

# COLOUR

WITH CONFIDENCE!



*All the tips, tricks and techniques you'll need to choose quilt colours*





# SHADE PARADE

Choosing colours for your quilts is a very personal thing, and it can often feel daunting to make the 'right' choices. We're here to help!

You'll be well aware that quilters have access to a huge array of fabrics, and unless you're a complete newbie (welcome, if you are!)

no doubt you have a sizeable stash at home. Pull it out and experiment using the colour wheel included with your booklet. We'll let you into some colour secrets that will help you on your way and show you some techniques for mixing print and pattern. Enjoy!

Lorna Slessor Editor

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 **Quilting**  
*Spinning your passion for fabric!*

*Meet our contributors!*



**Giuseppe Ribaud**

Find Giuseppe's tips on pulling fabric from p14



**Angie Wilson**

Admire Angie's snaps and dreamy fabric stash



**Holly DeGroot**

Learn colour theory with Holly's handy insight!

## How to use your colour wheel

It's not just a pretty card – using your wheel, together with a little bit of knowledge, can help you choose fabrics with ease

The function of a colour wheel is to show you how colours relate to each other. It's a visual expression of the principles of colour theory, and you can use it as a handy shortcut to enable you to apply these ideas to your quilting very easily – turn to p6 to see some examples.

Of course, you don't have to always be guided by your colour wheel – but it can help you to make up your mind, especially when you have a few similar fabrics to choose from.

Have you ever wondered why some fabrics just work, despite the fact that you're not very keen on the individual colours they use? You'll find the same happens with interior colour schemes, quilts, or even your favourite dress! This is down to how the colours are used, which we'll tell you more about. One example is that you may feel very differently about a pale mint than a deep, sludgy green. Some people will see the paler colour as insipid, others will love its subtlety, while people will see the sludgy khaki as either dull or sophisticated!

### PURE COLOURS

Colour dominance plays a massive part in how fabrics and quilts look. Pure colours will be the most dominant in any design, with yellow being the one that stands out the most. Pure colours are made when you mix the primary shades of red, blue and yellow, and they are the ones you can see named in white on the wheel opposite. Pure colours are known as fully saturated, while duller colours are desaturated.

