

The invasion of the Chagos by UK Chagossians

Latest information on the Chagos dilemma is that the US ambivalent president Trump has reverted to his previous criticism that it was stupid of Britain to surrender the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius. His contention is that the US military base of Diego Garcia, the main island of the Archipelago, will play a vital part in any American military standoff with Iran.

Funded and accompanied by a member of the right-wing, Nigel Farage’s Reform Party, a group of four UK Chagossians, led by Lindsay Mandarin, have on 18 February made the sea trip Sri Lankha in the Indian Ocean to the Chagos on a sailing boat.

They landed on a plot close to Peros Banhos, another one of the four larger islands among the 64 islets that make up the Atoll of the Chagos. Misley Mandarin, leader of this group of Four, has self-appointed himself as First Minister in exile and is claiming possession. Nigel Farage refers to him a the Chief Minister.



Sailing Home: The Group of Four

The situation is getting more and more involved, i.e. more complicated, regarding the Chagos. The Maldives which is situated closer to the Chagos (500km) refused earlier this month (February 2026) to acknowledge Mauritius’ sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. The Maldives is putting a counter claim based on historic and geographical connections.

The Chagos, part of the British Indian Ocean Territory until recently, is under the protection of the British Government. British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has sent a letter to Misley Mandarin ordering him and his

compagnons to leave the island.

But Misley Mandarin is reported to have declared that the authorities will only remove him dead from the Chagos, He has come home and he won’t leave, he says. He has provisions to last him for months, he tells enquirers.

Who is Misley Mandarin?

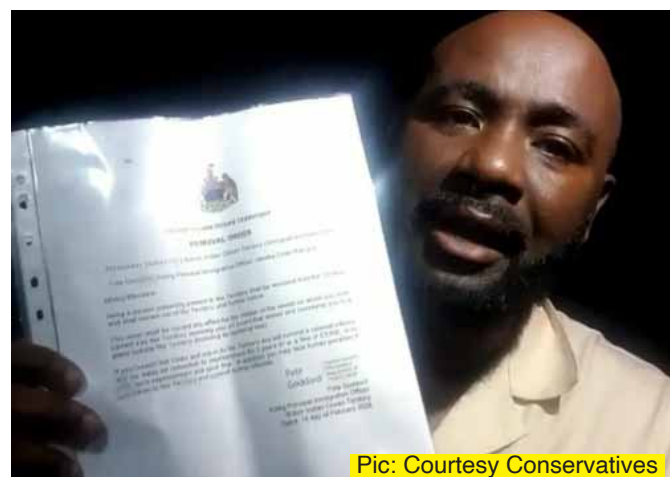
According to present Chagossian leader. Olivier Bancoult, Misley Mandarin was born in Mauritius when his parents were among the Chagossians who were criminally removed from their homeland by the British Government in the 1960s and 70s. Is he the son of Fernand Mandarin? Fernand Mandarin, was the first Chagossian to start the protest movements in Mauritius in the 1970s against the British illegal action to evict them from their homeland to make room for the US occupation. He effectively became leader of the exiled Chagossians in Mauritius

In the late 1990s, the British firm of solicitors Bernard Sheridans took the Chagossians’ case to the High Court of Justice in London. Fernand Mandarin was dropped and the name of another exiled Chagossian, Olivier Bancoult, was put forward to accompany a Chagossian delegation from Mauritius. And so was born, overnight, a new leader of the Chagossians. Fernand Mandarin was heard no more.

When the British Government decided to include the Chagos Archipelago among the newly-created British Indian Territory in 1965, the Chagossians were automatically considered as British subjects, and many of the Chagos nationals in Mauritius subsequently decided to emigrate to the UK. A very young Misley Mandarin was among the expatriates.

The area of Crawley in Surrey, South-East England, has become the home of the Chagossian immigrants where a large colony of them decided to take up residence. The is perhaps because it was initially easier for them to find employment at the nearby Gatwick Airport.

