

Strenesse Gabriele Strehle: The Fashion One brand. One woman. One philosophy.

However did Gabriele Strehle manage it? There are, after all, so many top designers. Her success story is often seen as a fairy-tale come true in the fashion world. Today everyone knows the difficulty of transforming a good brand into a cult brand. And of rendering a designer's name a hallmark that's synonymous with a certain art of living.

From a closer perspective, Gabriele Strehle's career isn't remotely like a fairy-tale. The real story is believable. Hers was not a shooting rise to fame. It was a growth process. And growing takes time. Only after she had imprinted her personal style throughout the Strenesse company did the designer put her name to one collection: Strenesse Gabriele Strehle. "An artist only signs work he feels is complete," she says, "and work he recognises himself in."

Gabriele Strehle is a person who does not need the spotlight. Nevertheless, she can be encountered at any time. Her character is, after all, woven into every item. That's because the values she cherishes in her private life are the ones that shape her work as well. Gabriele Strehle makes clothes for women who, like herself, reconcile what seems irreconcilable. Women who have and embody apparent opposites: femininity and determination; the desire for both a career and a charismatic sensuality; a cool head and natural warmth; the resolution to fight and the grace to surrender. "A woman today no longer wants to accept an either-or situation." Gabriele Strehle knows the price of this freedom. But she also understands the importance of retaining one thing: the right to dream. Her dream was to create her own perfume. Because that in turn will tempt others to dream too.

Strenesse Gabriele Strehle: The Concept

One yearning. One goal. One path.

Why does Gabriele Strehle want her own fragrance too? After all, there are perfumes in abundance. Designer fragrances for designer fashion brands have long become the norm. Or worse still, a matter of routine. Something that Gabriele Strehle simply cannot accept. Least of all, when she has perfume on her mind.

"For me every perfume evokes a yearning," she says. "A longing for love, faraway places, freedom and tenderness." There is only one thing it must not emit: the odour of commercialism. It is beyond Gabriele Strehle that some designers' names feature on perfumes, even though they were scarcely involved in their creation. "If people think of the fragrance as a part of me, then I need to be part of it."

Her goal was to compose a fragrance that lends her fashion a fourth dimension. A scent that conveys what fashion cannot express. One that touches what fashion cannot touch.

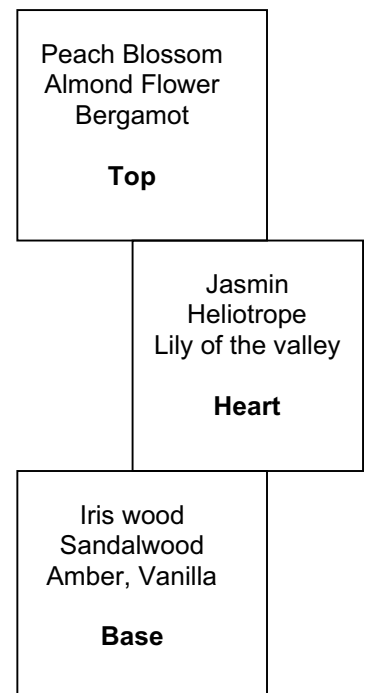
The road towards this vision was arduous: when a perfectionist accepts new challenges, there can be no compromises. Nor any easy solutions. Gabriele Strehle knew exactly what she wanted. And that was something unprecedented, something completely new. No wonder there were so many barriers to overcome; persuasion comes faster than conviction. And even for something as delicate as a fragrance, a revolution takes a far greater toll than any innovation. As the celebrated and seasoned New York perfumer Maurice Roucel from Dragoco was to discover. Together with him, Gabriele Strehle successfully completed the expedition. And returned from this new frontier exhausted and satisfied in equal measure. For her, it had been a journey into the unknown.

Strenesse Gabriele Strehle: The Fragrance

A sensation. A blossom. A secret.

Whatever is Gabriele Strehle up to? There are plenty of professionals who know how to develop a new fragrance line. But during the numerous conferences, this woman simply kept her eyes closed. "It's the only way I can see the ideas clearly in front of me," she said - and started talking about her feelings, her intuitions and her instinct. Suddenly the experts were riveted. They sensed what Gabriele Strehle meant when she said: "I want something shrouded, veiled, not a substance that's clear like water. A fragrance, more than anything else, must be mysterious." For a secret veiled is a secret kept. Only that which is concealed sparks our curiosity, perplexing and captivating us at once. What would be *discovered* must first be covered.