### TINTS, TONES AND SHADES

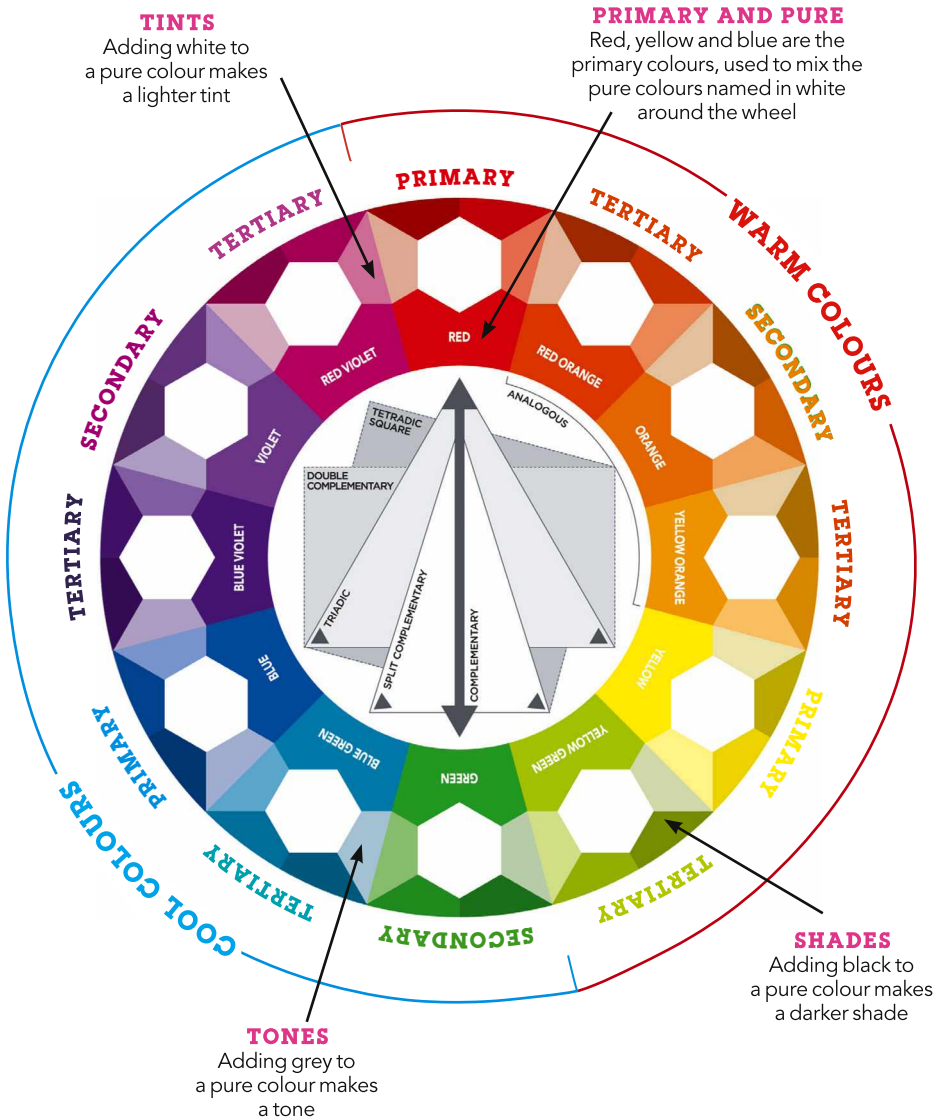
Many fabrics feature variations on pure colours, with black, white or grey added in to the base pure colours. Adding white makes colours lighter to make tints, adding black makes colours darker to make shades, and adding grey makes colours called tones. You can see examples of these shown around the edge of the colour wheel. This can explain why a colour you thought would be dominant isn't when you place it with other fabrics – it may be a tone or a shade, rather than a pure colour, and therefore it won't look as vivid as you'd hoped.

### WARM OR COLD, LIGHT OR DARK?

Warm colours (red, orange, yellow) are usually more dominant and stand out in a quilt design more than the cool colours (green, blue and violet) on the wheel, which appear to recede. Dark areas on quilts will often draw the eye more than light areas, so you might think this is where the dominance will lie, but it's such a general rule it really depends on how the dark and light are used. Remember that we said pure colours will be the most dominant? A pure colour will often make a dark colour recede, while very light colours used as accents on a quilt will stand out and be more noticeable than a darker background.

You'll often see 'value' discussed as a concept in quilting, but what it really means is simply how light or dark a colour is. Using both in one quilt will create a contrast, and make your eye move around the quilt. Find out more about planning quilts and choosing fabrics on p12.





# Using the wheel to select colour schemes

Combine your colour wheel with helpful colour theory to curate gorgeous fabric pulls for your next quilt!

### TETRADIC SQUARE

The darker grey tetradic square will show you which colours spaced evenly around the wheel will work together. Violet, red-orange, yellow and blue-green will coordinate well.

