

Armocromia: The Power of Colours.
*The right colour method that revolutionises your life and not just your
image*

By Rossella Migliaccio

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THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF COLOURS

When we think about beauty, it is virtually impossible not to think about colour: the harmony of colours has been an essential component of art and architecture and a fundamental aesthetic framework since ancient times. Just a touch of the right colour can put a sparkle in our eye, illuminate our smile, make us glow from the inside out. Understanding the secret language of colours, seeing them as friends that can lift us up when we are down or make us shine brighter on that special occasion, can change our lives, making us feel more secure, more beautiful, and as a consequence, more happy.

I always say that colour was written into my destiny: the name Rossella comes from the Italian word 'rosso', meaning red, which corresponds to the English name Scarlett and, like the adjective *scarlet*, means 'brilliant red'. My mother chose my name after watching *Gone with the Wind*, bestowing on me a love for this colour and the incurable optimism of the film's protagonist.

But besides this red connection, I've been fascinated by the world of colours since I was a child. I used to collect crayons, poster paints and watercolours, and would make a wonderful mess of a felt-tip pen, breaking it into pieces to experiment and make concoctions with water! Then, during my teenage years, I became interested in theatre and at the same time developed a real passion for cinema, especially old Hollywood movies: the divas of the past, from Audrey Hepburn to Grace Kelly, from Rita Hayworth to Greta Garbo, have never ceased to delight me. I was astounded and bewitched by their dresses, the amazing outfits, perfectly measured and studied by the costume designers to draw out their beauty and character.

Seduced by the knowledge and practice of those professionals, their ability to speak to an audience of millions, I wanted to make the language of colours first my field of study, then my trade. Now, after more than ten years in the field, my mission remains the same: to communicate the power of colours, bring it within the reach of all those who, despite the difficulties of everyday life, don't want to give up looking after themselves and feeling good around their friends and family.

But how does the magic of colour work? Surely, without knowing it, you've already been taken in by its charm. Have you ever walked into the office and been greeted by everyone saying, "Wow you look great today, what have you done? Have you changed something?" It's very likely that that "something" giving you an extra spring in your step is the colour of the dress you're wearing, and the compliment means you've got it just right. On the other end of the spectrum, how many times have people asked: "Is everything OK? You look a little down...", when you're actually feeling completely fine? Perhaps the only thing wrong that day was the colour of your outfit.

The fact of the matter is, things that can seem like a coincidence – choosing the right colour dress, the tone of your make-up, the colour of your hair – are actually a science. It is called colour analysis and it forms the foundation of my profession. Starting with an analysis of the three key elements we all possess - skin, eyes and hair - colour analysis has the potential to identify our friend colours, the ones that have the power to immediately render us more beautiful, in better shape and younger. This has at least two significant consequences.

First of all, it will help us to give our wardrobes maximum value. We'll get rid of the irritating sensation of "a wardrobe full of clothes but nothing to wear",

because once we've selected our friend colours everything will go with everything and we'll be able to get dressed in the dark! We only need a few things to breathe life into an unlimited number of combinations.

Colour analysis will help us save time, space and money, because shopping will be a more focused task and we'll no longer just buy things we like, but items that suit us and add value to our appearance. When you think about it, it's a more ethical and sustainable attitude.

Secondly, colour analysis promotes an approach to our image that is personalised and mindful. The result of this is that once again we become the protagonists of our own stories, with a stronger sense of our individual uniqueness and identity. But it's not just a question of image: rediscovering colours will make us question when and why we stopped using them, to take another look at our personal stories and, in some cases, begin new ones.

In this book I will guide you through the discovery of all the aspects of colour analysis: aesthetic, practical, psychological and even historical and cultural. I will reveal my method and introduce you to many case studies, which are all fruits of my experience working with thousands of clients and students and my continuous discussions with other image consultants from all over the world. And I will try to impart to you my passion itself: that of a life dedicated to colour.

FRANCESCA'S STORY

Francesca got in touch with me before her son's wedding. She was looking for something special to wear and wanted my help to construct a new look. I was really moved at our first meeting when she started out by saying: "I'm single and I don't know who else to ask for such an important occasion. I would like a professional opinion." I reassured her that we would find something and I asked her some routine questions so that I could better understand her needs and her usual style.

