

Perfume Bottle Enthusiasts Gather

Contributed by Joanna McLaughlin
Saturday, 17 May 2008
Last Updated Thursday, 29 May 2008

The International Perfume Bottle Association (IPBA) just held its annual meeting May 1-4, 2008 in St. Louis, Missouri. The organization's website is at <http://www.perfumbottles.org>.

Perfume bottle collectors have been around since perfumes were first put in bottles. (The first perfumes were more like incense, so the bottling craze didn't kick in until the Renaissance era and later.)

In fact, bottling was part of the mystique of perfume. Some of the early perfumes for women were put in elaborate cut glass or colored bottles to heighten their elegance. So extravagant had perfume bottles become in the 18th and 19th century that when a young upstart named Coco Chanel decided to unveil her signature scent, she opted for a sleek, plain rectangular bottle. That was way back in 1923. Chanel wanted something that was the antithesis of current perfume thinking.

While Chanel No. 5 still comes in the classic clear rectangular bottle, that, too, became an important milestone in how we think about perfume design. Today, bottles can be intricate (Bvlgari's Amethyst bottle looks like a knot), artistic (Missoni Missoni gets my vote here), decorative (Lolita Lempicka), unusual (the Bond No. 9 collection and Angel by Thierry Mugler), and extraordinarily practical (Stella by Stella McCartney).