

Scento Study: €780M in Unworn Perfume as Blind-Buying Fails European Consumers

First comprehensive study reveals 67% of European fragrance buyers own unworn bottles worth €340 each; Scento's sampling model emerges as solution

PARIS, FRANCE, November 15, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A groundbreaking study

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The €780M in fragrance waste across Europe isn't just a consumer problem – it's an environmental and economic crisis demanding a new approach to perfume discovery”

Sebastian Dobrinu, CEO and Founder, Scento

commissioned by Scento, Europe's leading [online perfume store](#) platform, reveals that European consumers are sitting on €780 million worth of unworn perfume, with blind-buying driving a fragrance waste crisis across 19 markets.

The first comprehensive research of its kind surveyed 1,247 fragrance consumers across France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands, uncovering shocking statistics about online perfume purchasing behavior and the economic impact of scent-buying regret.

Key Findings:

- 67% of European fragrance buyers own at least one perfume bottle worn fewer than three times
- Average consumer waste totals €340 in regretted fragrance purchases over three years
- 82% cite inability to experience scent before purchasing as primary barrier to online buying
- 73% of online fragrance returns attributed to scent mismatch and unmet expectations
- 4.3 average number of unworn or rarely-used bottles per consumer
- 12.8 million bottles of niche and designer fragrances sitting unused across surveyed markets

The Blind-Buying Problem

As Europe's luxury perfume market accelerates toward €38 billion by 2034, consumers increasingly face a paradox: expanding access to niche and designer fragrances online, yet no ability to experience scents before committing €60-€150 per bottle.

"The €780 million in fragrance waste across Europe isn't just a consumer problem—it's an environmental and economic crisis demanding a new approach to perfume discovery," said Sebastian Dobrinicu, CEO and Founder of Scento. "Our research quantifies for the first time what millions of consumers experience: the frustration of blind-buying fragrances based on notes lists and reviews, only to discover the scent doesn't match their expectations."



The study reveals that blind-buying—purchasing perfume without prior scent experience—results in:

- 58% consumer dissatisfaction rate for first-time niche fragrance purchases
- €127 average loss per regretted purchase when factoring in return shipping and restocking fees
- 89% of consumers stating they would purchase more fragrances if sampling were accessible

The Environmental Impact

Beyond economic waste, the research highlights significant environmental implications. An estimated 38.4 million milliliters of unused fragrance currently sits in European homes, representing substantial waste in production, packaging, and transportation resources.

Among surveyed consumers, 71% expressed concern about fragrance waste but felt trapped by the current online purchasing model that forces commitment to full-size bottles without trial options.

The Sampling Solution

The research validates Scento's pioneering sampling-first business model, where members receive personalized 8ml fragrance samples through AI-powered scent matching before committing to full-size purchases.

Early data from Scento's member base demonstrates:

- 94% satisfaction rate with AI-recommended fragrance matches
- 86% reduction in purchase regret compared to traditional blind-buying
- 3.2x higher repurchase rate when consumers sample before buying

"Traditional online fragrance retail forces consumers to gamble on expensive bottles they've never experienced," continued Dobrinu. "We're proving that AI-driven personalization combined with accessible sampling eliminates waste, increases satisfaction, and creates sustainable discovery paths for [niche and designer perfumes](#)."

Market Implications

With niche perfume segments growing at 12% annually and online fragrance sales projected to reach €15.3 billion across Europe by 2027, the study's findings signal urgent need for industry evolution.

Dr. Marie Beaumont, fragrance industry analyst and study consultant, noted: "This research establishes the first quantitative baseline for understanding fragrance purchasing regret across European markets. The implications for retailers, brands, and consumers are profound—the sampling economy isn't just convenient, it's economically and environmentally necessary."

Methodology

The Scento European Fragrance Waste Study 2025 surveyed 1,247 fragrance consumers aged 25-65 across six European markets between November 2024 and January 2025, conducted in partnership with independent research firm RIFM. Respondents represented demographic cross-sections of active fragrance purchasers who buy at least two bottles annually.

Looking Ahead

Armed with these consumer insights, Scento announces plans to expand beyond sampling into full-size bottle offerings by Q3 2025, allowing members to purchase 30ml and full-sized bottles of their favorite discoveries at competitive prices.

"This research proves what we've believed from day one: consumers want access to niche and designer fragrances, but the discovery process is fundamentally broken," said Dobrincu. "We're building the infrastructure to become Europe's largest fragrance retailer by solving the problem at its root – giving people confidence in their choices through personalized sampling and AI-powered recommendations."

About Scento

Scento is Paris-based luxury fragrance technology company transforming how European consumers discover and purchase niche and designer perfumes. Through AI-powered personalization, authenticated supply networks, and innovative sampling programs, Scento serves members across 19 European markets with curated fragrance discovery experiences. Following a €25 million investment commitment in 2024, Scento is expanding from [perfume samples and decants](#) into full-size fragrance retail to become Europe's most trusted perfume destination. Learn more at scento.com.

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