

The makeup artist's guide to finding your perfect red lipstick

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Red lipstick is a classic colour choice and elevates a look – that's perhaps why it's a favourite time after time. We asked makeup artists to reveal their secrets for finding the perfect hue, plus how to give it staying power



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There's something about a mouth decked out in red lipstick that transcends time and trends. A slash of crimson makes you feel like a more self-assured version of yourself and somehow makes the wearer appear larger than life. And whether you choose to lean on a matte, high-shine or satin finish; accessorise it with a little black dress or, simply, a pair of jeans, the transformative effect is the same.

Still, finding *just* the right shade of red remains a makeup white whale for some of us, but that doesn't mean you should skip it. "Everyone can wear red lipstick, you just have to find your perfect tone and texture," reassures Rachel Hardie, lead artist at NARS.

But before diving into shades, it's worth first considering the condition of your pout. Lipstick wears better on smooth, well-hydrated lips so if they're cracked or flaking, apply a lip scrub first. It's a trick makeup artist Zoe Taylor swears by when working with models on set, so much so that she created her own line of lip products. Front and centre is the Tinker Taylor Lip Scrub with sugar granules suspended in oil, which Taylor recommends you "rub in a circular motion over the lips for around 20 seconds, paying special attention to any dry areas."

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Rachel Hardie, lead artist at NARS

Undertones are an important consideration when picking red lipstick. “A blue-toned red really helps to brighten your smile,” says Hardie, adding that the [Nars Velvet Matte Lip Pencil in Dragon Girl](#) is the perfect pillar-box red. A cooler red that's ideal for paler skin also includes the [Tromborg Jumbo Pen Lipstick in No.10](#).

“To compliment an olive skin tone, opt for more of an orange-based red,” suggests Hardie. This hue is also a go-to for summer as orange really makes a tan pop. Try [Gucci Rouge A Levres Satin Lipstick in 302 Agatha Orange](#). "Or for a vampy look try [Nars Inappropriate Red Lipstick](#), which is a timeless colour that flatters deeper skin tones.” The earthy, brick red of [Lisa Eldridge's Velvet Jazz lipstick](#) and [Idun Minerals Matte Lipstick in Vinbar](#) makes dark lips sing if you're after a richer shade.

