

Entry-Level



★★★★

Tommy Girl
Tommy Hilfiger
www.tommy.com

★★★

ck IN2U her
Calvin Klein
www.ckin2u.com

★★★★★

Coco Mademoiselle
Chanel
www.chanel.com

Just as BMW offers its more accessible 3 Series to younger buyers, many perfume houses offer beginning fragrances for their younger consumers. Each house follows its own logic.

ck IN2U her is a scent created for those still using their parents' credit cards. In terms of critical assessment, IN2U poses a problem. Classically understood, a perfume is a work of art; YSL's Paris has (in theory at least) the same artistic integrity as, say, a Rothko painting. IN2U has the artistic integrity of an Abercrombie & Fitch hoodie. This is its intent. The perfumers Carlos Benaim and Loc Dong, along with the fragrance consultant Ann Gottlieb, have engineered not a perfume but a smell. There is nothing wrong with this per se. It's just a different thing. Where a perfume stakes out an aesthetic position, a smell like IN2U, with its carefully calibrated lock on the vibe of the moment, is a passkey to popularity. What it actually smells like is somewhat secondary. But it's pleasant enough: a combination of Breck shampoo and the scent of a brand-new Jaguar convertible on a clear, warm evening in Los Angeles.

Chanel has gone the Rothko route with **Coco Mademoiselle**. Chanel's perfumer Jacques Polge has lowered the age of entry while creating a scent that still appeals to the granddaughters of women who wear Chanel No. 5. He has also created a scent that's every bit the work of art that the youthful No. 19 is. Here, accessibility is created through straightforward olfactory style, not engineering. Where Ralph by Ralph Lauren condescends shamelessly to the young buyer (pure sugar candy), Coco Mademoiselle graces her with youthful sophistication. This is a Mercedes-Benz C-Class. It is both an entry-level scent and a very smart marketing decision. It smells like a 17-year-old girl in a divine summer dress. Using a core of beautifully engineered patchouli, its scent is floral without a trace of heaviness, fresh without green, sweet without sugar — in short, the scent of loveliness. Come across someone wearing it, and you want to lean closer.

The perfumer Calice Becker chose a third strategy for Tommy Hilfiger. **Tommy Girl** fuses IN2U's youth with Coco Mademoiselle's poise to create a balance: a perfume that incarnates a world in which young women feel utterly at ease. Zero stuffiness, and blissfully free of poseur attitude. Imagine it as a narrative. It is evening. There is the grassy scent of someone's vast, well-kept lawn out at the beach house, of pure, clear, twilight sea air and of women freshly showered, glowing with après-sun cream, clean and fresh. The house glows in the dark summer night, and the perfume, cool and young, seems to emanate from the very air itself.