

Inc.5000 HONOR ROLL

Perfumery Specializes in Niche and Discontinued Fragrances

Eau De Luxe Ltd. had humble beginnings, but a passion for perfume has landed the company on the Inc. 5000 Honor Roll



The interior of the proposed museum and retail operations of Maison G, a part of Eau De Luxe Ltd. located in Hackensack, New Jersey.

With an engineering degree from India, Sudhir Gupta never expected that an entry-level cleaning job in a New York City mom-and-pop perfume shop would change his life. Gupta’s goal when coming to the United States in 1992 was to earn money for a master’s degree in engineering. But then he spotted a giant perfume display bottle, known as a factice, in the basement of that store. “It was one of the most beautiful bottles in the world and had two intertwined frosted glass doves on it,” Gupta says. “In my heart, I needed that bottle.”

Unfortunately for Gupta, that bottle cost

\$2,000. He saved up his money, and within a few years, the Nina Ricci L’Air du Temps bottle was his. Gupta was on a mission from that point on. He wanted more factices but needed a way to fund his passion. Enter Eau De Luxe Ltd.

WHEN NOT TO OPEN A PERFUME SHOP: DURING A RECESSION

Gupta never did get that master’s degree. Instead, he started buying and selling hard-to-find and niche perfume brands from home. He used the profits to collect more factices. In 2008, in the middle of the recession, Gupta

5x ON THE INC. 5000 LIST



opened a retail store in Westchester, New York. “I made the biggest mistake of my life,” he says. That shop closed as Gupta defaulted on his loans. “Everybody told me to sell off my collection of big bottles to try to get out of debt,” he says. But Gupta ignored the advice. Instead, Gupta took out more loans and opened a whole-sale perfume business.

Gupta worked by himself for 80 to 120 hours a week without a brick-and-mortar store. As the company’s only employee, he focused on selling to wholesalers on multiple online platforms and eventually reached \$1 million in sales. “I would buy the products, take the pictures, catalog them, and sell them,” he says.

Eventually, Gupta hired six employees, and the company grew organically. “I don’t advertise myself. I never spent money on marketing,” he says. He made a name for himself through his niche of discontinued and hard-to-find fragrances, with resellers approaching him and customers finding his website for product. Through this word-of-mouth growth, Eau De Luxe made the Inc. 5000 five times consecutively from 2014 to 2018, placing him on the Inc. 5000 Honor Roll.

A FRAGRANCE HOUSE, NEW STORE, AND MUSEUM

Gupta now has nearly 2,500 bottles. His collection has always been private, stored in his home, warehouses, and other storage spaces. That is changing with the launch of Maison G, a perfume store and factice museum that opened in Hackensack, New Jersey, in October. Gupta hopes the factice museum draws more customers to Maison G.

In the coming year, Gupta also plans to relaunch his fragrance line, Ode Paris Love Potion. In 2019, he signed an exclusive one-year contract with Lord & Taylor, but the retailer went out of business during the pandemic. Gupta has never needed to market for success, but he might change his strategy for Maison G and Ode Paris and add social media marketing to attract Generation Z attention.

For Gupta, the key to his success is passion. He considers himself a dreamer, entrepreneur, collector, curator, and creator. “Everything I’ve achieved is from my passion for my bottles,” he says. “My goal is to support my passion.”

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Sudhir Gupta, founder and CEO, of Eau De Luxe Ltd., and his wife, Mercedes Acosta, creative director of Maison G.