

Matière Première Set to Enter North America

The French niche fragrance brand signed a distribution deal with International Cosmetics and Perfumes Inc.

By **Jennifer Weil**  April 15, 2022, 9:30am



PARIS — Matière Première is poised to enter North America in August.

The niche French perfume brand cofounded in 2019 by Aurélien Guichard, Caius von Knorring and Cédric Meiffret, has signed on International Cosmetics and Perfumes Inc. for distribution in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Matière Première, which was created to highlight the natural ingredients contained in the formulas and uses sustainable practices in its entire development chain — including sourcing from organically grown plants, has seen exponential growth. In 2021, its sales increased by 380 percent against 2020, and it looks likely to register triple-digit growth again this year, according to von Knorring, the brand's chief executive officer.

Numerous factors drew ICP to Matière Première.

“It fills the white space within our portfolio and, quite honestly, the industry,” said Thomas Saujet, CEO and president of ICP. “The brand's focus on raw materials is so unique, their visual merchandising is simple, elegant and a differentiator in the market and the way the products are showcased creatively through images; the combination of raw materials with a glimpse into Aurélien's laboratory is novel.

“Also, the team is incredible,” continued Saujet. “Aurélien’s family legacy as longtime perfumers, coupled with his cofounders for their business acumen, is truly a fresh perspective on the niche **fragrance** business.”

The strategy in North America is to launch a Matière Première website, with an e-commerce component, that’s run by ICP, in August. In September, the brand will launch exclusively in the U.S. through Saks Fifth Avenue and saks.com, and select concept stores. Then Canada and Mexico are slated for later this year.

ICP has big plans for Matière Première.

“In the next three years, we see it as a top-five rank in the niche **fragrance** category,” said Saujet.

Von Knorring said Matière Première took its time to find a U.S. partner.

“We chose to go with ICP because we thought this company was really the best to be able to give Matière Première the full dimension it can have in the U.S. They also share the ambition [and strategic vision] we have,” he said.

Matière Première launched in Harrods, then opened a shop-in-shop corner in Printemps. From there, it entered niche specialty stores such as Dover Street Perfume Market and Corso Como, leading up to when the pandemic struck. By then in Harrods, Matière Première was ranking among the top 20 fragrance brands and its Falcon Leather, in the top 10.

The brand established business contacts and opened some new distribution. Today, Matière Première is sold in more than 40 countries through over 100 doors — mainly flagship department stores worldwide.

The brand is also carried in a host of niche fragrance retailers, such as CampoMarzio 70 in Italy, Crème de la Crème in the Baltics, Galilu in Poland and Art of Sense in the Philippines.

In late October 2020, Matière Première raised 1.3 million euros in funding to help accelerate its development.

“The people we choose to work with, whether it’s in China, America or the Middle East ... are capable of understanding our DNA,” said Guichard, Matière Première’s perfumer-creator, adding partners also must see the brand’s potential.

On March 19, Matière Première launched French Flower, its ninth fragrance worldwide and 10th in the U.K. Guichard had planted tuberose in the south of France a few years ago.

“There is something amazing about the smell of a tuberose field at night — the smell of the air that surrounds [it],” said Guichard, who created the fragrance with mostly tuberose absolute to echo that. The goal was to make the scent both modern and approachable.