The nectar of ripe fruits has always been magical for Gabriele Strehle. "Purity in opacity, this sensual essence gleaned from a plant – that was what fascinated me." Above all, almond milk, because almond trees per se embody mystery for her. The delicate yet intense fragrance of the blushing blossoms, the delightful flavour of the nuts and their milk, the contrast between the rough, sturdy shell and its white, sensuous core. A darker, natural intensity was added: the depth of iris wood, tangy sandalwood, black vanilla seeds, and animalistic amber. But at its heart remains the almond, combined with other notes both white and light: peach blossom and bergamot, jasmine, heliotrope und lily of the valley. It is no coincidence that the almond tree has spun so many tales and myths – Judaic and Christian, eastern Asian and oriental. In China the almond is the symbol of feminine beauty, of spiritual strength and vigilance. All qualities that seem perfectly tailored to Gabriele Strehle. She had never read anything about them. But she still knew. Because she has an eye for such things - and a nose.



floral-oriental, fruity,
sweet-ambery

Strenesse Gabriele Strehle: Packaging the Perfume

One line. One symbol. One vision.

What's left for a designer to dream up? Flacons already come in every conceivable shape and size. There doesn't seem to be any scope for improvement. Gabriele Strehle didn't seek inspiration in distant regions. She saw something good very close by – when being handed the initial samples of her scent in the laboratory bottles used by the perfumer. These were simple cylindrical phials: rounded without being extravagant, rational yet still emotional, one of the oldest and simplest – yet utterly modern shapes. In short: Gabriele Strehle through and through. And she knew exactly who could make this idea work, who could create a flacon that perfectly matched her and her fragrance. The Hamburg-based designer Peter Schmidt. A designer whose belief had long been reductive clarity while others still revelled in decorative opulence.

A transparent bottle reveals the full magic of the mysteriously opalescent liquid. A faintly frosted lid sounds an echo of the contents. But Peter Schmidt was still not satisfied. He wanted a symbol. Of Gabriele Strehle's intense expressiveness, of the profound impression this unusual woman makes on everyone she meets. He wanted the imprint of her personality, the stamp that makes each of her designs truly unique. So he decided to put her thumbprint on the flacon: the ultimate seal of authenticity.

As a virtuoso musician takes up and interprets a melody, Peter Schmidt also expanded the leitmotif of the almond. The almond shell became a twin-layered folding box that couches the flacon. The darkness of the almond's outer layer is reflected in the box's inky interior. Nestling within this shell is the quintessence: the flacon with its shimmering white contents. Peter Schmidt retained the natural quality of Gabriele Strehle's vision. Because nothing is more precious than purity.

Strenesse Gabriele Strehle: Body Care Products

A need. A word. A touch.

What more, then, can we expect from a range of body care products? Chemists, cosmeticians, physicians and biologists the world over have already tinkered and tested ad infinitum. Gabriele Strehle has never sought to outrace state-of-the-art innovation. Instead, she has returned to the roots. To the origins of our needs. She summed up this approach many years ago in a single word that epitomises everything she creates for Strenesse. A kind of second skin: *skinaffinity*. It isn't found in any dictionaries, because she made it up herself. But people intuit instantly what it means. Something that is attuned to the skin, that does it good. Something akin to the skin. In a tactile sense. Yet at the same time, an emotionally-charged sensation that gets under your skin. Penetrating to your very soul.

This idea engendered the White Body Care Line. Mild and soothing like almond milk; ever so gently smoothing away stress. With a shower milk for the perfect start to the morning, followed by a body milk that envelops the body throughout the day like an invisible veil. And a roll-on deodorant for sure protection – effective and yet mild. Providing a feeling of security and freedom. A shield against environmental influences that's kind to the skin. Pampering but never pushy - this is the essence of the White Body Care Line. The fragrance is gentle, as is the skin's contact with the fine, silky shower milk, body milk and deodorant. These products remind you: touching brings happiness. Caressing our bodies means caressing our inner selves. Gabriele Strehle kept searching until she found three products that instantly take to the skin, soaking in and leaving behind a silky, velvety shimmer. All three products are luxuriously simple. Because pampering is also the simplest form of luxury.

shower milk

creamy, moisturising silk proteins caress the skin with a fine, rich lather – for a luxurious skincare sensation.

body milk

enriched, ultra-lightweight lotion that pampers the skin with a silky powder; quickly absorbed for a velvety finish.

roll-on deodorant

gentle and long-lasting – perfectly rounding out the fragrance experience.

