



Balenciaga Goes Back To Its Roots For New Fragrance Launch

It's the dawn of a new era at Balenciaga. Three weeks before Pierpaolo Piccioli presents his debut collection as creative director, the Kering-owned house is unveiling its first fragrances in years. Balenciaga CEO Gianfranco Gianangeli calls the arrival of Piccioli and the launch of the Balenciaga collection of fragrances "an exciting new chapter in Balenciaga's couture and olfactive history". "Fashion and fragrance have been in the house's DNA for almost 80 years, and exist in harmony," he tells Vogue via email.

The new collection of 10 scents, developed during the tenure of Piccioli's predecessor Demna and his team, is a nod to Cristóbal Balenciaga's legacy. It brings back Le Dix , the fragrance launched by Balenciaga in 1947, with a formula and bottle inspired by the original. (As a concession to the modern age, there's a spray dispenser in the bottle, which wasn't in the 1947 version.)

Balenciaga's new launch will include 10 fragrances.

Photo: Balenciaga/ Katerina Jebb

It's a fresh approach for Balenciaga fragrances, which were previously produced under licence by Coty (the licence expired in 2021, giving Kering the opportunity to bring it in-house). Under Coty, the brand's fragrances included Balenciaga Paris, Florabotanica and B Balenciaga. But Kering Beauté didn't pick up where Coty left off; instead, it started a fresh chapter by returning to Balenciaga's roots.

"There was no better way to honour everything this wonderful house stands for than by bringing back the very first fragrance that Cristóbal created," says **Raffaella Cornaggia**, CEO of Kering Beauté, the group's beauty division, which co-developed the fragrance with Balenciaga. "We are staying very faithful to the brand's codes, which inherently balance heritage and modernity," she adds, speaking to Vogue in an exclusive interview at the Kering Beauté office, just a stone's throw from Kering HQ.

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By

Christian Allaire Tracy Achonwa and Georgia Day

Kering Beauté was formed by the French group as a separate entity in 2023 to support its houses in the development of the category. It started by launching Bottega Veneta fragrances a year ago. "We have a very strong ambition to express the DNA of our maisons through beauty, and especially through high perfumery," says Cornaggia. "That's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity — to be able to create the entire universe for a brand in a new category, to expand the brand's expression into that category. So we did it for Bottega Veneta, and now for Balenciaga. In the meantime, we also completed the acquisition of [high-end heritage fragrance house] Creed and carried out its integration."

Kering Beauté CEO **Raffaella Cornaggia**.

Photo: Jean-François Robert/ modds

Sales of Kering Beauté in the first half of 2025 were €150 million (£130 million), up 9 per cent year-on-year, according to the group. While Kering Beauté remains modest in scale compared with beauty heavyweights, its ambition is not to rival them in size; rather, it seeks to channel the distinct identity of its houses into a coherent expression, following the Kering Eyewear model.



The new Le Dix does not include the animal-based ingredients of the initial formula (they are no longer used in perfumery); instead, it has iris aldehyde molecules. Though, there are violet leaves, just like in the original. "We are incredibly lucky to have the original formula. So we started with that and gave it a twist," says Cornaggia.

It taps into a growing nostalgia. "For people my age, the formula evokes vintage fragrances, but all the younger people in the office love it. It's a general trend, a return to old-style perfumery, with powdery, violet notes," says Cornaggia.

Other fragrances in the collection include No Comment ("echoing Balenciaga's belief that his creations should speak for themselves", according to the release); Getaria (named after Balenciaga's coastal Spanish birthplace); Cristóbal ("enigmatic and understated, yet radiates gravitas, evoking the duality of Balenciaga", also according to the release); and Incense Perfumum, whose black juice is an ode to the designer's extensive use of the colour.

The 100ml bottle carries a £230 price tag (by comparison, the Bottega Veneta fragrance is priced at £350). There is also a Discovery Box (£285), as well as the bag charm (£350), competing with Labubus when it comes to bag accessories.

