

The matte look returns with fresh color



Rihanna's edgy and street-ready style is set off with bright red matte lips and matte skin. (Danny Moloshok / AP)

By **MELISSA MAGSAYSAY**

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Spring is usually synonymous with dewy skin and shimmering color, but this season makeup is taking a cue from fashion's retro '90s flavor and going matte.

As seen on the spring runways at Prabal Gurung, Milly and Rebecca Minkoff, today's matte face is far from caked on, dry or heavy looking. This is a more modern approach to shine-free, with a satin finish and just the right amount of drama.

Photos



This modern take on matte makeup is fresh, sophisticated and slightly dramatic as long as the right product and technique are applied. Here are several matte makeup items new to the beauty market. (By Melissa Magsaysay)

"The difference between the '90s matte look and now is that now we have a great new color palette," says celebrity makeup artist Fiona Stiles, who works with Halle Berry, Jessica Alba and Kristen Stewart. "MAC Spice, a dirty pink-brown, was the big lip color back then. Everything was about dirty brown and sepia tones. Also, skin color was flat because of the heavy foundation formulas and lack of highlighting creams."

The matte lipstick formulas of the '90s were also heavier and drying, Stiles adds, unlike the more hydrating options of today. "I wore lipstick in the '90s that I could literally bite off in chunks," she says.

"Now there are a lot of matte lipsticks, but bright new colors like fuchsias, reds and oranges."

Another big difference this time around is that eyebrows are much fuller than they were during the grunge-fueled latter part of the 1990s, when most women were plucking their brows pin-thin.

"Full brows help modernize the matte look," says celebrity makeup artist Nico Guilis, who works with Mindy Kaling and Dree Hemingway. "It's not so trashy-grungy. This is more polished."

Just think about the way Rihanna has been rocking her doll-like perfect makeup. She usually does a highly pigmented matte red lip and matte skin that play well with her edgy street-style-ready ensembles. The look is unexpected for spring, and maybe that's why it feels so modern.

"The skin shouldn't be flat. There just has to be some sort of softness somewhere," Guilis says. "If it's flat, it looks too theatrical." To avoid looking like you're wearing stage makeup, don't make every feature matte. If skin is matte, wear a light lip gloss with some shine. Or do dewy skin with a strong, matte mouth.

The biggest fear women have about the look, adds Guilis, is that they'll look old with matte makeup, as some formulas tend to sit in fine lines and wrinkles. She recommends Neutrogena Healthy glow foundation and a dust of a light translucent powder to get the look. "Matte skin doesn't have to be so dramatic," Guilis says. "Put your own twist on it. You can use a mattifying primer under foundation for a porcelain finish. This is also a great solution for those concerned about oily skin."

Chanel recently released the new Perfection Lumiere Velvet Smooth Effect Makeup that makeup artist Kate Lee used on Anne Hathaway at this year's Oscars. Stiles' personal favorites include Jouer Matte Moisture Tint and Dolce & Gabbana foundation for its soft and satiny finish. Laura Mercier makes Secret Finish Mattifying Primer, which goes under foundation to give it a matte finish and more staying power.

When it comes to bronzers, matte is the most effective finish. Bronzers are meant to contour the face and a matte product creates a shadow rather than adding light like a shimmery bronzer would.

Guilis recommends making a comical "fish face" while applying a matte bronzer or blush, in order to create a little drama with cheek color.

"Start on the apple of the cheek and go back with the blush brush to the hairline, but in a less severe way than it was done in the '80s and '90s," she says.

The easiest feature to make matte is probably the mouth. Lipstick formulas have advanced since the 1990s, and there are plenty of hydrating and highly pigmented colors available now.

"NARS is the best for matte lipstick," Guilis says. "The formula is so pigmented it lasts for hours, doesn't run and isn't drying, which is important because I don't like to put lip balm on before a matte lip; it sort of defeats the purpose."

Guilis and Stiles both agree that a matte lip in a bold color is an effective statement accessory. Stiles favors Stila's Stay All Day Liquid Lipstick, a highly pigmented formula that swipes on like a gloss and dries to a matte finish.

Before applying a matte lip color, make sure lips are smooth and hydrated, because any dry skin will be magnified once the color is on. Exfoliate lips with a lip scrub and washcloth first; then apply color. Thankfully matte lipstick tends to stay on longer and there is seldom any need to reapply. "Once you start reapplying," says Stiles, "that's when it starts to look thick and chunky."

She adds that matte eye shadow is also a great option for this look, as it gives the eyes some drama for evening. Stiles advises sticking to neutral colors like camel, warm sable, taupe and a mid-gray tone and keeping the application light, as matte shadow will add depth to the eyelid very quickly.

"Matte makeup has a toughness to it that shimmery and dewy doesn't," says Stiles. "It's sort of like putting on a character for a minute and another way of playing dress-up through makeup."

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