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The 12 Best Lipsticks That Look and Feel Amazing, Tested and Reviewed by Editors

Including long-lasting options and formulas for dry lips, all hand-picked by experts.

By KRISTIN LIMOGES

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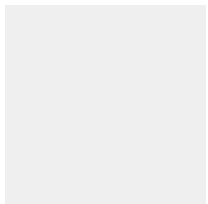
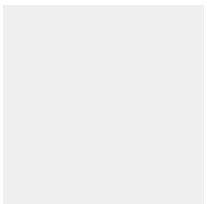
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Lipstick is transcendently powerful. It has inspired women like Coco Chanel to declare, “If you’re sad, add more lipstick and attack.” Wearing a bold lip can impart the wearer with a feeling of power, and science can back that up, too. Studies have found a possible link between cosmetics — especially lipstick — and self-confidence, claiming that it can increase both assertiveness and the mood of the wearer. So, if you need a quick pick-me-up, perhaps try swiping on a tube of one of the best lipsticks. But choosing said lipstick can be a tricky task — sorting through the hundreds of thousands of options, uncovering your ideal shade, and making sense of the complex language of formulas and finishes.

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While it’s easy to compile the idea of lipstick into one giant concept, there’s a vast variety of lipsticks on the market, varying greatly in formulas, finishes, shades, and even skincare-boosted benefits. When it comes to formulas and finishes, you can choose a foolproof option, like a sheer lipstick (which applies more like a tinted lip balm and gives the look of a lip gloss or lip oil) or you can pump up the opacity with a matte, shiny, or stain lipstick — all of which have longer staying power in various finishes.

“It all depends on your lifestyle when it comes to picking a lipstick,” says celebrity makeup artist Kasey Adam Spickard. This is why it’s ideal — perhaps even essential — to have at least two to three different lipsticks in your lipstick wardrobe for different occasions, adding polish to both your everyday and special occasion looks in just a single swipe.

On top of the standard variety of lipsticks, you can also consider trends when selecting a lipstick. Skip to the “Lipstick Trends for 2023” section below to dive into future fashionable lip hues our experts foresee. But as a sneak peek, here are a few exciting trends piquing their interest: “High-shine bold pigment lip textures” are exciting makeup artist Tasha Reiko Brown; the Y2K resurgence with shimmering lips has makeup artist Sabrina Rinaldi mesmerized; a bold red lipstick (which was seen all over the spring 2024 runways) has Spickard revamping his kit; French makeup artist Violette teaches us that rules were meant to be broken; board-certified dermatologist Dr. Rachel Westbay has some thoughts about nourishing lip care ingredients.

Another lipstick trend not likely to dissipate anytime soon? Skin care-infused formulas, which include hydrating ingredients — like hyaluronic acid, antioxidants, oils, and peptides — that not only improve the wearability and feel on the lips (particularly for dry pouts), but also promote healthy lips in the long term. Krupa Koestline, a clean-cosmetic chemist and founder of KKT Consultants, foresees longevity with this skin-benefiting lipstick trend.

Swiping on lipstick should be a source of joy and empowerment, but finding your perfect tube can quickly become a frustrating and overwhelming task. To help simplify the search, we asked our esteemed experts for their top lipstick picks, plus, we tested every one of these lipsticks ourselves, and painstakingly researched and consulted reviews for weeks to uncover the best lipsticks to invest in now, from red and pink to nude and deep plum (and every color in between).

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Top Lipsticks, Tested & Reviewed

- Best Nude: Charlotte Tilbury Matte Revolution Lipstick
- Best Classic: Mac Cosmetics Retro Matte Lipstick
- Best Sheer: Glossier Generation G Sheer Matte Lipstick
- Best Waterproof: Haus Labs Atomic Shake Lip Lacquer
- Best for Dry Lips: RMS Legendary Serum Lipstick
- Best Long-Lasting: Sephora Cream Lip Stain Liquid Lipstick
- Best Drugstore: Maybelline Super Stay Matte Ink Liquid Lipstick
- Best Professional: Make Up For Ever Rouge Artist Lipstick

- Best Palette: Westman Atelier Lip Suede Lipstick Palette
- Best Red: Fenty Beauty Stunna Lip Paint
- Best Liquid: Violette FR Petal Bouche Matte Liquid Lipstick
- Best Velvet: Lisa Eldridge True Velvet Lip Colour

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BEST NUDE LIPSTICK

Charlotte Tilbury Matte Revolution Lipstick

Shades available: 14

Finish: Matte

Coverage: Full

Key ingredients: Vitamin E, orchid extract

Sephora Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

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When you think of Charlotte Tilbury, you probably think of her signature nude-pink lip shade “Pillow Talk.” (It’s so popular that, according to the brand’s website, one Matte Revolution Pillow Talk lipstick is sold every two minutes.) Launched to give everyone what Tilbury calls “the most beautiful lips of your life,” the moisturizing formula smooths and shapes the pout for the appearance of softer, fuller, and smoother lips. But Tilbury’s other hues and finishes in the Matte Revolution category deserve equal praise. Coming in a variety of shades, from flattering nudes (in a handful of hues to flatter all skin tones) to bold reds, berries, and corals, there is a Matte Revolution lipstick made for you.

The formula includes some magic, aka light-reflecting pigments that make the lips appear more fuller and smoother. It also has a handful of ingredients to keep lips hydrated, including vitamin E and botanical extracts, plus emollient waxes to give the texture a softer and silkier feel when wearing.

Speaking of wearing, the brand says the lipstick can last up to 10 hours — but this is likely only possible when applied the Tilbury way, by prepping lips with a lip liner, applying and blotting, and then applying again. But this is not to say it requires a fussy application, because the angled square tip is purposefully designed to be applied straight from the bullet for ease of use. Plus, the chic and

instantly recognizable embossed-gold packaging makes public reapplication impossibly glamorous.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$35

BEST CLASSIC LIPSTICK

Mac Cosmetics Retro Matte Lipstick

Shades available: 7

Finish: Matte

Coverage: Full

Key ingredients: Dimethicone, vanilla (for flavor and scent)

Ulta Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

\$23

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Our list wouldn't be complete without the leader of cult-status lipsticks, Mac Cosmetics, and its iconic Retro Matte Lipsticks. The all-time bestselling lipstick features an intense, opaque color and a completely matte finish. It's so popular that Mac sells four Ruby Woo lipsticks (their most popular and famous shade) per minute worldwide, according to the brand. The iconic red shade, one of the best red lipsticks, was created in 1999 after an artist tweaked the tone of the brand's Russian Red formula to make it more universally flattering.

