



**SCENTS AND SENSIBILITY** Local perfume brand OLFAC3 offers customers what no other perfume brand does—a signature scent created especially for them

# Making Scents of It All

*Kathlyn D'Souza speaks to Aien Mokhtar, founder and chief fragrance director of OLFAC3, a perfumer inspired by nature, people and places*

**Tell us about OLFAC3.**

OLFAC3 is a play on the word 'olfactory', meaning the sense of smell. The number 3 represents a perfect perfume blend—the top notes, the middle or heart notes, and the base notes. These make up the building blocks of all our olfactory creations and it also represents the three key elements we derive our inspirations from: nature, people and places.

**Did you have any proper training for perfuming? Tell us about your journey.**

My journey began in 2002, on aromatherapy and the healing benefits of herbs. Initially I wanted to learn how to create blends that I could diffuse at home, to control my stress levels and to make natural bath and body products for my own use. Back then, I had to travel outside of Malaysia to learn, but having access to the

internet subsequently helped a lot. I started joining workshops and short-term courses organised by the manufacturer in Australia which I was ordering raw materials from on a regular basis.

I experimented a lot on my own, making blends from natural ingredients, with essential oils as my key building blocks. In 2011, I took a perfumery course in Grasse, in the south of France—considered by many as the perfume capital of the world. I will be returning to further my training at the Grasse Institute of Perfumery next spring.

**Where do you get your inspiration from?**

I love working with natural ingredients for the therapeutic benefits that it offers, as nature has the power to heal. Sometimes a certain flower, for example ylang-ylang which is known as the

*“I love working with natural ingredients for the therapeutic benefits that it offers, as nature has the power to heal”*

flower of all flowers (or the meditative qualities of sandalwood and the anti-ageing benefits of myrrh), would inspire me to create a scent because of the ingredient's therapeutic benefits.

I am also strongly inspired by people—historical figures, perfumers that I admire and even my customers. Our Rose series, for example, is a tribute to prolific women in history and are named after these women. I tried to imagine what scents these women would have loved and worn were they still around.

Our Memories series is a composition inspired by places I have been and experienced. People can relate to them based on places they too have been themselves, and when they smell the perfume it takes them back—scents and memories are very much intertwined.

My inspiration also comes from my customers. Often someone would come to me with specific needs; for example an avid naturalist needed a signature scent to have calming effects on the nerves, or another loves a scent from a perfumer I haven't come across before. Through and because of them, I find the inspiration to create.

**What are some signature scents?**

Maryam, a classy floral-fruity composition of rose and lychee is our signature from the Rose series. It was inspired by Maryam, the Lady of Immaculate Conception.

From our Skin series, which is designed for men but is unisex, it would be Skin #4, a composition of precious ingredients including myrrh and agar wood. The Skin series was inspired by different characteristics in men we admire and love. Skin #4 is a representation of someone who is both charismatic and undeniably magnetic.

From our Memories series, Matahari is our signature. It is a radiant, floral-fruity interpretation of a fruit orchard when the sun is beaming. I like to think of it as happiness or a ray of sunshine that we can wear. For me, it takes me back to my childhood, standing in the middle of my late great-grandfather's orchard on a little hill in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. Tropical fruits and flowers make up the scent, including watermelon and jasmine.

**What's next for OLFAC3?**

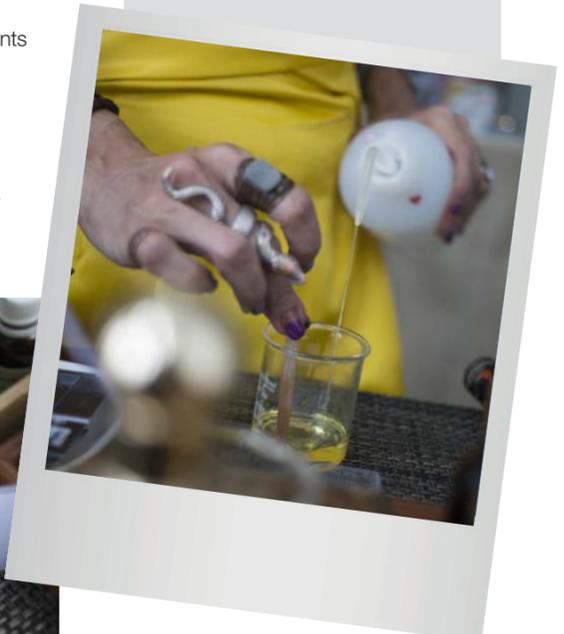
We have been engaged to create a signature scent for a soon-to-be-launched luxurious property development in Melbourne, Australia, designed by the world-renowned architect, Madame Zaha Hadid, and we will be present during the launch to showcase the scent and the perfume. It is one of the last developments designed by her before she passed away in 2016. We are also working with a key partner to establish our retail presence, which will see the OLFAC3 range of original perfumes featured and available at key premium retail locations in Kuala Lumpur. 📍

**OLFAC3'S SCENT PERSONALISATION SESSION**

When someone books a bespoke signature perfume creation session, **we start with a little questionnaire** to find out about their favourite things, style, allergies or any therapeutic benefits they would like to get from their signature scent. It takes about two to three hours to craft a scent and if I'm still not happy with it, I would usually ask for more time to tweak it on my own. The only thing our customer needs to bring is their nose and their passion!

Perfume is a little like wine, as it needs to age to reach the point of maturity. **The ageing period** is usually a minimum of three to four weeks, but there are some perfume houses that age their creations for up to six months.

Since we **blend signature scents on the spot**, our customers will need to let their bottles rest away from sunlight for at least three weeks, for it to age before they start wearing it.



**UNCOMMON SCENTS**

All bespoke signature perfume creations can also come in the form of solid perfume, perfume oil and body lotion, so customers can wear the scents just how they like it

IMAGES: SHAFFIQ FARHAN