The Balenciaga fragrance charm, which will retail for £350.

Photo: Courtesy of Balenciaga

Why prioritise the perfume collection format over an institutional fragrance? "There is the idea of creating desire starting from the highest segment. We also wanted to showcase the richness of the brand's different facets," says Cornaggia. A collection also allows Balenciaga to cater to a wide variety of tastes. Does she expect certain fragrances to resonate particularly in certain regions? "It's difficult to generalise, as preferences are evolving. For example, Asia is increasingly discovering more intense perfumes, while the Middle East is showing interest in fresher scents. The great thing about this range is that it covers every category."

Gianangeli draws the parallel with a wardrobe: "Each scent embodies distinctive attitudes, shapes and gestures rooted in the house's design language like a Balenciaga wardrobe." He expects the fragrance collection to bring in new clients. "We wanted to create a new medium of expression for both our existing community and those beyond fashion, expanding Balenciaga's audience to those seeking in the realm of high perfumery — exclusivity, craftsmanship and cutting-edge elegance," he says.

Balenciaga named his fragrance Le Dix ("The Ten" in French) as a nod to the address of his atelier located on 10 Avenue George V, which today functions as the brand's couture store. To mark the fragrance launch, the brand has turned part of the store into a perfume shop, which opens on 10 September. "In 2022, we opened the Balenciaga couture store. Today, with the launch of our fragrance collection, we open the fragrance store next to it, creating at 10 Avenue George V, a multi-purpose address with our couture salons on the first floor and the individual fragrance and couture stores occupying the ground floor," Gianangeli writes.

Balenciaga disrupts again with couture store offering 'gateway' to top-tier luxury

Arrow

Distribution is being tightly controlled. In addition to the perfume shop, the collection launches on Wednesday in a selection of Balenciaga fashion boutiques across North America and Europe, plus e-commerce. "We believe Balenciaga has good potential in e-commerce," Cornaggia notes. It will roll out in the Balenciaga stores in the Middle East, Asia and the rest of the world by the end of the year to reach an approximate total of 200 boutiques. "Subsequently, there will be a widening of the distribution, but only in the highest points of sale," she says. (Bottega Veneta launched its collection of fragrances



this week at Bergdorf Goodman, its first wholesale account.)

British artist Katerina Jebb is behind the campaign for the Balenciaga collection: a video featuring a scanning process mirroring the recreation of the original Le Dix bottle.

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By

Ellie Davis

On future beauty launches at Balenciaga, Cornaggia says there are “very exciting development plans, and there will be future milestones”. One thing is clear though: the focus is on the fast-growing fragrance segment, rather than makeup. During the Kering annual earnings press conference in February, Kering president and outgoing CEO François-Henri Pinault called fragrances, “the absolute priority for Kering Beauté in the coming years”.

During that same conference, Pinault also said: “The strategy for Bottega Veneta and Balenciaga is to position the houses in high-end perfumery to give them very strong visibility and desirability, and then, between 18 months and two years later, we will move into prestige in the higher-volume segment.” Kering has so far declined to comment on whether it would bring Gucci fragrances in-house once the current licence, owned by Coty, expires.

It will be among items on the agenda for Kering's incoming CEO Luca de Meo . During a media scrum after the Kering general meeting on Tuesday, de Meo said beauty is one of the sectors where the group “can gain momentum”. “It's an interesting sector. We have made significant acquisitions. We have brands that have interests in terms of licensing; it's something I consider important,” he said. (L'Oréal Group owns the license for Yves Saint Laurent.)

As for Kering Beauté's other houses, there is no plan to launch further fragrances at this moment. “It's already a lot,” says Cornaggia. “We created two [beauty] brands from scratch [Bottega Veneta and Balenciaga] and we are developing an important brand in the world of high-end perfumery [Creed]. We're happy with the result, and we still have a lot to do.”