The potent pigment lipstick also includes fuschia, coral, orange-red, plum, and a taupe brown. It won't cover all your shade requests, but the foolproof hues are a good staple to have on hand. Promising eight to 12 hours of wear, this formula truly is long-wearing, yet utterly comfortable on the lips — a feat only Mac Cosmetics could accomplish.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$23

BEST SHEER LIPSTICK

Glossier Generation G Sheer Matte Lipstick

Shades available: 9

Finish: Matte

Coverage: Sheer

Key ingredients: Synthetic beeswax (vegan), safflower oil, blue agave

Sephora Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

\$18

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For those who prefer a foolproof, swipe-and-go lipstick, Generation G is your type of product. Rumor has it the inspiration for the sheer matte finish came from the desire to simplify the lipstick application that requires blotting, re-application, and re-blotting until it's perfectly diffused and effortless looking.

With Gen G, a single swipe gives that just-blotted lipstick look, without the effort. But a buildable color coverage isn't the only benefit, it also packs a hydration punch. The formula is boosted with blue agave leaf extract and safflower seed oil for extra nourishment and hydration (making it ideal for dry lips), leaving lips looking moisturized and flushed with color. Speaking of color, the shades run the gamut, from nudes to peach to blue-toned reds.

I've swiped on Crush, a hot raspberry pink, numerous times — always sans mirror because it gives the slightest dose of color — without any application drama. Don't just take it from me though. Nearly 4,000 reviewers on Glossier's website enthusiastically love the subtle color payoff and buttery-soft feel throughout the day.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$18

Haus Labs Atomic Shake Lip Lacquer

Shades available: 6

Finish: High shine

Coverage: Full

Key ingredients: Marine algae extract, flexible film-forming polymers

Sephora Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

\$26

BUY NOW AT SEPHORA

Lady Gaga's high-performance liquid lipstick takes the idea of longevity to unheard-of new heights — leave it to Gaga to elevate a perfectly great lipstick to icon status level. This lipstick is going nowhere; it's water-resistant and budge-proof (almost alarmingly so), yet its glossy and high shine finish also remains all day long (ingeniously so). The long wear is thanks to flexible film-forming polymers that provide a high-gloss, paint-like shine that actually sets. And while that might sound like wearing a stiff lip product, the formula somehow remains breathable, weightless, and nourishing, thanks in part to the marine algae extract.

The packaging is glamorous, but must be opened with care — you'll want to unscrew the applicator wand while the tube is upright to prevent spillage. Because only six shades are currently available, the color offerings are less extensive, with most hues landing in the bold red and pink categories (though the versatile shades can likely flatter many skin tones).

You can easily track down endlessly enthusiastic reviews — almost in disbelief of its longevity, showcasing its transfer-resistance powers with bold tests — on Haus Lab's website and TikTok. I've also had the pleasure of testing Cherry Shine, a true red, and while it takes some trial and error, the trick is to wait for 15 seconds after application before blotting or touching to allow the shine shield to form. The formula lasts a shockingly long time, just as shiny and unmovable hours after the initial application — it's the best lipstick that stays on. Spickard is a fan of the liquid lip, too, noting that the technology behind the formula is one of the most impressive he's seen recently.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$26

BEST LIPSTICK FOR DRY LIPS

RMS Legendary Serum Lipstick

Shades available: 8

Finish: Satin

Coverage: Full

Key ingredients: Trio-wax complex, adaptogenic herbal blend, Kakadu plum extract

Amazon Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.6/5 stars

Nordstrom Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.5/5 stars

\$35

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This breathtaking new launch is packed full of revitalizing and hydrating ingredients in a convenient swipe-on stick, yet the formula still provides a shocking punch of pigment. Consider this lipstick the best of both worlds. “What I love about this formula is not only is it so unique and special, the application is perfection,” says brand founder Rose-Marie Swift in a press release. “It easily applies and leaves no trace of creasing or separation.” The eight vivid colors come in varying shades of red, pink, and plum for a variety of options.

But what really makes this lipstick sing is the moisturizing formula, which is so chocked full of hydrating nutrients that it almost qualifies as more of a lip balm or lip oil with deep pigmentation than a standard lipstick. The brand says the majority of the water inside the formula has been replaced with organic bitter cherry fruit water, which hydrates and smoothes the lips. The creamy, silky, and lightweight feel also comes courtesy of Kakadu plum extract and the brand’s Trio-Wax Complex (jojoba, mimosa, and sunflower waxes).

This lipstick is for everyone, but it’s especially for those with chronic dry lips — you’ll fall head over heels for this surprising option. Even though the lip is full-coverage in a few swipes, I find the slim bullet so easy to maneuver and control that I don’t need a mirror to apply, and the silky texture applies and feels more like a balm than a lipstick, which is delightful for those of us that despise that matte, dry-lip feeling (et moi!).

Price upon publish date of this article: \$35

BEST LONG-LASTING LIPSTICK

Sephora Cream Lip Stain Liquid Lipstick

Shades available: 73

Finish: Matte

Coverage: Full

Key ingredients: Avocado oil

Sephora Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

\$15

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Spickard is a huge fan of this long-wear liquid lipstick, even using it on one of his most prominent clients. “I love the vibrant bright orange-red in Chili Pepper, I use it constantly on Jenna Lyons,” he says. And if the formula and hue pass fashion icon, beauty entrepreneur, and the buzzy new star on ‘The Real

Housewives of New York City,' then we're all ears (or, more aptly, lips). What sets this liquid lipstick apart from its competitors is the shade range. From matte forest green to candy pink, nearly every hue under the rainbow is available in all its bold glory.

