

Name: Virginie Daniau

Age: 30



Background:

Virginie lives and works in France. She did A-levels in Maths, Physics and Chemistry. Virginie then specialised in Chemistry at university. In her spare time she likes painting, drawing, and dancing.

What sort of work do you do?

I have always liked Maths, and then was attracted to Chemistry because you can experiment and find out whether theories really work.

I also really liked the pops and bangs and the beautiful colours of the chemical reactions. Maybe it reminds me of the palette I use when I paint.

I began at a perfume company called Quest as a student in 1995. I decided I would really like to carry on working in the perfume industry. A few years later, I applied for a

proper job there. After a few interviews, I got it, and was delighted. Basically, when someone else discovers a new perfume molecule, I have to work out the best way to make it in the lab. The whole process can take up to 5 years.

The process I choose has to be safe, environmentally friendly, and be economic. We have to control the reactions very carefully: temperature, pressure, catalyst, stirring etc...

We also work closely with 'perfumers' who test what the molecules we're making smell like to see if it's good enough.

What do you like about your work?

I find my research very interesting for many reasons. Every day, you can learn something new like a new chemical reaction. You feel like a detective, trying to spot clues to solve a mystery. When you've solved it, it's really satisfying. My work is very varied. Some days I work with ideas. Other times I'm doing reactions to see if the ideas work.

What's the worst bit?

Sometimes, reactions do not work, however hard you try. Chemistry teaches you patience! Other times, even when the reaction works, my new process is turned down because it is too expensive, which can be disappointing.

What do you want to do in the future?

Overall, I love the work I am doing. We have an excellent team, and there's a great atmosphere in the laboratory. I'm very lucky! I like the idea of working more closely with the people who mix the scents together to make new perfumes - the 'perfumers'