spoken across the country. Purveyors of fragrance since history immemorial, we are known far and wide for our contribution to the fragrance industry for organic raw materials. With a valuation of \$24.10 billion, India contributes roughly \$500 million to the fragrance and flavour industry, to the extent that major design houses and maisons source their raw materials from us. Besides this, India is also known for producing some of the best attars in the world (there's a reason why Kannauj is called the Perfume Capital of India). And while we are one of the bigwigs in the industry, there's a surprising lack of luxury fragrance labels in India. That is until LilaNur Parfums made its way to India. 'Born in Madurai, and crafted in Grasse', as they like to put it, LilaNur is a premium fragrance label that marries India's artistry with French savoir-faire to create something unlike what we have seen in the country before. The Indo-French fragrance label is the collective brainchild of Anita Lal, Founder of Good Earth India and Paul Austin, Indophile and Scent Expert. Before the launch of the label, we sat down with the duo to get to understand the brand a bit better.

GRAZIA: Why does the perfume industry have a long-standing love affair with India?

ANITA LAL: Historically, owing to its rich bio-diversity, India has grown and supplied many of the most prized ingredients used in haute parfumerie - dozens of exquisite ingredients used in fine fragrances are cultivated in India. We are the oldest living culture in the world, and scent has been so deeply interwoven in our lives for millennia. Take attars, for example, which are a uniquely Indian scenting tradition. In India, attar perfume oils have been used for centuries to scent the body and enrich the soul and with LilaNur, I wanted to re-imagine Attars and bring a sense of purity and modernity that adds something new to the story of scenting.

G: What is the perfume-making process like at LilaNur?

PAUL AUSTIN: Most fragrances today are created in labs far from where the natural ingredients are grown and processed. Our approach was to start the creation process in the flower fields of Southern India, near Madurai - forging a deep relationship with Jasmine CE, India's largest source of floral absolutes to the international fine fragrance industry. From there, each of the creations blossomed.

For the launch collection, four of France's most revered perfumers - Honorine Blanc, Olivier Cresp, Fabrice Pellegrin, and Clément Gavarry - each with a shared passion for the rich fragrance culture of India – used iconic Indian ingredients as their muse and starting point. Many of these ingredients were from a joint venture between Jasmine CE and Firmenich in Grasse, aimed at developing unique and innovative extractions of Indian flora.

G: Do you believe in using storytelling to promote the brand and its values?

AL: Storytelling is integral to LilaNur's DNA and achieving our purpose, which is to highlight India's authority and contribution to the world of scent. For centuries, India has been supplying the most sought-after ingredients to create some of the world's most renowned fragrances – and yet this is a story very few know. As a fine fragrance brand out of India, LilaNur Parfums celebrates India's majestic flora and honours our ancient olfactive heritage. We want to highlight iconic Indian ingredients in our sensual scenting rituals and extend India's fragrant dialogue with the world through beautifully woven narratives told from an Indian lens. Each fragrance is an evocation of India. From Madurai's jasmine and tuberose fields, the spice gardens of Kerala, or the forests of Assam, each scent is a vivid olfactory portrait of our diverse and rich land.

G: At its crux, what does LilaNur stand for?

AL: LilaNur Parfums' mission is to inspire the world with India's rich fragrance culture, build awareness around its array of natural perfumery ingredients, and drive opportunities to the thousands of rural workers whose livelihoods depend upon India's floriculture economy.

Community is at the heart of culture, and at the heart of India's floriculture are the communities of flower growers and harvesters. We wanted to improve the lives and create additional year-round income sources for the flower harvesters, who are an integral part of our story. To this end, with our partners Jasime CE, we supported planting an additional rose crop, which was then used in our Gul Rouge fragrance. We've also been working with Devika Krishnan to train a group of flower pickers in weaving and basketry to make homeware using upcycled perfume ingredients.

G: How do you source the raw material for your fragrances?

PA: From the outset, LilaNur Parfums forged a close relationship with Jasmine C.E. in Madurai - India's leading supplier of floral absolutes to the fragrance industry - to ensure that Indian ingredients were at the heart of our brand. Together with fragrance house Firmenich, who has a joint venture with Jasmine CE, we were able to create an unbroken line in our creations from field to flacon, not only ensuring focus on Indian ingredients but also delivering olfactive innovation in the process. India has long been a perfumer's Garden of Eden, and with LilaNur, our goal was to have India's iconic ingredients play the starring role in each fragrance. We wanted to let them shine.

G: Who do you think is the ideal patron for LilaNur?

PA: Rather than the notion of an ideal patron, we believe that each of our fragrances will appeal in its unique way to a diverse audience with a shared appreciation for fine fragrances. Traditional fragrance connoisseurs, modern Indophiles, chic culture-seekers, and innovation enthusiasts – our Eau de Parfums and Attars and their authentic representation of iconic Indian ingredients can potentially resonate with any of these exciting personas.



G: How do you take inspiration from attars in India?

AL: I've always wanted to create a modern fragrance line that reflects the true essence of India's majestic flora and reintroduces the traditions of attars to the world. Building on the centuries-old tradition of using Indian attars to perfume the body and enrich the soul, LilaNur Parfums, through an innovative collaboration with Firmenich Innovation Lab in Grasse, developed a proprietary process in which the highest quality natural Indian floral absolutes are macerated for 100 days with traceable, sustainably-sourced natural sandalwood oil.

The true definition of slow perfume, these alcohol-free Attar Absolus –possess a deeply luxurious, luminous texture and sensuous olfactory bloom. When glossed onto the skin, these exquisite oils envelop the wearer in a divine scent.