Expect the formula to glide on easily and then transform into a potent stain that won't bleed or fade for hours. The brand notes that the liquid is silky and comfortable to wear, which they contribute to the addition of avocado oil, but some testers said it can feel a tad drying for all-day wear, so hydrate lips with a thick balm after removal.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$15

BEST DRUGSTORE LIPSTICK

Maybelline Super Stay Matte Ink Liquid Lipstick

Shades available: 40

Finish: Matte

Coverage: Full

Key ingredients: Dimethicone

Amazon Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.5/5 stars

Ulta Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

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On a recent flight to Palm Springs from JFK, a handful of flight attendants had the most flattering matte pop of red lipstick, each appearing to be the same hue but equally flattering for their variety of skin tones. I was so hypnotized by the lipstick that I had to know what was on their lips. Turns out it was Maybelline Super Stay Matte Ink Lipstick in the shade “Shot Caller,” a bold, neutral firecracker red, and one of the best matte liquid lipsticks on the market. Beyond the versatility of the hue, they each noted how comfortable and unmovable the formula is, so much so that they don’t have to worry or reapply mid-flight. Unmovable indeed — the brand says the matte liquid lipstick can last up to 16 hours without fading or budging. In fact, the lipstick is so long-lasting that a trending question on Google associated with this product is “How do you remove Maybelline Super Stay Matte Ink Lipstick?”

Nary a product has the staying power and intensity of color as Maybelline’s Super Stay Matte Ink, and Spickard agrees, it’s one of his must-have lipsticks (and definitely the best matte drugstore lipstick) for his celebrity clients. It’s also beloved on social media and the internet — on Amazon, over 111,000 people have reviewed it, with the product receiving an impressive 4.5 out of 5 stars. It’s also well known for its vast array of super-saturated shades, ranging from a classic red lipstick to nude lipstick and even bold bright hues.

As a rule of thumb, it's good to ensure you apply the lipstick carefully, since once it's on it's likely not budging. Consider the application method Violette has perfected for long-wear and liquid lipsticks: Apply the formula to the bottom lip first, then create an "X" pattern on your cupid's bow (aka the top curvature of your lips) and fill in the rest of the lip from there.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$7.98

Make Up For Ever Rouge Artist Lipstick

Shades available: 52

Finish: Satin

Coverage: Full

Key ingredients: Amino acids, camellia oil

Sephora Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

\$25

BUY NOW AT SEPHORA

\$25

BUY NOW AT NORDSTROM

Make Up For Ever has been making professional-grade products for nearly four decades, and this Rouge Artist lipstick is a fabulous example of the brand's dedication to artistry and creativity. The ultra pigmented, satin-finish lipstick has been lab-tested to deliver 24 hours of hydration and the formula applies with the intensity of a matte but with the glide and comfort of a cream lipstick. This creamy glide is thanks to a blend of amino acids, oils, and waxes that provide comfort and hydration for hours. In clinical studies, 100 percent of individuals agreed it provided all-day-long hydration to lips. (However, some reviewers note it can stick to dry patches, so it might be ideal to exfoliate lips before application with a lip scrub.)

The bestselling shades are a variety of nude lipsticks, including 100 (a pale beige), 172 (a deep cool-toned rose), and 150 (pale pink). Nudes and roses are a good chunk of the complex color range, so they have a hue for all skin tones, but a vast selection of reds, berries, and browns are available, too. The packaging is particularly clever — remove the cap and attach it to the bottom of the tube for an ultra-precise effect that mimics that of a lip brush.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$25

BEST LIPSTICK PALETTE

Westman Atelier Lip Suede Lipstick Palette

Shades available: 2

Finish: Matte

Coverage: Sheer to full

Key ingredients: Cherry oil, peptides, jojoba oil, marula oil

Sephora Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

Nordstrom Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

\$85

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What's better than one lipstick color? Endless lipstick color combinations, courtesy of Westman Atelier's matte suede lipstick compact featuring four hues that can be endlessly mixed for custom creations.

Coming in two shade ranges — nude and red — the four hues in each palette are brilliantly diverse, designed to flatter most skin tones. Plus, the mix-and-match shades create a fun, choose-your-own-adventure type of lip scenario. The vegan formulas are not only richly pigmented, but also feature hydrating skincare ingredients that heal and smooth lips, including cold-pressed cherry oil (rich in vitamins A and E), marula oil, and collagen-boosting peptides. And as with all things Westman Atelier, this formula is one of the cleanest on the market, free of silicones, parabens, and phthalates. Also, the captivating gold (for the nude palette) and striking red (for the red palette) compact is endlessly refillable — just pop out the pan and replace it with the new insert.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$85

BEST RED LIPSTICK

Fenty Beauty Stunna Lip Paint

Shades available: 7

Finish: Matte

Coverage: Full

Key ingredients: Dimethicone

Sephora Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

Ulta Top-Quality Store Badge on Google: 4.8/5 stars

\$28

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Rihanna's beauty brand is synonymous with inclusive and flattering products, particularly their makeup line. The lip offerings are all beautiful, but the Stunna Lip Paint liquid lip is especially beloved by users. Its soft matte formula is designed to offer 12 hours of coverage, drying down to a weightless stain. "I wanted a lipstick that wouldn't budge, even as you eat, even as you make out," Rihanna said in a press release.

While the universal rich red hue of Uncensored, which was hand-picked by Rihanna herself, gets all the fame for looking incredible on everyone — the brand's other hues deserve some love, too.

A few bold nude hues would be especially show-stopping on darker skin tones, while the opaque fuchsia and burgundy would be a great fit for any tone and occasion. The lipstick has enthusiastic fans, but also a few reviewers who note the formula can be drying. This lipstick, partly because it can be so long-lasting,

potentially needs more prep and aftercare (which includes a hydrating balm or mask before and after wear) when applied frequently.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$28

BEST LIQUID LIPSTICK

Violette FR Petal Bouche Matte Liquid Lipstick

Shades available: 3

Finish: Matte

Coverage: Full

Key ingredients: Castor seed oil

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Meet the lipstick shaking the beauty industry to its core — winning some of the most prestigious awards and on the lips of every person in the know. This liquid lipstick is a shortcut to *je ne sais quoi*. Whenever I wear this lightweight hue, I receive countless compliments and demands to know what's on my lips — it's Petal Bouche, *mais bien sûr*.

