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## Forward Thinking: A Scented Home

Candles indicative of the current times, ethereal concepts, outdoor-inspired fragrances, fast-food scents, environmentally conscious products and smart diffusive technology are driving air care innovation.

According to Fortune Business Insights, published in March 2020, the global home fragrance market size is expected to reach \$7.96 billion by 2026, exhibiting a CAGR of 4.6% during the forecast period<sup>a</sup>. The NPD Group reported that first-quarter 2020 U.S. prestige fragrance sales dropped 13% compared to 2019, totaling \$655.3 million. However, growth was seen in home fragrance categories such as candles (up 8% from 2019), diffusers (up 5%), home scents (up 4%) and ancillary gift sets (up 4%)<sup>b</sup>.

The NPD Group noted that candles are up not just in the United States, but globally. According to a May 4, 2020 New York Times article, home fragrance sales have experienced a surge in demand as a direct

<sup>a</sup>finance.yahoo.com/news/home-fragrance-market-size-reach-074330542.html

<sup>b</sup>www.perfumerflavorist.com/fragrance/trends/NPD-Q1-Beauty-2020-570038921.html

result of COVID-19. For example, Diptyque's sales in the home category have tripled since March, and D.S. & Durga's candles now make up 40% of its direct business while about 90% of Nest New York's sales now come from home fragrance, up from 75% before the pandemic<sup>c</sup>.

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## Sign of the Times

Trendincite's *Perfumer & Flavorist* "Forward Thinking: Scented Air," article, published February 2018, explored candles and air care activity. Pop culture continues to be an inspiration and a muse for new candle launches. From ethereal concepts and politics to fast-food-inspired scents and body parts, nothing is off limits.

## Ethereal Concepts

Fragrances are a personal choice, and consumers often have an emotional connection to a product or brand. Recent candle themes include a scent of the year, nostalgia for the 1990s, and a song.

In 2019, Yankee Candle introduced its first-ever Scent of the Year, which was named One Together. The scent highlights the miracle flower and has notes of amber, woods, suede, mandarin, nectarine and sandalwood and was described as "a trend that revolves around the human desire to express individuality while remaining connected to and embracing the diverse world around us." For 2020, Yankee Candle released Awaken, which is designed "to inspire us to experience the simple beauty of the everyday" and is self-described as a "crystalline mineral fragrance" with peony, freesia, driftwood, white amber, patchouli and mineral musk.

Inspired by the 1990s, Otherland, a direct-to-consumer luxury candle brand, launched the Carefree 1990s limited-edition collection in three scents designed to "evoke a sense of nostalgia." Blue Jean Baby highlights notes of white musk and mimosa flower while Dreamlight features wild freesia, plumaria and tangerine. Glosspop delivers strawberry gloss, hard candy and frosted rose nuances.

Inspired by Kacey Musgraves' Slow Burn song from the Grammy Award-winning album of the year Golden Hour, Boy Smells collaborated with the country music star on a scented candle. Slow Burn has elements of incense, black pepper, elemi, guaiac, raspberry, tonka, amber and smoked papyrus and

"perfectly captures the smells and visual vibrancy that one hears in the song, and the 'scentiment' is about pausing along the way to relax and enjoy exactly where you are right now."

## Political Slant

Candles are a creative outlet for politics, no matter which party you favor.

Kentucky for Kentucky released a limited-edition Politics scented candle with a label that reads "real Kentucky horseshit for subtle notes of bureaucracy, hypocrisy, & old farts." Lake & Skye partnered with InStyle magazine on the InStyle Badass x Lake & Skye limited-edition soy candle with a musk and white amber scent. With each purchase, the brand will donate to She Should Run, a nonprofit, non-partisan organization that encourages women to run for elected office. The candle is vegan as well as paraben-, phthalate-, sulfate- and cruelty-free. The Angry Candle LLC candles are "themed after things



PartyLite introduced the Borderless Brights collection in three scents: Dragon Fruit Zest, Ginger Saffron and Red Hinoki Wood. Each candle is housed in a bright, decorative, patterned glass jar. Photo courtesy of PartyLite.

<sup>c</sup>[www.nytimes.com/2020/05/04/style/how-will-we-buy-our-perfume-now.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/04/style/how-will-we-buy-our-perfume-now.html)

that anger us, annoy us or we simply find funny.” The brand is offering Presidential Election 2020 Candles in two scents: Trump 2020—orange sherbet scented—and Biden 2020—baby powder scented.