Despite this tender opening, it was clear that Francesca was anything but a weak woman and her image was also rather tough: a masculine cut trouser suit, few accessories, essential but smart make-up, grey hair, all black.

She told me her life story like a river in full flow: I didn't interrupt her because I could see that she really needed it. Born into a very rigid family, with a "perfect" and hard to please mother, she became very strict with herself, giving up many of her dreams in order to pursue the goals she had been assigned by others.

She found a husband, who back then was seen as a "good match", she furnished a nice little house just outside the city and had a son who is now a successful professional. She herself has made a brilliant career as a commercial lawyer in a very masculine environment. "I've only worn black for years, because that was the only way to seem credible and not come across as too much."

In the last three years however things haven't gone as planned and Francesca has had to make peace with the fact that we can't always plan our lives out like a To Do list: her marriage has ended and her only child has moved to the United States. She has found herself alone, but she is a very strong woman and perhaps asking for help with the wedding outfit is her way of starting over.

So, one cannot wear black to a wedding: Francesca needed to break this spell and I secretly quite enjoyed the tension that I could sense within her. I wasn't worried, I knew that in the end she would fall in love with her colours, because

when they suit you you always end up loving them, but it was clear that she was worried. Before beginning the search for an outfit, we needed to identify her colour palette. We chose a beautifully sunny morning and sat down next to a window for the colour analysis session. Francesca's colours turned out to be autumnal, warm and deep like nature in that season. It was incredible how well terracotta, mustard and leaf green suited her, and even she was astounded that she'd never realised before. After all, having always worn black, she'd never been posed with the problem of trying something different and she had been convinced that all black was the only "uniform" that would get her through difficult situations at work.

We found her a beautiful teal dress for her son's wedding and of course we also worked on the beauty side of things: out with the black eyeliner, in with a chestnut eye shadow; out with the grey strands in her hair, in with a natural warm brunette. Francesca had truly bloomed again: her eyes shone and when we were at the hairdressers I thought I saw a glint of emotion in her eyes. Not a tear, though.

Over the weeks that followed she carefully guarded the outfit in her wardrobe and was impatient to wear it, like a child with before Christmas. The change in her beauty regime had clearly already borne fruit and the first compliments began to roll in, but her "uniform" remained black.

She called me the day after the wedding, saying: "Rossella, I want to complete the journey. Let's review my whole wardrobe!" "Are you sure?" I asked her. "Yes, I can't wait to get started." Perhaps it was down to the change in the beauty side of things over the last few weeks, perhaps it was seeing herself in colour for the first time after years of black. Or perhaps it was simply due to having closed, once and for all, some chapters of her life: the marriage of her son, the conclusion of the divorce process and, most importantly, her change of role at work.

Now Francesca is the chairperson of her legal office: "I no longer have anything to prove, I'm at the top and nobody can question my value." She continues to wear beautiful suits, but in extremely elegant colours that add value to her image, like tobacco brown, aubergine, red-purple, forest green. And she's inseparable from her new camel coat!

But the truth is that she has stopped judging herself, she has decided not to listen to that old voice inside her head that constantly told her what was appropriate and what wasn't. That same voice that told her that wearing colours wasn't elegant. There's no such thing as elegant colours and tacky colours: a colour is elegant if it works in harmony with the person wearing it.

She confessed that when she was a little girl she had dreamed of being a dancer, and now she has signed up for a tango course. She has started going on adventurous excursions and doing everything she didn't have the time or courage to do before. It's never too late to live in colour!

THE FIRST STEPS INTO COLOUR ANALYSIS

The characteristics of personal colours

Colour analysis is not just a matter of undertone: that is a common misconception. It is a much more complex analysis that takes into account at least four variables that we will learn to interpret and intersect.

As I've already mentioned, the characteristics of personal colours that we look at in analysis are:

- **Undertone**, also called temperature, which can be warm or cool;
- **Value**, also called tone, which can be light, medium or dark;
- **Contrast** in the skin-eyes-hair mix;
- **Intensity** or brightness, which can be strong or muted.

In the following chapters we will go into a lot more detail on each of these categories, but first I would like to highlight that we are talking about, to use a mathematical term, independent variables.