French makeup artist Violette knows a thing or two about lipsticks, having served as Dior Beauty's international makeup designer, Estée Lauder's global beauty director, and the current creative director of makeup at Guerlain. On top of all that, the Brooklyn-based artist created her eponymous makeup line in 2021, which includes this instant-classic liquid lipstick.

The velvety formula is unlike any on the market right now, as it feels soft and comfortable on, is deeply pigmented, and impressively long-wearing. Violette classifies the matte lipstick as “iconically French” and says she perfected the deep red shade of Amour Fou for nearly two years. In the last year, Violette has launched two additional hues of Petal Bouche: Cerise Désir (a sophisticated and flattering burgundy) and Coeur Infidèle (an unexpected magnetic pink). It can be applied in countless ways, from blotting it on for more of a subtle stain look to slightly blurring the edges of a full-coverage lip to give it a more lived-in, just-been-kissed appearance.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$28

BEST VELVET LIPSTICK

Lisa Eldridge True Velvet Lip Colour

Shades available: 23

Finish: Velvet matte

Coverage: Full

Key ingredients: Saturated technology

\$30

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If the name Lisa Eldridge doesn't immediately set your heart aflutter, allow us to introduce you to this makeup artist, historian, and New York Times bestselling author. One of the world's most celebrated celebrity and editorial makeup artists, Eldridge's clients and friends include Dua Lipa, Kate Winslet, and Keira Knightley, Eldridge is an artist's artist — known for her thoughtful, education, and trusted POV. You might also recognize her from her wildly popular YouTube

channel (which she started in 2010 — the first professional makeup artist to do so) to share industry techniques long before TikTok was a thing. Today, her channel has over 2 million subscribers and 235 million views, with all revenue going to charities that focus on female education and health. Eldridge has also been Lancôme's creative director of makeup since January 2015.

But we digress, back to the lipstick! Her wildly popular lipstick, available in the UK since 2018, is now finally available in the US. Not only does the lipstick impart a velvet matte (with a slight sheen) finish on the lips, but the texture has a special technology that gives it a trompe l'oeil effect, making both the bullet and lips appear three-dimensional and multifaceted. The lipstick has become synonymous with its intense pigmentation, needing only a single swipe to develop an immediate opaque lip.

The shade range is complex, with 23 hues, in a wide array of reds, nudes, and pinks designed to have the perfect match for any skin tone. This iteration completely modernizes matte lipsticks, giving the feel of a creamy, hydrating lipstick, but the appearance of a matte finish with a hypnotic slight sheen.

Price upon publish date of this article: \$30

How to Make Your Lipstick Last

Having long-lasting lipstick that can withstand a cappuccino or cocktail (or two) is always a plus. There are formulas specifically designed for such a job, which are typically liquid formulas like Maybelline's Super Stay Matte Ink, that are designed to last through meals, meetings, or any task for up to 16 hours.

If you prefer a more standard lipstick formula, though, there are tips and tricks to make your lipstick much more long-lasting. Try using a lip liner in a similar shade to your lipstick to line and fill in lips completely. Then, apply the lipstick atop it. Violette likes to put the pointed tip of the lipstick in front of your lips so you can get a better look at the application. After swiping on the lipstick, blot with a tissue, then reapply. You can blot and reapply a few more times for extra wear, too. For even more staying power, matte formulas naturally have a more velvety opaque coverage that can last longer than other finishes.

Lipstick Trends for 2024

While bold eye looks have taken center stage recently, data shows lipsticks still have a place in our beauty arsenal. Here are a few trends our esteemed experts are particularly excited about.

- **The Return of the Red Lip:** While you might be questioning “the return,” assuming it never left, artists have seen nude hues take precedence in the last year or two. But a red pout is poised to be extra popular this fall, per runway trends. “For years, I carried red lipsticks in my kit and almost never used them — everyone wanted nude, nude, nude,” notes Spickard. “But, with red being such a trendy color in fashion right now, I’ve completely revamped my red lipstick shade range,” he adds. “I carry varying shades from super blue reds to vibrant bright orange reds.” The beauty of a red lip is its versatility, too — pair with just a swipe of mascara for an understated appearance, or amp up the volume with a bold eye and bronzer, too.
- **High Shine:** “I’m very excited about the new all-in-one, light-reflecting, high-shine bold pigment lip textures,” says Brown. “I love that lips are continuing that energy with maximum pigment and shine.” She recommends swiping on Chanel Rouge Coco Bloom in Dream, which has been her go-to for a dose of subtle color and shine. And the sister to high shine is shimmer, which Rinaldi has seen trending — albeit a more subtle, elegant, and wearable shimmer than the early aughts’ glitter iterations. “I love the return to shimmer on the lips,” she says.
- **Unbelievable Longevity:** While long-wear lipstick is nothing new, some brands are uncovering technology that takes the concept to unimaginable levels. “I love the long-wear, high-shine liquid lipsticks that have come out in the last year or two,” notes Spickard. Brands like Haus Labs, Maybelline, and Urban Decay have all recently launched liquid lipsticks that are so smudge- and transfer-resistant that they can last up to 16 hours with just a single swipe.
- **Skin Care-Inspired Ingredients:** “We’ll see more color formulas across foundation, eye makeup, blush, lips, and even nails to incorporate treatment ingredients as consumers want to treat their skin 24/7,” says Koestline. Following this theme, many lipsticks now include ingredients like hyaluronic acid, black rose oil, and jojoba seed oil to help heal lips while also supplying a burst of color. Today, a hydrating lipstick can take on the qualities of a lip mask — hydrating, repairing, and soothing — rather than the dehydrating options of yore.

