

TIME in a BOTTLE

by Marguerite LaCorte

Although we can never stop the hands of time, there will always be elements of a period that help us capture tradition and memories. For me the fascination of perfume bottles began as a small child, when my family would visit grandma on Sunday. My favorite room was her bedroom, since it was there I noticed her vanity table consumed by an assortment of beautiful flacons. In the late afternoon, the sunlight would stream through the window. Fragments of light ricocheted of each bottle throughout the room.

As I grew older, I would watch my parents prepare for an evening out. There was a glamour that excited my senses watching them fuss and primp. Mom was never completely ready until a dose of fragrance was applied and I was the lucky candidate who would help her choose which one! Of course I was enchanted by the different shapes, sizes, colors and stoppers of her assorted bottles. It was not a matter of choosing randomly. Oh, no!

For me deciding on this finishing touch was a serious decision. From there, the passion for fragrance bottles and the alluring essence within captivated me. The "commercial" perfume bottle is synonymous with a particular time or place for the collector and non collector alike. From the evolution of the simple apothecaries' jar, to the ornate artisan designs; the bottle has always evoked beauty.



D'Orsay
"LYDES D'ORSAY"

C.1916. Crystal bottle with sterling collar and label.



Coty
"PARIS"

C.1921 Crystal bottle, Package shows fireworks spelling out Coty Paris.

There were two advances in bottle making that helped make it possible to standardize the fragrance bottle. The first breakthrough was the mechanization of the blow molded glass method and the second was the invention of the automatic bottle making machine, which was patented in 1891 by J. Michael Owens. By the early 1900's commercial bottle manufacturing in the United States had become fully automated. The golden age of the perfume bottle which occurred around 1907 and continued until W.W.II, was the direct result of technological advancement as well as the partnership that evolved between two of the world Masters; Rene Lalique and Francois Coty. To a collector of fine glass, the name Lalique represents the highest level of quality. The prestige that Lalique glass conveys, was based on the mere genius of Rene Lalique's mastery of techniques which he refined first as a jeweler and then later adapted to the production of glass. In 1907, Francois Coty, commissioned Lalique to design the labels of his perfume bottles. Later Lalique designed his own bottles as well. This relationship became one of the most successful of all Lalique's commercial ventures.