



THE GOOD LIFE LUSCIOUS LIPS

by Clare Maxfield

During WW2, the single item that most women said that they missed most was their lipstick. So what is this small item which has found it's way into every woman's handbag and life. It has caused headaches and angst as we not only try to find the perfect colour, but then struggle once we have to keep stock of it.

Lipstick today is a cosmetic product which is made up from a combination of pigments oil, waxes & emollients that apply colour & texture to the lips. This has not always been the case though.

Lipstick is known to have been around for almost 5000 years. The ancient Mesopotamian women wore lipstick made up of semi precious jewels that were crushed and then applied to the lips. This is a lot safer alternative than the lipstick of Ancient Egyptians who made it up from a purplish red dye from seaweed, some iodine and bromine which would lead to serious illnesses and blistering of the lips. Meanwhile Cleopatra had her lipstick made from crushed beetles and ants. The carmine beetle gave her lips their deep red glow.

It was during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I that lipstick started to gain popularity. She made fashionable the stark white face, from deadly lead based foundations and the blood red lips made from a blend of beeswax and red stains from plants. Then lipstick took another hiding when, during 1770, the British parliament passed a law which decreed that a woman wearing lipstick could be tried for witchcraft. It was Queen Victoria who said that to wear make-up was impolite and she believed that a woman who wore red on her face was "fast". I wonder what she would say about my red boots?

Fast forward to the 1920's and the suffragettes used lipstick as a symbol of their new power. Gloria Swanson and Lana Turner also increased the popularity of lipstick and Elizabeth Arden opened a beauty parlour in the 1930's so that all women could access makeup. Where as once the shimmer in your lipstick came from fish scales today is generally due to adding bits of mica or silica.

So one wonders were all these women in pursuit of that perfect colour just as we are today?

To select the perfect colour beauticians always recommend you choose a shade as close to or a shade lighter or darker than your natural lip tone. Women with fair colouring should wear lighter, paler lipstick colours and women with dark and bold colouring will look gorgeous in the stronger more vibrant colours.

To keep your lipstick on you must prepare your lips. You can do this by first blotting them dry and even pressing a layer of powder onto your lips for your lipstick to adhere to. I always recommend starting with a lip liner - your lip liner needs to be a colour very close to the color of the lipstick you are wearing. You do not want your lip liner to be completely different shade to lipstick it needs to blend in with the colour not stand out. I find colouring in my lips with my lip liner also creates a great base for long lasting lipstick.

The reason we wear lipstick is to create a healthy vibrant look, simulate arousal and to emphasise our femininity. The lighter the lipstick you're wearing the fuller your lips can appear. It is therefore wise, as we get older, to start wearing lighter lipsticks as it will help make our skin appear luminous and detract from the aging of our teeth.

I find the darker the lipstick is that I wear now I'm instantly putting ten years onto my age. That was OK 20 years ago but I am totally against fast forwarding the clock now. Time is moving at a fast enough rate without me speeding it up.

Some final lipstick tips to keep you looking fresh

1. Once you have applied your lipstick blot it with a tissue and reapply. This will absorb any excess oils in your lipstick and just leave the pigment and the matte colour .
2. If you lick your lips before you drink or eat anything you are less likely to have your lipstick coming off on your food or glass.
3. Applying your lipstick with a lip brush gives you a greater coverage than applying it straight from the stick.

To shop for good lipstick properly - go shopping with a fresh face to see what colour your lips really are. Keep in mind - when you are buying a lipstick chose one that you really like because over a lifetime you going to end up eating around 2.5 kilos of the stuff. Yumm.

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