

# Guerlain's Bee Bottle Goes Rock 'n' Roll

The French jeweler Lorenz Bäumer worked with the perfume house, and the crystal maker Baccarat, to reinterpret the bee bottle in a bold black and white.



Guerlain's new bee bottle, the fourth iteration of the design, will hold a new fragrance, called Imagine. The scent has notes of orange, sandalwood and white musk.

**By Melanie Abrams**

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Guerlain's bee — the insect that has been the symbol of the French fragrance house since 1853 — has taken on a new look, with the French jeweler Lorenz Bäumer and the crystal manufacturer Baccarat creating a black bee-shaped crystal bottle, with clear crystal wings, for a new fragrance.

Called the Black Bee Prestige Edition, the offer is limited to 22 pieces, at 25,000 euros (\$24,849) each. It is expected to be available in Guerlain boutiques from Paris to Riyadh and in department stores, including Harrods in London, beginning Nov. 22 — as well as in Place Vendôme, an haute perfume shop in Wevelgem, Belgium.

The new bottle holds a new fragrance, called Imagine, which has notes that include orange, sandalwood and white musk, Thierry Wasser, Guerlain's master perfumer, wrote in an email.

The fragrance “smells a little bit like honey,” and is kind of sensual, floral and sweet, Mr. Bäumer said in a phone interview from his atelier above the Bäumer Vendôme boutique on Place Vendôme in Paris. It was there that he sketched the original bee bottle that Guerlain introduced in 2010. (The new black bottle is the fourth iteration of the design.)

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Mr. Bäumer said he first discussed the new bee bottle with Véronique Courtois, the chief executive of Guerlain, about two years ago. He then chose to reinterpret the bee in black “because I like the rock 'n' roll side,” he said. “It's transparent and opaque. It's black and white.”

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But he kept the wings in clear crystal “because the wings of the bee are transparent,” he said.

Using black crystal, which Baccarat creates by adding metal oxides to clear crystal, is trickier than it looks. “It’s so black,” Mr. Bäumer said. “If ever there was a defect on the surface, you’d immediately see it.”

The shape has three parts: the bottle as the bee’s body, the head as the stopper, and the wings, fanning out on either side of the bottle. The bottle and its stopper are made first, said the new product development engineer of Baccarat, David Vosgien, who assembled a team of 38 artisans for the project. The faceted wings are then glued onto the bottle, underneath the stopper, he said.

The wings, made by machine from a steel mold, are faceted to ensure “that we would have maximum reflection of light inside the bee,” Mr. Bäumer said.

But the faceting is also complicated — first, Mr. Vosgien said, because the lines between the facets have to be repeated exactly on each wing.

“If you work the facet too much or not enough, the junction between the facets change, and then the wings look different,” he said.

As the bottle and the wings are curved from the inside, Mr. Bäumer said, “the curve has got to be absolutely the same. And then when you glue things, you also sometimes have bubbles.”

As with other Guerlain limited-edition perfumes, the bottles are filled by hand at the Guerlain perfume factory in the town of Orphin, in north-central France, and then adorned with a fan of silk threads wrapped by a cord around the stopper and sealed with the house’s logo.

This bee is a showstopper. And it won’t sting.