But soon a movement was to start led by Allen Vencatessin for the return ot the Chagossians to their original homeland. He even styled himself as the Chagos President in exile. Unfortunately, it was reported that he got himself embroiled with the law and allegedly did time for a while. This left room for Misley Mandarin



Misley Mandarin holding British Government's evacuation order

to step in his shoes.

It is a known fact that British Government has agreed to return the Chagos Archipelago to the sovereignty of Mauritius, in accordance with the ruling of the International Court of Justice. Britain agrees to do so with the proviso that the Chagos Archipelago, situated some 1,500 miles in the north-east of Mauritius, would remain under the jurisdiction of Britain on a 99-year lease.

But Britain has entered into a separate lease of the archipelago’s main island of Diego Garcia to the Americans so that they may carry on maintaining their military base on the island which was established in 1960s.

This is where the American Great Manitou controlling all the activities on Planet Earth has of late been dilly dallying. At first, he categorically said that it was a mistake for Britain to return the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius. Then it was reported he felt good about Mauritius’ sovereignty over the Chagos.

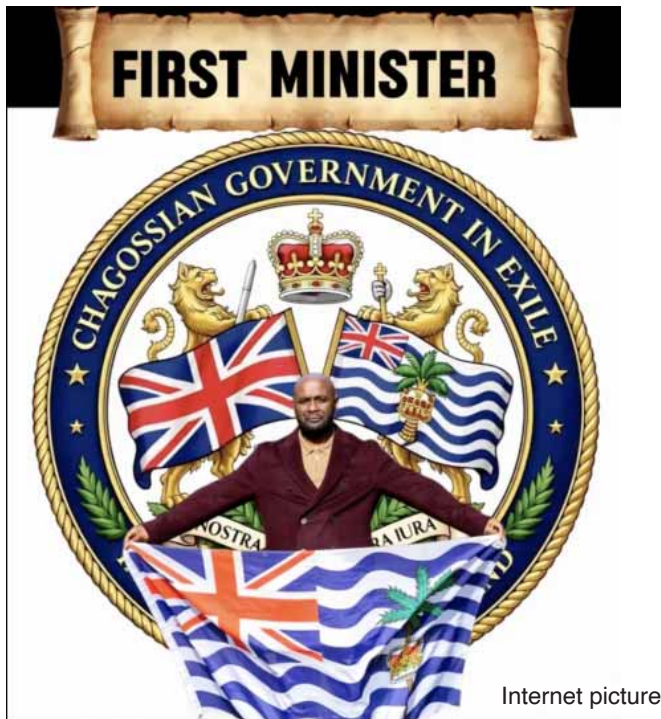
Now that the US is on the brink of war with Iran, Trump believes that the US military base of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean will play a vital role in the assault on that country. He is no longer happy that the sovereignty of the Chagos will be returned to Mauritius. He argues that Mauritius may make deals with China for the latter’s easy access to the Indian Ocean.

However, the British government is denying Trump’s intention to use the Diego Garcia base to attack Iran. But does he care? He is

Continued on Page 2

The invasion of the Chagos by UK Chagossians

From Page One



Misley Mandarin pictured with his own design of the Chagos Coat of Arms. He has designed the flag for his republic

even defying judgement of the Supreme Court in his own country.

How is it that the US, from the other side of the world, can interfere with activities in the Indian Ocean?

This is happening thanks to the British who have always been subservient to the US. In the context of the decolonisation process, a Mauritian delegation headed by Premier SSR attended in September 1965 a constitutional conference at Lancaster House in London.

The British Government, under Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson, made it known to the Mauritian delegation that Britain had decided to grant independence to Mauritius with the excision of the Chagos Archipelago.

As a matter of fact that same year (1965) Britain created the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) to include the Chagos Archipelago. A year later, in 1966, Britain leased the Chagos to the US for a period of 50 years. British Prime Minister Harold Wilson declared to the world that the Americans would use the main island of Diego Garcia as a satellite communication base.

Was Wilson unaware of the Americans' inten-

tion to build a military base on the island or was it a deliberate lie on his part?

