



SCENT OF A WOMAN: Jessica Dunne, creator of Ellie D Perfume, in her vintage Lincoln Park condo.

Uncommon Scents

When Jessica Dunne sent an e-mail to master French perfumer Michel Roudnitska in 2005, she wasn't even sure she'd get a response. Dunne, then working as an art gallery manager on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, was acting on a dream she's had since childhood—to create her own fragrance. But Roudnitska did respond, and a few trips to his laboratory, a slew of different scents and hundreds of back-and-forth e-mails later, Dunne launched her first perfume, Ellie, at Henri Bendel in New York in 2006. Dunne, 32, now lives in Chicago with her husband and two-year-old daughter and recently debuted her second perfume, Ellie Nuit. The niche fragrances sell for \$180 at a handful of specialty boutiques in the U.S. and internationally.

How did you convince Roudnitska to work with you when you had no experience? I was very persistent and I was set on working with him. I admired perfumes he created, and his father is a legend in the perfume world—he created scents for Dior. I think he was impressed with my determination. **So what was it like working with him?** He lives on a beautiful old property in Cabris, outside of Grasse, France, and his lab is right next to the house. We smelled a bunch of different

scents and he went through note after note with me and then just started concocting. I left with a sample, and he told me to wear it and get back to him with changes. From there, we just went back and forth until we got it right. **Did you know what type of scent you wanted?** I wanted something that was nostalgic, but also something youthful. And with Ellie Nuit, we just pulled out the same notes and made it deeper, sexier. I have these great memories of my grandmother with all her beautiful bottles displayed on her dressing table, and I thought they were just so glamorous. I wanted to capture that feeling, but make it modern. **How do you decide where to sell your perfumes?** I prefer to have them in special places that don't carry a ton of lines. I don't feel the need to be on every beauty counter across the country. June Blaker is the only spot they are sold in Chicago. **Why the move to Chicago?** My husband got transferred here in February. But I already love the city; it's like New York in that it has lots of energy and the people here are really warm. **Any spots you visit for inspiration?** I go to Belmont Harbor and watch the boats, and I love the Lincoln Park Conservatory. When we moved here we were in a corporate apartment near the Art Institute, and I went there all the time. ■

DUNNE'S CHICAGO FAVORITES

BEAUTY COUNTERS:

Benefit Boutique,
Blue Mercury,
Barneys, Nordstrom

ART SPOTS: The Art
Institute, MCA,
Richard Gray
Gallery, Intuit,
Mongerson Galleries,
Zolla/Lieberman
Gallery

RESTAURANTS: Yoshi's
Cafe, Avec, Graham
Elliot, Blackbird,
Wakamono, MK

SHOPS: p.45, Helen Yi,
Krista K, Tory Burch