Celebrity craze hits the mens fragrances market

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Celebrity scents have been stealing the limelight in the fragrances market for the past five years but only recently has their popularity extended to the men's category.

In the UK alone celebrity signature scents have come to account for an estimated 40% of the fragrances market, a 2,000% rise in value sales on the 2004 figure according to UK specialist chain The Perfume Shop. With over 30 new brands coming onto the market in 2007, including fragrances from Kate Moss, Katie Price, Christina Aguilera and Gwen Stefani, the trend is showing no signs of abating.

The UK is by no means the only market where celebrity fragrances are finding success. Indeed it has become a truly worldwide phenomenon in an age where the rich and famous are followed with an almost cult-like fervour. Using the celebrity as a brand, perfume houses have found a way of tapping into ready-made consumer groups with the minimum of time and investment, enabling them to keep pace in a launch-intensive market where two years is the average shelf life for a new scent.

Ubiquitous in the women's category they might be but celebrity scents are only just gaining a foothold in the men's fragrances market. Despite early adoptees of the trend including Antonio Banderas, Carlos Santana and Donald Trump, celebrity fragrances only gained serious attention in the male category in 2006 when Sean John Unforgivable stormed the global market to become the first celebrity brand to achieve top 10 status in the men's premium segment. Since then, Intimately Beckham for Him has performed strongly in the UK and US, and perfumery shelves are fast filling up with yet more me-too launches. New York Yankees Captain Derek Jeter, KISS and Usher are just some of the stars that have sensed the opportunities in the fragrances market.

Part of the reason celebrity scents have been late to take off in the men's category is a general lack of supply. Early launches were small and under-funded and major introductions were saved for the women's market. This is not surprising given that women's fragrances generate US$20 billion globally each year (about twice the value of the men's category) and with only around 50% penetration, continue to enjoy solid growth year on year. The women's market is a good testing ground for new developments, with women being generally more experimental than their male counterparts.

Changing male grooming patterns, however, mean the average man now spends longer in the bathroom and a larger portion of his income on shaving products and toiletries. This has meant a boom in sales of men's fragrances â€“ the global market grew by over 50% in 2007 according to Euromonitor International's provisional 2008 data â€“ and a renewed interest in the category from manufacturers.

Celebrity fragrances are generally targeted at a younger demographic too, and this may further explain their tardy uptake amongst men. Unlike other areas of the men's grooming market and particularly skin care, hair care and shower products, premium fragrances have stronger appeal among older men. Teens and men in their early 20s tend to be more tempted by strongly-scented body sprays such as TAG and Axe (also branded as Lynx or Ego in some markets) that are cheaper and have racier images and associations with sexual success. In recent years companies have begun to realign their men's fragrances with the younger set and celebrity scents may be seeing the benefits of their efforts.

The men's fragrances market is expected to reach US$13 billion by 2012, according to provisional Euromonitor International data, representing a 17% rise on the current figure. When inflation is taken into account, this suggests only a moderate slowdown on historic dynamism. Celebrity scents are expected to play an increasing role in sales growth. However, not all fragrance manufacturers stand to benefit from the trend. Of the big name players, Coty has the best potential, with a diverse portfolio of celebrity scents and a number two global ranking in the men's premium fragrances market. Procter & Gamble, to a lesser extent, is also associated with the celebrity trend and has been pumping resources into its prestige fragrances business in recent years. Elizabeth Arden, on the other hand, will have more difficulty tapping into the trend without a top 10 position in the premium men's segment despite being the creator of Elizabeth Taylor White Diamonds, the world's most enduring celebrity fragrance.For further detail about this article and other related findings, please visitÂ Euromonitor International by clicking here.