### DOUBLE COMPLEMENTARY

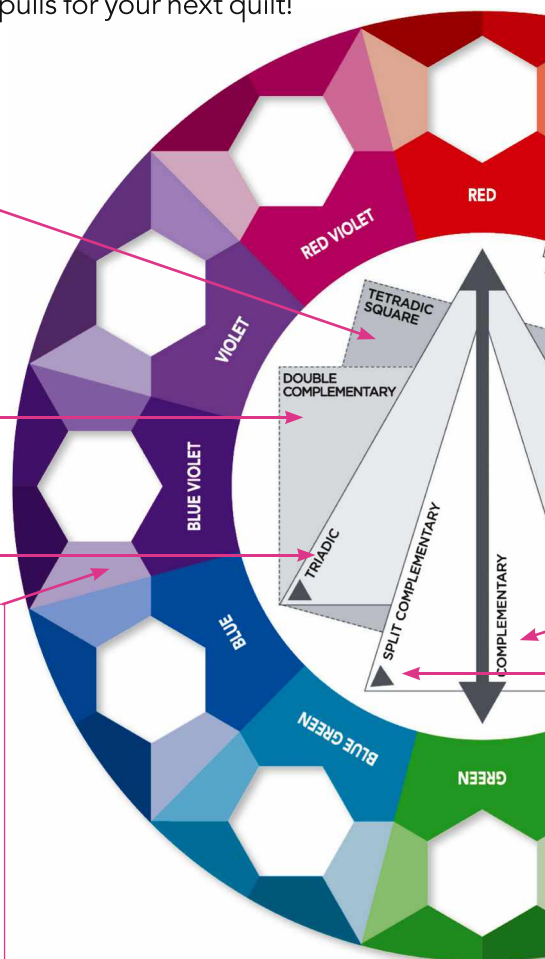
Double complementary schemes use the light grey rectangle to find four colours; two complementary pairs. Try using red, violet, yellow and green.

### TRIADIC

The grey equilateral triangle shaded on the wheel points to the triadic colours – three evenly spaced colours, like red, blue and yellow. You don't have to use the pure colours of each – get a more muted effect by combining prints featuring tints, shades or tones of the base colours.

### MONOCHROMATIC

Monochromatic schemes (also known as ombré) don't have to be black and white. It just means they use different versions of the same colour. If you have a pink ombré scheme as shown here, all the colours will sit within the same section of the wheel – in this case, it's the red violet section.



## ANALOGOUS

Analogous colours sit on either side of the base colour the arrow points to on the wheel, and they feel very comfortable used together. Want something to work with orange? Try red-orange and yellow-orange as shown by the indicating line, or greens and yellows like the photo.

## COMPLEMENTARY

The main arrow on the wheel shows which colours are complementary – they're opposite each other. In this position you can see the arrow is pointing to red and green. Turn the disc and you'll see blue and orange, violet and yellow, and blue-green and red-orange are all complementary.

## SPLIT COMPLEMENTARY

The narrower, white triangle finds split complementary schemes. These use a base colour, plus the two colours next to its complementary colour, for a less stark take on the complementary pairing. So for instance, to complement blue, you'd select red-orange and yellow-orange.



## More about colour

All the terminology and techniques you'll need to mix and match colour, and sound like a pro while you do!

### PRIMARY

There are three primary colours: red, yellow and blue. These colours cannot be mixed or formed by another combination of colours. All other colours can be created by combining these three hues



### SECONDARY

There are three secondary colours: orange, green and violet. These are created by mixing two primary colours together



### TERTIARY

There are six tertiary colours: red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet and red-violet. These colours are created by mixing a primary colour and a secondary colour together







### HUES, TINTS, TONES AND SHADES

These terms are often used interchangeably but they mean very different things in terms of colour theory. **Hue** is the term for the pure spectrum colours.

- A hue with white added to it is called a **tint**
- A hue with grey added to it is called a **tone**
- A hue with black added to it is called a **shade**

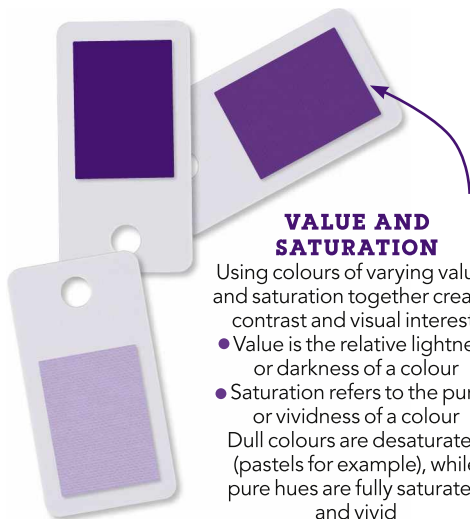


### WARM AND COOL COLOURS

The colour wheel can be divided in half into warm and cool colours.