India who had been campaigning throughout the sixties to declare the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace was very concerned about the US lease. India knew that the US would build a military base on Diego Garcia and made this fact known then.

So, this was how America got Diego Garcia on a plate without having to lift a finger or to make **any payment**. It happened thanks to the British imperialism.

The British were brutish and the white people of Britain today should not complain about non-white foreigners in the country today. Britain made great fortunes out of the exploitation of the colonies and the enslaving of people of colour during the colonial era

The Chagos Dilemma

The Chagos dilemma has still a very long,



America has again been given a further lease of Diego Garcia for another 99 years without having to disburse a single dime, and yet with the right to dictate.

Britain has agreed to pay the rent to Mauritius for the new US lease to the American, and to pay compensation to the Chagossians for the inhumane treatment inflicted on them, con-

sidered as a crime to humanity.

Britain is at present under the control of a Labour Government in distress. The Labour leader, Sr Keir Starmer, is a marked man.

Valeur du jour, Labour will be out of office following the next general election. The Right or a coalition of the Right will secure power.

The Right in Britain are against the Chagos deal with Mauritius, the rent payment to Mauritius and the compensation payment to the evicted Chagossians. They argue that Britain's economy is in dire straits. Britain has no money.

The Reform Party

The most vociferous of the right-wing elements of Britain is the new Reform Party under the leadership of Nigel Farage.

This man **almost** single-handedly brought about Brexit, the exit of Britain from the European Union. And yet he was at the time a member of the European Parliament from which he wanted Britain to dissociate. It did not bother him to lose his seat.

Funding the Chagossians trip to Peros Banhos

It has been said that a member of Nigel Farage's Reform Party has been funding and advising the rebel Chagossians to Peros Banhos.

Reform Leader Nigel Farage who is giving his total support to the Chagossians has vowed that he would soon broadcast to the world from the beaches of Peros Banhos.

The occupation of Peros Banhos by the UK Chagossians has taken place under the very nose of the Americans on the nearby Diego Garcia. How can Mauritius which is 1500 miles away patrol the Archipelago as a whole?

No the plight of the Chagos and the Chagossians is far from over.

Editor's Note:

As regards those four Chagossians, they may soon find how hard it is to survive on a desert island. Multi-millionaire Nigel Farage will not send them provisions for long. They MAY soon turn into some Man Fridays. We are still during the cyclonic season in the Indian Ocean. Already cyclone warnings are frequently being issued in the area. Without any proper infrastructure in place they will wish they never set out.

P.C.

AI Impact Summit 2026: Prime Minister Ramgoolam calls for international partnerships

"As Artificial Intelligence (AI) reshapes the global power structure, we cannot act in silos. AI holds enormous promise but also carries major risks requiring new governance frameworks through international coordination. This is precisely why strategic international partnerships must be set up".

The Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, made this statement, on 19 February, in New Delhi, India, during the 'Leaders' Plenary – Global Vision for AI Impact and Governance' of the AI Impact Summit 2026 which is being held from 17 to 22 February.

Prime Minister Ramgoolam warned that widening technological disparities between developed and developing nations could have far-reaching consequences. He stressed that the growing AI divide is already placing developing countries at a disadvantage, threatening their development prospects and compounding existing socio-economic challenges.

While describing AI as a structural pillar of future development, he underlined its vast potential to enhance public service delivery, strengthen decision-making, optimise resource management, bolster climate resilience and unlock new avenues for

growth. However, he cautioned that AI also raises critical issues relating to ethics, governance, equity and trust.

Dr Ramgoolam underlined that without the relevant infrastructure, developing countries, in particular Small Island Developing States, are already disadvantaged in areas such as education, health and trade, and will fall further behind. He emphasised that small economies thus need rapid upskilling in order to stay competitive.

In this regard, the Prime Minister indicated that Government has published the 'Mauritius Digital Transformation Blueprint 2025-2029' as a bridge to the future. It is a strategic roadmap outlining Government's commitment to modernising public services and empowering our people through technology despite our limited resources, he stated.