### Bring the Outdoors In

COVID-19 has had the world cooped up and anxious. Air care and candles have the ability to transport consumers. Science has demonstrated that smells trigger vivid memories and emotions. From faraway places to childhood memories, brands are launching a variety of products to bring the outside in and evoke pleasant reactions and emotions. Hinoki wood seems to be the en vogue ingredient for the season.

Febreze added three new scents to its Air Effects line: Forest (bergamot, musk and aloe flower), Ocean (ginger, water lily and hinoki) and Wood (oud, amber and cedar) in a range of products such as air fresheners, plug-ins, wax melts, fabric refreshers and car scents. For the spring, Febreze introduced Berry & Bramble, Jasmine & Lime, Lilac & Violet and Peony & Cedar limited-edition fragrances.

For the summer, PartyLite introduced the Borderless Brights collection in three scents: Dragon Fruit Zest, Ginger Saffron and Red Hinoki Wood. Each candle is housed in a bright, decorative, patterned glass jar. Dragon Fruit Zest features dragon fruit, mandarin peel, pink lady apples, mango blossoms and papaya juice accords while Ginger Saffron blends Thai lemongrass, lemon zest, green ginger



To support beachside businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Hawaiian Tropic introduced the limited-edition Beachside (Inside) candle that is “infused with the trademark scent of Hawaiian Tropic sunscreen to transport you back to sunnier days.” Photo courtesy of Edgewell Personal Care.



Island Rain & Sea Glass is the newest scent to join Nest New York’s Summer Home Fragrance Collection, available in a candle and reed diffuser. Photo courtesy of Nest New York.

peach and golden saffron. The Red Hinoki Wood scent has notes of red tea, golden amber, patchouli, black pepper, red hinoki wood and Italian bergamot.

Nest New York’s newest scent for its Summer Home Fragrance Collection is Island Rain & Sea Glass, described as “palm leaves drenched in island rains, infused with the essence of fresh waterlilies, jungle moss, and a hint of cedar wood.” Northern Lights launched the Chroma Collection, which are hemp inspired fragrances formulated with CBD oil in a soy wax blend with a hemp wick and a heat-activated vessel that changes color when lit. The collection features three scents: Citrus Ginseng, Mosswood and Palo Santo.

In May, sun care brand Hawaiian Tropic introduced the limited-edition Beachside (Inside) candle that is “infused with the trademark scent of Hawaiian Tropic sunscreen to transport you back to sunnier days.” It launched in May, and 100% of proceeds from the sales will go to the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association, an organization supporting beachside businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. British brand Earl of East partnered with Uncommon Creative Studio to create an exclusive range of limited-edition soy candles designed to raise money for Hospitality Action. The Scents of Normality line is described as “candles that smell like the places we miss most during lockdown with evocative scents, reflecting some of the nation’s favorite hangouts,” and includes The Local, The Cinema and The Festival.

Cosy Owl, another U.K. company, used a social media poll to determine a new “quirky fragrance” to add to the brand’s fragrance oil range. A Petrol

scent won with 45% of the votes. The description says, “the smell of petrol certainly divides opinion and whilst you do not have to necessarily like cars, bikes, and other forms of transport, filling up your tank and getting a whiff of the scent might just be enough for you.”

In the United Kingdom, Yankee Candle launched the “Chosen By You” campaign to enable consumers to vote on which eight Yankee Candles should return to shelves for a summer and winter 2021 launch. The first round of voting ran May 20-June 10, 2020, for voters to select their four favorite summer-inspired candles, while the second wave of voting took place between August 31-September 18, 2020, and focused on a winter-inspired selection.

### Fast-Foods Make Scents

At the end of 2019, to engage consumers for the holidays, fast-food brands launched limited-edition scented candles inspired by a selection of signature savory and sweet flavored products fast-food chains offer.

Qdoba Mexican Eats debuted a limited-time Queso Candle for the holidays that was inspired by the brand’s signature three-cheese queso. In honor of McDonald’s 50<sup>th</sup> burger anniversary, the brand launched a burger-scented, six candle collection. Each candle represented the scent of the ingredients that make up McDonald’s quarter pounder: 100% Fresh Beef, Ketchup, Pickle, Cheese, Onion and Sesame Seed Bun. Consumers are encouraged to burn all six at once, “for maximum deliciousness.” At the end of 2019, Subway in the United Kingdom teased the launch of the Ultimate Cheesy Garlic Bread reed diffuser on social media, which is expected sometime this year. Dunkin’ Donuts partnered with Homesick on the release of three limited-edition candles inspired by the brands’ most popular items: Old Fashioned, Original Blend and Peppermint Mocha scents.

