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News Perfumes Notes Noses Club About



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## Francis Bacon and Thomas Mann: The Homoelegans Species

11/03/15 13:58:36 (5 comments)

by: **Miguel Matos**



# HOMOELEGANS

If I had to chose my top 10 best fragrances of the year, I would have no doubts in putting Quality of Flesh up front. Together with Tadzio they are the pair that introduces the Italian brand Homoelegans to the world. From literature, cinema and painting come these masculine scents that depict different kinds of sensuality. One brutal and sexual (Quality of Flesh), one dreamy and delicate (Tadzio).



The talented new nose **Michele Marin** (responsible for Spectator and Iris Mater) composed these two works of olfactory art for Francesco Gini and Maurizio Piazzi. I met them in a hotel in Florence last september and Michele in his house. The conversations were a bit crazy at times but that may be the effect of such tantalizing scents. Sex and beauty, dirt and water, darkness and light. These are ingredients from top to base on Homoelegans' debut.

### Homoelegans -

*“A new civilisation that does not only think rationally, but also makes full use of their perceptual, sensorial and emotional skills, sharing beauty and wellness.”*

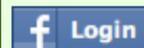
**Miguel: What is Homoelegans? Please introduce me to your brand.**

Maurizio Piazzi: Homoelegans is the kind of man that likes to look at beauty and art. He sees that this way he can grow in a positive way. It's a new, more developed species from homo sapiens. We used two different ways for explaining this idea. The first fragrance is Tadzio and the second is Quality of Flesh.

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by *ondiwear*



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- [NEW FRAGRANCES](#)
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- [NICHE PERFUMERY](#)
- [BARGAIN FRAGRANCE](#)
- [REVIEWS](#)
- [NATURAL PERFUMES](#)
- [FRAGRANT HOROSCOPE](#)
- [ART BOOKS EVENTS](#)
- [RAW MATERIALS](#)
- [FRAGRANCES AND CULTURES](#)
- [VINTAGES](#)
- [HOME SCENTS](#)
- [SCENTED SNIPPETS](#)
- [FRAGRANCE REVIEWS](#)
- [GENDER BENDER](#)
- [COLUMNS](#)
- [FRAGRANTICA](#)

## PERFUMES

- [PERFUMES](#)
- [NOSES](#)
- [GROUPS](#)
- [NOTES](#)
- [SEARCH BY NOTES](#)
- [VIDEOS](#)
- [COLORS](#)
- [DESIGNERS](#)
- [COUNTRIES](#)
- [PARENT COMPANIES](#)
- [INDUSTRIES](#)
- [NEW REVIEWS new](#)

## NEW PERFUMES

-  Grandiflora  
**Madagascar Jasmine**
-  Penhaligon's  
**Blasted Bloom**
-  Penhaligon's  
**Blasted Heath**
-  Pierre Guillaume  
Croisiere Collection  
**Rivages Noirs**

-  Pierre Guillaume  
Croisiere Collection  
**Foudre**
-  Guerlain  
**La Petite Robe  
Noir Ma Premiere  
Robe**

-  Serge Lutens  
**De Profundis  
Limited Edition**

-  Scent Bar  
**600**

-  Laura Tonatto  
**Apeiron**

-  Il Profvmo  
**Cortigiana**

-  Inspiritu  
**Prvdentia  
(Prudentia)**

-  Inspiritu  
**Ivstitia (Iustitia)**

-  Inspiritu  
**Temperantia**

-  Inspiritu  
**Fortitudo  
(Fortitudo)**

-  Jehanne Rigaud  
Parfums  
**Imperial Poudré**

-  Koto Parfums  
**Jogging in New  
York**

-  Koto Parfums  
**Shopping in Paris**

-  Koto Parfums  
**Beach Time in  
Hawaii**

-  Koto Parfums  
**Party in Shanghai**

-  Thymes  
**Vanilla Ambrette  
Cologne**

-  Pour Toujours  
**Khamsin**



Francesco Gini: In 1911, two years before writing *Death in Venice*, the author Thomas Mann lived in Italy while on vacation. There a young boy caught his eye and so the character Tadzio was born. The young boy embodies that sense of eternity and the sensorial. Tadzio is the protagonist of Thomas Mann's work. He is the ideal of beauty and transcendence. This perfume has a very romantic inspiration. In Tadzio we can find the energy of youth and the explosion of the instinct. We have played with the pleasure of summer and so we started this perfume with citric notes such as limette and orange.