Moreover, he underscored that Government is establishing a Specialised Economic Zone dedicated to digital technology and AI, designed



world leaders for strategic discussions on the future of AI. Key themes include: AI governance and global cooperation; Balancing innovation with responsibility; and AI's role in economic growth and social impact.

G.I.S

Japan Local Colour

Sapporo Snow Festival 2026
A Winter Wonderland Under the Stars

From
Mylene



The beauty of this festival is that all the sculptures featured below are fashioned out of snow, and they last!

The Sapporo snow festival takes place in Odori Park, right in the heart of the city, from February 4 to February 11. With no gates or barriers, it's a completely open-air, 24-hour event where you can stroll around at your own pace, taking in everything from towering snow sculptures to smaller, more intricate ones. Best of all, it's completely free.

It's hard to believe the festival began back in 1950, when a group of high school students built a handful of snow statues in Odori Park just for fun. They probably had no idea they were kick-starting what would become one of Japan's most famous winter events, now attracting millions of visitors from around the world.



The Thoroughbred Crowned in Glory

Things really took off in the 1950's when Japan's Self-Defense Forces joined in, using their technical skills and manpower to create much larger and more elaborate sculptures. By the 1970s, the festival had grown into a major winter attraction, with professional artists, community groups and international



Tsuruga Castle

teams all joining the snowy creative party. Despite its global scale today, the festival's roots remain charmingly local.

I've been to the festival many times, but always during the day. This year, I decided to go at night, and it felt like stepping into a completely different scene.



Projection mapping .

The daytime buzz, cheerful crowds, constant chatter, and families weaving in and out from sculpture to sculpture gives way to a calmer,

more relaxed, more hushed atmosphere.

Under the floodlights, the sculptures look even more magical, especially ones lit up with colourful projection mapping that brings them to life in shifting colour and light. There's something about the cold night air too. It feels sharper.

Standing there, I couldn't help but think how temporary it all was. Walking through a park filled with giant works of art made entirely out of snow, knowing they won't last forever. They shine brightly for a short time, delighting visi-



A Grand Home

tors before eventually melting away. Somehow, that fleeting nature just makes the whole experience feel even more special as if the night itself shaped them, and will quietly reclaim them when the lights go out.

That, perhaps, is the real charm of the Snow Festival. It isn't meant to last. It's a fleeting winter spectacle, gone with the snow, but not from our memory.



Story Book Character



Animation characters

The Rodrigues Newsletter

*From Paul Draper,
Port Mathurin*



**Care-Co (Rodrigues). & the Trevor Huddleston Association for the Disabled (Rodrigues).
Camp du Roi, Rodrigues, R.519. Republic of Mauritius, Indian Ocean. Tel (230) 8311766**

careco@intnet.mu: pdraper@intnet.mu: gonzaguepierrelois@gmail.com
www.careco-rodrigues.com, www.gpl-centre.com

Greetings from Rodrigues.

As I write this we are following the developments concerning a Tropical Storm which is likely to become a threat to Rodrigues in the following days. It has now been baptized Horatio and we shall see what next week brings.

That's not good news but now...

I am able to share some good news !

Yes, good news from the GPL Centre as I heard today that 5 of our 7 teachers who are on the staff in the Centre have passed their recent Mauritius Institute of Education exams and have received their Certificate in Special Needs Education.

All of them passed the exam and one of them with distinction. The teachers have been following the various stages of the course for some time and recently sat the required exams. This news of their success means that they are all happy and feel that they have proved their competence in the work and this also boosts their professional outlook in this their chosen career in what is, a challenging field of education,

At the same time, Susan (School Director p.i.) and I are very happy for this successful outcome for our teachers and congratulate our five teachers on obtaining this certification. Thanks too for the nice cake which was made to mark the occasion!

At the same time we should not forget the other members of the team including 'carers' and other non teaching staff for their dedication and care to the students at the Centre.

