

Hot Stuff

Candles, diffusers and plug-ins are revolutionizing the way formulators and consumers think about home fragrance.

Melissa Meisel, Associate Editor 09.03.18



Mood-enhancing essential oil aromatherapy diffusers, customizable plug-ins and candles with platform lids are just a few of the innovative creations moving home fragrance products from shelf to shopping cart. In fact, unique scents and attractive designs have pushed the home fragrance market to its strongest position yet.

Meanwhile, the mass segment registered its biggest gains in the past five years. Mass market sales are up across the board for all home fragrance products, according to data from Information Resources Inc. (IRI) for total US multi-outlet (supermarkets, drugstores, mass market retailers, military commissaries and select club and dollar retail chains) for the 52 weeks ended June 17, 2018. Air freshener sales climbed 3.4% to \$2.9 billion. Home air fresheners rose 2.6% to \$2.0 billion and potpourri/sachets jumped 6.9% to \$428.5 million. Automobile air fresheners increased 3.7% to \$410.5 million. Total candle sales rose 3.2% to \$1.2 billion.

“Online shopping has taken precedence over brick and mortar retail in a majority of industries. The Millennial generation uses social media for their discovery process as often, if not more so, than visits to stores,” observed Kathy LaVanier, president of the National Candle Association and CEO of Renegade Candles, New Albany, OH. “E-commerce is expanding, as products are matched to customers’ preferences and purchase history. Subscription boxes are also a popular way to shop for monthly home fragrance indulgences. Many companies offer curated monthly deliveries of candles, from American-made candles to themed services, that celebrate your favorite movie or TV show.”

According to LaVanier, when it comes to home fragrances, shoppers often seek scents that create a memorable, personal and relaxing environment. Millennials particularly gravitate toward new brands and items that offer a unique take on an experience that they can share with friends.

“The excitement around candles creates the connections they crave, which explains why candles are the top choice for gift-gifting among the Millennial generation,” she explained. “One small product offers so much to talk about, and the details around the aroma offer a story within itself. Candles are also consumable, which resonates with Millennials’ minimalistic approach.”

While price is important to Millennials, it is second to the fit factor in how well the product speaks to them. This approach allows creative room for higher fragrance loads, embellished vessel decorating and hand-touched packaging.

“The consumer is increasingly focused on her mind, body and spirit...aromatherapy, an ancient perfume tradition, relies on essential oils to provide scent. Today most aromatherapy practices are focused on using single note essential oils in diffusers, or applying simple blends in carrier oils to achieve therapeutic benefits,” noted Laura McCann, CEO and co-founder, Adoratherapy, Asheville, NC, whose company recently rolled out a line of room mists.

“Because so many people are on a daily quest for balance, portable and easy-to-use wellness products are a must,” added Lara Morgan, founder, Scentered, United Kingdom. “We provide a more modern and accessible take on essential oils, which have been used for thousands of years for medicinal and therapeutic purposes. While essential oils provide wonderful benefits, they can frankly be a bit of a mess. Scentered has developed a way to bring people essential oils in portable, easy-to-use, mess-free candles.”

Diffuse & Melt

One of the biggest launches this summer is in the mass market from Chesapeake Bay Candle...but it’s not a candle! Mind & Body 100% Pure Essential Oils and Essential Oil Diffusers rolled out in Target stores nationwide and **Target.com** at the end of August. This month, the line reaches other major retailers, including Meijer, Fred Meyer, Yankee Candle and Amazon.

The Mind & Body line includes 12 open stock essential oils, three trio essential oil sets, and six essential oil diffusers. The essential oils offer mood-enhancing aromatherapy benefits that cover different states of mind, from happiness to calmness and awake to asleep.

“More than three years ago, we premiered the Mind & Body Collection offering home fragrances infused with natural essential oils,” said Mei Xu, co-founder and CEO of Chesapeake Bay Candle. “Since then, we have seen the demand for home scent products made with pure and natural ingredients only grow. Essential oils are an excellent option for



wellness minded consumers who may be looking for aromatherapy benefits. By customizing the strength of the scent, you can personalize the fragrance experience according to your own preferences. If you are looking for a flameless fragrance option or a product that is 100% natural, you will love our essential oils!”