**Miguel: But there is a clear and strong fig smell.**

Francesco: Yes, **fig leaves**. We have researched with Michele how to do a fresh first impression. We have a green accord with **ivy** and **cucumber**, so this is a fresh and green fruity scent. After this we can find the woody and oriental base with **immortelle** and **opopanax** for the impression of hot skin after a day at the beach. Also we played with the sea and salt over the skin. There is innocence and sensuality in Tadzio.



**Miguel: I don't see much innocence here...**

Maurizio: Yes, it is dangerous.

**Miguel: To my nose, this fragrance works on a clash of two forces. One very fresh and green composition at the top, and very warm and sensual oriental accords in the base. There's also a powdery sensation...**

Francesco: We have **neroli** and **orange blossom**. Also the immortelle is very powdery and honeyed. It's a very interesting material.

**Miguel: Michele went deeper in this fragrance, comparing to the other two scents he previously did for other brands. His first creations were more simple.**

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*by missan*
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*by Taliera*
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*by neggii*

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-  New Fragrances  
**Introducing Deco London:  
Fragrances for Modern Bright  
Young Things**  
*by Sherihan*

-  Bargain Fragrance Reviews  
**Bargain Fragrances: Mariah  
Carey Dreams (2013)**  
*by alchimia72*

-  New Fragrances  
**Guerlain La Petite Robe Noir  
Ma Premiere Robe**  
*by windhill*

-  Bargain Fragrance Reviews  
**Bargain Fragrances: Close by  
GAP (2009)**  
*by Miele honey*

-  Bargain Fragrance Reviews  
**Bargain Fragrances: Gravity  
by Coty (1992)**  
*by perfumeholic88*

-  New Fragrances  
**A Gift From Ajmal: New  
Regalo**  
*by Angela Agiannidou*

-  Interviews  
**April Aromatics: An Interview  
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Maurizio: Oh, but Homoelegans' fragrances are not!

Francesco: We love deeper and richer fragrances.

 Pour Toujours  
Boule de Gomme

 Pour Toujours  
Pyrus

 Pour Toujours  
Graines

 Pour Toujours  
Tudo Bem!

 Pour Toujours  
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Sweet Romance

 Love2Love  
Bluebell + White  
Tea

 Inessance  
Lilly Night

 Inessance  
Identity Code



*Maurizio Piazza & Francesco Gini*

**Miguel: It's summer, but it's not a summer fragrance. It's more like a winter day when you are dreaming of summer.**

Francesco: Or twilight on a summer day.

Maurizio: Not the vampire movie! (laughs)

**Miguel: The contrast of green notes and oriental ambers is always interesting and a classic paradox also seen before in Calvin Klein Obsession for example. It's a balance within tension. I'm impressed by Michele Marin's work. How and why did you chose him to start your perfume brand?**

Maurizio: Because Michele is a friend, but also because with him we can grow together and he has a big professional attitude. We all have a similar sensibility and we thought that Michele could interpret our feelings, first in concept and then in fragrances.

Francesco: We know that Michele understands our strong idea and tastes. But also, Michele has a classic and old fashioned signature.



*Michele Marin*

**Miguel: I wouldn't say classic, but rather timeless.**

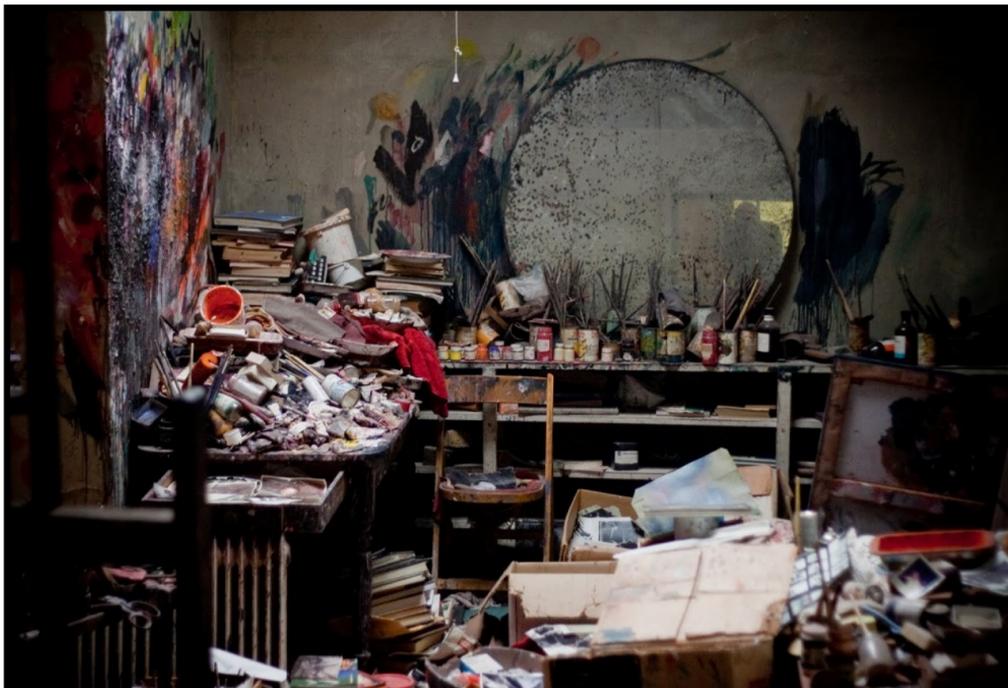
Francesco: Yes you are right. He can bring elegance to our perfumes.

