

My choice of pastels

Although we are mixing many tints and hues on the surface of the paper, we need the right set of colours to combine together to create our clouds and different types of sky. I have worked with Unison Colour to select a gorgeous combination of pastels to form a bespoke Sandra Orme Sky Set, which includes the colours listed below. This set forms a great base of sky colours from which to build to let you create most skies from a cloudy day through to blue skies or a sunset. I will be working from this set to produce all the work in these tutorials, so if you use another set, you will need to look for similar hues.

I recommend you purchase some Unison Pastels so you are able to get the best results with the tutorials. If your budget won't stretch to a full set, choose the project you want to try and buy a few appropriate colours from those listed here. If you can use these along with your existing pastels, they will help bind all of your pastels to the surface.



Crucial pastels

If you are expanding an existing palette, the pastels shown opposite, bottom right, give you a useful range to use across a variety of clouds and skies. Whichever range of pastels you choose to use, try and find something similar.



Exploring the Sky Set

I've developed my preferred colour palette to ensure it's as versatile as possible. There are combinations and groups of colours that will help you to create a range of different skies, including blue skies, sunsets, sunrises and storms.

A list of the specific pastels used for each project is included in case you wish to copy exactly. These include some pastels that are not in my Sky Set – the extra colours will allow for smoother blends, but are not necessary.



The variety of delicate tints and shades in the BG (blue-grey) and BV (blue-violet) pastels will let you capture the subtlety of blue skies.



Rich reds like A14, A15 and R15 and strong yellow and golds like A12, A10 and Y12 are essential for sunsets and sunrises.



Strong greys are perfect for stormy skies that rely on subtle (but sometimes surprisingly strong) colours. D23, BV17, A52, G33, BV4 and BV8 are very versatile for dramatic clouds.



This stripped-back selection of LT1, BV1, BV8, BV4, BV5 and R18, is made up of pastels I regard as crucial, as they include the all-important bridging colours (see page 34).





# Blue Sky, White Clouds

This first tutorial will teach you to create the kind of clouds and sky we might see on a pleasant summer day – white clouds bubbling across the blue, with the wind creating wispy threads amongst the crisp cumulus edges. We will use a limited, harmonious palette so that you can learn the layering technique without having to cope with complicated colour mixing. We only apply white at the very end, for the brightest, cleanest highlights.

## SELECT YOUR PALETTE

We need a good quality soft white, plus three to four shades each of grey and blue; plus a lilac. I chose:

**Sky** LT1, LT12, BV3, BV4, BV8, BV9, BV10, BV12, BV17, BG10

**Land** BV16, A52, G33, Y16, LT5



'The whole sky is one ocean of alternate waves of cloud and light, so blended together that the eye cannot rest on any one without being guided to the next.' **John Ruskin**

## The finished painting

This shows a detail of the finished painting, which can be seen in full on page 49.





# Cloudburst

This tutorial will take you through how to create a cloudburst of rain sweeping down past the mountains and along the distant shore of Loch Lomond in Scotland. The techniques you learn here will allow you to explore all kinds of rain effects, from subtle distant showers through to more dramatic weather. We will investigate how grey clouds can be exciting and evocative, as well as exploring movement in clouds through mark-making and layers.

This is a harder piece to balance compositionally because of the dominant cloudburst. Using the right amount of light and detail in the mountain horizons, as well as texture in the bottom left of the loch shore will help.

## SELECT YOUR PALETTE

A range of greys from very pale through to very dark. Test them by making colour swatches to check they are not green- or brown-tinted greys. We need blue- or purple-tinted greys. I chose:

**Greys** BV1, BV3, BV4, BV5, BV8, BV9, BV10, BV11, BV12, BV16, G33, A52, D23, LT12

**Other colours** LT1, LT8, Y16



## The finished painting

This shows a detail of the finished painting, which can be seen in full on page 61.

'And then you will hear the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and you will see those watch-towers of vapour swept away from their foundations, and waving curtains of opaque rain let down to the valleys, swinging from the burdened clouds in black, bending fringes, or pacing in pale columns along the lake level, grazing its surface into foam as they go.' **John Ruskin**







# Vivid Sunset

Up to this point, we have been using a relatively muted and limited palette. You have explored different ways of building layers, applying marks and using the shaper. It is now time to really have fun with colour. This tutorial will show you how to control and use powerful colours to produce a beautiful sunset sky. We will also need to use bridging colours to control the blending process.

When using a range of very vivid, distinct colours, it's more important to keep your hands clean. Within stages, don't wet your hands: it's enough to brush them on your apron or a dry cloth. Between stages, wash your hands and dry them thoroughly – while basic, this advice is the best way to help control this colour challenge.

## SELECT YOUR PALETTE

We need a rich range of warm reds, purples, oranges, and yellows, along with cooler blues, purples and pale lilacs – quite the range!

Note that the colours used for additional details aren't in the Sandra Orme Sky Set.

**Warm sunset** A10, A12, A15, A14, O2, Y12

**Darker clouds** A36, R15, R16

**Bridging colours** A4, LT12, LT5, R6, R18

**Additional details** BV1, R17



'...until the whole heaven – one scarlet canopy – is interwoven with a roof of waving flame.' **John Ruskin**



## The finished painting

This shows a detail of the finished painting, which can be seen in full on page 85.