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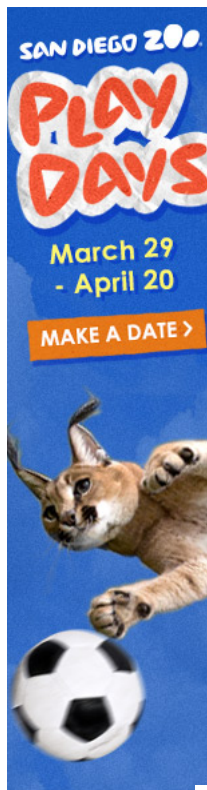
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Art Books Events

Richard E. Grant Launches JACK at Liberty: On the Scene Report

04/03/14 17:05:27 (6 comments) by: Suzy Nightingale



Standing so near me I can reach out and touch them are **Sir Bob Geldof, Jools Holland, Miranda Richardson, Simon Callow** and **Professor Brian Cox**. I restrain myself and do not even make an attempt to reach out, lest I cause an embarrassing scene and the security guards turf me onto the street. It's elbows out as the crowd surge forward to get a better look at the A-Listers and flash bulbs pop with photographers jostling for the best position while trying to avoid clattering into waiters balancing silver trays of Moët. We are all here at Liberty's of London for the launch of Richard E Grant's 'signature in scent' - the JACK perfume that has been two grueling years in the making, entirely self-funded and, as he revealed to me in an [exclusive interview for Fragrantica recently](#), the result of his lifelong passion for fragrance.

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NEW PERFUMES











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Angel Eau
Sucree



I arrived early for the launch and so, not exactly being averse to browsing the hallowed halls of Liberty, I wandered happily through the beauty department, making my way to the perfume section at the back to get a good look—and sniff!—at the beautiful display of the JACK perfume bottles and the starred ceiling draped with Union Jack bunting.

-  Coach
Coach Eau de Toilette
by pravda48
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FCUK Friction for Him
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Sweet and Spicy New Scents
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by rosembloom
-  New Fragrances
Givenchy Ange ou Demon Le
Secret Edition Croisiere
by daniellepolet
-  New Fragrances
Prada Candy Florale
by daniellepolet

-  Mancera
Wind Wood
-  Mancera
Aoud Violet
-  Mancera
Indian Dream
-  Mancera
Aoud Line
-  Mancera
Lemon Line
-  Houze Of Sillage
Passion de l'Amour
-  Jennifer Lopez
Growing Goddess
-  Jessica Simpson
Fancy Girl
-  Agatha
Agatha Street
-  Agatha
Rue Agatha



As I spritzed some on, rubbing my wrists (which you're not supposed to do, I know, everyone says so but it's instinctive, isn't it?) out of the corner of my eye I noticed a colourful movement of red, white and blue.



On closer inspection, this color combination was revealed to be Richard E. Grant himself, resplendent in a highly appropriate Union Jack jacket, and now making his way over to me. I paused mid-sniff, and he said, "You know everyone says you're not supposed to rub too hard," and I replied that had always been my trouble. Laughing, he asked if I was Suzy and I confirmed it was, indeed, me (a stunning piece of repartee, I excel at this stuff) and thanked him for being kind enough to [answer my previous questions for Fragrantica](#). After he whisked upstairs to get ready for the launch, I watched the shopping customers with interest, one woman covering herself in huge sprays from the tester. When she saw me looking, she grinned and held up her bag, "I've just purchased a bottle, but I can't get enough of the stuff. It's addictive!"

I am so glad I can finally share my sniffs with you and tell you what it smells like, for **JACK** is a real knee-trembler of a scent. Addictive it certainly must be, from the just-peeled lime with salty tang of the top notes, smoothly through to the decadent white floral musky heart and a gloriously dry tobacco, nutmeg, clove and pepper finish that lingers gloriously on the skin. The zestiness lasts all the way through, not like some fresh-noted fragrances where the pleasure is over in the first few minutes. It's juicy smelling, I know there's mandarin listed but I seem to get green mango, too. The overall effect is quite simply mouthwatering. On to the subject of the marijuana note, which isn't literal in the way of smelling like you've just smoked a naughty cigarette, it's far more accomplished than that, more a suggestion of a good time had by all and the party's hardly started ...



I made my way to the womenswear department where a room had been cleared to host this special event, chatting with some of the staff who were peeping in—"It smells so good in there!"—having my name checked off on the list and, eventually, it begins.

Richard is standing by the vast glass table filled with vases of red roses, talking away nine to the dozen and beckoning us over to join in. "Roja Dove my wizard and mentor told me I had a great nose and natural ability, possibly because I've never drunk or smoked. Well ... not cigarettes, anyway," he says with a mischievous waggle of his eyebrows.



Richard takes to the stage and describes to the rapt crowd his first meeting with top nose [Alienor Massenet](#): "She asked me to bring things that represented my favorite smells. I was emptying out my pockets on the table and there were marijuana leaves, citrus peelings, bits of nutmeg, peppercorns and I told her that it had to make you go 'rrrraaagh!' She said 'uh, what does that mean?' I said 'I don't know if I can put it into actual words but it has to go RAAWGH.' You know when people first smell it, I didn't want them to say 'Oh, yes, that's quite nice' I want them to go 'Oh YES, I love it, I want to lick it!'"

