

SCENT PROFILE

Scent Profile is a creative study in conversation between Sigil founder, Patrick Kelly, and a groundbreaking artist, auteur, CEO, or disruptor. Learn about these pioneers' creative practices, inspirations, and most fervent associations to scent.



Kelsey Barrett

Kelsey is a western clinical herbalist, organic gardener, and traditional food enthusiast. She believes that using, tasting, smelling, growing, and embracing plants as part of our larger community gives us greater opportunity to reconnect to our health in meaningful ways.

She began her herbal studies on a pilgrimage to France before expanding her engagement with the plant world through an apprenticeship in organic farming at Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, followed by three years of study in Western Herbalism at the Ohlone Herbal Center in Berkeley, California. Kelsey sharpened her herbal application skills in a three-year mentorship with Dr. William Morris in Ding lineage pulse diagnosis as presented by Dr. John HF Shen. She served as a Director at Ohlone for three years on programing and operations, and on core faculty at Ohlone teaching European and clinical herbalism, and pulse and tongue diagnosis.

Kelsey's herbal and environmental insights have been published in Vogue, Edible East Bay, and GOOD Magazine. She is currently based in San Diego and has a private practice across California, counseling students and clients on creating life-changing strategies for wellness.

Prior to her work with plants, Kelsey worked as a technical designer and designer in the fashion industry for eight years in New York and LA, for the likes of Marc Jacobs and Everlane.

Kelsey believes that "each of us has capacity to receive intuitive and practical wisdom from the natural world for our healing and transformation."

I'm proud to call Kelsey a dear friend, and have leaned on her many times for sage advice and expansion in the spiritual and corporeal realms. Thank you, Kelsey: for taking the time to chat with us this week, as well as for your mentorship, kindness, and wisdom.

What are your pronouns?

She/her.

Tell us about your creative practice. Where do you draw inspiration?

Daily nature immersion, and the desire to channel the power and beauty of the natural world into culture, medicine, and individual transformation.

Every single kind of music. I'm pretty sure that playing and listening to music has saved my life on more than one occasion.

Community. I create almost exclusively in relational environments. I think it comes from growing up in a big Irish Catholic family. We're talking around 35 members. It was full of play, imagination, love, gardening, and food. We all lived within a few blocks of one another and I was never really alone. Looking back, it felt like an old world village of sorts. It deeply informs my creative life.

Describe herbalism for a layman.

Herbalism is the primordial practice of using plants as energetic and physical medicines. We evolved in relationship to plant medicine, and plants evolved in relationship to humans. A return to a life intimately integrated with plants is a return to our natural state.

Explain the origins of and how you've iterated in your approach to clinical herbalism within your private practice.

Clinical herbalism, understanding photo-chemicals and the physiological actions of plants allows me to speak to the average person about how herbs can support their life, in language they understand. When I can meet people where they are at, it allows me to land more esoteric folk plant wisdom. Both are key aspects to how I give herbs in my private practice.

What does scent mean to you?

My sense of smell was damaged after living in a moldy house, which caused a chronic infection that took the last few years to clear. So I'm extremely attuned to smells. Those that are harsh and damaging to my sensitive and fragile nose and those scents that are safe, healthy, and uplifting.

Tell us about your favorite Sigil perfume.

Anima Mundi was the scent that was most enticing and delightful my senses.

I find it simultaneously uplifting and clearing. I found the scent over the summer when I began reading The Sacred Prostitute by Jungian analyst Nancy Qualls-Corbett. The book looks at cultural Mesopotamian and goddess worship of Inanna. Historically, there were societal roles for women to worship and embody the goddess, and Qualls-Corbett explores the importance of this role in creating a healthy balance of the masculine and feminine in society. While reading the book I began to dream about my animus, the Jungian term for the masculine side of feminine. Then, by chance, I chose a bottle of Sigil Scent, and intuitively went for Anima Mundi. I was surprised to read that the scent was created with the intention to balance masculine and feminine. So I began using the perfume as part of my bedtime ritual to cultivate the dream time knowledge of my authentic divine masculine, outside of the culturally imposed masculine.

Also, I simply love smelling like nature. I'm always rubbing plants on my neck and armpits when I'm hiking. So this feels like a more elevated and chic encounter with natural fragrance than my standard practice. :)

What sound or song does it evoke?

Heaven, a later-era Rolling Stones song, Super sexy, spacey, groovy, transcendent.

What are you most excited about for the rest of this year?

Everything that comes with fall: the weather change and invitation to get cozier. Baked squash, putting cinnamon and cardamom in all my foods.

I'm especially excited to welcome in the autumn equinox with my Ojai community Luna y Sol's five-course plant based dinner.

I'll be serving as a Conversation Guide crafting an atmosphere of seasonal wellness. Reconnecting to seasonal change in community connects the senses back to the old ways and the natural flow of being human animals, which is most beautiful.

What is your current daily wellbeing practice?

Morning hatha yoga. Oil pulling. Hiking or swimming in the ocean. My infrared Sunlighten sauna. Dancing around to 60s Brazilian music. Homemade seasonal herbal lattes that give me a daily detox and nourish yin. Giving my creative force space to lead, especially when crafting client formulas.

Which artists, founders, innovators would you like to spread awareness for?

The work of Wild Tender. They offer immersive wilderness pilgrimages that cultivate intimacy with place, build earth skills, connect with wisdom traditions, and nurture wholeness and belonging.

My teacher Julia Graves. She is a traditional European Medicine woman and flower essence master. She has decades of meditation practice including four years of silence in Dharamshala. As a result, her mind is extremest clear and sharp, and she brings this into her flower essence making practice. Her flower essences are incredibly potent.

Delphi VC. They are a venture capital firm my friends recently launched. They are working from within the financial system. Stewarding investments toward innovative companies that nourish and sustain the environment.

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