

Shane Watson

Long live the Queen



There is something wonderful about the story of the Queen ticking off the photographer Annie Leibovitz (even if her majesty didn't storm off, as the BBC tried to imply). To recap: in a BBC

documentary on the workings of the royal family, to be shown in September, there is a moment when Leibovitz – commissioned to take a portrait of HM – oversteps the mark by daring to suggest the Queen remove her “crown” so that her outfit looks less “dressy”. There are so many howlers contained in this request it's hard to know where to begin. For a start, you don't tell the Queen what to do – everyone knows that. In particular, you don't tell the Queen how to wear the Order of the Garter regalia, when there are only a handful of people in the world who know what goes where and why. You do not refer to her tiara as a crown (this is vaguely insulting, implying the crown is a bit of costume jewellery that she pops on whenever she fancies being extra-regal). And you do not diminish the symbolic power of the Queen's ceremonial clothing by describing it as “dressy”. So, the Queen snapped at Leibovitz. And that's when we perked up.

This might look like a straightforward clash of old and new worlds, but that isn't why we whooped (even committed anti-royalists) when we heard that Leibovitz had been put in her place. It's because everyone recognised the moment when a woman confident of her own image, requiring no embellishment, no stylists or spin doctors, met an image-maker who deals in manufacturing icons out of nothing, and exposed the hollow core of that profession. We loved the Queen for taking a stand, not just because we respect her for minding about doing things properly (no latte for her during make-up), but because we have come to abhor the bogus business of celebrity. It's only a few months since Tom Cruise, Katie Holmes and Suri posed for Leibovitz in a Vanity Fair shoot that made them look like wholesome settlers in the great American wilderness. How did that story bear any relation to Mr and Mrs Cruise's real lives and personalities? Not remotely, is how. They live in LA and he is a Scientologist, la la la, and their best friends are the Beckhams.

Ah, the Beckhams. The news of the Queen v Leibovitz was timely, coming as it did in the week that brand Beckham appeared in W magazine. Dear God. David, face down on a bed, buttocks to camera, sheet teasingly pulled aside; and a full crotch shot of VB in panties, tugging her legs apart. Hello? The message about who these people are is what exactly? A footballer and a ... jeans designer? The parents of three small boys?

Actually, what the W story says is: “Do us any way you want that will get us attention, even if we both end up looking like hookers.” Because that is celebrity now. Get me an audience, whatever it takes, and don't ask what I actually do for a living.

No wonder the Queen wouldn't take off her “crown”. She really doesn't need to. □



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Read my lips: secrets of a perfect pout

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ROUGE AWAKENING

Poppy King thinks that somewhere during our love affair with lip gloss, we have lost the art of great lipstick. So, with her new line, she's gone back to the 1940s — when women really knew how to wear it. She talks pigment with **Helen Brown**

As make-up statements go, it doesn't get much more potent than red lipstick. A symbol of the powerful woman, the vixen, the vamp and the *femme so fatale* you feel that even one lingering glance might prove deadly, rouged lips have an undeniable appeal. Today, the most glamorous celebrities, such as Dita Von Teese, have made it their trademark look, just as Louise Brooks did in the 1920s and Eva Peron in the 1940s. On the catwalk, too, red lips are a recurrent theme — the strongest make-up look for this autumn/winter was, without a doubt, Gucci's Veronica Lake glam, complete with precision ruby lips.

The allure of bright-red lips is not lost on Poppy King, the self-confessed lipstick queen, who, on leaving school in Melbourne at 18, was so frustrated at being unable to find a decent red lippie that she launched Poppy, her own range of lipsticks. It instantly garnered a cult following, and sales of more than £400,000 in its first year (1992).

After running her company for 10 years, King spent three years working on colour for Prescriptives. Now, she's back with a new range, Lipstick Queen. "I decided to launch Lipstick Queen because I thought lipstick was in danger of becoming a thing of the past. I didn't see anything that offered a dramatic statement in colour or texture. It was all centred on lip gloss. All the lipsticks had a slippery, shimmery texture and weren't very rich in pigment or reminiscent of the 1920s and 1940s, when women really knew how to wear lipstick."

