



# Phuong Dang Launches Namesake Perfumes at Barneys New York

An artist by trade, Phuong Dang is launching her namesake collection with no formal training in perfumery.

By **Ellen Thomas** on August 18, 2016



Phuong Dang, an artist whose primary medium is painting, has had no formal training in perfumery, but her collection of 10 scents launching in September exclusively at **Barneys** New York has inspired high expectations by the retailer.

Her self-named collection of extrait de parfums is comprised of high concentrations of raw materials of what Dang described as “precious and rare quality” and sourced from all over the world — like rare oud from Vietnam, black pepper from Madagascar, frankincense from Somalia, rose from Turkey and Morocco, and rare flower notes like narcissus. “We stop at nothing to achieve the originality and the **beauty** we are looking for,” said Dang.

She designed the **fragrance** packaging herself, a simplistic glass bottle, hand blown by a master glassmaker in France, with a black wooden top. “My intention is to convey more with less,” Dang told WWD. “[I used] only the essential elements.” Dang sees perfumery as another outlet through which she can express her creative vision.

“Perfume is an extension of my artwork in another form,” said Dang. “The concept [for my collection] is based on my own artwork, but as an olfactive scent, conveying very specific emotions.”

Dang noted that each **fragrance** is rooted in a concept from her own artwork, and begins with what she refers to as an olfactive sketch—“a feeling of mine, an emotion that I want to translate into liquid form.” The scents are named for the emotions they are inspired by, and each contain a complex combination of notes.

Raw Secret, which is meant to feel intimate and abstract, is comprised of a heart of jasmine absolute, lily of the valley, and white flowers, a base of amber and sandalwood and finished off by top notes of bergamot, mandarin, red pepper, tea leaves and ginger.

Untamed Oud, developed to evoke inspirational and powerful feelings in the wearer, is made up of a base of vanilla absolute, tobacco, tonka bean absolute, oak moss, musk, amber grey, atlas cedarwood, oud and cypriol, a heart of narcissus absolute, honey, rose oil, clove and apple and top notes of tar, coriander seeds, rum and cumin.

Along with the extrait de parfums, candles and a travel-spray atomizer will launch at **Barneys'** flagship on Madison Avenue and the Barneys' Beverly Hills store the first week of September, as well as on Barneys.com. The line will roll out to the remaining Barneys' doors over the course of the month. Prices range from \$300 to \$450 for a 50-ml. bottle to \$450 to \$650 for a 100-ml. bottle. Candles are \$140 and a discovery set containing all 10 fragrances retails for \$380.

After dabbling in mixing her own scents for personal use, Dang decided to pursue a formal line. The current state of the fragrance industry, she said, is overrun with commercialization and sameness, even on the niche side, and she aims to offer something different with her assortment of scents. “My perfume line is about the human spirit,” said Dang, who noted that each scent is meant to evoke a particular raw emotion in the wearer. She sees the current state of the fragrance business as lacking unique vision, and her line, she says, offers something entirely original. The feeling at Barneys' is mutual.

“It's very different from anything else that we sell,” said Jennifer Miles, vice president of cosmetics at Barneys'. “It's going to bring a unique take to the category.” Miles told WWD that she expects Dang's fragrances to be one of the standout launches for the store's fragrance department this season.

With no formal experience in the perfume world, Dang tapped the help of seasoned veterans. She sent a blind letter to perfumer Bertrand Duchaufour detailing her vision. A painter himself, Duchaufour was intrigued by the project and ended up developing nine out of the 10 scents, working with Technico Flor and Art et Parfum. Perfumer Marina Jung Allegret, working with Düllberg Konzentra, developed the remaining scent, Raw Secret.

Dang sought out a mutual friend to connect her with the now chief executive officer of Phuong Dang Perfumes, Spencer Kanis, an industry veteran who helped found 3Lab Skincare. Kanis noted that Phuong Dang's strategy for its first year in business is to “get as many people as possible to experience each scent.”

“This isn't a me-too line,” said Kanis. “Every formula is very unique — Barneys' is great for that because it has a well-educated consumer who is highly selective and truly understands what luxury and uniqueness are all about.”

A body cream with a scent of its own is planned for later this year or next, as well as the addition of one or two fragrances within the next year. Industry sources estimate Phuong Dang perfumes will generate in excess of \$1 million in retail sales in its first year at retail.

Next year, Kanis said the line will enter international markets — specifically Russia, Germany, France, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Middle East.

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