

Read my lips

The beauty industry is on red alert – after years of easy-care gloss, more and more women are now plumping for the high-glamour, high-maintenance – and high voltage – option of rich red lipstick.

Diesel, Anna Molinari, Krizia, Valentino, Dolce & Gabbana, Vivienne Westwood... the message from the catwalks is loud and clear: red is back. “For some of us, it never went away,”

says the queen of lipstick, Poppy King. “But I do feel that after years of being on a losing streak, I’m finally backing a winning team again.” These days, says Poppy, lipstick spans the spectrum, “from a high-pigment, high-maintenance look to a sheer wash of colour”.

The variety of textures and colour densities on offer has helped power the lipstick renaissance. “There was a time

when a long-lasting lipstick was drying and almost puckering on lips,” explains Poppy. “But there has been a very real revolution in pigment technology.”

Traditionally, the only way to get a lipstick to last was to add more pigment, but pigments dry the skin. So, rather than the powder pigments of old, the latest generation of lipsticks have a liquid, almost latex-like stretch, enabling them to move

with your lips. In fact, the best are so comfortable that you can easily forget you are wearing lipstick at all.

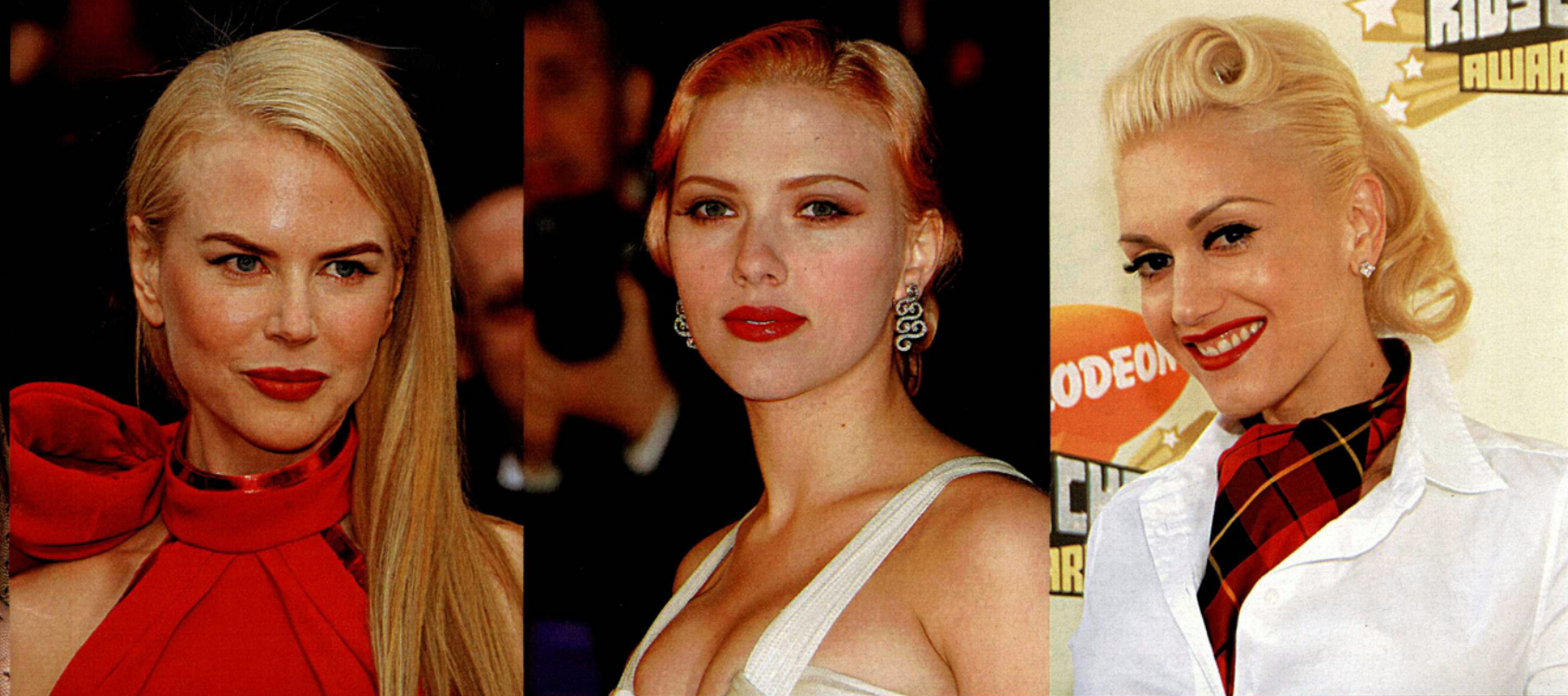
Poppy has always been crazy about lipstick – she created her own range in her native Australia while still in her teens. After moving to New York where she developed new products for Prescriptives, she has now returned to her beauty roots by bringing out a range called Lipstick Queen Saints and Sinners. And so enamoured is Poppy with the new lipstick formulations that she is on a one-woman mission to ensure we all have at least one red shade in our make-up bags. “I’m still as enchanted as I was all those years ago,” she enthuses.