These colours can be used in a quilt to give the design depth.

- Warm colours are red, orange and yellow. These colours feel vibrant and energetic and appear to advance in space
- Cool colours are green, blue and violet. These colours feel soothing and calm and tend to recede in space



### VALUE AND SATURATION

Using colours of varying values and saturation together creates contrast and visual interest.

- Value is the relative lightness or darkness of a colour
  - Saturation refers to the purity or vividness of a colour
- Dull colours are desaturated (pastels for example), while pure hues are fully saturated and vivid

### NEUTRALS

These include neutrals as well as white, black and grey. Near-neutrals include browns and tans

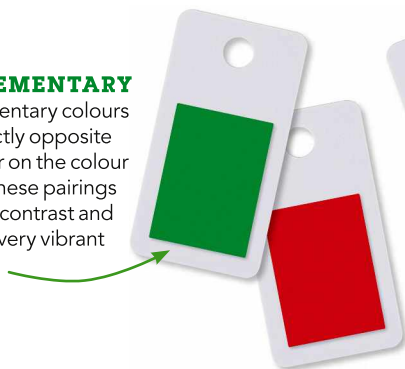


## Colour harmonies

Stuck for ideas on what to pair with your favourite colour?  
You can't go wrong with one of these fail-safe combos

### COMPLEMENTARY

Complementary colours are directly opposite each other on the colour wheel. These pairings are high contrast and usually very vibrant



### ANALOGOUS

Analogous colour schemes are adjacent to each other on the colour wheel. They are harmonious, pleasing to the eye and often appear in nature



### SPLIT COMPLEMENTARY

The split complementary colour scheme is a variation of the complementary scheme. In addition to the base colour, it uses the two colours adjacent to its complement. It creates the same visual contrast as a complementary scheme, but with less visual tension



### TRIADIC

Triadic colours are evenly spaced around the colour wheel and are usually vibrant, even when using unsaturated hues. You'll see that a triadic combination is often used in our projects – it's our favourite harmony!



**TETRADIC SQUARE**

Square colour schemes are similar to double complementary colour schemes, but with all colours evenly spaced around the colour wheel

**DOUBLE COMPLEMENTARY**

Double complementary colour schemes (sometimes called rectangular schemes) use four colours arranged in two complementary pairs

**MONOCHROMATIC OR OMBRÉ**

Monochrome colour schemes use several different values, tints, tones and shades of the same colour. Ombre is a popular term for these types of colour schemes, typically arranged in light to dark values

*Using the colour wheel*

Start by choosing a dominant fabric and selecting colours from your stash as accents. If something doesn't look right, just get rid of it. Trust your instincts!

# How to plan your quilts

No matter what project you're working on, we're armed with handy tips and ideas to help you get great results!

## COLOUR INSPIRATION

Colour inspiration is everywhere, including in nature, on Pinterest, Instagram and other sites, and also in your own photographs.

You can pull colours out of a photograph with a colour picker in photo editing software or with a good old box of crayons. Choose several colours that you like in the photo or artwork and pull a selection of fabrics in those colours to make a new quilt.

## FABRIC INSPIRATION

Designers work hard to choose the colour schemes for their collections, so why not use them to build a quilt colour scheme? Find a multicolour print you like, take a look at the selvedge to see what colours it contains and pull blender fabrics in colours that coordinate. Any multicolour or large accent fabrics in the same colours will work too. Include different values to create contrast

and add in some neutrals and solids to give the eye a place to rest. You can use the fabric that inspired your colour choices in the quilt, or take it out and use the rest of the stack for a little twist!

