

BOOK REVIEWS

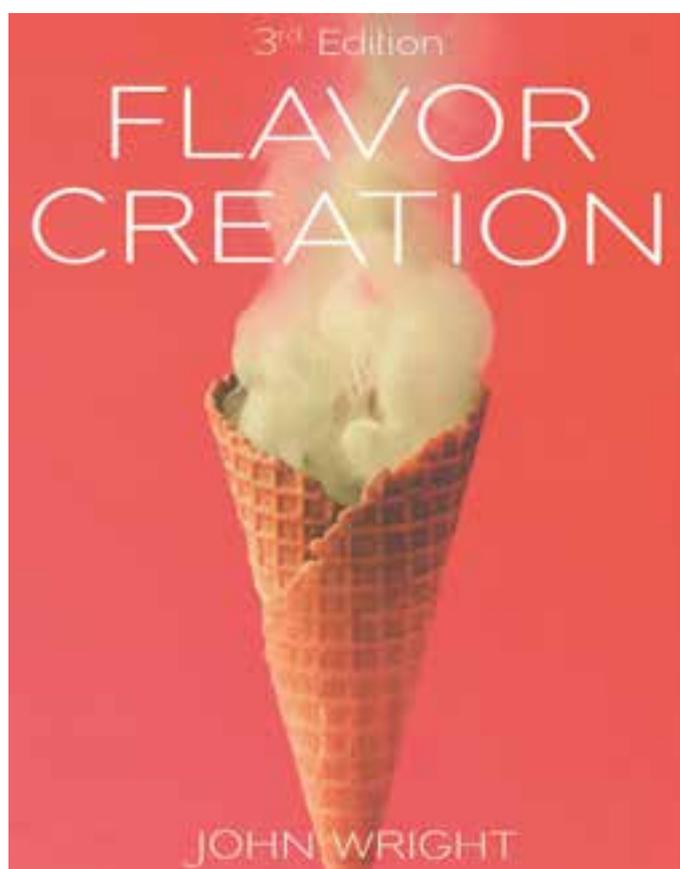
DR TONY CURTIS

FLAVOUR CREATION (3rd Edition)

John Wright

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Over a decade ago I was asked by IFEAT to expand the old IFEAT undergraduate Perfumery programme, not only into a postgraduate (MBA style) programme but also to embrace both the Flavour & Fragrance aspects of the Aroma Trades. This would have been an impossible task without the participation of world-renowned authors such as Brian Lawrence, John Ayres and John Wright. John Wright authored the ICATS Modules on Flavour Creation and Application of Flavours to Flavoured Products. He is the world's leading presenter on Flavour Creation and has over many years run the IFEAT Conference Workshop on Flavours. See page 6 of this News Letter where we profile this outstanding contribution to the Aroma Trades.

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I was particularly drawn to, Chapter 8: Flavour Matching. In the Perfumery area many writers discuss fragrance creation. Very few discuss the matching brief such as: 'Can we have something like Chanel 5 but that works in white soap'. There is an old saying that 'A little knowledge is dangerous.' Too often people with superficial knowledge think all you have to do is a GC – MS run and the computer will print out the appropriate formula. There is too much 'fake news' about how AI (artificial intelligence) and 'expert computer systems' will replace the creative process. Well we are not there yet! You find citral in a flavour. Is it added natural citral (isolated from an essential oil), is it a component from a whole oil used in the formulation or

from synthetic citral? The raw GC – MS print out will not give you the answer. Matching (flavour or perfumery) is a forensic process with a lot of creativity (plus a lot of practical experience!). John is disarmingly honest about the 'political' flavour matching request. In discussing the short deadline matching brief John writes:

The short deadline is the clue. In all too many instances the matching request was simply a means of pressuring the existing supplier on price and would never have resulted in a sale.