Maurizio: Another very good thing about Michele is that he is very open to mixed ideas and feelings. He is open to talking about things and studying them. He is an investigator.



**Miguel: Now moving to Quality of Flesh. First of all I have to say I identify myself a lot with it.**

Maurizio: Quality of Flesh is an expression, a quote from an interview with Francis Bacon. He was one of the greatest artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a figurative painter. With this fragrance we wanted to make a portrait of this artist. This is a triptych. The first portrait is the places of his life: Soho, the pubs, an alcoholic opening with **juniper berries** and **gin**. The set is London at night and the gay bars. The juniper berries introduce the second portrait which is the artist's studio, with black **pepper**, **styrax**, **costus**, resins... It represents the brushes and oil paintings. The smell of the workshop...



*Atelier Francis Bacon*

**Miguel: Styrax here is very well balanced. But it still smells so animalic... It has to have castoreum and civet, right?**

Francesco: That is the third part. The life of the artist. We wanted to give the fragrance a fatty sensation so we included **narcissus**, too. In the base, all the animal smells play around carnal sensations, the masculine body...

**Miguel: This must be one of the most sexual scents I have ever smelled.**

Maurizio: If Tadzio is a skin fragrance, this is a flesh fragrance. Francis Bacon's paintings deal with images of the deformed body.

*"I like men. I like their brain. I like the quality of their flesh"*

*- Francis Bacon*

**Michele Marin enters the analysis...**

**Miguel: Last time I was in your beautiful house we talked about our fragrant interests and I told you I love civet, so it seems that this time you made something that seems to be for me.**

