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Eau de Nascar: Licensing and the Smell of Money

By [VIV BERNSTEIN](#)

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Matt Kenseth has competed in the Daytona 500 seven years in a row, long enough to know all the sights, sounds and scents of the most prestigious race on Nascar's Nextel Cup circuit. But Kenseth obviously was not consulted when the folks at Elizabeth Arden came up with Daytona 500, the new eau de toilette and aftershave for men that will be available for race fans beginning in April.

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Daytona 500 cologne smells better than burning rubber

"I don't know how you make Daytona 500 into a cologne unless it smells something like burning race gas or something," Kenseth said during a conference call with reporters last Tuesday.

What does Kenseth know? According to the news release, Daytona 500 is a mix of yuzu, bergamot, mandarin, tarragon, sage, nutmeg, cardamom, amber

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man turning rubber.

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and sandalwood. It is supposed to be "a fresh, masculine modern fragrance that captures the thrill and exhilaration of the Daytona 500."

Elizabeth Arden and International Speedway Corporation, which owns Daytona International Speedway and the licensing rights to the race, hope it is a mix that will inspire not only men, but women (as purchasing agents for their boyfriends and husbands). It is one more way to get women to buy into Nascar. International Speedway is the sister company of Nascar, which is doing its part to attract women and their purses with its latest link: a licensing deal with Harlequin Romance novels.

Not to be left out of the money grab, drivers have forged their own licensing deals and, with Nascar, are promoting Crock-Pots. Now every Nascar mom can own a [Tony Stewart](#) Crock-Pot. Or a Ryan Newman Crock-Pot, if that is how they lean. More than a dozen drivers are in on that deal. Tony Stewart's mother was signed on to hawk the Crock-Pots last season.

Nascar is perhaps the only traditionally male sport that is making this kind of concerted effort to market itself to women.

"Our research shows 40 percent of our fans are female," Kerry Tharp, who worked in the licensing division on the Harlequin deal before becoming Nascar's public relations director, said in a telephone interview. "You want to make sure that you are doing everything you can to cultivate that group. I think there's been a shift in our product line of the last couple years that appeals more to females."

That shift includes a licensing deal with Track Couture, which sells women's shirts and skirts — predominantly pink — with selected driver numbers. Nascar is even licensing vegetables, fruit, bacon, sausage and barbeque sauce.

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"We've got an author base that's been quite interested in Nascar," Katherine Orr, vice president of public relations at Harlequin Enterprises Ltd., said in a telephone interview. "So we called up Nascar and said, 'How'd you like to partner with us?' They leapt at the chance, too. It has been the smoothest partnership we've ever worked with.

"The appeal to us was the fact that they're global, we're global, they've got a huge fan base of which well over 40 percent are women. Our phones rang off the hook the day we announced it."

The first book is now available. "In the Groove" is the story of down-and-out Sarah Tingle, who is hired to drive the motor coach for the famous Nascar driver Lance Cooper. Naturally, romance follows:

"Silence filled the air, the kind of heavy quiet that seemed to amplify everything. Her breathing. His breathing. Her scent. His scent ... And then his lips began to twitch a bit. He moved in closer to her. And then there was noise, loud noise — her heart as it echoed in her ears like the slap of water against a rock. Her cheeks heated all over again, especially at the brief glimpse of ... something she caught in his eyes. ..."

Harlequin authors are using only fictitious driver names. The Roush Racing driver Carl Edwards has signed on to be the prize in a contest. He will take the contest winner out on a date.

Orr said 200,000 copies of "In the Groove" have been shipped, with the book going back to press three times, which she called an unusual amount. They do not have sales totals yet but are confident enough to have planned two more titles this year and as many as 19 next season. Harlequin, Orr said, has not approached any other sports league with a similar deal.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Arden's success with the Halston fragrance Z-14, promoted by the driver [Jeff Gordon](#), led to the idea for Daytona 500. The fragrance was sold at the race in February and will be available exclusively at J. C. Penney and Sears beginning in April. It will be sold at major retailers starting in July.

"When you think about the great sporting events of the world, you think about the World Cup and the N.B.A. finals and the Super Bowl and all these fantastic massive sporting events, this has never been done before," Daryl Wolfe, vice president of sales and media for the International Speedway Corporation, said in a telephone interview.

And whether it smells like the Daytona 500 or not is irrelevant. When it comes to Nascar, the smell of money is always in the air.

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