Receiving this certification and passing the exams allows the teachers to go on to the diploma Course and thus increase their professional status in the field of Special Needs Education.

More Good News !

We are in the centre of the cyclone season and the threat of the approaching storm 'Horatio' casts a shadow on our beekeeping department at the Care-Co workshop, BUT we had good news early in the month to note that we were able to harvest our first honey gathered from our hives for the past few years and have our own prizewinning Honey (at the UK National Honey Show) appearing once again in our shops and on sale.

It has been a few years since we suffered a decline in the honey harvest and the loss of many of our Bee colonies as a result. We have been looking at the situation and trying to suggest reasons why there has been this decline. However help has been on the way and it is thanks to Charles from France who has worked so hard to expand and develop the apiary, that we now have about twenty five active and healthy bee colonies and that some of them, even in this late stage in the season, have yielded honey that we can bottle and put on sale in our shops.

We are also indebted to the help and advice from Vincenzo from Italy and the ENSAMN project that we have been able to assess, plan and improve our beekeeping activities in order to help and train more beekeepers in Rodrigues.

So, with these encouragements we can face the future (and the cyclones) and be thankful that we are able to provide employment to a good number of people with disabilities and special education to nearly 60 children with special needs.

Once again, please excuse the printed 'letter' which cannot ever replace a personal message, but, as always, if you respond to this letter I will definitely reply.

Thanks

Paul

The Mauritius Labour Party celebrates 90th Anniversary

On 23rd of February 1936, Dr Maurice Curé founded the Mauritius Labour Party. 90 years later, the party is still wandering from quarters to quarters. With the millions that have come into the kitty over the years, the Party is still as poor as job. No fixed abode.





PARIS : le Royaume des parfums

Par Akhtar Gopaul



« Mon Dieu, mais que ça sent bon ! ... »

Je me souviens que, à chaque fois qu'une de mes clientes parisiennes, surexcitée, s'exclamait ainsi, je ressentais aussitôt cette secrète et électrisante petite célébration intérieure... Tellement ravi, et assez fier je l'avoue, de voir mon parfum faire autant d'effet ! Ce parfum que mon passionnant métier d'alors me demandait de présenter au mieux à chacun des clients que j'étais amené à rencontrer, à accueillir et à conseiller.

Car j'ai eu cette formidable chance et ce véritable privilège d'avoir été, pendant près de vingt-cinq ans à Paris — la plus belle ville du monde, je vous le confirme..., conseiller Expert et ambassadeur Maison en l'univers fabuleux des Parfums de luxe.

J'avais quitté Maurice pour partir effectuer des études en art dans la capitale française car j'ambitionnais et je rêvais de devenir designer automobile ou styliste de mode.

Mais voilà que, dans la vie parfois, vous attendez patiemment ce bus qui ne vient toujours pas, et vous finissez par monter dans un autre. C'est ainsi que moi, un beau jour, j'ai pris cet improbable « bus du Parfum » qui s'est arrêté devant moi et qui m'a ouvert ses portes (...)

Mon aventure débutant, en octobre 2003, chez SEPHORA. Dans le quartier chic et mode de l'Opéra, là où se trouvent les fameux grands magasins du Printemps Haussmann et des Galeries Lafayette ainsi que le célèbre et historique musée du parfum : Fragonard, de Grasse.

C'est en tant que conseiller junior que j'ai commencé chez SEPHORA, la première parfumerie occidentale multi-marques et forte de la puissance internationale du groupe LVMH, proposant les fragrances des plus belles Maisons de parfum ainsi que les signatures olfactives des plus grands noms de la haute couture, de la joaillerie et de la maroquinerie. De Guerlain à Versace, en passant par Hermès, Cartier et Armani, toutes ces prestigieuses marques sont représentées chez SEPHORA sous leur forme parfum.