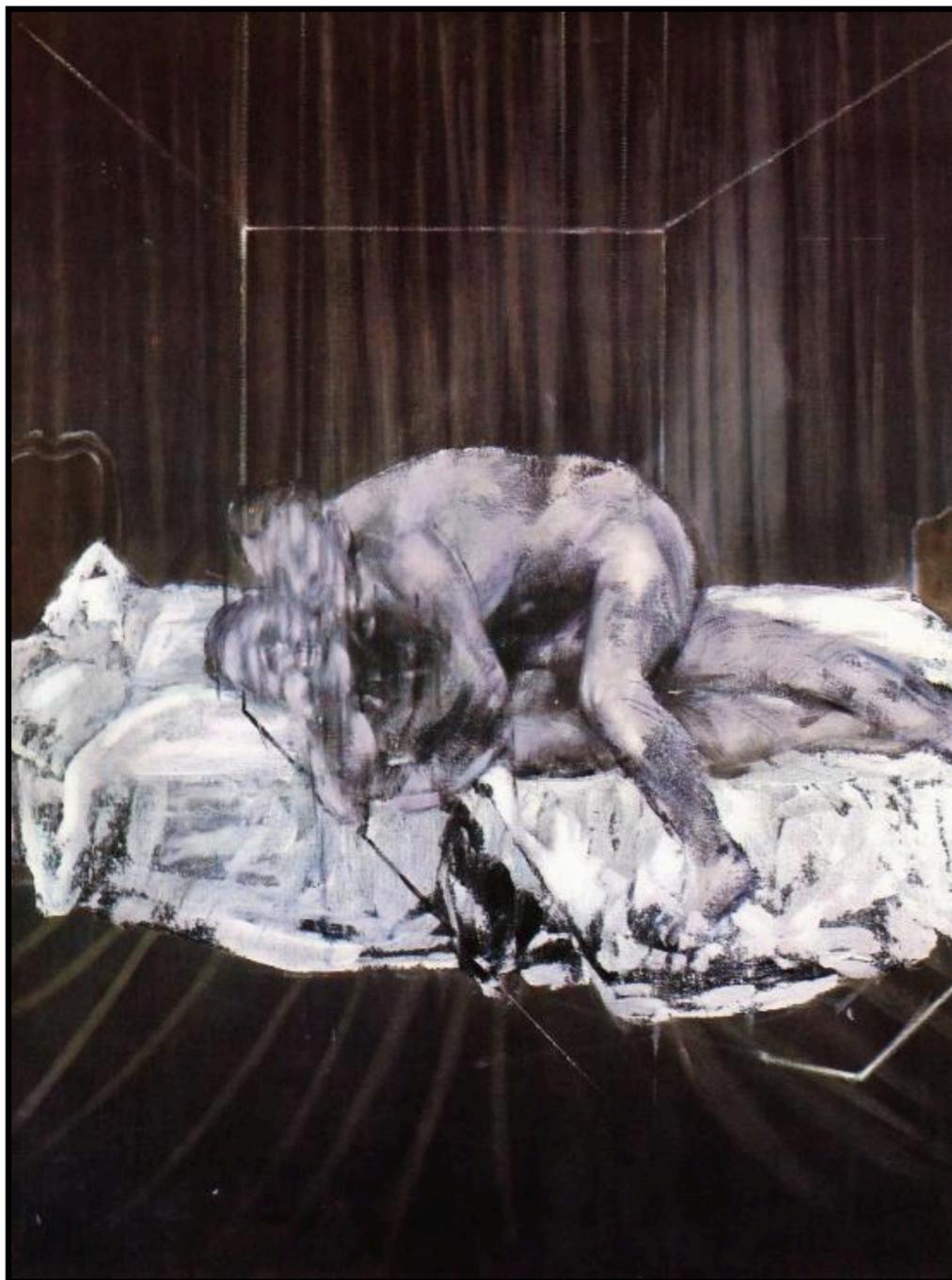
Michele: Yes and I remember you also love castoreum. But I wanted to use all these animalic materials and mix them with the juniper, pink pepper and black pepper to have the sensation of the studio of Francis Bacon. I was inspired by the biography of the artist.

**Miguel: All the composition is cold and then it gets warm, dark and animalic. It could be too dense if it wasn't for the pineapple top note you included and that is genius.**

Michele: When someone wants to create a dark picture, the darker it is, the more you need to work on the light. So I think the same for fragrance. On the bottom I put this beautiful flower which is not a sunny flower. Narcissus is very sensual. I used Narcissus from Mane but in a small quantity because it's too expensive. There's also ylang ylang, but the narcissus for me represents the relationship Francis Bacon had with his lover George Dyer. The bohemian mood of the swinging sixties in London comes through with leather and dark accords of castoreum, styrax, costus, different woods. It's all about sex and sensuality. There was a very strong sexual side to Bacon's personality.

**Miguel: Ok, I have to say this. It smells like sweaty men having sex.**

Michele: Yes. And there is an S&M element to it, because of Francis Bacon's preferences. This is really a sensual concept about anonymous sex. This is flesh and pure burning desire. Like in a Francis Bacon painting you sometimes see one, two three bodies, three legs, you don't know what is happening.



*"Two Figures" by Francis Bacon, 1953, Oil on Canvas*

**Miguel: And the pineapple note is just genius here.**

Michele: Oh yes! Thank you, write that please!

**Miguel: So this is clearly not for everyone.**

Michele: Of course not. This is for a very sensual man but also some girls tried it and it becomes completely different. Not so animalic. On the skin of a woman it is not so sexual. For a chypre woman I think this is very good. Or also for a secretary, the Prada kind of woman. Someone very controlled would be drawn to this fragrance. It would be surprising! You'd expect her to be wearing Chanel N°5 and instead it is Quality of Flesh. Wow!

**Miguel: It's the same attitude as with [Bandit](#).**

Michele: Yes. It's sort of lesbochic style.

**Miguel: And then there's the counterpoint of Tadzio...**

Michele: The concept of Tadzio is about skin, and the Mediterranean sea when the sun goes down. At the end of the movie by Visconti the musician dies in front of Tadzio who is reclining under the sunlight. It's very romantic, there is joy and love.



*Still from Death in Venice, dir. Luchino Visconti, 1971*

**Miguel: It's a happy fragrance actually.**

Michele: It's happy because after all it's about youthfulness, the joy of life. He is running to the sea and drinking something very fresh. There is something like a basket of fruit in this perfume, something exotic, red fruits... then there's green and watery effects from the ivy and cucumber.

