

Clubbers can smell a good nightspot

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Since the smoking ban in restaurants, bars and nightclubs, customers are more aware of unpleasant smells, such as body odors and the smell of old beer, that used to be masked by cigarette smoke. Now science is looking at how the introduction of pleasant ambient scents that hide unwanted odors might enhance the nightlife experience. According to Dr. Hendrik Schifferstein from Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, and his colleagues, carefully selected fragrances can enhance dancing activity, improve the overall perception of the evening, and improve how nightclub goers rate the music as well as their mood. Their findings were just published online in Springer's journal *Chemosensory Perception*.

The authors suggest a possible solution to this issue is to install [fragrance](#) machines that distribute a pleasant scent in order to mask the unwanted odors. This might lead to improvements in the perceived quality of the environment and hence greater spending, in nightclubs in particular. Just like combinations of lights and sounds create the desired atmosphere, adding scents to the mix could lead to an enriched multisensory experience.

The researchers tested the impact of dispensing three scents suitable for a nightclub environment - relaxing orange, stimulating [peppermint](#) and neutral [seawater](#) - in three distinct dance clubs in cities with significant student populations. They observed the level of dancing in a mixture of male and female visitors in their early twenties, and then asked 849 of them to fill out a short questionnaire asking how they liked the evening in the club (quality of the evening, the music and the club, as well as

feelings).

The results showed that the introduction of scents positively influenced dancing, enjoyment, music and mood, although there were no differences in effects between the scents. More dancing activity was observed with scents than without; participants rated both the evening and the music more positively with scents than without; and they were more cheerful with scents than without.

Dr. Schifferstein concludes, "Given that visitors gave a better evaluation for the clubs, felt more cheerful, and showed more dancing activity when scents were diffused, environmental fragrancing may be expected to have a positive effect on visitor return rate and future revenue for clubs."

More information: Schifferstein HNJ et al (2011). Can ambient scent enhance the nightlife experience? *Chemosensory Perception*; [DOI:10.1007/s12078-011-9088-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12078-011-9088-2)

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