

Kate Middleton's Favorite Rose Discovered in Africa, Scent "Stolen" by Perfume Maker: Get the Details!

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By Alli Rosenbloom

Danny Seo, environmental lifestyle expert, guest blogs for *Us Weekly* about his trip to Africa and his discovery of Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton's favorite roses.

This is me in East Africa. On the Equator. Sticking a syringe-like apparatus into a yellow scented rose. It happens to also be Kate Middleton's favorite rose. I'm stealing the scent since I can't take the rose. Let's backtrack.

I have a line of perfumes called Danny Seo Reserve. Each perfume is inspired by different places around the world: Australia, North America and even a "best of the world" Global perfume. So, naturally, Africa made sense as our next inspirational destination.



Kate Middleton Credit: Samir Hussein/WireImage;
Inset: Courtesy Danny Seo

I teamed up with Micato Safaris, who Travel & Leisure has named "World's Best Safari Outfitter" nine years in a row because they know how to deal with unusual clients who want truly custom safari adventures.

Think customers who want to wake up next to baby elephants frolicking in the Serengeti followed by a champagne brunch in the middle of a field by way of hot air balloon. I gave them one simple request: help me find the perfect African rose.

My safari guides take me to the edge of Mount Kenya. We pass one remote village after another down countless bumpy dirt roads. And then we arrive at a carefully guarded compound simply marked "Tambuzi Roses."



In a silk-tent-covered greenhouse, Tambuzi founder Tim Hobbs walks me down row after row of roses. There are 50 unusual varieties in all with names like “Purple Tambourine” and “Heiko Romantica.” They don’t smell like supermarket roses, but have notes like spun sugar and strawberries & cream.

Which brings me to Kate Middleton. Tim casually mentions “this is a favorite of Princess Kate.” It’s yellow. And it smells like honey. These roses will be cut today in Africa, refrigerated, and air lifted to London tomorrow. A shop called The Real Flower Company inside Selfridges will arrange them into beautiful arrangements in hat boxes. Prince William's wife Kate, explains Tim, is a huge fan of these unusually scented roses and loves to send them out as gifts.

When Tim isn’t looking, I steal the scent. This little glass dome and needle are called NaturePrint technology that my fragrance partners at Tru Fragrance and Firmenich use this to capture scents the way they smell in nature without killing the flower. So over the yellow rose goes the glass dome and the needle is injected through a small hole on top. A microscopic pad absorbs the breathtaking scent. And then the needle is brought back to NYC, where our perfumers can replicate the DNA structure of the scent and use it as a singular note in my next perfume.

And then it’s on a 15 hour British Airways flight home connecting through London. At security, my suspicious collection of NaturePrint needles and glass domes brings me to security where I calmly explain, “I found Kate Middleton’s favorite roses on the Equator and used this to suck the scent.” Perplexed, they let me go.