

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a person's lips. The lips are coated in a vibrant, glossy red lipstick. The texture of the lips and the sheen of the lipstick are clearly visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus skin tone.

WORD OF MOUTH

Toss the gloss! Fall's ladylike fashions call for grown-up makeup. Lipstick makes a vibrant return. TEXT: STEFANIE POLSINELLI



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When the usually demure actress Michelle Williams showed up at last year's Academy Awards on the arm of Heath Ledger, it wasn't just her canary-yellow gown that had people talking. With her mouth painted a vivid scarlet, she personified the glamour of old Hollywood—and ushered in a lipstick revival. Although lipstick has long been a symbol of femininity (archaeologists estimate the first lipstick, found near ancient Babylon and made from crushed, semi-precious jewels, to be 5,000 years old), its status has been challenged in recent years by the popularity of gloss. But this fall, thanks to fashion designers, makeup artists >



WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE NEW LIPSTICKS? INNOVATIONS IN TEXTURE, FORMULA AND PACKAGING.

and the occasional daring celebrity, lipstick's back—in a big, bold way.

At Gucci, Valentino and Roberto Cavalli, red lipstick made as much of a statement as the clothes on fall catwalks. Gucci Westman Neville, international artistic director for Lancôme, was one of the driving forces behind the colour revolution. "We saw beige lips for so long that I wanted to go darker and more polished," she says. "And the clothes just begged for a clean, crisp look." Toronto-based designer David Dixon agrees. "This fall signals the return to a classic way of dressing—it's fashion with a sense of propriety," he says. "Lipstick is much more lady-like and sophisticated than lipgloss, so it pairs better with the clothing."

While designers are showing renewed interest in a more prominent

mouth, some women, like Poppy King, have always been lipstick enthusiasts. Unable to find a shade she liked, King started her own lipstick-only line—the now-defunct Poppy—at the age of 18. Ten years later, in 2002, the company was shuttered, but the New York-based entrepreneur is making a comeback with a new line called Lipstick Queen and a book entitled *Lessons of a Lipstick Queen: Finding the Great Idea That Can Change Your Life*. "Lipstick isn't just a beauty product," she says. "It's part of the female experience. When women go too long without wearing it or being aware of it, they develop a sense of loss."

But this trend isn't for the timid: unlike gloss, pulling off a brightly painted smile requires a certain level of self-assurance. "A woman who is

LIP SERVICE

Canadian men weigh in on life in the lipstick jungle.

"I've always viewed red lipstick as a sort of mating call—not necessarily for sex but for trying to attract men." — Daniel Kishimoto, 27, Toronto

"Lipstick indicates a certain formality, and, unless I was appropriately attired, I would feel underdressed in her presence." — Barry Choi, 32, Toronto

"Nothing is sexier than watching a woman apply her lipstick." — Indy Singh, 37, Toronto

"I wouldn't rank lipstick high on my list of turn-ons. It's a monster to be avoided when you're wearing a white shirt and makes stolen kisses visible to everyone." — Andre Zunic, 35, Toronto

"When I think of red lipstick, I think of grandmothers or the 1980s." — Daniel M., 27, Toronto

"Context is important—strong lips might be a tad much for the subway but just right for a black-tie event." — Greg Zunic, 31, Toronto

"Bright red lipstick screams 'sex!'" — John Gemmill, 25, currently living in London, England

From top: Lipstick Queen Lipstick in Red Sinner (\$23); Chanel Rouge Allure Luminous Satin Lip Colour in Lover Limited Edition (\$35); Rouge Dior Lipstick in Red Première (\$35); L'Oréal Paris Colour Riche Star Secrets Lipstick in Penelope's Red (\$10.50); Elizabeth Arden Exceptional Lipstick in Lush Red (\$24.50); Revlon Super Lustrous Lipstick in Raspberry Bite (\$9.50); Nars Lipstick in Shanghai Express (\$30). For details, see Shopping Guide.

in full possession of her being knows the effect of a red mouth and feels confident wearing it," says Heather Hiscox, host of *CBC News: Morning*. King acknowledges the shade's seductive connotations: "Reds are the most femme fatale of any lipstick colour."

Whether you opt for red lips or something more subdued, you'll be spoiled for choice at the beauty counter this season, with manufacturers offering one of the biggest selections in years. So what's different about the new generation of lipsticks? Innovations in texture, formula and packaging, says Susan Sterling, international makeup artist for Chanel. A lipstick's packaging is important because women love the seductive gesture of pulling the tube out of their purse to apply it, she says. Chanel transformed the ordinary lipstick case into an *objet d'art* with last year's Rouge Allure, which features a sexy click-release design. Givenchy followed suit with Rouge Interdit, and Shu Uemura launched Rouge Unlimited, which was fashioned by the New York architectural firm Tsao & McKown. (The futuristic packaging took a year to create; during that time, the architects also built a 15-storey building!) Sterling says that beauty companies are also investing in improved colour selection and long-wear formulas. And, according to King, lipsticks that double as diet suppressants and nutraceuticals are coming soon to a beauty counter near you.

The return of lipstick is seen by some people as part of a broader trend: shortly after the attacks on the World Trade Center, Estée Lauder chairman Leonard Lauder coined the phrase "lipstick index"—an indicator to gauge consumer spending. "During economic or global troubles, lipstick sales increase," explains King. So, while the urge to buy lipstick may not bode well for the future, says King, it's a small and relatively cheap way to give yourself a sense of hope. □

From top: Lola Cosmetics Lip Crème in Bitten (\$24); N.Y.C. Ultra Moist Lip Wear in Plum Rum (\$2); Giorgio Armani Cosmetics Armani Silk High Color Cream Lipstick in No. 11 (\$34); Cover Girl IncrediFULL Lipcolour in Fresh Jam (\$9); Estée Lauder Pure Color Longlasting Lipstick in Midnight Pink (\$30); Lancôme Color Fever Lasting Radiance Sensual Lipcolor in Violet Fashion, Not Victim (\$31); Yves Saint Laurent Rouge Pure Shine Sheer Lipstick SPF 15 in No. 23 Candy Plum (\$35)