In a mathematical equation, a variable is dependent on other variables if there is a relation between them. Where there is no relation, the variables are usually considered independent. In a colour analysis this means that undertone, value, contrast and intensity do not influence one another. How often does a woman walk into a make-up shop and have the saleswoman say: "You have black hair, *so* you have warm colouring," or "You're fair-haired, *so* you have cool colouring"? This is the most common error, and I want you to be on your guard against it. The problem is with the word *so*, because being dark-haired or dark-skinned does not necessarily imply a warm colouring, just as being fair doesn't necessarily mean a cool one. Value, which defines whether you are dark or fair, and undertone, which identifies whether you are warm or cool, are both independent variables.

There are various combinations of undertone, value, contrast and intensity that together determine the various categories known as seasons and subgroups. Otherwise we could generically divide the world up into brunettes, blondes, redheads and people with black hair, and be done this topic in a couple of pages. However, we know all too well how much difference there can be between two people who at first glance look similar: there's blonde and blonde, dark and dark. We are not all the same and most importantly, as you will have already observed, the same colours, the same lipsticks and the same hair dyes do not suit everybody.

How to prepare for colour analysis

To analyse your chromatic characteristics, I recommend you look at your skin *au naturel*, rather than with make up on or a tan. If you can, remove your make-up a few hours beforehand in order to avoid reddening from rubbing your face or rings of leftover make-up. Trying out the colour shades on a bare face makes it easier to appreciate the smoothing and brightening power of our palette. By the same token, it also makes it easier to see the mortifying effect of the enemy colours, which will highlight shadows, discolouration, wrinkles and blemishes on our skin.

In terms of tanning, it's not a problem for the most expert consultant, but if you are a novice it could definitely deceive you and you might find it very difficult

to recognise their real colour of your complexion. The ideal situation would be to evaluate your skin in its most natural form, without the effects of the sun. Therefore, if possible, postpone your analysis for wintertime or for whenever you are not (too) tanned. If you use sunbeds, avoid using one for at least a month before the colour analysis, to diminish the effects of artificial tanning.

It goes without saying that your eyes also need to be natural, without make up but most importantly without coloured contact lenses, as they could alter the contrast and the intensity level. If you usually wear glasses, I recommend removing them as they are a large accessory and cover up an important part of your face. They can create shade, hide the area around the eyes, but most of all influence the choice of colour because they are also coloured.

The same goes for earrings, big and small: they can distract us during the analysis, especially in determining the undertone.

Last but not least, I advise you to cover your hair - especially if it is dyed - with a white sheet, so that its colour doesn't influence you. But even if your hair colour is natural, it is still useful to cover it up so that in the second part we can see whether it darkens, lightens or simply emphasises your undertone.

To completely isolate your face from the colours surrounding it, I advise you to also cover your body from the neck down with a white sheet. That way, with your hair and chest covered, we can analyse your skin tone and the mix with your eyes.

How to carry out colour analysis: the environment and the drapes

If you prepare the environmental conditions well, the session will be straightforward and accurate. The most important factor is the light. Natural light is ideal. You don't need to be in the sun, but shade doesn't help. It's best to set up in a bright room, perhaps next to a window.

I also advise doing the colour analysis in the morning, but if you can't fit it in or if you don't have a bright space, you can use artificial light. But be careful, because artificial lights can change the colours. Normal lamps, for example, generate a yellow light that warms the environment and any objects within it, including our faces. Neon, or blue, light, on the other hand, tends to make the

COLOURED DRAPES

An essential tool in any careful and thorough colour analysis is the set of coloured drapes. You can buy a set ready to use, or assemble it using offcuts of fabrics from a haberdashery shop or online. The drapes help us to identify our skin's undertone, intensity and skin-eyes-hair mix contrast; and the season we belong to and its related subgroup. Therefore it is important that the colour performance of the drapes is excellent.

To determine your season you'll need drapes in the following colours: strawberry, fuchsia, powder pink, coral, orange, apricot, silver, gold, optical white, cream or butter, emerald, sage, mint and olive green.