The result of her musings is a capsule collection of just 10 colours. There's everything from Pink, an impossibly pretty ballet-slipper shade, through to the matt, latte-toned Nude and King's signature shade, Red, which was inspired by Jerry Hall in her Studio 54 years. Each shade comes in two formulas: Sinners, which have a velvety texture and intense colour that remains just as punchy on the lips as it does in the barrel, for aficionados of "done" lips; and Saints, which give a sheer tint, for less confident lipstick-wearers. "Saints are great if you've been wearing gloss and want to get back into lipstick," King says.

But why should we take King's word for it? After all, her first company went bankrupt in 2002. Well, for starters, she practises what she preaches, using traffic-stopping red lips to complete her own 1940s pin-up look on a daily basis. Plus, her new range is already going down a storm in the USA, where it launched in January. Barneys is selling out of some shades, and it is

quickly gaining a celebrity following, too — Nicole Kidman apparently wore Red Sinner at the Oscars.

But, aside from all of that, you need only try them to understand that she knows what women want from their lipstick. There are no gimmicky colours or tasteless shimmer or sparkle, just a wearable palette of shades that stay true when you apply them, last for hours and really do have that elusive ability to lift your whole demeanour.

KING'S TIPS FOR WEARING LIPSTICK

Do the groundwork Keep your lips in good shape by brushing them in a circular motion with a spare toothbrush to remove any dead skin cells and stimulate circulation. Then apply a good lip balm — my favourite is By Terry Baume de Rose (£29, from Space NK; 020 8740 2085).

Choose the right one for you The right red should bring your hair, skin and eyes to life. The wrong one can make you look deathly. Generally speaking, blondes or those with pale skin should go for orangey reds, as anything blue-based may end up looking too pink. Brunettes or those with darker skin should stick to blue-toned shades, as red can look orange on them.

Don't overdo it The trick is to wear red lips with minimal eye make-up (the least you're comfortable with), as that is what can make it look gaudy.

Stop the bleeding Lip liner can look wrong unless you keep it as close as possible to the shade of your lipstick. Instead, before applying lipstick, smudge under-eye concealer around your lips to hold it in place.

Make it last If durability is your priority, go for highly pigmented (ie, intensely coloured) formulas, as they last longer. Apply one layer straight from the barrel, blot with a tissue, then apply another. With a strong pigment, you should need to reapply only twice during the day.

Rouge up your cheeks To make your face come alive, apply a touch of lipstick to the apples of your cheeks and blend.

Clean your teeth Prone to getting lippie on your teeth? A good tip to prevent the problem is to apply your colour, then pucker up as if you're about to kiss someone, put your finger in your mouth and pull it out to remove any excess that could end up on teeth. If yellowing teeth are a concern, opt for bluer tones. □

Lipstick Queen Saints and Sinners (£15 each) will be available exclusively from Space NK from mid-August



"King uses traffic-stopping red lips to complete her own pin-up look"



Demon reds

THE BEST LIPSTICKS

Lipstick Queen in Red Sinner 1940s glamour all the way, this gives dense coverage that is as vivid on the lips as it is in the stick. £15

Shu Uemura Rouge Unlimited in RD190 A rich, womanly colour with orange undertones. Good for blondes and those with pale skin. £15

Chanel Rouge Allure in Passion Builds up in sheer layers to form an impressive flamenco red. £18

Mac Matte in Russian Red This deep, true red gives a grown-up, matt finish that lasts for hours. £11

Giorgio Armani Armanisilk in 10 A great "just eaten a punnet of strawberries" stain. £17

Guerlain KissKiss in Excès de Rouge A blue-toned red with a comfortable slip to it. The waxy formula is good for dry lips. £16

Rouge Dior in Red Premiere A lipstick that combines intense scarlet colour with a flattering satin gleam. £16.50

Nars Lipstick in Jungle Red An unbelievably bright, poppy shade, with a striking, powdery finish. £17

Word of mouth
Poppy King