Inspired by cocktails, Poo-Pourri, the toilet spray brand, added Cosmopolitan (cranberry, lime and lemon), Margarita (lemon, lime and tequila) and Old Fashioned (orange, cherry and bourbon) fragrances to its portfolio. In addition, the brand launched Buttered Popcorn (popcorn, butter and lemon) and S’mores (cocoa bean and burnt vanilla) scents.

### The Smell of Private Parts

Gwyneth Paltrow’s brand Goop received a lot of press for the launch of This Smells Like My Vagina limited-edition candle, which sold out within hours of its launch and blends geranium, bergamot, cedar, damask rose and ambrette seed. Riding on the press coattails, Canadian company Taxi launched This Smells Like My Penis candle and used the



Toilet spray brand Poo-Pourri added a variety of food-inspired scents. Product shown: Poo-Pourri Buttered Popcorn. Photo courtesy of Poo-Pourri.

opportunity to address the gender pay gap. There was no fragrance description, but the copy read “This candle costs 25% more than its vagina-smelling equivalent. That’s because even though it’s illegal in Canada to pay women less than men, the gender pay gap smells as strong as ever. On average, women earn 75 cents for every dollar men make. It’s time to burn the gender pay gap.”

### Environmentally Conscious

Like other categories, natural ingredients and sustainable materials have become important to consumers and have made their way into candles and air care.

Reckitt Benckiser added the Botanica by Air Wick collection, which is “made with exotic, natural ingredients and offers high-quality air care products that are carefully sourced and packaged in a way that respects the planet.” It is available in five scent pairings: Caribbean Sweetgrass & Sandalwood, French Lavender & Honey Blossom, Fresh Pineapple & Tunisian Rosemary, Himalayan Magnolia & Vanilla and Island Rose & African Geranium. The Botanica line is offered in a variety of formats, including scented oils and room sprays. The products do not contain phthalates or dyes, and the room sprays are made with 95% natural ingredients, while the scented oils contain natural essential oils.

Sephora launched its own exclusive candle collection in four scents using a natural soy-blend wax, and the fragrances are formulated without phthalates.



*Botanica by Air Wick is a new collection "made with exotic, natural ingredients [that] offers high-quality air care products that are carefully sourced and packaged in a way that respects the planet." Products shown: Botanica room sprays in Fresh Pineapple & Tunisian Rosemary and Island Rose & African Geranium scents and French Lavender & Honey Blossom scented oil. Photos courtesy of Air Wick.*

Bloom is a classic floral with notes of rose petals, freesia and amber, while Pop Fizz features blood orange, red currant and sandalwood. Refresh offers a blend of grapefruit, jasmine and musk, and Unwind contains sandalwood with pink berry and vanilla.

Brooklyn Candle Studio and California-based artist Allison Kunath collaborated on three scented candles, each housed in 10 oz reusable ceramic containers adorned with Kunath's abstract female figure drawings. Candle 1 has notes of currant and fig with amber and sandalwood, while Candle 2 contains hinoki cypress, sandalwood and cedar leaf and Candle 3 blends sage, pine and spruce. The candles are 100% soy wax derived from American-grown soybeans, 100% vegan and petroleum-free with lead-free cotton wicks.

British brand Saint Fragrance London debuted a line of six hand-poured calming candles made with responsibly sourced ingredients and vegan-friendly formulas housed in 100% recyclable packaging. The six fragrances are Balearic Isle (coconut and white floral), Late Night Fig (fig and citrus), Old Fashioned (leather-floral), Powdery Skies (powdery orris and white tea), Rose Whispers (modern rose) and Sunday Papers (vanilla). U.K. Organic Oils by Hema specializes in organic hair oils as well as a line of lip and body care products. The brand launched a new line of diffusers available in Fragrantly Floral Rose Geranium, Sensational Spice Orange & Cinnamon and Sweet Zing Lemongrass & Cedarwood scents, which are formulated in a vegetable base and are free of alcohol and glycol. The diffusers are packaged in reusable and recyclable materials.

