

Byredo - 1996

In 1996 legs turned into Isosceles triangles with the dawn of bootcut pants. Netscape Navigator 3.0 sat on desktop screens. Shoes were chunky. OJ was no longer just a juice, and he was on trial. 2Pac was alive and 2Pac was dead. "Texting" did not exist. Tourists were Japanese, and kids did not learn Chinese in US suburbs. Women wore big blazers and listened to Tracy Chapman. People believed in the invisible wall between smoking and non. The first mammal was cloned. It was 1996. We can't remember exactly what it smelled like, but when we think of its collections of cultural ephemera, we're wistful— not because we miss it, but just because it's past.

With amber and violet, vanilla and patchouli, the easy familiarity of Byredo's scent "1996" feels less like putting something on, than taking something off. It's the scent equivalent of a long bath after an international flight or that friend who's good with plants, liberal with essential oils, and who looks cozy no matter the weather. However, more than a mix of scents, this perfume is a study of memory.

A collaboration between Byredo's parfumeur Ben Gorham and photographer couple Inez and Vinoodh, the scent was inspired by the close up photograph of a porcelain looking girl's face entitled "Kirsten 1996." Her eyes almost closed, the girl in the photo seems simultaneously alive with her vibrant innocence of youth, and dead with a white-eyed abandonment of consciousness. The photo is memory aestheticized; it depicts the turning in of consciousness. It could be the moment the eyes close in ecstasy, to reel in a memory, or to fall asleep. The photo reminds us that a perfume bottle is a tiny coffin of memories: both dead and alive, inevitably aging and eternally youthful. ^{BG}

Byredo Scented Candle "1996" - 65 € - www.byredo.com

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