Strenesse Gabriele Strehle: The Language

One motif. One mystery. One message.

How can images evoke a fragrance? The world's leading advertising agencies have sought solutions for years. Many a creative mind has been wrung dry by elaborate theories and strategies. Gabriele Strehle was not seeking a new theory, but a new language. An idiom of imagery that speaks without words. Distilling the essence of the fragrance. Intimating its secret. Without, however, revealing too much.

The mysterious is always elusive. As a result, the visual presentation needed to avoid anything too overt. This idea led Gabriele Strehle and her Art Director Thomas Elsner to the New York-based photographer Craig McDean. His style is implicit rather than explicit. He never states the obvious but rather paints ambivalent, deeply meaningful scenes. Refraining from exposing every last detail, he prefers to cast mystifying shadows that inspire speculation and supposition. And leave room for thought.

And the path to the photographer Craig McDean led Gabriele Strehle further – to Amy Wesson, a young American who, at just twenty-four, has already learned an important truth. That she owes her charisma to what she doesn't know about herself. That those facets of her sensuous body remaining concealed fill others with desire. That the hidden features of her beautiful face spark curiosity. Craig McDean realized that Gabriele Strehle's message cannot be conveyed by a face or a figure. Thus the photography showcases not the model but her skin. The perfect contours of her shoulders, neck and throat – all the places a woman dabs perfume. Every single pore appears to radiate the fragrance. Anyone viewing these pictures will inhale the secret of a new scent. Because they speak a language that our soul understands.

Strenesse Gabriele Strehle: The Company

An evolution. A statement. An aura.

What makes a small company grow into a global organisation?

Good intentions alone definitely do not. What we call "luck" hinges on the ability to recognize good fortune when it calls. In 1949 the Strehle family opened a textiles factory in Bavaria. Its destiny was shaped just two years later with the birth, also in Bavaria, of a girl named Gabriele. Having trained as a bespoke tailor – completing her degree at the Munich Fashion Academy – Gabriele took a post as a designer for the young brand 'Strenesse' in 1973- at the Strehle GmbH textiles company. And that turning point marked a radical change in focus. The corporate 'identity' shifted from being a goal to being a way of life, shaped by the personality of a head designer who – measuring just 5' 5" – perfectly embodied the company. Even more so, when she and the entrepreneur Gerd Strehle married in 1985. In taking this step, he demonstrated his own talent for recognising good fortune. From then on the Strenesse brand identity was not only unequivocal, but inextricably entwined with Gabriele Strehle: clarity plus sensitivity, simplicity plus sophistication, personality plus sex appeal. The cosy yet cosmopolitan Gabriele Strehle had created a style that was understood the world over.

The break through was delivered by her acclaimed fashion show in Milan 1996, where she has since continued to regularly present her collections. Today Strenesse is represented in over 30 countries around the world. With stores from Hamburg to Munich, and Milan to Rome. And with shop-in-shops from New York to Tokyo, and London to Moscow. Converted into an AG in 2000, the German equivalent to a US Corporation, Strenesse has subsidiaries in Italy, the U.S.A. and Japan. Strenesse clothing, shoes, bags and accessories post total annual sales of approximately 200 million DM. Until now, the charisma that is Strenesse Gabriele Strehle has lacked one thing only. A fragrance.

This has now been developed with Cosmopolitan Cosmetics as the licensee - a partner that not only represents the product, but also shares her conviction. Without flourishes or fanfares, this fragrance will quietly captivate women and – through them – men as well. Regardless of their language, their creed, and their country. Because charisma knows no bounds.

Strenesse Gabriele Strehle: The Products

A secret. A caress. A scent.

Eau de Parfum Natural Spray 25 ml

Eau de Parfum Natural Spray 50 ml

Eau de Parfum légère Natural Spray* 50 ml

Eau de Parfum Natural Spray 75 ml

Shower Milk 150 ml

Body Milk 150 ml

Roll-on Deodorant 50 ml

* Not available in all countries.