Le Parfum en majesté, trônant fièrement au royaume universel du total Luxe — et sous toutes les intensités imaginables, allant des eaux fraîches aux extraits absolus, et décliné dans ses versions lait corps, bain moussant, crème mains, brume cheveux... Et ce, pour le plus grand émerveillement des Parisiens, des provinciaux et des touristes des quatre coins du globe et de toutes les cultures, avec autant de jeunes "Fashion victims" japonaises que de connaisseurs expérimentés et affirmés de New York ou de Milan.

Tous, autant passionnés que dépensiers, et à l'excès. Car l'empire du Parfum de luxe ne connaît ni limites, ni frontières...

Durant mes années SEPHORA, j'ai également connu ce bonheur inimaginable et tellement inestimable d'être convié aux Journées de formations des marques, d'y rencontrer les têtes pensantes actuelles, pour mieux plonger dans leurs merveilleuses histoires et m'en imprégner. Pour, ensuite, les raconter et les transmettre.

Pendant les formations parfum chez Hugo Boss ou GivENCHY, le langage des odeurs se traduit par un discours au vocabulaire vestimentaire et couturier. Ce parfum frais et léger vous est raconté telle une robe d'été en coton, alors que cette autre fragrance plus sophistiquée et tellement puissante vous sera détaillée à l'image d'une très élégante veste en velours, vous enveloppant entièrement.

Chez Cartier ou Boucheron, votre parfum vous habillera autrement, et sous la forme d'une prestigieuse montre pour votre poignet ou sous les traits d'un sublime collier de perles à offrir à votre épouse.

Mais un parfum, c'est aussi le souvenir d'un lieu, d'un moment, d'une personne qui n'est plus...

Il nous transporte et nous fait voyager aussi bien dans le Temps que dans l'Espace en nous raccompagnant avec nostalgie vers nos si lointains souvenirs de l'enfance. **BRUT de Fabergé, pour moi, c'est l'île Maurice.** En août 1993, pour mes dix-sept ans. Cadeau d'anniversaire de ma grand-mère...

Mon parfum préféré. À tout jamais. Cependant, un parfum possède également le pouvoir de nous porter et nous élever, avec confiance et sérénité, vers l'avant. Vers notre Avenir. C'est l'essence de notre cœur, et le moteur de notre vie.

Sentir est une faculté extraordinaire concernant toute une panoplie de dimensions. L'odorat en premier lieu, suivi du visible, du gustatif, de l'auditif et du tactile. Une fragrance, ça se sent et ça se goûte. Ça se caresse, ça se contemple et ça s'écoute... Car tout parfum s'exprime et rayonne en déployant son éventail multisensoriel pour nous apporter cette multitude d'émotions qui nous rendent si vivants à travers l'éveil de nos sens. Puisque c'est ainsi que notre parfum nous dévoile ses facettes et nous les offre.

Ma carrière prendra un virage décisif lorsque je découvrirai l'univers de la haute parfumerie, bien des années plus tard, en me retrouvant conseiller Expert et ambassadeur de la Maison NICOLAÏ, fleuron de la parfumerie de niche française.

Ici, dans ma boutique précieuse et très intimiste de Neuilly-sur-Seine — petite bourgade avoisinante et au charme exquis, nous recevons une clientèle de proximité, d'une élégance rare, et dotée d'une immense et riche culture générale. Des épicuriens auxquels nous prenons un sincère plaisir à proposer des créations artisanales et éco-responsables, nées d'ingrédients les plus naturels et de matières premières les plus nobles, fruits d'un savoir-faire traditionnel et véritablement unique en son genre.

D'une qualité incomparable, les créations originales et familiales de Madame Patricia de NICOLAÏ — arrière-petite-fille de Monsieur GUERLAIN, sont d'une distinction absolue. Chez NICOLAÏ, on vous présente nos parfums de peau tels de beaux habits sur mesure, et on vous fait découvrir nos bougies parfumées et nos bambous odorants telles de précieuses fragrances d'intérieur pour délicatement sublimer et ambiancer aussi bien votre salon que vos chambres. Sans oublier la brume d'oreiller relaxante à la fleur d'orange et le parfum à l'accent légèrement café pour la voiture. Cire de bougie végétale et flacons de parfum recyclables.