## SOLIDS

Solids are fabrics that don't have a printed design on them. There are lots of different lines of solids to choose from. This category also includes fabrics that are almost solids, such as shot cottons, linens and chambrays, amongst others. They are important to add to busy quilt designs to give the eye a place to rest and can be used on their own, without prints, to give a quilt a bold, graphic look.

## BLENDERS

Blenders (also called basics) are tone-on-tone or colour and white prints that mix well with lots of different fabrics. They have a dominant colour, even if they include small accents of other colours. They are very useful to have in your stash since they can be used on their own or mixed in with a collection, as long as the colours coordinate.



## LARGE ACCENTS

These fabrics may feature multiple colours, but generally one will be dominant. They help to blend different colours within a quilt, but can be difficult to use as they contain so many hues.

## MULTICOLOUR PRINTS

These fabrics contain multiple colours and are tricky to categorise as a specific overall colour. They are often best used in moderation and mixed in with other types of fabric to tone down their effect.

## SORTING BY COLOUR

Sorting fabrics by colour helps to break away from using only one fabric collection together. It also allows you to identify gaps in your stash where you may need to buy more (or less!) of a certain colour.





## PULLING PALETTES





## Expert advice!

We delve deeper into colour with **Giuseppe Ribaudo** – aka Giucy Giuce – famous for his vibrant fabric pulls

We've walked through the theory behind the colour wheel, explored how we can use it and touched on applying it to your stash... now it's time to properly put it into practice! We figured there was no-one better than fabric and quilt pattern designer Giuseppe Ribaudo to do a deep dive into how colour theory can be applied when pulling fabrics for your next quilt project. In the following pages Giuseppe curates fabrics following the theory behind complementary, triadic, analogous, split complementary, double complementary, and monochromatic colour schemes, so you

can go ahead and apply colour theory to your own quilts with ease! All of these fabric pulls can be replicated using your fabric stash and colour wheel – each column is full of advice for applying the science to whatever you've got stored away in your sewing space. So whether you're a self-confessed fabric hoarder or are growing your stash from the ground up, it's time to grab your new colour wheel and settle in for some inspiring reads!

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# Complementary

**Giuseppe Ribaud** talks us through the three main complementary colour pairings on the wheel

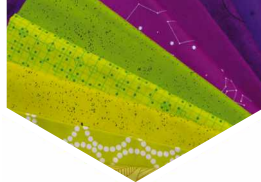
Let's talk about complementary colours! Simply put, complementary colours are opposite one another on the colour wheel. Red complements green, blue is a complement to orange, and yellow is complementary to violet (and as you'll discover, it's my personal favourite complementary combo).

I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that we can all agree that the most famous complementary colour combination is red and green. For as far back as we can remember, red and green have been synonymous with the celebration of Christmas. In 1931, Haddon Sundblom's famous depiction of Santa Claus for The Coca Cola Company's holiday advertising campaign cemented this colour combination in the history books.

When I think of orange and blue colour schemes I always think of Elisabeth Hardy (@elisabew), who has made countless spectacular quilts using blue and orange. Of her favourite colour combination Elisabeth comments, "Both colours are so bright and cheerful, but they balance well so nothing is ever overwhelming".

The last complementary colour combination is my absolute favourite: yellow and violet. I love this combination so much that I designed an entire fabric collection around it! I have long associated yellow and violet with aliens, and DECLASSIFIED is a collection about the existence of extra-terrestrials. The palette of DECLASSIFIED is analogous but its inception was with the simple combo of yellow and violet. Every project I imagined featured this combination laid against stark black backgrounds. To start with, I found the perfect shade of acid yellow. This colour was so important to the group, I needed a shade that was other-worldly. Once I had my venomous yellow I needed to find the right complementary violet – something bright and beautiful that when paired with my deadly yellow would create a menacing and mysterious combination. Don't underestimate the power of complementary shades!