What to Look for in the Best Lipsticks

- **Shade Range:** There is a flattering lipstick for you, guaranteed. Locating that

perfect shade may take some trial and error though. (Consult the “Best Lipstick Shades to Try” section below for more on shade matching.) But there are thousands of hues to consider, from bold red to eye-catching pinks and lip-enhancing nudes. One trick to uncovering your ideal shades is to discover your skin tone. Most lipstick shades have either cool, warm, or neutral undertones. Pairing the tone of your skin to the tone of the lipstick is a quick way to zero in on potentially flattering hues.

- **Key Ingredients:** While a bold color payoff and longevity used to be enough to sell lipstick, these days consumers are looking for a more impressive list of ingredients. Hydrating ingredients, like oils, hyaluronic acid, and butters, can be found in a good amount of these best-of lipsticks. But they don’t stop there. Formulas can also impressively include ceramides and lipids, both of which help retain moisture and optimize barrier function, notes Dr. Westbay.
- **Finish:** Lipstick finish is a personal preference, but it’s helpful to have a variety of options in your lipstick wardrobe for every type of occasion. Sheer lipsticks are foolproof, can be mindlessly reapplied on the go, and often include hydration-enhancing ingredients. Creamy, shiny, and satin finishes feel modern and give a big color payoff (just with different finishes). They often have a comfortable feel to them that makes them not only enjoyable to wear but also likely to have hydrating benefits. If you want all-day staying power, reach for a matte lipstick. The opaque finish gives a polished finish, while also lasting all day — the only downside being the formula naturally can emphasize chapped lips.
- **Formula:** Spickard recommends zeroing in on your makeup preferences and lifestyle when narrowing down a formula. Those that are low maintenance but love high impact should go with a long-lasting, transfer-proof formula. Low maintenance and want a natural look? Consider a lip stain or balm-textured lipstick instead, which is more foolproof. Fine with regular reapplication? A traditional lipstick is a great choice, just zero in on your ideal finish, whether that be glossy, matte, or satin. Texture and transfer are two other top-of-mind considerations when it comes to formula. Take into consideration the type of lipstick that you enjoy wearing. For example, those who detest the dry-lip feeling of matte lipstick might feel more drawn to a juicy balm or glossy finish. And if reapplication or transfer after every bite or sip is annoying to you, consider a longer-wear formula, even the impressive transfer-resistant lipsticks.

The Best Lipstick Brands

The best lipstick brand for you is the one you love wearing. That said, there are a few brands that stand out based on their convenience, innovation, and shade range. When it comes to the best drugstore lipstick brands, Revlon and Maybelline are leaders in their field. Pushing lipstick technology forward, like the impressive Super Stay Matte Ink Liquid Lipstick by Maybelline, and offering an endless list of hues make them worth every dollar.

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On the other end of the spectrum, newer, trending brands, like Glossier, Fenty Beauty, Westman Atelier, Haus Labs, and Violette are pushing the industry forward with groundbreaking formulas and ingredients. These popular brands have another thing in common: “girl-boss” founders. From Rihanna and Emily Weiss to Gucci Westman and Lady Gaga to Violette — these lipstick brands were created by extraordinary leaders in their fields. Other brands worth considering are artist-forward brands, like MAC, Nars, Make Up For Ever, Lisa Eldridge, and RMS, all created by makeup artists and still beloved by the experts. These brands, particularly MAC, Nars, and Make Up For Ever are also known and celebrated for their impressive range of lipsticks, both in color and finishes, providing every artist — both professional and aspiring — the tools to accomplish any look.

The Best Lipstick Shades to Try

There are entire books devoted to discovering your perfect shade of lipstick, but you don't have to spend hours Googling “What lipstick color should I wear?” to find answers.

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“Finding your perfect lip color is such a personal journey,” Brown says. “You'll know it's your color when after it's applied, your face feels like home.” This journey might take a lot of trial and error to find the shades that make your skin pop and glow. “Expect to find many perfect lip colors over and over again with each new version of yourself,” Brown adds.

- **Best Nude Lipsticks:** While nudes can be some of the most wearable shades, they can also be the most difficult to find your ideal hue. When it comes to choosing the best nude lipstick, look at your lips first. “When searching for the perfect nude lip, try and find a shade that’s similar to your own lip color,” Rinaldi says. “You can go lighter, but not more than a shade or two at most or you risk your lips washing you out.” A nude lipstick, whether it’s fair rose or one of the best brown lipsticks, is incredibly versatile — ideal for both a casual brunch with a summer dress and a black tie formal.
- **Best Pink Lipsticks:** Think of pink lipsticks as difficult to wear? Reconsider the more-popular-than-ever hue (blame Barbie) by remembering that the best pink lipsticks have many different shades, intensities, and variations — i.e. your dream pink is out there. It acts like a less intense red, allowing you to wear it for innumerable occasions and throughout the day seamlessly. If you have warm-toned skin (often with golden, peachy, and yellow undertones), then warm-hued pink lipsticks like peachy and rosy shades are ideal, suggests Rinaldi. For those with cooler undertones (think blue, red, or pink tones), look for soft nude pinks in cool tones. Have neutral undertones? You’ll likely be able to hop around on tones, experiencing both cool and warm tones.
- **Best Berry Lipsticks:** Berry tones can toe the line between the boldness of pink and red — a happy medium that imparts a natural, yet bold hue, almost as if you’ve been skiing down the slopes and your lips have turned a berry-toned flush from the crisp air. Berry lipsticks can mimic a natural look or can be turned up a notch in intensity and glamor with satin and matte formulas. While a berry hue is ideal for every day, the bold shades are particularly apt for a formal occasion. Cool tones tend to have success with plum and mauve hues, says Rinaldi, while warm tones will thrive with berry shades with orange undertones, like burgundy and maroon.
- **Best Red Lipsticks:** The perfect red lipstick is one of the most sought-after shades — and for good reason, as the tone greatly affects the color and wearability. Speaking of wearability, a red lip never goes out of style (and it’s trending right now) so feel free to swipe it on whatever the occasion may be. Or if you need style suggestions, take inspiration from the runway and pair a bold lip with the casual look of baggy jeans, a white T-shirt, and a cool leather jacket. Orange-

toned reds will most likely be flattering for warm tones, says Rinaldi. Blue-toned reds are ideal for cooler tones, like cherry and crimson, suggests Spickard. But don't get defeated by the intimidating search for the perfect red, because Violette believes these rules were meant to be broken. "I've heard so many times that if you have redness, you can't wear strong red lipsticks, but I don't believe that's true." She suggests using virtual try-on features or heading into your local store to test lipsticks to find your perfect match.

