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An Ode to Africa with Roads Fragrances



African Edition collection from Roads Fragrances.
All Images Courtesy of Roads Fragrances.



BY AUDREY NOBLE

We were hooked at the simple, cool aesthetic of the fragrance bottles and the clear vision and beautiful story behind each scent. We stayed fans because **Roads** is more than a perfumery; it is a creative-lifestyle brand.

“I wanted to create an artistic brand that would not be limited by its own definition or confined to only one idea,” says Roads founder **Danielle Ryan**.

Ryan, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, in London, has curated a brand that also consists of a high-end publishing company and an entertainment studio, along with its fragrance line. Every product—whether a book, film, or scent—is inspired by subject matters and themes of today. The company is thought-provoking, creative, and unique.

But back to what got us hooked on the brand in the first place. Roads Fragrances started out with a collection of 10 scents, each made to evoke a theme or a thought. “I pick a theme and then write down all the characteristics of that theme. That becomes the backbone of what the perfumer and I work with,” explains Ryan. “You try to find the best ingredients that work with that characteristic.”

So, a fragrance that does more than emit lovely scents? This takes creativity to a whole new level. “This process means we can do a fragrance out of anything. It makes it a more artistic interpretation [of making a fragrance],” says Ryan. Our personal favorite from the original collection is the fresh-smelling **Bitter End**. Inspired by the beautiful landscape of her home of West Ireland (Ryan is of Irish, German, and Sri Lankan descent), this fragrance is made of wild grasses, fig leaf, and oak moss.



Left: Roads founder Danielle Ryan. Right: Roads fragrances scent Bitter End.



Contemporary and fresh is exactly what we got (every fragrance contains ingredients that were grown in the homeland, such as rosemary from Tunisia and geranium from Egypt). Here is the breakdown of each scent:

1) **I Am Dance:** This is dedicated to the dance that inspired **Beyoncé's "Run the World (Girls):"** African street dance Pantsula. "It's really fast, cool, and everyone gets really excited about it," says Ryan. "It's become kind of a phenomenon." The fragrance is made of notes of lemon, amber, and apple.

2) **Afropolis:** This represents the continent's modernization. "I wanted to do something around the big urban cities and the big cultural art scenes and dance scenes and fashion scenes," says Ryan. "Something cool, contemporary, very edgy, and fresh." One spritz and you are engulfed in a lovely mixture of gin, wood, and vetiver.

3) **Big Sky:** One cannot think of an African landscape without thinking of the sky. "It's quite interesting that it's this unspoken thing that's always in the artwork," says Ryan. "It's clearly a big inspiration, so this one is very open and broad, slightly luxurious." The scent is made of citrus, geranium, and amber.

4) **Past | Presence:** This fragrance is a tribute to the political and poetic influence of Nigerian writers. "I think Nigeria is pretty proud of their writers, and I wanted something that would get the sense of it," says Ryan. "It had to be something elegant, something clear, very strong, and very soulful." To capture those



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