One might think that using only two colours may be a boring choice, but with the right complementary scheme you can create an impact that simply can't be rivalled.





## PULLING PALETTES

Different tints and shades can create a real impact!



# Triadic colours

**Giuseppe Ribaldo** takes his next stop on the colour wheel to give us the backstory of two iconic trios

A triadic colour scheme consists of three colours that are equally spaced apart from each other on the colour wheel – just visualise an equilateral triangle. Everything the points touch are the three colours in the triad.

If we think of the colour wheel at its most basic level (that is red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet), there are just two triadic colour schemes. The primary colours of red, yellow and blue are one colour scheme, with the secondary colours of orange, green and violet comprising the second.

The primary triad has been a key combo throughout history. The contrast between the bold shades helps prints to pop in a detailed pattern, making it an easy go-to for designers and artists alike. My favourite instances of the primary triad are found in the world of art, and there's no shortage of this palette being used by some of the most prolific artists in the modern art movement of the early 20th

century. Piet Mondrian famously used this palette for his linear, grid-like pieces, Henri Matisse used the primary triad in much of his work, and Alexander Calder frequently

used the palette as well, especially in his mobiles. How about Roy Lichtenstein's graphic pop art of the 1960s? Almost all of Lichtenstein's art was created exclusively with red, yellow and blue, creating an instant attention-grabbing effect.

My personal preferred triad is undoubtedly orange, green and violet (the secondary triad). In fact, it is one of my favourite colour combinations in general. In my pull here I've chosen gem tones of rusty oranges, earthy greens and plum violets to create an autumnal palette. Orange, green and violet are often associated with the colours of fall as they mimic the colours of the changing leaves. However, this crisp and saturated palette is always on trend for clothing, home decor and, naturally, in the world of quilting.

While the colours for the two triadic schemes are set in stone, it's easy to switch up the overall effect with a variety of shades and tones. Mix and match until you've pulled the perfect triadic trio – they're guaranteed to look good together! Need extra inspiration? There's bound to be an artist or designer who's already done the leg work for you.





## PULLING PALETTES

Choose from just  
two basic triadic  
colour palettes



## Analogous colours

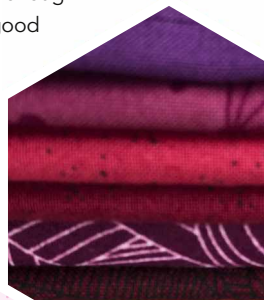
**Giuseppe Ribaldo** is exploring nature's favourite colour combos with this rich fabric pull

Analogous colours are the next door neighbours of the colour wheel. Due to their close proximity, analogous palettes are the easiest to find on the colour wheel, and are naturally pleasing to the eye. Typically speaking, one colour is the dominant one, and the other two are there to help create a sense of serenity. Analogous colours usually comprise a primary, a secondary and a tertiary colour. For instance, an analogous colour scheme with cobalt blue as the dominant or primary colour would include teal and indigo as secondary and tertiary colours.

Gradient or ombré quilts often utilise analogous colours to create a subtle transition from one colour to the next. Similar to a monochromatic palette using different shades and hues of one colour, analogous palettes are a bit more nuanced. They use just a touch more colour variation for added visual interest. We see analogous colour in many different ways in nature. A simple example is in autumn, where crisp green leaves change to warm tones of gold, amber and burgundy. Another example is a peacock feather, where greens mingle with shades of chartreuse and aqua.

According to traditional colour theory, analogous colour schemes are comprised of three colours. But breaking the rules to add more colours can make some striking combos. In my fabric pull I started with burgundy as the dominant colour. I then added in burnt orange and plum to complete the trio, then threw out the rule book and added in hues of lighter oranges and violets. The result is an arresting autumnal palette. Notice that all the colours are similar in tone. Something to consider: it is important to keep your 'types' of colour similar. This means that it is difficult to make colours harmonise analogously if you are using different tones, like trying to mix cool tones with warm ones. Try using only pastels or jewel tones for your palette to balance perfectly.