The Different Types of Lipstick

Once upon a time, most lipsticks came in a bullet — but today, lipstick comes in countless packaging and formulas. Here's what you need to know about every variation and what sets them apart.

- **Liquid Lipsticks:** Liquid iterations have seen a surge in popularity in recent years, thanks to cutting-edge formulas, like Violette FR Petal Bouche Matte Liquid Lipstick and Sephora Cream Lip Stain Liquid Lipstick. They can come in multiple finishes, including matte, like Violette's iconic option, or impossibly glossy. The major benefit of a liquid lipstick is its longevity, some lasting through meals (when applied correctly). The only negative is the need for careful application because of its long wear, which can set on lips quickly and be stubborn to remove. Be sure to use a makeup remover so you don't tug too harshly at the delicate skin on the lips.
- **Cream Lipsticks:** Cream formulas are a classic for a reason — rarely sticking to or emphasizing dry lips, easy to swipe on, and countless finishes. Whether you're hoping to indulge in a shimmery hue or a glossy, bold red, there is a cream lipstick for you. Speaking of countless finishes, cream lipsticks can be sheer, deeply opaque, or somewhere in between, and they can be shiny, matte, satin, or any other finish imaginable. Cream lipsticks are timeless and easy to use.
- **Long-Lasting Lipsticks and Waterproof Lipsticks:** Want lasting power with your lipstick? Look to the new and exciting field of long-lasting and waterproof formulas. Options, like Haus Labs Atomic Shake Lip Lacquer, are designed to be practically indestructible and budgeproof — some lasting as long as 16+ hours. But unlike their liquid lipstick siblings, these waterproof options tend to have unusual ingredients that allow for unheard-of staying power, like flexible polymers that form a seal on the lips. While transfer-proof lipsticks aren't new, these modern iterations include hydration ingredients, like marine algae extract and hyaluronic acid for a more comfortable and modern feel.

- **Lipsticks for Dry Lips:** As Koestline mentioned before, consumers are seeking out lip products with treatment ingredients, even in their lipsticks — and brands have responded by crafting reparative and protective lip formulas chock-full of potent hydrators. Take Westman Atelier's Lip Suede Lipstick for example — the palette includes peptides, cold-pressed cherry oil, and marula oil to strengthen and support the delicate lip area while also providing a bold burst of color.

How We Tested and Selected the Best Lipsticks

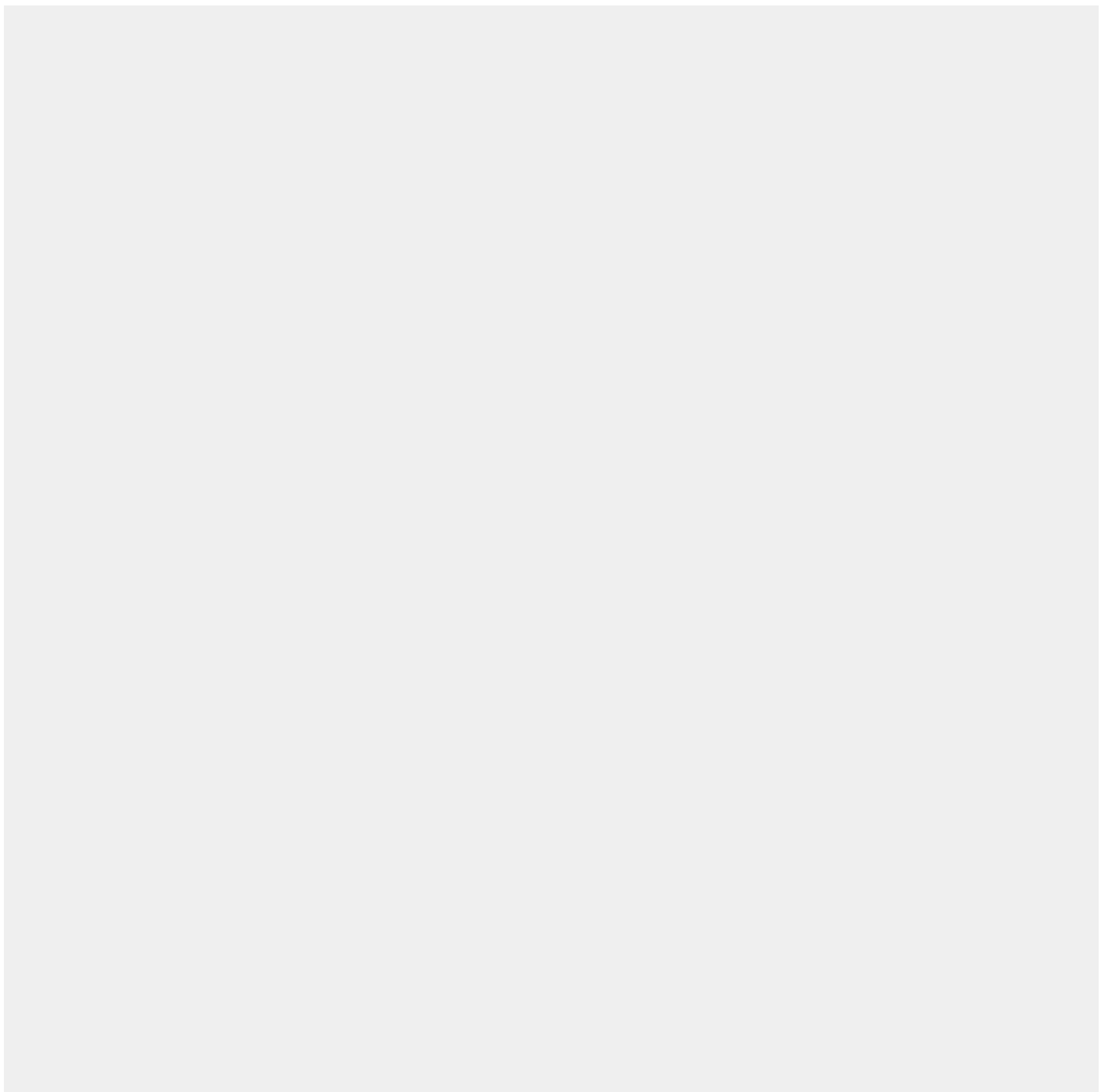
To compile this comprehensive list of the best lipsticks, we swatched over 110 lipsticks from classic and emerging brands, including decades-old formulas and new releases. A veteran beauty writer interviewed six experts, including esteemed makeup artists and dermatologists, for their tips on what to seek out in a high-performing lipstick formula. Throughout a six-month testing period, our panel of testers swiped liquid and cream formulas with finishes ranging from high-shine to matte on fair to ebony skin tones. For each product, our testers took note of the color payoff, how evenly the lipstick applies, and how it fades throughout the wear time. We also noted price points and how the price tags align with the quality of the lipsticks. Lipsticks that easily smeared, faded unevenly, or had an unpleasant texture were cut from our list.

