

# Lessons for the Locals From an Australian Lipstick Queen

POPPY KING laments the lipstick offerings on the market today, most of which are shimmery.

“Not good for people who want to be chic,” she says dismissively.

To fill the gap, King has originated a lipstick line with two distinctly different leanings: Saints, a collection of sheer tints, which she calls “classic and wearable;” and the more brazen Sinners, which are “earthy and decadent.”

Fellow Aussie Elizabeth Charles recently brought Poppy King to the neighborhood for an evening of wine and learning about lipstick. Charles now offers the new lipline at her boutique at 2056 Fillmore, near California.

“When I was a teenager, I bought her first line of lipstick in Australia,” Charles



says. “It was called Poppy. Very rich in color — and I loved it.”

Years later, Charles ran into King in a New York cafe frequented by Australians.

“I recognized her at once from her trademark red

lips,” says Charles, who was eager to offer King’s new line. “Lipstick fanatics come back and tell me how fantastic it is. They especially rave about the texture.”

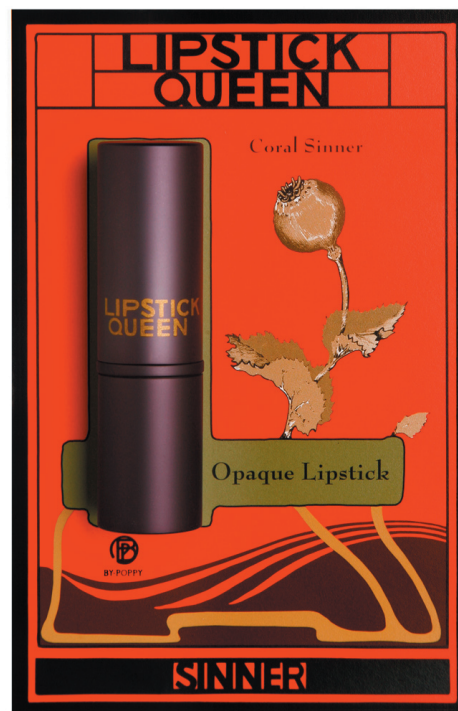
The sheer Saints have 10 percent



**THE QUEEN IS A KING:** Lipstick queen Poppy King (left) has created a new line now available at the Fillmore boutique owned by her fellow Australian, Elizabeth Charles.

pigment; the opaque Sinners have 90 percent pigment. King says her lipstick has “lots of grip,” making lip liner, which she abhors, unnecessary. “Lip liner is an odd habit — and a habit that goes too often goes too horribly wrong,” she says.

King, who has striking pale skin and blue eyes, wears no makeup other than lipstick. “I have no interest in any other cosmetic,” she says. But she freely admits she has been obsessed with lipstick since she first sneaked a swipe from her



mother’s tube while playing dress-up as a young girl.

And for the many women in search of a shade that flatters rather than distracts, King takes the guesswork from the quest.

“The main message I want to give women is to really trust themselves. Look in the mirror and ask two questions,” she says. “First, do my hair, skin and eyes look illuminated?” The wrong color, she says, will drag the natural color from a face.

“And second, ask yourself: Am I

comfortable in it? That’s a matter of personal style,” she says.

With these two questions as guidance, King says those testing shades will see immediately when a color suits them. And she despairs over the fixation on make-up artists who design women’s faces for them, fueled by the unquenchable interest in the Hollywood stars.

“It has taken away women’s self-confidence,” she says.

King advises those who are game to experiment with lip color to tread lightly when applying other cosmetics.

“You can prevent looking like a drag queen by playing down your eyes,” she says, noting that the current trend for those who indulge in lip color is to wear “the least amount of eye make-up they’re comfortable with.”

She cautions that the right lipstick shade is a moving target. “You’ll feel comfortable in different things at different times,” she says.

Still, even the target has practical parameters. “Take your natural lip color and amp it up,” she says. “Take what you have and push it forward.”

Look next year for King’s book, *Lessons of a Lipstick Queen*, which she describes as a guide for how to make a business idea come true.

In the meantime, King’s lipsticks are available at Elizabeth Charles for \$18, whether you’re a Saint or a Sinner. You can also find them online at [www.Elizabeth-Charles.com](http://www.Elizabeth-Charles.com).