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BUYING AND SELLING



GET A WHIFF OF THIS
Trained nose Judi Bradbury, main, uses different scents around her house, including a smoky chestnut candle in the red evening room, below



ANDREW FOX FOR THE TELEGRAPH; RICHARD GOODING

always suggest that vendors use good-quality scented candles; they form part of the crucial first impression and can be a talking point," he says. "Along with Diptyque, I also rate Cire Trudon, another Parisian brand [which Marie Antoinette used]. Their Ernesto scent evokes Cuban cigars. It's part of selling a lifestyle." He is marketing homes at Buxmead on The Bishops Avenue, where developer Harrison Varma commissioned aromatherapist Alexandra Several to create bespoke scents for the super high end scheme of serviced apartments, where prices start from £6.9million.

"The quickest way to add warmth and personality to a brand new home is to use scent – smell is very related to our emotional state," says Portuguese-

born Several, who has also created a Highgrove scent for Prince Charles. "I used the cedars around the Buxmead site and the interior's wood panelling as a starting point. The fresh Alpine wood smell of balsam fir evokes a sense of 'welcome home'. I think of Christmas trees and happy

family times. I added petitgrain [orange tree twigs] to lighten it up and in the cinema and bar areas I used aged vetiver – think tobacco and leather chairs – to add a sense of warmth and maturity."

Scent plays a part in creating a narrative or backstory to a property – something that is in-

creasingly important in helping to sell homes in high-end new schemes.

At Jermyn Street's Beau House, a boutique development inspired by Regency dandy Beau Brummell, interior designer Oliver Burns used nearby perfume house Floris (est 1730) to create a "Regency era" scent of fresh citrus, orange blossom, frankincense and myrrh for a feel of timelessness. Prices start from £2million.

For the luxury apartments of Chelsea Island, where prices start from £935,000, chandler Rachel Vosper created an uplifting petitgrain and bergamot scent to complement the soft grey and lemon decor. She suggests taking the long view when concocting a homely scent: "Rather than use a specific scent that is in fashion and will date, go for something with longevity."



THE SMELL OF SUCCESS
Floris created a Regency-era scent for Beau House, above; Buxmead's signature scent, below, is the work of aromatherapist Alexandra Several

Can the right scent really help you sell your home?

A professional perfumer tells Liz Rowlinson her secrets – from chestnuts in the evening room to jasmine in the bedroom

Marcel Proust knew about the power of the senses to evoke happy memories. Cues in everyday life – in his case, the smell of a madeleine dipped in tea – can spark a sense of security or joy. Retailers and hoteliers have exploited our involuntary responses to certain smells for many years, and estate agent folklore says that aromas of freshly brewed coffee or baking bread can help sell a home. But does scent really make us buy a house?

It certainly persuaded Judi Bradbury, a perfumer, to buy a property in the "wrong area". Rather than walking up

and smelling the roses (or coffee), it was an olfactory "assault" of orange blossom, lemon balm, honeysuckle and lily of the valley. "We'd been scouring the Home Counties and decided to take a look at the Grade II listed Georgian property in Warboys in Cambridgeshire," says Judi, 54, who is married to Paul, an architect. "The heavenly smell enveloped us as we entered the property. I have always loved florals, which remind me of my mother, who had a dressing room full of beautiful glass-stoppered bottles of scent."

Judi worked at Molton Brown before becoming a trained nose at Penhaligon's and then a profiler who matches people with the right fragrances. In the perfume room of the seven-bedroom

house they bought three years ago she keeps rare supplies of the scents worn by John F Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor and Napoleon. Now that several of the couple's six children (aged 14 to 29) have left home, the family are moving into the old barn in the grounds of their property, converting it into a four-bedroom home and the 17th-century dovecote into a perfumery. The rest is for sale for £1million with Fine & Country, and each room is a feast for the nose.

"Fragrances improve your mood and you want people to relax as they walk around and feel that it is a refuge, a safe haven" says Judi. "The secret is to make people think 'what a wonderful place' without realising it's the smell. Subtlety is key: overpowering smells like patchouli can be a turn-off."

A fan of Jovoy, the Parisian brand of scented candles, Judi uses one made with chestnuts for the red evening room. "It has a rich, soft smokiness that evokes the chestnut blossom in Paris every April," she says. "For the morning room, a very light room, I use a lemony, herbal scent that is uplifting and smells of the seaside." The delicate notes of an English herb garden uplift the hallways, while a touch of jasmine creates sensuality in the bedroom.

Scenting a home is a seasonal thing. For being transported by fresh, summer fragrances to the lavender fields of Provence, Simon Deen, director of estate agency Aston Chase, swears by Manuel Canovas' Palais d'Été scented candle for selling homes. "I