The development of the essential oil assortment is based on the results of consumer insight studies conducted by Chesapeake Bay Candle. Research revealed that consumers are highly interested in customizable scents that can impact mood.

Using ultrasonic technology, the Chesapeake Bay Mind & Body essential oil diffusers allow the user to transform the home into a wellness retreat by infusing the space with the fragrance of essential oil. The devices are designed to scent any room up to 200 square feet in size.

In other news, Young Living is expanding its essential oil collection with kunzea, a native shrub that grows wild along the southern coasts of Australia and Tasmania. According to the company, the kunzea plant, with its bulbous tops and whimsical blossoms, is commonly referred to as “white cloud.” The extracted kunzea essential oil has comparable properties and uses to tea tree oil. When diffused, it helps create a relaxing atmosphere and creates a refreshing respiratory experience, said the company.

For years, Procter & Gamble researchers have been focused on fragrance across all product categories; no wonder then, that the company is expanding into wax and plug formats. Febreze One wax melts and wax warmers debuted in July. The wax melts have the same odor elimination power as other Febreze products, but with a nature-inspired formulation for those who prefer natural perfumes, said the company. The wax melts are available in Lemongrass & Ginger and Peppermint & Rosemary scents. Additionally, consumers can partner them with the newly introduced Febreze wax warmer. Newly-redesigned Febreze plug-ins feature a sleeker design and the adjustable intensity control now has three levels (low, medium and high) so users can adjust the levels of perfume. Additionally, the new plugs are UL certified, according to the company.

“When it comes to home fragrance, consumers are looking for products that deliver a dual benefit,” Mandy Ciccarella, communications manager, P&G, told Happi. “They’re desiring items that not only smell nice but also eliminate unwanted odors rather than just covering them up. Our entire Febreze lineup—including base air and fabric, Febreze One and Unstoppables—has the odor elimination benefits that consumers crave and have come to love from the Febreze brand.”

Light It Up...or Spray Away

The new Yankee Candle Elevation Collection with a platform lid is taking home fragrance style to new heights this season. The range features a decorative lid that lifts the candle by nesting underneath when in use. According to the company, the contemporary shape of the tapered silhouette heightens the look of any room.

The headlining scent profile for Fall 2018, according to Yankee Candle, is Harvest Walk—reminiscent of a fall day filled with bright sun on birch, red oak and eucalyptus with a dash of sandalwood. Notes of bergamot, violet woods and patchouli complete the scent.

Planning ahead to cooler weather is controversial wellness tastemaker (and Academy Award-winning actress) Gwyneth Paltrow’s Goop Edition 04 Orchard Candle. According to Goop, this home fragrance features sun-warmed apricot, fresh hay and dry earth. Of course, Orchard is made up entirely of natural elements and complete with a fully transparent ingredient list and no harmful chemicals, according to the company. The candle retails for \$72.

Phlur, the perfume brand best known for digitized fragrance, is introducing new scents in a candle form. Each scent is inspired by, and meant to be paired with, an original fine fragrance, all of them crafted by the same world-class perfumers. One of the top rollouts is Annica, with its reverent subtlety and warm embrace, is designed to induce tranquility in those moments where calm is required. An interpretation of Phlur’s Hanami fragrance, Annica shares Hanami’s minimalist sensibility.

According to the company, while the fragrance features the deep woody essence of Indian sandalwood, it doesn’t contribute to its near extinction by using a lab-created safe synthetic that captures the same scent. The vegetable-based wax is hand-poured by a candle filler in Greenfield, MA, into a reusable ceramic vessel.

