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MASTERS' UNION × BOOND FRAGRANCES

Pre-Read

Kannauj Ittar Immersion: Craft, Heritage and Business

1. About Boond Fragrances

Boond Fragrances ("बूंद," Hindi for "droplet") is a Kannauj-based natural perfume house founded in May 2021 by siblings Krati and Varun Tandon. Both are independent filmmakers by training, their short film Syaahi won a National Award in 2016, and neither had a background in perfumery before starting Boond. Stranded in their hometown of Kannauj during the pandemic, they watched local perfumeries and artisans struggling to survive, and started Boond as what they describe as a passion project to help preserve the craft.

Krati, an ISB alumnus with over a decade of corporate experience, and Varun, a National Award-winning writer-director with a long-standing interest in classical music and perfume, built Boond around a simple mission: revive the ancient art of Indian perfume-making and take Indian fragrances to the world.

The brand has since been featured in Al Jazeera, Vogue USA, National Geographic, Elle (Sustainability Awards 2023), Conde Nast Traveller, and several Indian business and lifestyle publications, and holds the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag conferred by the Government of India for authentic Kannauj perfume.



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2. Boond's Business Model

Boond positions itself as an artisan-led, direct-to-consumer natural perfume brand, built on a few clear pillars.

Craft and sourcing: Every fragrance is handcrafted using the centuries-old Deg-Bhapka distillation method, with raw materials, flowers, herbs and spices, sourced locally around Kannauj. The products are chemical- and alcohol-free.

People: Boond employs 15+ local artisans to handcraft and package its fragrances. Packaging is handmade from recycled paper and cotton scraps and screen-printed by artisans; each box includes a locally stitched pouch and a handwritten note or poem from local school teachers, who earn additional income this way. Boond also runs an Artisan Support Fund, launched in 2023, and an Art Initiative commissioning local and independent artists.

Product range: Attars such as Maati (petrichor), Motiya (jasmine), Kesar (saffron), Audh (oudh), Shamama (a blend of 122 spices) and Rajnigandha (tuberose), alongside rose water and dhoop (incense cones), priced roughly Rs. 600 to Rs. 1,800 per product, with curated gift sets.

Growth: By October 2023, Boond had dispatched over 10,000 orders in twelve months. The company expects sales to double over the next two years, riding a broader wave: market research firm Technavio projects the Indian perfumery industry to grow around 15% annually over five years, driven by renewed consumer interest in natural, heritage fragrances, particularly post-COVID.

3. About Ittar - The Craft of Kannauj

Ittar, also spelled attar, is a natural perfume made by distilling flowers, herbs, spices or wood over a base oil, traditionally sandalwood oil, so that the oil slowly absorbs the raw material's scent. Unlike Western perfumes, ittar contains no alcohol, which makes it long-lasting on skin and

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suitable across religious practices, since alcohol-based scents are considered haram in Islamic practice while ittar is not.

Kannauj is known as the perfume capital of India. Distillation stills excavated from Indus Valley sites suggest a culture of scent-making in the region dating back roughly 5,000 years, and local legend credits the Mughal queen Nur Jahan, who lived in the 16th and 17th centuries, with popularising the craft, though Sanskrit texts suggest Kannauj was already a fragrance centre before her time.

The industry has seen real decline: until the 1990s, Kannauj had around 700 working distilleries; by the mid-2000s, that number had fallen to 150-200, as economic liberalisation brought cheaper, alcohol-based Western perfumes into the Indian market and some local manufacturers cut corners on quality to compete on price. What is happening now, through brands like Boond, is being described by industry observers as a genuine revival, a return of younger, urban Indian consumers to natural, heritage fragrance, often discovered and sold through Instagram and D2C channels.

4. About the Sessions During Immersion

The Boond Fragrances immersion takes students through the complete craft and business of Kannauj ittar-making, from the flower farms that supply raw material, to the artisan workshops that turn them into perfume, to a direct conversation with the people running the business. The sessions will cover the following:

No.	Program	Agenda
1	Farm Visit	Welcome, farm visit and introduction, with tea and biscuits.
2	Itr Daan Workshop at Home	Introduction to what itr daan is, how it is made, and its history.
3	Town Walk	Visiting the lanes of Kannauj, sightseeing at Deg Khana, and exploring local ittar shops and the market.
4	Field Visit	Visit to a kuppi maker's workshop.

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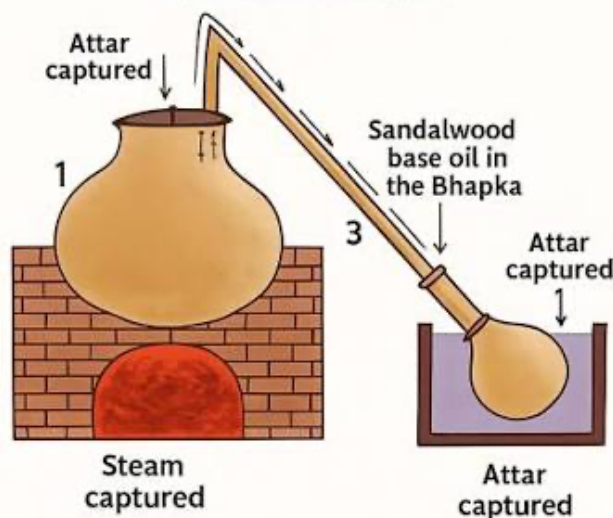
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No.	Program	Agenda
5	Live Workshop & Product Experience	Deg Bhapka workshop to learn the perfume-making technique, artisan interaction, the Boond team explaining the process step by step, and a product experience session.
6	Interactive Session	A conversation with Mr. Pravin Tandon and Ms. Ranjana Verma.
7	Evening Tea & Snacks	Evening tea with snacks.
8	Departure	Departure and the journey back to Lucknow.

Traditional Deg & Bhapka Proces

The traditional process involves extracting attars through hydro-distillation over sandalwood base oil where the raw plant material and Attar is captured in the Bhapka.



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5. Glossary

Ittar / Attar	Natural, alcohol-free perfume made by distilling flowers, herbs, or spices over a base oil.
Deg	The large copper vessel in which raw material and water are heated during distillation.
Bharka	The smaller receiving vessel, sitting in cold water, where fragrant vapour condenses into scented oil.
Deg-Bharka	The traditional Kannauj hydrodistillation technique, using the deg and bharka together.
Deg Khana	The distillation workshop or quarter of a perfume town.
Kuppi	Traditional leather container used to store and age ittar.
Itr Daan	Traditional ornate perfume casket used to hold and present ittar.
GI Tag	Geographical Indication, a government recognition that a product's quality is tied to its specific place of origin; Kannauj perfume holds this tag.
Hydrodistillation	Extracting fragrance by passing steam or vapour through raw material and condensing it, without any solvent.

6. Sources

- [Boond Fragrances - official website](#)
- [Al Jazeera - Smell that: The rise of India's ittar industry](#)
- [Indulge Express - A fragrance revival is blossoming](#)
- [Mid-Day - The scent of movie magic](#)
- [Vogue - Attar, the Millennia-Old Fragrance Tradition, Is Poised for a Major Comeback](#)