She’s certainly not the only one. Beauty icon Dita Von Teese, pop stars like Gwen Stefani and movie A-listers such as Scarlett Johansson are all lipstick lovers who have proved that if you want a short-cut to full-on glamour, red lips are the only way to go.

In her Saints and Sinners range Poppy offers a choice of coverage – Saints contain 10 per cent pigment; Sinners offer 90 per cent. “That way, you choose your shade and coverage with ease,” she reveals.

Celebrity fans include Drew Barrymore, who is a Red Saint wearer, Mary-Kate Olsen, who bought the entire range, and Nicole Kidman, who teamed a stunning Valentino couture gown with Red Sinner for maximum impact on Oscar night.

But you don’t need to tread the red carpet in order to rediscover lipstick, according to Poppy. “Lipstick is still a rite of passage for most girls – they buy a first lipstick and start to become a woman,” she explains. “Gloss is sexy in an innocent way, while lipstick seems grown up and womanly. Yet it can be worn with an evening gown, or with jeans and a T-shirt, minimalist skin and mascara.”



Come on you reds: (from left to right) Dita Von Teese, Nicole Kidman, Scarlett Johansson and Gwen Stefani show how full-on, glamorous red lips get you noticed. And according to 'Lipstick Queen' Poppy King (below right): "Women who wear red lipstick smile more often than those without"

Word of mouth

Whether it's a subtle shade or a bold look you are after, the new lipsticks have it covered

L'Oréal Paris Color Riche Made For Me Naturals, £7.99 In ten nude shades – ideal for anyone who shies away from deep colours.

Body Shop Precious Rouge, £9 A glossy lipstick for beginners. Comes in three shades.

Daniel Sandler High Impact Lipstick, £11 Visit danielsandler.com

Maybelline Moisture Extreme Lipcolour, £4.99 Comes in 26 shades.

Chanel Rouge Allure, £18 Six new shades – Precious 39 (above) is the perfect suits-all raspberry.

Clinique Different Lipstick, £12 Ten new shades for autumn. Available from 26 October.

Givenchy Rouge Interdit, £16 Has two new nudes for autumn – Voluptuous Nude (left) and Rose Caprice.

Shu Uemura Rouge Unlimited Red Collection, £15 In five dramatic shades. Tel: 020-7235 2375.

Poppy King Lipstick Queen, £15 In ten Saint and ten Sinner shades. From Space NK, tel: 020-8740 2085.

Max Factor Lasting Colour Lipstick in Firebrand, £6.50 Used by make-up artist Pat McGrath at the Valentino and Dolce & Gabbana shows.

Estée Lauder Signature Lipstick, £15 Launches 1 October and comes in 30 shades.

MAC Viva Glam, £11 Now in six shades – from deepest red to nude pink. And all proceeds go to the MAC AIDS Fund charity.

Poppy's guide to great lips

Avoid lip liner "A great, high-pigment lipstick is really all you need to create perfect lips. If you are worried about bleeding, prep your lips by patting them with a dab of concealer around the outer edge. Then apply your colour direct from the bullet."

Bright lips, less eyes "My simple rule is: the brighter your lipstick, the less eye make-up you should wear. One of my favourite looks is natural skin, mascara and deep-red lips."

Lip locking "To ensure lipstick doesn't smudge on your teeth, after applying pop your index finger into your mouth, pucker up around it, then pull your finger out. Any excess colour will be on your finger, not your teeth."

Long-lasting lips "People tell me that high-pigment lipstick is high-maintenance, but I disagree. I apply my lipstick at 7.30 in the morning, at 3pm, and again at 8pm. I simply tissue off the colour, apply a little ChapStick, then apply again."

Seeing red "To find your perfect red I recommend you first try the reds in the less-pigmented Saints range. Once you have got used to and found your perfect colours, you are ready to become a Sinner."

Go-anywhere colour "To find your perfect low-maintenance, go-anywhere colour, simply match the natural colour of your lips – pink for pink lips, brown for brown lips. Or choose berry shades, which suit everyone."

● For more information about Poppy's lipstick range, visit lipstickqueen.com