On top of expansive shade ranges that cater to a variety of skin tones, our testers considered the below criteria during our six-month testing window.

- **Ease of application:** Because lipsticks range from watery liquids to balmy creams, applicators range from sculpted bullets to doe foot wands. Our testers noted if the application aligned with the formula texture for intuitive use, awarding extra points to formulas that work for thin to full lips. We also made sure that each lipstick on our list allows you to coat the thinner corners of lips with precision.
- **Texture:** Stains, creams, and matte liquid formulas feel different on the lips due to their consistency, but the best lipsticks will dry down to comfortable feel a few minutes after application (if not immediately). Our testers took note of how our lips felt before, during, and after wearing the lipsticks for up to 10 hours. Any lipsticks that left our lips dehydrated after wear were removed from our list.
- **Color payoff:** There's beauty in a buildable lipstick, however the best lipsticks should deposit your desired pigment intensity in one to two swipes. On top of

concentrated color payoff, we also noted if the lipsticks applied evenly (any that streaked on application didn't make the cut). Our panel of testers evaluated the wear time of the colors, too, checking in on the look of the lipstick after one, two, and three hours of wear without touch-ups.

- **Potential to transfer:** Not all lipsticks are designed to be transfer-proof (the balmy feel of cream formulas results in a higher likelihood the formula may mark your glass or coffee mug). However lipsticks that promise to stay put should do just that. We cross-referenced brand claims to the formulas, making sure that stains and budge-proof options lived up to their promise. Our testers evaluated this by blotting the pigment with a tissue, as well as sipping and snacking while wearing the product.



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Meet the Experts

Kasey Adam Spickard is a celebrity makeup artist. The former Google and Pinterest employee left the tech industry to pursue his dreams of becoming a makeup artist. He’s known by his celebrity clients for looks that involve glowing skin and usually a lip focal point (and he has a lot of feelings about lipstick!).

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Tasha Reiko Brown is a Los Angeles-based makeup artist and groomer who is known for her skin-forward approach to beauty. Her long list of celebrity clients rely on her for lit-from-within skin and fashionable makeup looks.

Sabrina Rinaldi is a makeup artist and hair stylist. With a career spanning almost two decades, the makeup and hair artist is celebrated for her attention to even the tiniest of details. Whether her artistry is minimal or bold, the look is always on trend.

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Violette is a makeup artist and the founder of Violette_Fr. The French mononymous makeup artist and entrepreneur was previously the Dior Beauty international makeup designer and Estée Lauder global beauty director, and is currently the creative director of makeup at Guerlain. Her eponymous makeup brand is a

celebration of French beauty.

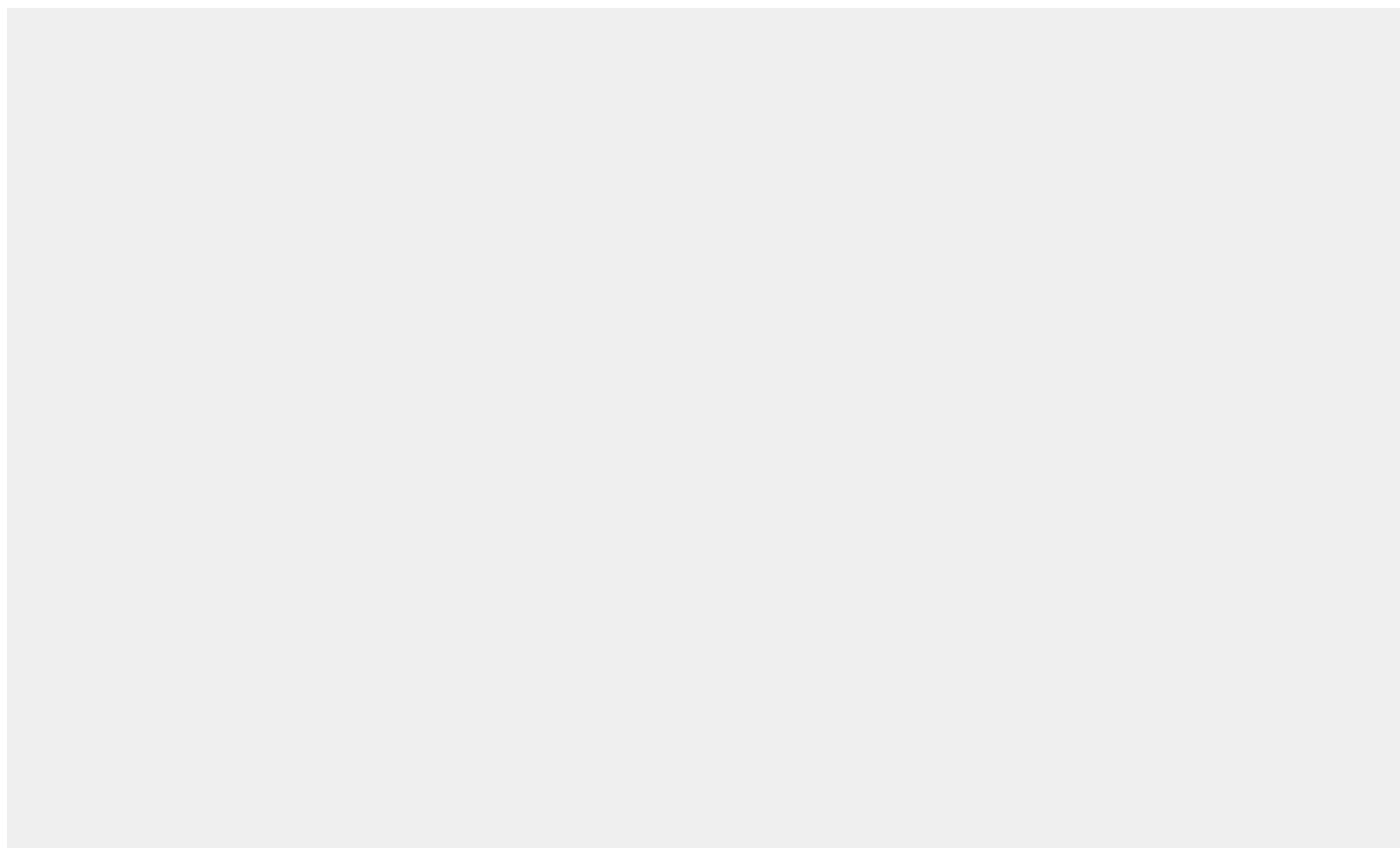
Dr. Rachel Westbay is a New York-based board-certified cosmetic dermatologist who specializes in all things skincare and beauty at Marmur Medical. She's also a clinical instructor at Mount Sinai Hospital.