If analogous colours are good enough for mother nature, then they're good enough for a quilt. And luckily for you, if you've got a dominant colour in mind, you really don't have to stray very far to achieve breathtaking results.





## PULLING PALETTES

You don't always  
have to follow the  
rule book!



# Split complementary

**Giuseppe** unpicks the theory behind one of the most versatile combos on the colour wheel

We've covered complementary colour schemes – now let's turn things up a notch and talk split complementary. As you know, a complementary colour scheme is created with two colours directly across from one another on the colour wheel. Continuing in the same vein, a split complementary colour scheme is created when you combine a base colour with the two colours adjacent to the base's complement. To visualise, a split complementary palette with red as the base colour would also include yellow-green and green-blue (as green is the complement to red). Unlike other colour schemes, there are vast combinations to be made from split complementary shades and, most excitingly, each one is as beautiful as the last!

When it comes to quilting, I love to use split complementary colours to pull interesting palettes for holiday projects. With one warm and two cold colours in each combination (or vice versa), it's easy to create a soft balance that's perfect for any time of year. Let's start by talking about red with yellow-green and green-blue. Doesn't that sound like the perfect modern festive combo? How about

violet as a base colour with orange-yellow and yellow-green as its secondary shades? What a great palette for a fun Halloween project! Another example of split complementary colour used to celebrate a holiday is in the American tradition of Mardi Gras. On 'Fat Tuesday' (Shrove Tuesday for my UK friends), we don beaded necklaces and masks in the contrasting combo of violet, yellow and green to celebrate Lent.

In my fabric pull I've gone for a combination that's one of my favourites: orange, blue-green and blue-violet. I've always loved orange – it's such an underrated colour, and balances so well with the other two shades. There's a strong contrast, yet the impact is easier on the eye than complementary.

Out of all of the colour schemes, split complementary is one of the easiest and most fun to play with. Next time you're agonising over fabrics, pick up your colour wheel and discover the array of interesting combinations you can make. You'll be surprised by just how many variations there are.





## PULLING PALETTES

Use your colour wheel on your stash for this pull!





# Double complementary

**Giuseppe Ribaud** digs deeper into the theory behind double complementary colour schemes

Double complementary colour schemes are an interesting and underused way to play with colour. This elusive colour combo is created when two adjacent complementary colour schemes are put together. Each consists of two primary and two secondary colours.

The best way to explain this mysterious colour scheme is by demonstrating it. Imagine red as the primary colour with its complement green as the root of your combination. To complete the combination you would add the secondary colour of orange and its complement blue: red, green, orange, and blue. Conversely, instead of adding orange and blue to the red and green root you could add violet and its complement, which is yellow: red, green, violet, and yellow.

If you are looking at a colour wheel while reading this, you may be surprised that there are not many possible double complementary combinations. When you think of the colour wheel at the most basic level (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet) there are actually only three possible

combos. Now, just because there are only three general combinations, that does not mean there is a shortage of interesting ways to play with these colours. We can use different tints and shades of our primary and secondary colours to create complex variations. Also let's not forget about tertiary colours and the combinations that exist therein.

While double complementary colour schemes are few and far between, when we do see them they are often used in subtle ways. For example, you wouldn't necessarily use an even dispersion of each of the colours in your combination. Perhaps you would use one main colour and use the other three to complement and support that main colour... which is what I have done in my fabric pull!

Do you have a colour you love to use in your quilts time and time again? For your next project, why not try using that colour as the basic for your fabric pull? Next, find its complement, then find the adjacent complementary colours and start to play around with different colour variations. The results may surprise you!



## PULLING PALETTES

Use this palette to make one colour really shine!