To determine the contrast you'll need two black and white striped drapes: one with stripes around one centimetre thick, the other with very narrow ribs, or white and grey stripes. As for the size, they will need to cover your shoulders and the top part of your torso. If possible it is best to avoid shiny fabrics, because the reflection can sometimes distort the colour.

environment appear cold. If you really have to use artificial light, try to get hold of

a white light, similar to natural light, which you should be able to buy in shops. Another indispensable tool is a mirror, big enough to reflect your face and the top part of your torso. Once the environment is prepared, we are ready. Arm yourself with some coloured drapes and let's go!

The use of drapes follows a very precise order: we start by analysing the undertone, then the intensity and finally the contrast. These three characteristics, together with value, will be the topic of part two of the book. For now we just need to know which drapes to use to analyse each of them.

To evaluate the undertone we will use reds: get hold of a series of descending drapes in the cool versions of this tone (strawberry, fuchsia, powder pink), and compare them with their warm counterparts (coral, orange, apricot). If these six drapes aren't enough, you can also use some lamé fabrics (silver for the cool ones, gold for the warm) or whites (optical for the cools or cream for the warm).

The intensity test, by contrast, is done using greens: emerald for the intense colours and sage for the muted ones. These two greens are cool, but if in the first test your undertone was warm, we can use mint for the intense colours and olive green for the muted ones. The principle is the same, because here we are evaluating the brightness level.

For analysing contrast in the skin-eyes-hair mix, I have created a method that works very quickly, for which you'll need stripy fabrics: you can use a classic black and white stripe (high contrast) with a ribbed or a white and grey stripe (low contrast).

Value is more a question of intuition and there's no need for drapes: I will explain how to measure it in detail in the later chapter on that.

Now you are ready to start the colour analysis itself. When you alternate the drapes under your face, it is important to put your personal taste to one side: so you shouldn't choose the drape you like most, but the one that adds the most value to your appearance. And those two things, I'm afraid, do not always coincide.

My advice is to focus on your skin, not on the drape. Observe how your face changes depending on the colour beneath it. To best judge how a colour performs for you, invite one or two friends to come round and give their unbiased opinion.

The colours we can call 'value-adding' are those that illuminate our skin, mute any blemishes we may have, and brighten our eyes, making them more lively and glossy. Essentially, a value-adding colour makes us look happy and relaxed, but also healthier, younger and brighter.

In contrast, an enemy colour might dull our complexion, bring out discolouration, dark circles under our eyes and any little wrinkles we have from smiling or squinting, creating shadows and extinguishing the shine in our eyes. The effect of this is that we look under the weather, sad or sometimes even sick.

(...)

1. WINTER

Winter people patterns

Let us begin with winter because it is statistically the most common season, at least in our part of the world, especially the Mediterranean region in general. Let's look at the chart below and recap the characteristics of this season – a cold undertone and high intensity.

We are in the top left-hand portion of the chart.

F C
I
WINTER
SUMMER
SPRING
AUTUMN
i

To these characteristics we must add a quality of medium-low on the colour scale. These are usually people with a medium-dark to very dark quality. And, finally, a medium-high contrast in the skin-eyes-hair mix in various combinations. The level of contrast explains why people with these patterns come out well in black and white photographs.

Remember that fair doesn't mean cold and dark doesn't mean warm. In the case of winter, the undertone is always cold but the skin can be milky-white, like that of the Chinese actress Fan Bingbing, or else olive like Johnny Depp's or very dark like that of the American actress Viola Davis.

The quality can vary a great deal but so can the overtone: some people will have a much rosier superficial layer, like for example Anne Hathaway, while others a slightly yellow one like the American of Mexican origin Eva Longoria. In the first case, it is hard for them to get tanned, they burn in the sun and their skin gets easily red, with freckles sometimes appearing. However, when the overtone is more yellow and the complexion olive or very dark, they have no difficulty tanning and consistently do so.

Talking of skin, I noticed that statistically winter people tend to have pronounced rings under the eyes. It's not that others don't share this problem, but in the case of winter, pigmentation can be very noticeable with ageing as well as in youth. A frequent occurrence is purple or very dark lips, as well as gums and other mucous membranes. Naturally, these are clues: a person may just have one and not necessarily all of them.

Winter people's hair can be anything from ash brown like the actor Keanu Reeves's to the raven black of Kit Harington (an actor in the series *Game of Thrones*). In all cases, they do not have any naturally gold or copper shades.

