

BEAUTY / FRAGRANCE

# EXCLUSIVE: Sana Jardin Uses Flowers to Empower Moroccan Women

The fragrances are exclusive to Harrods Salon De Parfums.

By [Samantha Conti](#) on August 2, 2017



Sana Jardin  
Courtesy

LONDON — Amy Christiansen Si-Ahmed has launched an eco-friendly collection of luxury fragrances called Sana Jardin. Spiked with Moroccan rose and jasmine essential oils, the first of the seven fragrances in the collection made their exclusive debut at **Harrods'** Salon De Parfums earlier this week — but that's only part of the story.

Si-Ahmed is using fragrance as a vehicle to create a social impact project. Although Sana Jardin is a for-profit fragrance house — with some big-name female investors and entrepreneurs on board — the production of the juices is helping the female flower harvesters of Morocco to build their own separate business.

Sana Jardin's scents have been created by the master perfumer Carlos Benaim and are made by IFF.



Sana Jardin Courtesy

Each one contains 15 to 20 percent essential oils, and they are free from artificial colors, parabens and formaldehydes. Each juice contains at least one ingredient that's been grown in Morocco, such as jasmine or rose.

The flowers are usually harvested by women, but their work is seasonal and the waste product from creating the oils and fragrances usually goes straight into the landfill. Si-Ahmed was hoping to solve those problems.

Working with Nest, the New York-based non-profit organization that aims to support global artisan businesses and homeworkers, and with Les Aromes de Maroc, the flavor and fragrance supplier owned by Morocco's King Mohammed VI, she came up with The Orange Blossom Project.

The project sees the flower harvesters work all year round, transforming waste from perfume production into orange blossom water and scented candle wax. The water is used widely throughout North Africa and the Mediterranean and can be used for making tea, for baking and for washing the face and hands.

The orange blossom water and candles are sold through the harvesters' newly established cooperative, and they retain 100 percent of the revenue.

“Berber women would pick the flowers during the seasonal harvest but it was traditionally sporadic work. Now it’s year-round work,” said the American-born Si-Ahmed, who’s based in London with her family.

“We want to change the way business is done and solve a social problem,” added Si-Ahmed, who has attracted a group of women investors for Sana Jardin. They include Emilie Fritz Veloso, the cofounder of O.N.E. Coconut Water; entrepreneurs Hortense Decaux and Sofia Barattieri-Weinstein and [Carmen Busquets](#).

Busquets was one of the earliest investors in Net-a-porter and also has stakes in brands such as Farfetch, Cult Beauty and Moda Operandi. She said she’d like to see the Orange Blossom business model rolled out to “many other countries and small villages to create great social impact.”

The project is in keeping with Si-Ahmed’s heritage. She may have been born and raised in the Midwest, but she traveled the world as a child with her grandmother Mary Pomeroy, a cofounder of The United States Delegation for Friendship Among Women.

Si-Ahmed would travel to North Africa and the Middle East with her grandmother, and continues to visit those regions. She said it was on a recent trip to Morocco that the idea for Sana Jardin hit her.



Sana Jardin Courtesy

“I always knew I wanted to help Moroccan women, as it is a country I spend a lot of time in, and it is very dear to my heart. I realized I could use my experience in implementing innovative solutions to social problems to create change,” said Si-Ahmed, who spent two decades working in the non-profit sector.

As for the fragrances, they are called Berber Blonde, with notes of orange blossom; Savage Jasmine; Sandalwood Temple; Tiger by her Side, with amber; Celestial Patchouli; Nubian Musk, and Revolution de la Fleur, with ylang yang.

The first four — Berber Blonde, Savage Jasmine, Sandalwood Temple and Tiger by her Side — are on shelves now, while the remaining three will land at [Harrods](#) in September.

Annalise Fard, Harrods’ director of beauty and home, called Sana Jardin, “the world’s first socially conscious fragrance house, founded with an innovative, social impact platform at its heart.”

She said Harrods was “very happy to get behind and support” The Orange Blossom Project.

The perfumes are priced at 180 pounds per 100-ml. bottle. The bottles and black caps are made from recyclable materials, while the box, which features an ancient snake symbol meant to represent destruction and creation, is recyclable.

A “discovery” set of seven 2-ml. bottles will also be available to purchase online on the brand’s site [sanajardin.com](#), which is set to go live in mid-August.

Si-Ahmed, who began working on the project two years ago, said she wanted to create perfumes that smelled like “sophisticated” essential oils and said the fragrances are meant to be layered. The name is a blend of East and West: Sana comes from the Arabic word for dazzling or radiant and “jardin” means garden in French.

There are more products on the way: Travel sizes and roller balls will be launched next year, as will luxury scented candles.

Si-Ahmed said she eventually wants to double the number of fragrances in the collection, and is also talking to stores in the U.S., the Middle East and Hong Kong to roll out the collection late this year or in early 2018.