# Monochromatic

Giuseppe pares it back to show the dramatic effects that can be made with monochrome palettes

As the name suggests, monochromatic colour schemes are comprised of all the colours within one single hue, and are extended using its tones, tints and shades. Monochromatic colour can add an interesting edge and elegance to any quilt. There are a number of ways to use monochrome palettes in your quilting – one example is using tones, tints and shades to create an ombré. Another instance is to simply use one shade and pair it with a neutral, like white, to create a dramatic effect. Both of these applications have been used for centuries and continue to be used by modern makers today.

The history of quilting is rich with monochromatic projects. In 2011 the American Folk Art Museum transformed New York City's Armory into an awe-inspiring quilt exhibition with its show *Infinite Variety: Three Centuries of Red and White Quilts*. The show featured a countless selection of quilts, some hundreds of years old. Each one was more remarkable than the last, all with one common theme: the simple colour combo of red and white. Most, if not all, utilised only one shade of red.

While you can make a statement with one colour in a project, another creative way to use monochromatic colour is to arrange different shades of colour, gradually going from light to dark. A recent trend in the quilting world, many fabric designers are even creating monochromatic fabric collections. Libs Elliott is a master of such fabric lines.

Inspired by Libs Elliott's *Almost Blue* collection I have create a blue ombré fabric pull of my own. I started mine with one medium blue-grey fabric and added darker shades and lighter tints to create a brooding, stormy winter palette. Each of the prints have a very heavy blue cast to them, creating a drab – but beautiful – array of colour. Cast is particularly important when pulling monochromatic palettes – it's the tint a particular colour leans toward. When pulling fabrics for a project, the cast of the colours of the fabrics you combine should all be similar.

A personal favourite use of colour, monochromatic quilts are timeless. Always striking, committing to a single colour or ombré of colour can take your work to the next level.





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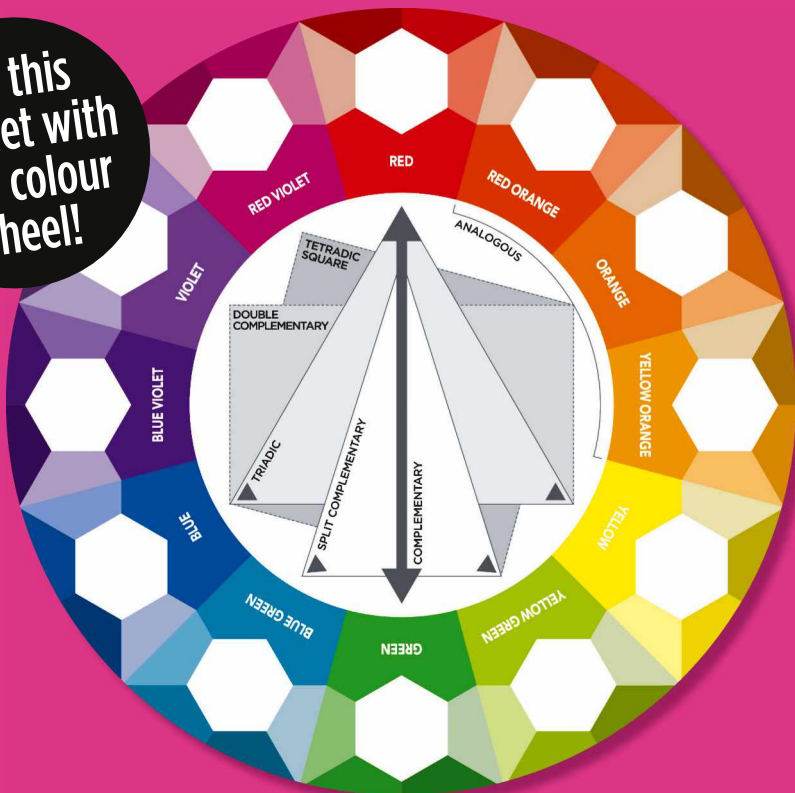


Neon Wave by Jemima  
Flendt, issue 106



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