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ESXENCE 2024: Emil Élise Presented A New Fragrance — Twisted Sin

Niche Perfumery

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In 1994, [Calvin Klein](#) released [CK One Eau De Toilette](#), one of the first fragrances to be openly marketed as unisex. Targeted at a younger audience, it quickly became iconic due to its clean, minimalist design and fresh, sparkling scent with citrusy, green, and woody notes. [The ad](#) — featuring Kate Moss, Stella Tennant, Donovan Leitch, Jenny Shimizu, and other models — drew inspiration from a 1969 [photo](#) by Richard Avedon, Andy Warhol, and the Factory members. The secret to the campaign's success lay in its deliberate simplicity, gender ambiguity, languid sensibility, and the controversial *heroin chic* aesthetics.

Thirty years later, the legendary photo of casually dressed people against a white background continues to captivate and inspire young creators. The monochrome advertising campaign by the niche brand [Emil Élise](#), celebrating individuality, self-confidence, and diversity, pays homage to Steven Meisel's work.



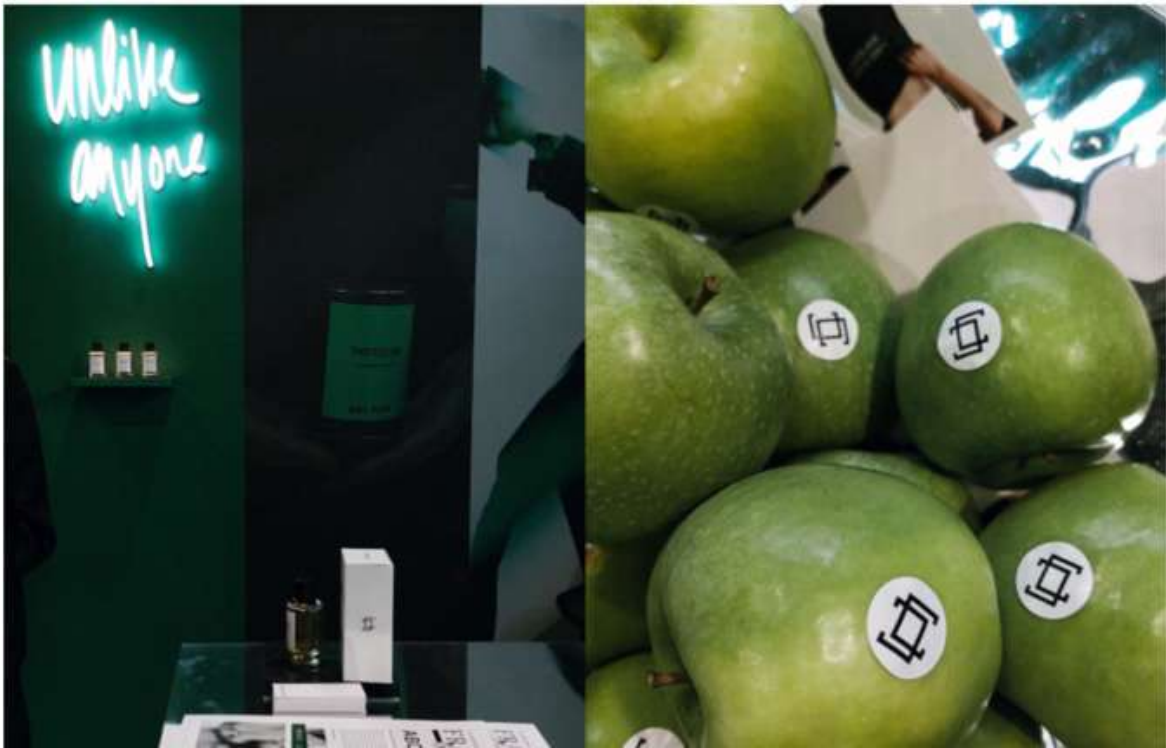


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The brand was created by the young, for the young. However, compared to the artistry of Steven Meisel's work, their advertisements appear mediocre. The same goes for the fragrances themselves; you can read about them in Andrei Lensky's [review](#). Emil Élise scents are like modern pop hits that play in many cafes and malls and are occasionally recommended by YouTube and Spotify algorithms. Everyone knows those tedious, instantly forgettable tunes featuring auto-tuned vocals and bland arrangements. The only distinctive scent in the entire collection is [Melting Lust](#), which one perfumer (an acquaintance of mine) compared to cherry red lipstick. It's ridiculously disappointing in the case of [Hangover Meditation](#) — such a catchy name for such an unremarkable result.

Emil Élise made a bet on hype and edgy marketing that works exceptionally well on social media. For instance, at the Esxence 2024 exhibition, they distributed hangover kits and green apples to guests. Their promotional images of the fragrances, featuring fruits, flowers in plastic, extremely long nails, and crushed blackcurrants, are characterized by a trendy, deliberately anti-aesthetic "gritty" visual style. This reminds me of another red-hot brand — [BORNTOSTANDOUT](#).





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During the last Esxence exhibition, the brand's team unveiled **Twisted Sin**, a warm, spicy perfume with the most prominent accords of cinnamon, green apple, rum, and vanilla. Echoing the color palette of their ad campaign, they painted the walls of their industrial-style booth in a vibrant malachite green. The austere interior was enlivened with abundant neon, glass, and metal. Visitors had the opportunity to enjoy crunchy Granny Smith apples and read newspapers — possibly a marketing tactic inspired by Instagram bloggers' fondness for print media.

*A mysterious call. A longing.
A thirst for the forbidden fruit.
Sweet. Innocent. Like Apple and Bergamot.
Suddenly. The air changes.
A thick smoke of Amber and Cinnamon.
A burning desire. Good or bad? You decide.*

*Choose your sin!
Unlike Anyone.*

— a description from the brand's official website





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The first association that comes to mind when testing **Twisted Sin** is that of a sweet cinnamon-flavored chewing gum distinguished by a slightly spicy aftertaste. The vigorous opening is primarily centered on this robust, spicy note. Cinnamon lends the fragrance composition a slight powderiness or even dustiness, as well as a pronounced woody-balsamic tone. However, the initial sensation is pink pepper, followed by the main accord, dusted with lemon zest — and sugar. Indeed, Emil Elise's new offering is characterized by a distinctly pronounced sweetness that's almost teeth-hurting. Following this, the chewing gum impression transitions to strudel and caramel-glazed apples, along with a light fruit cocktail based on rum. This leads into a monotonous vanilla-woody finale — elevator music in the world of perfumery.

Some fragrance reviewers have already taken the opportunity to compare **Twisted Sin** with two other perfumes that blend cinnamon and strong alcohol: **Angels' Share** and **Apple Brandy on the Rocks** from **The Liquors** collection **By Kilian**. The comparison does not favor the newcomer. Unlike other fragrances from the brand, **Twisted Sin** leans more towards being cute rather than cringe-worthy, but it is very predictable and cloyingly sweet. It lacks lasting power and sillage, devoid of any striking contrasts — not what one expects from a niche scent. For teenagers, it is way too overpriced; for fragrance connoisseurs, it is too dull; and for a guilty pleasure, it lacks the necessary provocation and grotesque elements. A better idea would be to go to a bar and order a Spiced Apple Spritz made with rum.