

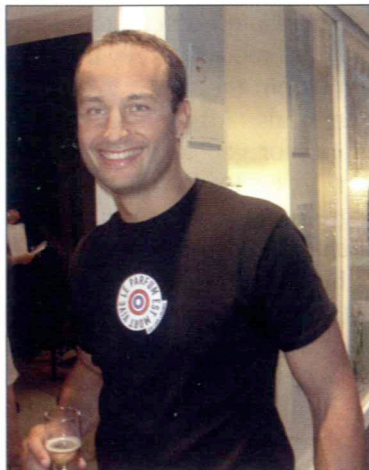
by Sarah Colton



NOTES FROM PARIS

ETAT LIBRE D'ORANGE

Etat Libre d'Orange has just ratcheted up the stakes for provocation in luxury perfumes with its newest fragrance launched in June. With a name like, "Don't get me Wrong Baby... I Don't Swallow," one is put on alert. And yet, **Etienne de Swardt**, Editor and creator of Etat Libre d'Orange, (loosely translated, The Free State of Orange), is skillful at walking the fine line between outrageous provocation and creative innovation in selective perfumery and has proven yet again that there is room and indeed a need for niche fragrances that push limits while maintaining olfactory excellence. "Don't get me Wrong..." the scent of the titillating title is, in fact, a beautiful and sophisticated muguet fragrance recalling with just the slightest twinkle its great predecessor, Diorissimo.



Etienne de Swardt has good reason to be drinking champagne at the successful street party launch of his brand, Etat Libre d'Orange. His T-shirt displays the Etat Libre d'Orange motto: "Perfume is dead, long live perfume."

For those who need maps, L'Etat Libre d'Orange will be impossible to find. Suffice to say that Etat Libre d'Orange emerged as a free state of the arts in October of 2006 with the launch of its boutique at 69 rue des



Antoine Lie in front of display case inside the boutique at 69 rue des Archives

Givaudan's Nathalie Feisthauer and Anne Laure Pouquet celebrating at the launch street party



Archives in the Marais district, one of the hippest, artsy neighborhoods of Paris. Intrepid olfactory adventurers are lured through its doors to a world of unsettling juxtapositions: humor and seriousness, refinement and the most primitive, sacred institutions and iconoclasts, all of which may be taken at whichever level one dares.

The creator and self-proclaimed king of this realm is none other than Etienne de Swardt, Perfumer and Editor of renown, formerly at Givenchy and most recently of "Oh, My Dog" fame and success. "I have always wanted to found a brand of perfumes that was truly different; one which would create a revolution in the tightly formatted and over-controlled universe of Perfumers whose talents are too often limited by profitability guidelines and consumer testing. Etat Libre d'Orange is by definition a declaration of independence, creating an olfactory territory in direct



Frederic Rivoire, head of Fine Fragrances at Givaudan, on the phone perhaps spreading the word of the success of the entire affair or being congratulated by some well wisher

opposition to conventions and marketing rules. With our motto, 'Perfume is dead, long live perfume,' we proclaim the birth of a free territory, a land of olfactory libertinage, free of taboos and governed only by the laws of deliberate insubordination and olfactory eroticism," said Mr. de Swardt.

To create fragrances for his kingdom, Mr. de Swardt picked a handful of experienced and talented Perfumers

all from Givaudan fine fragrances: **Antoine Maisondieu**, (Balmain's Balman, Burberry Brit for Men, Burberry London for Men, among others), **Antoine Lie** (Armani Code for Men, Paul Smith London for Men, among others), and **Nathalie Feisthauer** (Azzaro Orange Tonique, Must De Cartier Pour Homme, Clarins Elysium, Comme des Garçons Guerilla 2, among others).

In true Faustian style, Mr. de Swardt made the Givaudan Perfumers an offer they couldn't refuse, essentially a Perfumer's dream—*carte blanche* in choosing notes and accords, an unlimited budget and choice of raw materials and no marketing or creative constraints except to create fragrances to express a number of themes: "Sécrétions Magnifiques," "Vierges et Toreros," "Putain des Palaces," "Encens et Bubble Gum," "Vraie



His Royal Highness, Mr. de Swardt, and his princely children greeting well-wishing subjects at the street party



Sophie Cauchi (r.) of Givaudan carries an Etat Libre d'Orange bag and discusses fragrance samples on blotters with a Journalist.



A crowd is gathered in front of 69 rue des Archives in the Marais district. A peek at libertine naughtiness and nonsense upstairs



Blonde," "Eloge du Traître," "Divin Enfant" and now, "Don't get me Wrong..."

A kick-off party unlike any other spilled over from the boutique and into the street and ended up more like a block party with limitless champagne, a star-studded array of guests from the fragrance world and startled and enthusiastic passers-by who participated in the festivities well into the wee hours of the night.

Trend watchers, Perfumers and perfume companies large and small as well as international observers of geopolitics are keeping a close watch on activities in Etat Libre d'Orange. In a land of no curfews and where a *coup d'état* is by definition impossible, there will certainly be more disruptions. Travelers' Alert: Code Orange!

Three sizes of Eau de Toilette spray are available: 100 ml for €59.00, 50 ml for €39.00 and 30 ml for €27.00. They are sold in the new freestanding store located at 69 rue des Archives in the Marais district of Paris. The line is also available at Henri Bendel. *BF*