For those who would rather spritz a spray, Glade Fine Fragrance Mist is making waves in the mass market. According to the company, this product is infused with essential oils for light, layered scents in a continuous fine mist, all captured in a clear bottle. Fragrances include No 1 Enraptured, No 2 Bright, No 3 Free and No 4 Tempted.

Scentsy is launching a variety of fragrance products and scented plush toys featuring Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Hundred Acre Wood, Disney Princess and Disney Pixar Finding Nemo. The collaboration was unveiled in Anaheim at Scentsy’s annual convention. The entire Disney Collection is now available for purchase through independent Scentsy consultants.

A Cozy Winter Ahead

The Danish-inspired design aesthetic of comfort known as hygge has helped change consumer attitudes toward home scents, according to The NPD Group. Seeking to create a feeling of warmth, connection and wellbeing in their homes, during the past year, more consumers used home scents to relax, feel cozy and uplift their spirits, according to Scentsiments, a suite of consumer insights on the US fragrance industry from the market research firm.

Nearly 80% of US consumers scent their homes. Among these users, 50% reported that using home scent made them feel relaxed in 2017. This was also accompanied by an increase in consumers wanting their home to smell like things such as food/beverages (cookies, vanilla, etc.) and woody scents, which evoke a cozy atmosphere.

Several characteristics have grown in importance when consumers are making purchase decisions, including the style or look of the product and the color, speaking to the need for home scent products to fit in with, or enhance, their home décor, also found NPD.

“Consumers are forging stronger emotional ties to their homes and basking in simple pleasures, whether it is the warmth of a candle or the comfort of a cozy blanket. In capturing this hygge, consumers are approaching and experiencing scent in new ways, as we see by the fact that growth of home scents is outpacing the rest of the fragrance category,” said Larissa Jensen, executive director and beauty industry analyst, The NPD Group. “Capitalizing on the successes of this market, by creating more synergies between scented products worn on and beyond the body, presents a ripe sales opportunity for the fragrance category to bring the experience full circle.”

There has been a major trend toward traditional scents we all know and love. According to LaVanier of the National Candle Association, surprising fragrances such as tomato, Jim Beam bourbon, tobacco cedar and leather have all risen in popularity—especially as more men become candle buyers and prefer more masculine scents.

Fragrance is also particularly powerful due to its ability to evoke memory. LaVanier added that candle companies are now capitalizing on this value, by giving candles descriptive names like Summer Camp or Friday Night Football that further induce nostalgia by allowing the consumer to reflect on past experiences.

What’s inside the home fragrance also counts, noted Ciccarella of P&G. She told Happi, “As we keep our eyes tuned to the latest in shopping habits, we’re noticing that the home fragrance category is mirroring a trend that we’re seeing across the consumer marketplace. Before placing items in their shopping carts, consumers are carefully scanning labels and paying close attention to the ingredients in products. This trend is especially on the rise with millennials parents, who we’re seeing are actively seeking out safe, yet effective, home fragrance solutions.”

Trends To Watch into 2019

- Consumer preferences are constantly shifting, and the US candle industry is evolving accordingly. Kathy LaVanier, president of the National Candle Association and CEO of Renegade Candles, points out the hottest home fragrance trends:

Personalized Touches

Consumers love the ability to customize their products based on their unique set of preferences and needs. Brands such as Yankee Candle offer customers the freedom to select their own fragrance, and add a personal touch like a photo or quote to the container.

Wooden Candle Wicks

Wooden wicks offer a uniquely visual and audible experience, and make a great addition to a relaxing ambience. As a candle burns, it gives off a soothing, soft crackling sound reminiscent of a fireplace. Unlike traditional cotton wicks, wooden wicks are offered in a variety of colors or printed designs.

Unique Containers

Along with the scent itself, the display is equally important. Following fragrance, a candle’s container is one of its top selling points. Companies like the Himalayan Trading Post have begun using reusable vessels such as wooden serving trays and galvanized iron pots that extend the life of a candle well after it is burned. Materials like concrete, metals, and tree bark are also appealing to consumers looking for candles that complement their home’s décor.