

# One Woman's Scentual Journey - MORE Magazine

---

At the Ojai Valley Inn and Spa, a reader creates her own fragrance (and learns a bit about herself along the way)

“The wisdom of the body will tell you what you need,” the aromatherapist at the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa told our group of four women, who were perched on stools at the Artist’s Cottage and Apothecary. I was there to create my own custom blend of essential oils, a signature scent, and my choices, she said, would be guided by my unconscious. “I can get a feel for people from what they’re choosing. The oils themselves will tell you everything.”

It was a blazing hot California day, and in this charming cottage, with its cooling slated tiled floor, apothecary shelves with bottles of bath salts, herbs, lavender—there are lot of lavender growers in the area!— I was beyond excited to create The Essence of Me, wondering what I’d be drawn to/my concoction would reveal about myself. Atop the granite counter sat a tray holding more than 30 essential oils, extracted from leaves, fruit peels, herbs, petals, and other plant parts, nature's subtle fragrances that can, aromatherapists say, balance your mood, give you a lift, even treat some medical conditions.

Over the course of about an hour we passed around the bottles, sniffing, and ranking our favorites. Sherrie, our teacher, didn’t tell us what the scents were until after we’d all had a whiff, so we would react to what we loved, and were drawn to, not to what we thought we liked. (Vanilla, a scent I always find sweet and inviting, did not pass my sniff test). If needed, we had mint or fruited water to sip and small cordial-like glasses of fresh coffee beans to sniff when we needed to reset our olfactory palettes.

I found myself deeply inhaling the scents I loved, as if to drink them in: the warm sensual smell of Chinese and rose geranium, the rich yet grounding essence of vetiver and sandalwood; the soothing “heart notes” as Sherrie called them, of lavender and champaka, and spicy cardamom and lemon peel. Altogether my finished blend consisted of 11 drops of oil, and the moment I put the final drop in (lemon peel) I knew it was perfect. (Sherrie says she looks to body language, the “wow moment” in a smile or when the body totally relaxes, to know that the scent is where it needs to be. Sherrie told me my choices indicated I was grounded, happy and open, yet looking to spice up my life (SO TRUE!). I decided to name my perfume Serenity Spice, in honor of the place where I am right now.

**Next**

**The Essence in Balance is a unique, very personalized spa treatment at Spa Ojai. Total: Three hours which includes creating a personalized blend of essential oils to address whatever/however they are feeling or are needing at that exact moment in time. The oil is then used for their massage, providing an aroma-therapeutic treatment that is a truly healing experience.**

### **The Goody Bag**

Vial, a cobalt blue bottle from the perfumer with your specialized name on it. Scented massage oil and then you go to the spa for their signature Essence in Balance massage using your own blissful blend. Your mix is on on file to make soaps and lotions.

For more information on the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa, go to [www.ojairesort.com](http://www.ojairesort.com)