Puisque le style, le bon goût et le savoir-vivre à la française, ça n'a pas de prix...

Par la suite, je recevrai une offre qui me fera rejoindre une autre sphère, insoupçonnée, de la haute parfumerie. En devenant responsable boutique et garant de l'image de la Maison ARABIAN OUD, à la Défense — le quartier ultra financier de l'ouest parisien avec sa clientèle internationale d'hommes et de femmes d'affaires tirés à quatre épingles, toujours très pressés et d'une exigence sans commune mesure, j'apprends au plus vite l'ensemble des stratégies et toutes les subtilités définissant la puissance économique de cette haute parfumerie "venue d'ailleurs".

Si le temps c'est de l'argent, alors nos ventes de parfums doivent obligatoirement se conclure en un temps record, mais sans rien sacrifier au service et à l'expérience Clients. Être irréprochable.

Numéro un incontestable de la parfumerie orientale à travers le monde, ARABIAN OUD propose des fragrances d'une autre époque et d'un autre charme : ceux des Mille et Une Nuits...

Des élixirs d'une richesse et d'une opulence enivrante, envoûtante à l'excès, précieusement gardés et protégés en des écrins à l'esthétique majestueusement sophistiquée. Des objets d'art



en verre massif, telles les pièces de collection d'un musée lointain, habillés d'or et d'argent, et abritant secrètement leurs potions magiques. Des œuvres sculpturales en forme d'encrier royal, de lune féérique ou de dague.

Chez ARABIAN OUD, le parfum prend une dimension à la fois sensuelle et spirituelle. Ici, avec comme serviteurs dévoués : encens, copeaux de Oud à brûler et huiles intimes, tous vos fantasmes sont permis car aucun amour ni désir n'est interdit. Puisque, aux pays du Moyen Orient, c'est dans la sublimation du corps et du cœur que s'élèvent l'âme et l'esprit. Le Sacré, sous toutes ses formes parfumées, et dans toute sa divine splendeur...

Tout au long de mon parcours, des rencontres et des échanges, j'ai pu mesurer l'importance inouïe de cet emblème tricolore. Bien plus qu'un joli symbole du patrimoine français, le parfum est une profonde et inamovible fierté nationale. En France en général, et à Paris en particulier, on EST parfum. Ici, on est Guerlain. On est Chanel. On est Dior... C'est ainsi que l'on se revendique. Car c'est une question d'identité et d'appartenance au-delà-même de nos différences culturelles, sociales et économiques. Le Parfum, unissant tout un peuple "par la fumée"...

Quels que soient son âge et ses origines, il est inconcevable pour une Française de ne pas se parfumer avant de sortir ! Dans un pays bâti sur les fondations de l'art, du style et de toutes les formes du Beau, c'est tout naturellement que se sont imposées les valeurs esthétiques du parfum sur sa population venant de tous les horizons. Sans oublier ses bienfaits... Car si le parfum n'est point une science, et encore moins médicale, c'est bien un art magique qui peut nous procurer les soins de l'âme et le soulagement des maux. À la fois une fontaine de jouvence et une cascade de bien-être et de plaisir, abreuvant de ses dons surnaturels notre état d'esprit.

D'où notre fascination pour le Parfum, la divine Eau !

C'est au cours de toutes ces années que j'ai appris à mettre des mots sur ce que je sentais et sur ce que je faisais sentir à mes clients en magasin. Car "sentir", c'est une affaire de sensation, de sentiment et de sensibilité. Pour ce faire, libérons nos cinq sens.

Parler d'un parfum, c'est parler de l'Invisible...

Savoir le comprendre, le décrire, l'expliquer et le matérialiser. Pour, au final, parvenir à le rendre VISIBLE. Tel un vêtement.

D'ailleurs, n'est-ce pas ainsi qu'on l'exprime souvent ? :

"Porter" un parfum...

A suivre dans le prochain numéro