



Meaningful Scents around the World

Markus Gautschi, Head of Fragrance Research, introduced Roman Kaiser in a most sympathetic way to the Medias who attended today the presentation in Zurich. He made reference to his over 30 years of natural scent research using especially also Givaudan's type of "headspace technique" resulting in the knowledge of the analytical composition and the olfactory secrets of around 2400 attractive natural scents, from which around 450 have also been reconstituted based on the individual synthetic scent constituents.

By comparing his non-destructive approach towards natural scents with the method of "enfleurage a froid" applied by Grenouille, the protagonist in Patrick Süskind's bestseller "Perfume: The Story of a Murder," Roman Kaiser started his fragrant journey around the world during which he used 15 well selected scent reconstitution as olfactory illustration.

We took off, as the book starts, in Yunnan where scented orchids as *Cymbidium goeringii* have been appreciated long before we in Europe spent any thoughts towards fragrant plants. Already some 2500 years ago, Confucius lauded their beauty and scent, which he referred to as lan, comparing their flowers to the perfect human being and the scent to the joy of friendship. After the Medias could enjoy this first scent he revealed some olfactory and cultural aspects in using China's probably most appreciated scented flower, *Osmanthus fragrans*, which are used to enhance certain flavour aspects of their finest teas as it is done in a similar way with *Jasminum sambac* to get the so-called Jasmin tea.

After having discussed scents of olfactory and cultural interest trapped in Japan and Papua New Guinea the journey brought us to South India where both gods and humans have always be fond of beautiful flowers and their scents. One of the target flowers of this ScentTrek was the True Lotus, *Nelumbo nucifera*, unquestionably the most sacred plant of Buddhists and Hindus. It was very interesting to hear on this occasion, that the so-called Blue Lotus of India, not a real lotus but a blue water lily named *Nymphaea stellata*, is part of the lotus concept, also being the symbol of divine creation. He compared then this fragrant sacred flower opening in the morning with the rising sun and closing already shortly after noon with the equally attractive scented the so-called Blue Lotus of Egypt, *Nymphaea caerulea*, which was a few thousand years earlier the chief flower of Egyptian culture symbolizing the sun god Ra.

The audience was then brought to the Masoala peninsula to experience the beautiful *Barringtonia*, to a magical place full of bulbous plants around 380 km north of Cape Town, here especially to find and evaluate endangered *Gladiolus* species, to the species and scent rich rainforest biotopes in tropical West Africa and Lower Amazonia, to the Humboldt Redwoods north of San Francisco and the last Sequoia groves on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada to feel the sacred atmosphere generated by the Coastal Redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens*, as well by the Giant Redwood, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, the tallest leaving beings on earth, ambassadors from another time.

A stop over at the Ligurian Coast showed to participants that Europe is also rich in highly scented regions and with the example of the reconstituted scent of olive flowers, which has for example been successfully use in Armani Code, the aim of such investigations could be well illustrated.

To illustrate that also regions of low biodiversity can surprise with unique scents the journey brought us then to the top of Europe to evaluate the so-called Watermelon Snow and the Alpine Forget-me-not.

Finally we came back to Shangri-la, the scent paradise in the North western highlands of Yunnan, to enjoy the scent of a rare and endangered peony species, *Peonia lutea*, which will be discussed in more detail in Roman Kaiser's next book entitled "The Scent of the Vanishing Flora.

At the very end he did not miss to thank to the countless colleagues inside and outside Givaudan for their contributions towards the completion of this book