## Smart Diffusive Technology

Technology is continually evolving, and the latest activity in air care is being driven by smartphone-enabled diffusers.

Air Wick introduced the Essential Mist smart diffuser with Bluetooth technology and a mobile app. Consumers can customize their scent experience with programmable scent schedules, adjustable scent intensity settings, refill reminders and the ability to purchase refills directly from their smartphone. The Aroma range starter pack is



*Air Wick's new Essential Mist Smart Diffuser with Bluetooth Technology and a mobile app enables consumers to customize their scent experience with programmable scent schedules, adjustable scent intensity settings, refill reminders and the ability to purchase refills directly from their smartphone. Photo courtesy of Air Wick.*

available in a Happiness (pineapple, peach and wild mint) fragrance and includes one diffuser, batteries and a fragrance refill. Additional fragrances in the range formulated for different moods include Sleep (lavender, eucalyptus and sage) and Unwind (jasmine, tea tree and lotus blossom) made with an exclusive blend of natural essential oils. Fragrances from the Air Wick Essential Mist collection include Cinnamon & Crisp Apple, Fresh Water Breeze, Lavender & Almond Blossom, Mandarin & Sweet Orange and Peony & Jasmine variants and are compatible with the smart diffuser.

Similarly, Nest New York launched a Smart Home Fragrance Diffuser powered by Pura that connects to a smartphone, is Alexa-compatible and enables user to set a scent schedule, swap between scents and adjust intensity. The starter set comes with Bamboo and Grapefruit fragrance vials, which are offered in scent refills, in addition to Cedar Leaf & Lavender and Moroccan Amber fragrances. Airzai released Aroma, a premium smart home fragrance diffuser with an app that is voice-enabled and can be managed by Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant. The smart diffuser can schedule fragrance preferences, adjust the fragrance intensity in low, medium and high settings and create ambient lighting. Australian Sandalwood, Mediterranean Blossoms and Santorini Fig are the three current aromas offered.

In February 2020, Candle Touch launched a Kickstarter campaign. Described as the “world’s first smart-connected real-flame candle,” the Bluetooth-enabled scented candle works with a password-protected app and uses a device with an electronic base that is connected to a scented coconut wax candle and sends a current up a wire to ignite the cotton wick. According to the brand, a candle can last up to 40 hours, and the app works from as far as 60 feet away and can light up 10 candles simultaneously. Candle Touch is offered in scents such as Amber and Clove, Avocado and Mint, Grapefruit and Cardamom, Lime and Grapefruit, and White Tea and Ginger. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, at the end of March, Candle Touch closed the campaign.

At the Consumer Electronics Show 2020 (CES), Tel Aviv-based startup company introduced Moodify, an “active scent” car-like air freshener, which is designed “to alter human behavior, improve performance, enhance feelings of well-being and even increase vehicular safety.” Moodify White is the brand’s first scented product, and it “eliminates perceptions of bad odors by temporarily affecting how the brain interprets smell. It confuses the brain with custom scents in the same way that a white noise machine dulls unpleasant sounds by saturating



*Moodify White is the brand’s first scented product, and it “eliminates perceptions of bad odors by temporarily affecting how the brain interprets smell. It confuses the brain with custom scents in the same way that a white-noise machine dulls unpleasant sounds by saturating the space with a neutral audio background.”*  
Photo courtesy of Moodify.

the space with a neutral audio background.” Moodify Blue, Moodify Green and Moodify Red scents are all under development. The Moodify Blue is meant to calm an individual down and reduce stress and aggression, which is being formulated to replicate pheromones found in human tears. Moodify Green is designed to increase alertness and awareness and is based on the pheromones found in the sweat generated by humans in fearful situations, while the Moodify Red is engineered to wake you up “100% of the time [with] a very good possibility to save lives.”

### A Scented Home

A scented home is always welcome, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Brands and manufacturers are capitalizing on air care and candle fragrances’ ability to transport consumers to faraway places and evoke positive childhood memories. Themes indicative of the current times act as inspiration for new candle scents while fast-food brands use their signature flavors as inspiration for limited-edition scented air care during the holidays. Consumers are connected to their smartphones, and smartphone-enabled scent diffusers are the latest technological advancements in air care. Consumers are adjusting to the new normal, and, although behaviors may change, candles and air care are mainstays.

