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Selling Sex – Etat Libre d'Orange Putain des Palaces Perfume Review



ETAT LIBRE d'ORANGE
PARIS

When I started The Candy Perfume Boy, I didn't really have much of a plan, I simply wanted to talk about perfume. Since my first post way back in July 2011, the way I write and the subjects I write about have evolved. Nowadays I tend to focus more on reviewing new launches, with ancillary series such as Desert Island Sniffs, The Candy Perfume Boy's Guide to... and the Scent a Celebrity Series as supporting materials. Series have come and gone (due mainly to my short attention span) but this year I'd like to spend a bit more time looking back, as well as forward, by reviewing some scents that aren't brand spanking new.

So to start, I want to look at a fragrance that has always been on my mind, but never in my collection, well up until recently, that is. Those of you who have read this blog for a while will know that I'm quite partial to the intriguing olfactory output from rebellious perfume punks, Etat Libre d'Orange. I own about seven or eight of their 32 fragrances, with the latest addition to my collection being the tricky *Putain des Palaces* – a perfume I've always liked but have been reluctant to buy, for no reason other than the fact that I'm indecisive.

Putain des Palaces was released in 2006 as part of Etat Libre d'Orange's initial crop of fragrances. Composed by perfumer Nathalie Feisthauer (Hermès' *Eau des Merveilles*, Van Clef & Arpels' *Gardénia Pétale* & Amouage's *Honour Man*) the fragrance, which is roughly translated as "Hotel Whore" (racy, huh?), is described by Etat Libre d'Orange as "the temptress who awaits her prey in the hotel bar, and leads her lucky victim to unimaginable delights..." So yes, *Putain des Palaces* is a perfume about sex, specifically the transactional variety, and you know what? It does exactly what it sets out to do.



Putain des Palaces ("Hotel Whore")

The Notes

Rose Absolute, Violet, Leather, Lily of the Valley, Tangerine, Ginger, Rice Powder, Amber and Animal Notes

How Does it Smell?

Putain des Palaces is essentially, a perfume of two halves. The top half is based around the idea of a classic French perfume. One therefore finds a ton of violet and rose, both of which come together to create a lipstick-esque accord.

There is sweetness and powder aplenty here, as well as more than a few nods to the great lipstick fragrances of the past, including more recent offerings like Editions de Parfums Frederic Malle's *Lipstick Rose*. Perhaps what is most intriguing about this accord is the fact that it smells a bit rough around the edges, and dare I say, a little bit cheap. There's a trashiness to it, due in part to the overdose of both sweetness and powder, that feels frivolous and not in tune with a high class image. More importantly, it displays a wicked sense of fun.

Sitting beneath all of that lipstick and make-up powder is what I like to call, the funk accord. This funk accord consists of two distinct elements; the first of which is sweaty and armpit like, thanks mainly to a big dose of cumin, and the second is sour and animalic due to a ripe leather note. The effect of these two facets coming together is a odour that is distinctly post-coital, smelling both human and animal. It's what I like to call the 'freshly fucked' look and to me, it creates the distinct impression of sweat soaked bed sheets, with the trail of that lipstick fragrance lurking in the fibres.

So many fragrances attempt to sell sex – to evoke, or create the image of hot guys and girls going at it with fervour. *Putain des Palaces* is one of the few scents that actually succeeds, and where so many simply read warm and resinous (the industry thinks that 'oriental' means 'sexy'), *Putain* has the balls to actually smell like sex. It does exactly what it says on the tin and when smelling it, it's almost impossible not to imagine that unmade bed (Tracy Emin style) imprinted with the scent of the night before. The fragrance is a whisper and a memory – a keepsake from an erotic encounter with a courtesan. Her scent is her calling card and it invites you to come back for more.

Availability

Putain des Palaces is available in 50ml (£59.50) and 100ml (£99) Eau de Parfum.

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