Krupa Koestline is a clean beauty cosmetic chemist known for her award-winning formulations with breakthrough technology. She's also a trend forecaster and industry pioneer in clean beauty.

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Meet the Author

Kristin Limoges is a seasoned beauty writer specializing in skincare, haircare, fragrance, and makeup. With nearly a decade of expertise, she's known for her thoughtful and thorough point of view. Her work can be seen at *Harper's Bazaar*, *Allure*, *InStyle*, *Byrdie*, *Bustle*, *Departures*, and more. Previously, she was the beauty editor at *Domino* magazine, where she created and crafted the wellness vertical. Limoges' extensive expertise in covering the beauty market informed the product selections on this list of the best lipsticks.



Writer Kristin Limoges after applying one of many top lipsticks during a six-month testing window. KRISTIN LIMOGES

This article was fact checked and reviewed by Leanna Yip, a veteran copy editor with over 12 years of experience, including eight years text editing researched shopping stories and in-depth product guides across several categories, including fashion, beauty, home, footwear, tech, gifts, and more.

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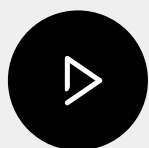
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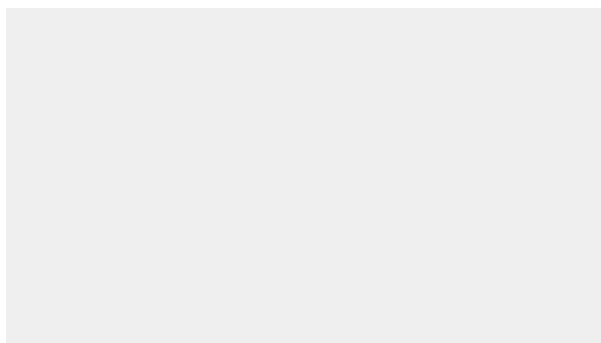
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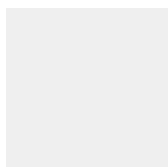


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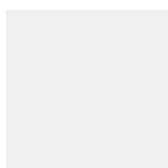
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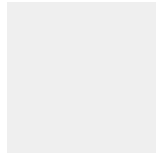
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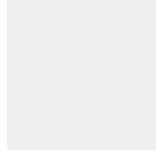
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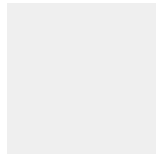
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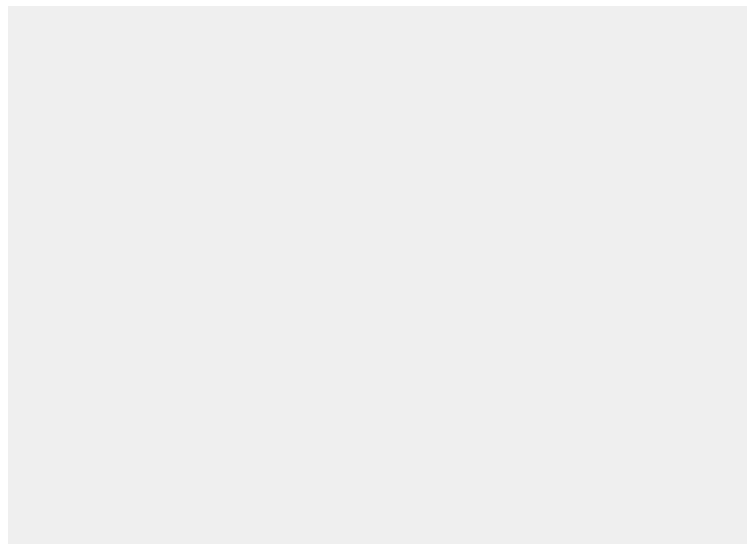
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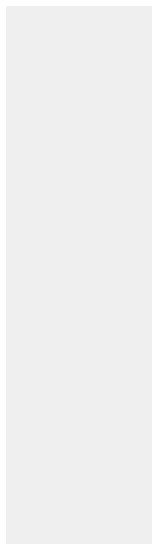
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