It is fascinating to hear Richard talk about his experience of working with a perfumer, trying so many different notes together and desperately trying to find that elusive eureka moment. What sounds good on paper and smells great in your mind can, of course, be quite another matter when it's sitting there on your skin.



"The thing is, at some point you have to make the final decision of what this is, like knowing the final brush-stroke of a painting or the final take of a scene. One day I decided to try mixing these two differing versions of the fragrance together and immediately called Alienor to say 'you have to make this one, please! It's the closest I am ever going to get.'

"I have obsessively collected flags all my life and people ask me about the packaging and why no Union Jack on the box. I'd been thinking of a way to get one on there for ages, but then when I was filming the television programme Hotel Secrets in Japan, I was inspired and suddenly knew the box had to be matte red with a black border, simple and stylish. Hardly any fragrances are packed in all red so it really stands out from a distance. I was hands-on in every aspect of this perfume, you see."



While Richard continues talking animatedly about his inspirations and the moment he bent to smell the gardenia bush in designer [Anya Hindmarch's](#) garden which led him on this adventure, he pauses to ask if he's going on too much. "No!" we roar back, so he laughs and carries on, talking about the many people who have helped him along the way in his scented journey. As he describes the various ways each of them gave up their time and, knowing he had no money left in the budget to spend in advertising, offered him practical help such as two weeks of a massive billboard for free—"... and I know how much this stuff costs, I now know what every single inch of a cardboard box costs to design and have made! People have been just incredible, incredible ..."—he becomes choked with emotion, leaning away from the microphone to wipe away actual tears of gratitude. It seems that he cannot bring himself to speak, leaving nobody in any doubt as to how much this means to him and what he has been through to get to this stage. Just in front of him, among the watching masses, is his daughter, Olivia, who calls out encouragingly, "Go on, dad ..." and he catches her eye, beaming a smile. As they share this moment it's difficult to say which of them is more proud.



"I have to thank my daughter for putting up with all the ranting and tearing my hair out at every single stage; and of course my wife, who can't be here tonight as she's filming abroad; for the constant humiliation for her of me sniffing everything, from food to people's necks to car bonnets. I find it really strange that everyone doesn't act this way, but apparently it's not normal. Oh well."

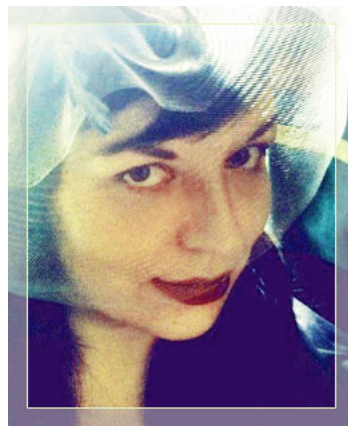
Stepping from the stage, composed again and looking mightily relieved, Richard makes his way among the guests, famous pals and his daughter's acquaintances and us lowly members of the press all greeted with equal warmth and a genuine appreciation for being there to support him. Richard confessed that he had been incredibly nervous about this evening, counting the hours until the official launch finally began, worrying over every little detail and even dressing the window displays himself.

Again, it is worth pointing out this is no celebrity perfume with a cheesy grin on a bottle and little thought to the juice inside, neither is it some huge company bankrolling an actor's vague wish to have a fragrance along with the book, the film and the mass-produced t-shirt. Richard knows of what he speaks, he may not have been a perfume expert when this began, but my goodness, the passion was obviously there and willed him forward to this day, with customers downstairs hungrily snapping up bottles in Liberty's exquisite perfume department, and up the creaky wooden stairs to this velvet roped-off room full of people sniffing themselves delightedly, saying "Oh wow, it's REALLY good, isn't it?"



Richard, you got your "RAAWGH!"

Pictures from the event in London by Suzy Nightingale



Suzy Nightingale ([Miss_Nightingale](#)) is a perfume-obsessed writer from the UK who wore Chanel's Coco aged 10 and never looked back. After reviewing her fragrance collection for Fragrantica and receiving positive feedback from fellow members and editors alike, Suzy joined the Fragrantica team to be a UK correspondent.

Reporting on exclusive events, product launches, interviewing perfume makers and discovering brand new labels to enthuse about; she also manages a day job in the world of fashion, while blogging about style, beauty, historical snippets and the various trinkets that catch her eye.

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Elena Vosnaki



This is one celebrity scent which has me interested. Love REG to bits, hope I get some juice in the mail for reviewing in the blog/here.

ranchorita





REG is a brilliant author and actor-- LOVE him! I can't wait to smell this-- ideally on my fellow! *bliss*

wait!-- this is unisex???(not that labels mean much to me!) - I may levitate at any moment. Correction: this purchase will be for myself. ;)

rosecat



wonderful! Can feel the excitement for him, amazing description of the event. i only wish i could smell it!

Filomena1941



I am so grateful to be a part of this blog. I feel like I have actually experienced this event and can smell this fragrance--and it smells marvelous!

Gojira



I have to point out you met the Great Intelligence again! I must have been brain dead when you said you were going to it. Brilliant article!

NebraskaLovesS



BRAVO! So happy to hear it's a wonderful scent. Best of luck with it, Mr. Grant!

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