

## 18th-Century Scents in France and America

Sarah Colton, of ex-Editor-in-Chief-of-the-AAWE-News fame, revealed yet another facet of her talents on February 21, when she shared her passion for perfume with us. Sarah is a charismatic speaker and held us in the palm of her hand for well over an hour without any notes in sight. She accompanied us back to Marie-Antoinette's day, when the lack of hygiene — even in the grandest of palaces — made perfume not just a luxury, but a necessity. She described the ingredients of the successes of the day. (We know something now that you don't know; we know what bergamot is!) She had us smell samples of what are today's descendants of the "*Eau de la Reine de Hongrie*" and "*Eau de Cologne*", and more. (Why did she keep telling us not to drink perfume?! Oh yes, because in those days, the alcohol used to fix the scents was drinkable and was indeed drunk!)

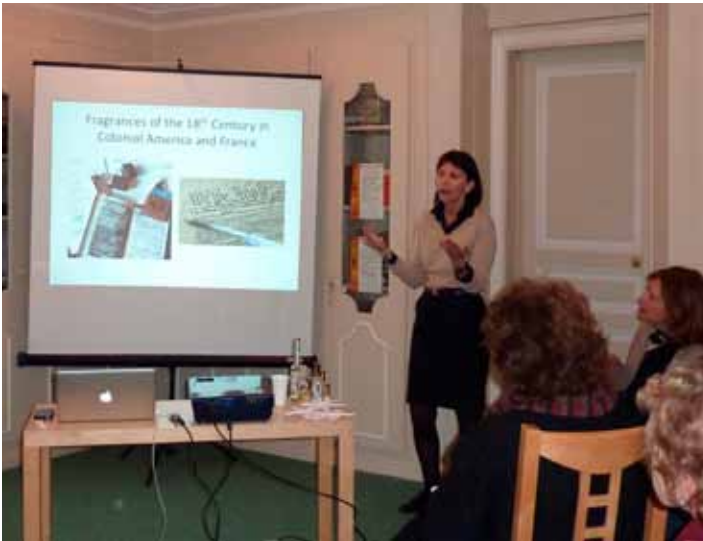
She explained about fragrances in general and about concepts such as the well-known (for some!) "Fragrance Pyramid", which

shows how scents evolve on our skin. But her main interest in perfume is neither historical nor theoretical. Perfume is part of her life, sort of like her wardrobe. In fact, maybe more than her wardrobe. One perfume can "fit" first thing in the morning, another suits her professional self, yet another is for quiet time.... She believes that it's fundamental that we listen to ourselves and find our own perfume, maybe even several perfumes.



This leads us to the perfume world of today. To marketing. To global marketing. To such places as Sephora or Marionnaud. How on earth to find your personal perfume there?

As could be expected, an opposite concept evolved—the "*niche*" concept. "*Niche*"? We Francophiles-and-phones



know that literally, it's a small alcove in a wall. But whatever the context, it can only hold a small amount of... whatever. So, the *niche* in perfumery is the one where you will find the perfume for...you. Just you.

Sarah knows many who are active on the French per-

fume scene today, brilliant actors dedicated to creating *niches* and for whom she has great respect. She has much more to tell about them and their creations.

Perhaps she will come back to us with another workshop?

**Marianne Hansen**



*Sarah Colton brought a bit of this century's fragrance to AAWE*

*Member Sarah Colton is Paris correspondent for The Perfume Magazine and Beauty Fashion magazine. "Perfumes and Cognes of 18th Century France and America" is one of several interactive workshops Sarah offers. Her upcoming book about perfume is scheduled for publication in fall 2013.*