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Expert says stars have the keys to kissing

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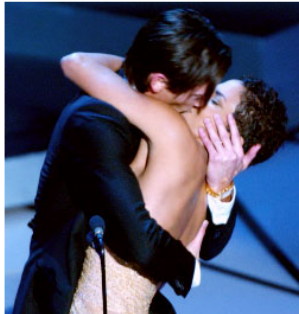
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Want a more pleasing pucker for Valentine's Day?

Get some new ideas to "freshen up" your kisses by watching great romantic movie moments, advises Andrea Demirjian, a philametologist (kissing expert).

"On-screen kisses usually can't be re-created in terms of timing and setting, like that first kiss in the gazebo in 'The Sound of Music,' but you can re-create the spirit and emotion of the kiss," she says.



In "Kissing: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About One of Life's Sweetest Pleasures" (Penguin, \$9.95), Demirjian reveals some of the best on-screen smooches.

▲ Halle Berry responded to Adrian Brody's kiss with passion at the '03 Academy Awards.

AP

Halle Berry is one of Hollywood's greatest kissers, she says, citing the "super-racy, sexy sugar smack" she gave Michael Ealy in the 2005 TV movie "Their Eyes Were Watching God" and her passionate response to Adrian Brody's spontaneous lip-lock at the 2003 Academy Awards.

What makes a kiss memorable, she tells us, is "a certain mix of tenderness, urgency, caring, passion and sexual energy." We've come a long way from '50s TV, when network censors made Desi and Lucy keep at least one foot on the ground while necking on the set of "I Love Lucy."

Among the women interviewed for her book, Demirjian found that kissing mojo knows no age limits. "Those surveyed cited a range of men from classics to Young Turks to BMOCs."

Among their picks:

Sean Connery: "Even in his 70s, there's something about his full-bodied mouth that draws us to him." Best kiss: with Catherine Zeta Jones, "Entrapment."

Harrison Ford: "He's always had a mixture of earnestness and vulnerability." Best kisses: with Karen Allen, "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and with Kelly McGillis, "Witness."

Colin Firth: "Unexpectedly sexy, with a deep, earthy passion." Best kiss: with Renee Zellweger, "Bridget Jones's Diary: The Edge of Reason."

Olivier Martinez: "Smoldering and provocative." Best kiss: with Diane Lane, "Unfaithful."

"Most kissable" female stars include Kelly Ripa ("playful and enthusiastic"), Eva Longoria ("very naughty and appealing"), Lisa Marie Presley ("edgy, with her father's snarl and sexiness") and Diane Sawyer ("confident, flirty and fun").

Demirjian figured that even heartthrobs had to start somewhere, so she asked several celebrities to share their first-kiss memories.

Lisa Kudrow: "My first kiss was at a girlfriend's sweet 16 party. I kissed the most gorgeous boy in high school, the guy everyone fancied, and I was so overcome, I cried."

Charlize Theron: "I was 12. His name was Nicky and he had braces. We were in the back yard, and he like, 'You wanna do it, you wanna do it? Well, OK, let's do

me back yard, and I'm like, 'You wanna do it, you wanna do it?' even, OK, let's do it.' And then we did. It was just awful."

Leonardo DiCaprio: "It was the most disgusting thing in my whole life. The girl injected about a pound of saliva into my mouth, and when I walked away, I had to spit it out."

Brad Pitt: "I was in the fourth grade. We made a plan to meet in her garage and kiss. It was like this business deal. I go right up to her, kiss her. Then I ran home."

Intuitively, Demirjian assures us, everyone is a good kisser -- with the right person. "It's about how people connect more than about skill, but there are nuances you can work on and improve," she says.

Celebrity quotes about their first kisses reprinted from "Kissing" by Andrea Demirjian by arrangement with Perigee, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc., Copyright 2006 by Andrea Demirjian.