What does usually happen, however, is that when they dye their hair and the colour begins to fade, the hair takes on a dreadful violet-red glow that's impossible to eliminate. The only way to handle this is to wait for the hair to grow out and, meanwhile, use large amounts of anti-red shampoo. If this happens to

your hair, then start seriously wondering if you are a winter person because this is a typical reaction of this season.

Winter hair does, however, have significant advantages: when it turns grey, or during that salt-and-pepper transitional stage, it is a brilliant white or an elegant grey. It never has that yellow shade which is actually typical of warm colours.

Keeping your hair grey is a stylistic choice that particularly suits winter people. Many grey-haired men are more attractive and charming than when they were young. I am thinking of George Clooney, who many agree is more attractive now than in his early TV series. Some winter men grow a white beard that matches their hair, then choose to dye their eyebrows brown so as not to lose the contrast and intensity of their eyes. To give you an example, it's the Sean Connery effect.

When it comes to eyes, dark irises can be brown, vaguely reddish-purple or hazel, but equally very dark and deep. Dark eyes usually create a wonderful contrast with the very white sclera, which makes the gaze especially piercing. The best example is the model Kendall Jenner.

There are the lucky few with pale irises, like green, blue or grey. Just think of Elizabeth Taylor's violet eyes, no doubt one of the most beautiful examples in the history of film.

In the next paragraph, we will review the winter subgroups; this will allow us to go into more detail and detect often important differences between various types.

Winter subgroups and the true season

Everyone who belongs to winter has the following characteristics: deep quality, cool undertone and bright intensity.

If one of these characteristics is more dominant than the others, then the person belongs to the relative subgroup, which takes its name from the dominant one, in fact. In the case of winter, we have: winter deep, winter cool and winter bright.

TRUE WINTER

F C

I

BRIGHT

DEEP

WINTER

COOL

BRIGHT

LIGHT

SPRING

WARM

WARM

DEEP

AUTUMN

SOFT

COOL

LIGHT
SUMMER
SOFT
i

When, on the other hand, someone possesses these three characteristics in harmony, in, say, 33%-33%-33%, then we call it a pure palette. Since no specific characteristic is predominant, spillovers into other seasons are not to be expected. In that case, we have a true winter.

Winter deep:
F C
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BRIGHT
DEEP
WINTER
COOL
BRIGHT
LIGHT
SPRING
WARM
WARM
DEEP
AUTUMN
SOFT
COOL
LIGHT
SUMMER
SOFT
i

It is one of the hardest categories to recognise because at first glance it can look like an autumn. The skin is dark and tans easily, the overtone can be yellow, but the difficult part comes during the coloured cloths under the face test.

Winter deep holds black and dark blue well, colours that would stifle any autumn. This different reaction to black also concerns make-up and hair dyeing: while winter deep holds it even in the cosmetics department, it would be a serious error for an autumn type. Good examples of this subgroup are Victoria Beckham, Penélope Cruz and Lupita Nyong'o: their undertone might seem warm but they hold black too well to be autumn types.

Moreover, this subgroup has a medium-low contrast between skin-eyes-hair, but while the autumnal mix is still harmonious, winter deep is characterised by contrast and intensity because it has a very white sclera and other *chiaroscuro* elements.

How can we explain this closeness between two seasons with different undertones? The dominant characteristic is depth, not temperature, which is why

they are unequivocally close, though don't forget that they are clearly separated by a straight line.

Given the closeness of these two seasons, we can notice a slight shift of winter towards autumn deep, with which it shares a few especially deep colours, like octane. In practice, the two deep segments you can see on the chart become a "free zone" for the two seasons that share this subgroup.

Winter cool

It is the lowest intensity section of winter. These are mostly people with brown hair and medium or very fair skin, especially during the winter period. Their eyes can be hazel or greyish. The untrained eye could mistake them for autumn, because of their brown hair, but, as we have repeatedly said, it is the skin that is of paramount importance; the cool or porcelain complexion therefore takes us to the left of the chart. This is the case with the actress Natalie Portman and the actor Tom Cruise.