This is not just an academic treatise, although it is academically rigorous. There is a lifetime of hard practical experience in flavours between its covers. Too often the inexperienced will see a brief in technical terms. After all, the stability and applications issues are challenging enough! There are always the political and commercial contexts to consider as well. In the last edition of the ICATS News Letter we reviewed 'FOOD INDUSTRY R&D: A New Approach' which also covered the political dimensions of NPD (new product development). Another welcome and essential section is Chapter 12: Legislation. Most of the fashion press provide exciting cover to fragrance creation and never give any cover to regulatory affairs. You can do much as you like on an oil painting. There is no amount of blue colour you can't use, if you want! Flavours and fragrances are not like that. Not a hint of IFRA recommendations in the tabloid press for perfumes. Much of my lecturing at University was in International Marketing. My practical experience came from 25 years of working in the Aroma Trades with its global consumer markets and supply chains. John gets stuck in on the very first page of this chapter. What is safe and legal? Well it all depends (of course) as you might expect. An LD50 is an LD50. There should be no problem about a simple set of global regulations to govern food safety and flavours. Dream on! In just on 20 pages he gives a vivid personal overview of its nature and complexity. For readers not familiar with this quagmire of regulation I think John's comment on the AFT regulations sum things up nicely:

AFT Regulations: As if things were not complicated enough, flavours for alcoholic drinks are regulated in the United States by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (AFT).

Well of course just what you expect! I managed BBA's UK Formulation Control Unit for some time. We had, even over 25 years ago, two people full time to check formulations and advise customers about local safety and labelling requirements. Natural, organic and sustainable were not the major issues, reflected in complex legislation, that they are now. After all you do not want to confuse your WONF (with other natural flavours) with your GRAS (generally recognized as safe) regulations. Elsewhere in this News Letter I have said the 'Devil is in the detail'. Recently ICATS had to check-

out a UK VAT (value added tax) issue. The expert we consulted cheerfully said they would consult this year's UK Government guidance notes – these run to over 10,000 pages! In ICATS we do believe people should, be financially literate. It is not possible for them to be expert in taxation issues in, even just one country, it is a full-time role. It is the same for safety and regulatory affairs, the practising Aroma Trades professional must have a sound overview to talk to the experts and to intelligently use the available computer systems that allow the efficient and effective management of this labyrinth of complexity. After the heavy but necessary coverage of regulations Chapter 13 Elysium is a joy. This is the capstone of this monumental work (all 449 pages). Here John provides a 50-year perspective of the past with a pointer to the future, with great care not to be nostalgic. A CIM (Chartered Institute of Marketing) exam question was to invite students to discuss the difference between a Product led company and a Marketing led company. What should the driving force be? Over an enthralling few pages of focused comment he wittily and insightfully considers some of the driving forces: Creative, Applications, Research, Operations, Finance, Marketing or Sales. This is just a warm-up to considering the types CEO (Chief Executive Officer) aspects: Visionary Leader, The Next Bright Idea, The Launch Question, The Common Touch, The Hair Shirt, Team Building, The Sharp End, Industry Experience, Silver Bullet, Restructuring, Flavourists are People Too and Fixed Idea.

It is odd how many times the words 'Silver Bullet' come up in conversation. Silver bullets are especially attractive tools for CEOs to ward off questions from their directorial boards. They sound good and the details are often close to incomprehensible, which suits all involved.

This book is a suitable testament to a lifetime of experience in the industry. I well remember in 1969 the publication of Steffen Arctander's Perfume and Flavour Chemicals (Aroma Chemicals). This was expensive but many Perfumers and Flavourists purchased a copy to have close to the right hand when creating flavours or fragrances. After 50 years of use my copy is starting to disintegrate. I feel this too will be a 'Must have personal copy' for Senior Flavourists. Every laboratory engaged in making flavour materials, creating flavours or using flavours should have a copy of this book. John has not only brought his vast knowledge and experience to this publication but also his effervescent enthusiasm for the topic. This is not a bedtime read, but an essential reference source to all professionals in the flavour area of the Aroma Trades.