**Miguel: With these, you have launched four perfumes until now. In [Spectator](#) and [Iris Mater](#) I could see your talent, but they were like minimalist scents.**

Michele: Yes, more controlled, because I was asked for that. Spectator was made for Korea so it had to be discreet. Iris Mater was a very feminine [iris](#), flower and root. But these were specific requests.



In Homoelegans they told me they wanted portraits of Tadzio and Francis Bacon. Beyond that I was completely free and I could create my idea of Tadzio, my idea of the novel by Thomas Mann and of course the movie directed by Luchino Visconti. These two new fragrances represent two different parts of me. In Tadzio and in Quality of Flesh I express myself in a different way than in Iris Mater, for example, which is lighter, more sophisticated and feminine. These are very hard and masculine. In Tadzio I enjoyed creating something ozonic and marine with [calone](#), floralozone and [fruity notes](#).

Homoelegans is a bold brand and everyone who prefers to stay subtle perfumewise shouldn't come close to these scents. But the ones who embrace hedonism and sensuality are going to be beguiled by such a spectacular attempt to pudency.

### **TADZIO**

*Top: limette, ivy, cucumber*

*Middle: blackcurrant, marine accord, orange blossom*

*Base: immortelle, patchouli, opopanax, musks*

HOMOELEGANS



QUALITY OF FLESH

HOMOELEGANS



TADZIO

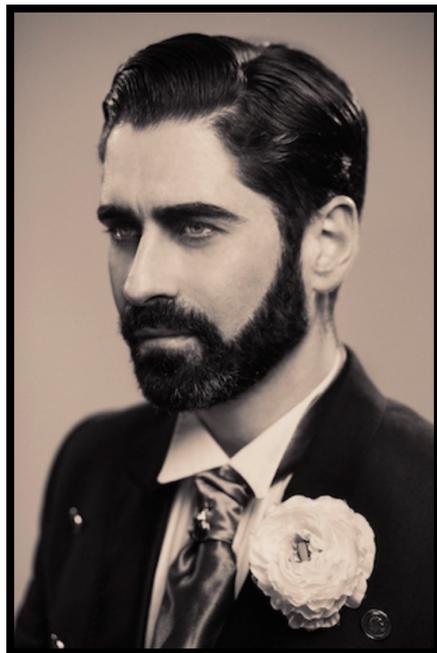
**QUALITY OF FLESH**

*Top: juniper berry, pink pepper, black pepper*

*Middle: narcissus, patchouli, styrax, costus*

*Base: leather, civet, benzoin, castoreum*

Images from [www.homoelegans.com](http://www.homoelegans.com); [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org); [graphictide.com](http://graphictide.com); [francis-bacon.com](http://francis-bacon.com); and [ravepad.com](http://ravepad.com).



**Miguel Matos**

Miguel is a Portuguese journalist obsessed with art and perfume. Miguel likes to see himself as a fragrance curator, investigating the possibilities of perfume as contemporary art in exhibitions and other multimedia projects. He directs his own cultural magazine, Umbigo, besides contributing with texts for museums and art galleries. He is a perfume collector and specializes in vintage perfumery, organizing monthly talks called Vintage Perfume Sniffing in Lisbon. He is a [Fragrantica](http://Fragrantica.com) writer, translator and editor of [Fragrantica.com.br](http://Fragrantica.com.br).

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10

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**Angela Agiannidou**

Thanks for this wonderful article Miguel, having lived with an artist for 16 years I heard a lot about F Bacons art, studio, life, my ex



had told me how Bacons father would have him horsewhipped. As for the scents I am glad these are not made for wallflowers, I expect Q o F to match every bit the artists talent, spirit, personality, lust for love and life and passion.



**missy.stratimirov**



now, that's a lot of interesting homo ideas thrown in but then the stereotyped secretary (obviously a woman) is mentioned... wasn't expecting it.



**shimmer**



Intriguing concepts, interesting notes, pricey, pricey, niche-y, niche-y... but then the bottles - like they stocked up at their local hardware store. Normally I couldn't care less about the containers but when there's this degree of reference to great art one would have expected them to try a teensy bit harder.



**ChrisInBrooklyn**



Looove this brand concept, and they both sound amaaazing! Thanks, Miguel!



**NebraskaLovesSc**



"Ooh, you smell good. What are you wearing?"

"Quality of Flesh."

Would love to see the puzzled look on someone's face after such an exchange ... ;-)



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