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BRIGHT
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WARM
WARM
DEEP
AUTUMN
SOFT
COOL
LIGHT
SUMMER
SOFT
i

When presented with a choice between purple and orange, those who belong to this subgroup will have no doubt: warm and orange shades are most definitely the enemy.

They have rather delicate colouring which is why they don't much care for black and prefer, at most, dark blue. The same goes for hair dyeing: a dark colour can emphasise the contrast, especially a rather Winona Ryder-type dark style, but in other cases, cool brown is still the best choice. Some medium ash browns belong to this category and in their case a dominant cool characteristic allows them to lighten their hair further. In this instance, we get closer to the summer palette but the medium-high intensity still keeps them in in the winter palette.

As for make-up, black is too harsh and brown too warm. The right compromise is a range of greys and cool browns, with perhaps a touch of pink or plum.

A good make-up artist can venture some warm and intermediate make-up but, unless you have access to a true professional, I suggest you be very careful not to get tempted by bronze or orange colours.

This subgroup is more flexible on the intensity front but if there is something that cannot be neglected, it is the undertone, which is cool and the dominant characteristic. You can take a small step into summer by incorporating brighter but delicate colours of summer cool.

Winter cool and summer cool meet on the undertone boundary that allows them to share many forms of dark blue as well as some greens and purples. The glide (remember the flow theory?) into the summer cool section illustrates why some pastel tones suit this subgroup so well.

But, of course, always cool ones.

Winter bright

This subgroup is dominated by brilliancy, i.e. high intensity as well as high contrast. It comes from a rare and fortunate colour combination that involves the following characteristics: cool undertone, quality of medium-low, and very high intensity and contrast. In practice, these are dark-haired people with gemstone eyes, be they green or blue, but definitely shiny and a contrast with the rest. Good examples are the actors Liv Tyler and Joaquin Phoenix.

What distinguishes those who belong to this category from others is the brilliancy of personal colours and also the colours that enhance them. As a matter of fact, they are among the few people who can wear fluorescent and brighter shades. Naturally, they embody all the characteristics of winter and that is why they can hold black and in general cool, deep colours very well, although in the seasonal palette, once again, they particularly prefer bright colours, from fuchsia to emerald green and even lemon yellow.

FC
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BRIGHT
DEEP
WINTER
COOL
BRIGHT
LIGHT
SPRING
WARM
WARM
DEEP
AUTUMN
SOFT
COOL
LIGHT

SUMMER

SOFT

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As for make-up, the high contrast makes them very elegant even when wearing the strongest, shiny lipsticks. Their eyes, however, again are best with black and grey but also with the purple range as a complement to the iris.

The high contrast can be emphasised artificially by dyeing their hair darker. Like the actress Megan Fox and singer Katy Perry: going from medium brown to dark brown has been a successful step.

Men can emphasise the contrast by growing a black stubble or else using hair gel. Thanks to the wet effect, styling products make the hair look darker. The example in Italy is the goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon.

The undertone is very important but in this case intensity is even more so as it's dominant. This is why this subgroup is slightly more to the right on the chart, sliding a little into spring bright. By doing so it can tap into some other brilliant colour, such as mint green, turquoise and Maldivian blue. Only a few colours share these segments on the bright chart.

What separates these groups is the undertone, and what brings them together is the dominant characteristic of brilliancy. A winter bright will prefer a nice lawn green, however warm, to a dull grey, however cool.

True winter

The characteristics of true winter correspond to essentials of the season, without exceptions, because it does not "slide" into any of the three bordering seasons.

The quality is low, the skin olive, and, when not exposed to the sun, it tends to lighten even though it stays compact and not rosy. The hair is dark and possibly black. The eyes are generally hazel. The most striking examples are the lawyer Amal Clooney and the actress Audrey Tautou. The undertone is cool and no doubt requires lunar colours with a blue base, while the intensity remains high, both for its discreet contrast and the overall depth of the colours.

Those who belong to this category brings together all the characteristics we saw above but without the exceptions observed in the various subgroups. With regard to hair, I suggest leaving it natural unless it is necessary to dye it in order to conceal grey hairs. I know people sometimes fancy a change but it's better to aim for a different cut. The best colour in this case is undoubtedly the one provided by Mother Nature: it is usually beautiful dark hair that is neither ash nor intermediate but deep and definite. I am always surprised when a true winter tells me that it is natural!

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The winter wardrobe colours: friends and enemies

As a rule, the colours of the winter palette have the same characteristics as winter people. Consequently, they have deep, cool and brilliant colours. The basic wardrobe, just like the capsule wardrobe, can be black. A very good alternative, especially for the cool subgroup, is still dark blue, while grey works only if it is anthracite and deep, and not pale and dusty. It's good to choose the reds on this palette with caution, keeping away from orange tones. Go for wild berry shades: strawberry, black cherry, raspberry, blackberry. They must always have a hint of blue, then veer towards purple.

Other recommended colours are pine green, petrol blue or emerald, even though they are cool. There are few yellows on the palette: lemon and the brightest – almost acid – lime.

Among the enemy colours we definitely find beige, brown and everything from mustard to terracotta, via orange and salmon. In practice, if friendly colours are cool and brilliant, the enemies are warm and understated.

For men looking for tips on casual wear I suggest replacing beige trousers with ice colour, which is similar but cooler. It is very attractive, especially with a dark blue jacket for a broken-up casual chic. Ice is also recommended for accessories, like shoes or moccasins. Winter men are definitely fortunate with their work clothes. The classic dark blue or dark grey suit with black accessories and a white shirt is the most common and perfectly within the palette. All we need is to match it with a tie of a cool, deep shade and there you have it. My favourite is still the burgundy tie with a navy blue suit.

The patterns that work best are those with contrasts, preferably on a black background, with polka dots, checks, houndstooth and all-time favourites in dark blue, like sailor stripes. Naturally, the higher the person's contrast, the higher the contrast of the prints and combinations must be.

Women's professional wardrobe is equally straightforward (so to speak!): a tailleur and dark blue or black sheath dress is standard issue. Under-jacket tops, blouses and shirts can be spaced out on the palette, tapping into the coolest and

most definite colours or else arrive at a reassuring optical white. But, please, never ivory.

For special occasions, I would say that black evening clothes are fine. Interesting alternatives are petrol blue, crimson and indigo. For daytime events, at which lighter, more delicate colours are required, you can opt for brilliant sorbet varieties, cool and vibrant, which the British call "icy".

Every one has her own jolly colours, with black and midnight blue for the deep subgroup, all shades of blue for cool, and emerald and purple for bright. True winter has no preferences, and the whole palette suits her.

Winter people accessories and must-haves

Black is a favourite for shoes, bags and leather goods. In terms of strong colours, optical white is spot-on and, naturally, a combination of black and white. If you decide to use black and white or dark blue and white, I suggest you break it up with something red, like a belt or a scarf, always a cool shade, naturally.

I particularly like lemon yellow with navy blue, as well as green and purple and even emerald with electric blue but please don't take this literally: there can be an infinite number of colour combinations within every palette. The most daring combinations will especially draw those who belong to the dominantly bright type, as they are naturally attracted to contrast. Many winter people like animal patterns and ask my advice on how to manage them within the palette. You can choose a spotted pattern with a definite black base instead of golden and combine it successfully with a total black. Good alternatives are zebra prints, with their typical contrasts, and in general varieties of spots in palette colours, like purple, for instance.

One should definitely mention nude shoes, which I like because they make your legs look longer. Nude also exists in cool and warm versions: in this case, I suggest a cipria shade of rose.

It's best to avoid beige, even with accessories, and that's for two reasons. First of all, it would not go with the rest of the outfit which tends towards cool colours. Moreover, do not underestimate the power of colour in small details. Look at the colour of your feet in beige sandals and your hands with orange polish, and you'll see for yourself.

Another excellent substitute for beige for winter people is ice: we saw it recently with clothes but it is also an excellent choice for accessories, especially at the beach in the summer.

Glasses are a definite strategic element because they are situated in the centre of the face and frame your eyes. Go ahead with mirror frames or with metal details in silver shades, while acetate ones will range freely throughout cool, deep colours. More classic sunglass frames for this category are black, white and contrasted. Prescription glasses, on the other hand, can be black, dark blue or even purple (don't worry about matching them to your clothes because you're coordinating everything on a single palette).

Still among the classics we cannot ignore tortoise shell. It usually has warm shades but there is also a cool version, that is a blend with dove-grey rather than honey. In actual fact, when the tortoise shell is very dark or very dense, it can also be suitable for winter people.

If dark glasses seem a little dull and you feel like some brightness, I suggest you try those with a transparent or lighter layer inside the inner part of the frame. Even though you can't see it from outside, you immediately notice more brightness.

Do not underestimate red glasses because they can be very strategic. A few years ago, I took a client to help her choose her prescription glasses. We explored all the possibilities within the palette and finally could not decide between a strawberry red and a classic black. I preferred the red while she was more drawn to the black, so in the end we bought both, intending to alternate. Later, she confessed that she much preferred wearing the red ones not just because they were brighter but because they somehow replaced lipstick, which she didn't use because it drew attention to her mouth, which she considered her weak point. The red frames enhanced her like a bright lipstick but without underlining the weak spot in her face.

The basic metals for this category are silver, gold, white and platinum. I don't recommend yellow gold because it tends to look vulgar especially on deep and true winter types. Gemstones follow the palette in cool, brilliant shades. Diamonds, sapphires, emeralds and rubies are the most flattering. Let me also mention amethysts and black onyx, especially when contrasted with diamonds or enamels and white stones. As for pearls, I suggest white or dark grey ones. Cream and all other warmer and understated ones are definitely not flattering.

Beauty tips for winter people: make-up, hair and...

When we talk about beauty for this category, the most critical decision is undoubtedly that regarding foundation, because it is one of the most diverse in terms of complexion. To make things simpler, let's keep to the overtone, and draw a distinction between three broad types.

Fair, rosy skin prefers rose-based foundation, preferably with the help of a green concealer that can reduce any localised redness. Fair skin is cool, but with a slightly yellowish overtone, and is enhanced by honey tones that can be right for the complexion without warming it or changing its natural undertone. Finally, olive or dark, cool skin can be concealed or softened simply with complementary colours. That's what so-called neutral and anti-olive foundation is for. It balances and smoothes the basic colour without necessarily warming it.

Talking of warming, let me advise you against bronzing powder and anything that gives your face an orange glow. If orange doesn't do it with cloths under your face then it's hardly going to work with products on your face. If you're a fan of contouring and need powder to define contours by creating a *chiaroscuro* effect, you can buy cool powder, which works the same as classic powders but without the bronze effect.

On the blush front, mauves are definitely best. Also a green light to rosy ones but mind the 1980s look if that's not what you're after. The bright subgroup, more inclined towards brilliancy, can also afford a slightly stronger pink.

If you like a definite look for your eyes, you're among the few to look good with black or, alternatively, midnight blue and dark grey are also good. A compromise I find excellent and envy winter people is lead: an odd blend of grey and blue, strong yet gentle, definite but elegant.

The more delicate cool subgroup is set off by cool browns, dark blues and softer tones than black. The bright subgroup, on the other hand, which stands out for its pale, brilliant eyes, can also toy with complementary colours like purple. During the summer period, when you can be daring with colours, I recommend electric blue or other brilliant tints on your palette. The effect is simply irresistible.

Where the lips are concerned, be careful not to choose orange shades and make sure that the intensity of your lips is proportionate to your skin-eyes-hair mix contrast. Colour-wise, you can opt for mauves and lilacs if you're after a more natural look, raspberry or crimsons for something more definite, and, finally, cherry or black for a dark effect.

True winter hair, which, as I said, stands out for its beautiful natural colour, ranges from cool, definite brown to raven black, which I suggest you keep wherever possible.

Because of its closeness to autumn deep, winter deep may consider lightening as long as it's not too warm or chestnut. Think of the actresses Eva Longoria and Penélope Cruz.

Winter cool prefers intermediate, not overly strong shades. Cool skin requires cool colours and not orange or mahogany. Depending on the intensity of the contrast and also personal style, you can range from light to dark brown. A perfect example is the actress Rooney Mara, who has tried many hair colours. Seeing her different looks is useful to get an idea of how this changes a face and an appearance.

If you are a winter bright you can darken your hair with every dyeing and achieve a surprising effect!

One final remark for all winter subgroups concerns more daring dyeing, such as purple, platinum or electric blue. They all work as long as they are cool, definite colours, and provided the skin is very fair and not tanned.