

## WATERFRONT REFLECTIONS

Finished Painting and Source Image (Cassis, France)



This is the sheltered harbour in the small French town of Cassis. It looks like a complicated subject, but we are going to take a straight forward systematic approach and gradually build up our painting.



## Materials

We will use a 1/2 and 1/4 inch flat brush, a small rigger, a rough bristle brush, a charcoal pencil, pen and hake brush. The main colors we will use are either Indian Yellow or Quinacridone Gold, Permanent Alizarin Crimson, French Ultramarine Blue, Phthalo Blue (Green shade is best if you have a choice) and Phthalo Green (If you don't have Phthalo Green, Aureolin or Lemon yellow mixed with Phthalo Blue will do). Permanent rose is handy but you can get by without it. If you don't have Cobalt use your Ultramarine.

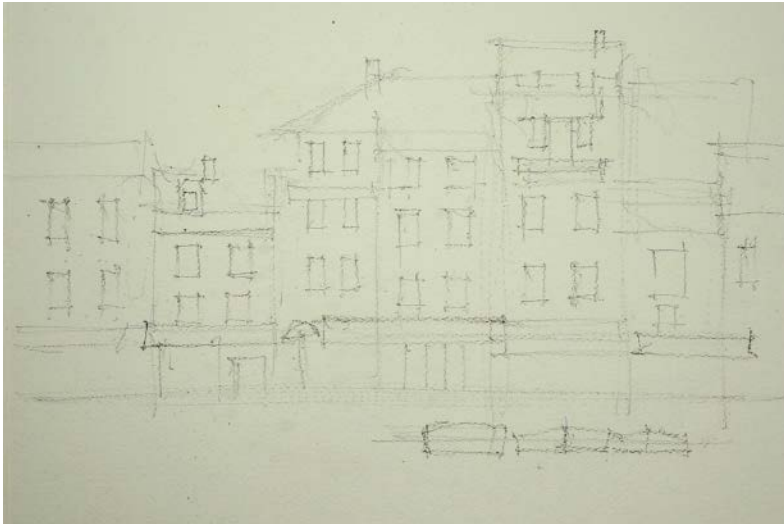
You will also need some White Gouache, and Burnt Sienna (or similar) Ink and Ultramarine Gouache if you have it. I did my demonstration painting on a 27x36cm (quarter) sheet of Arches 300gsm medium paper.



### Thumbnail Sketch

Our first task is to juggle the shapes with a quick thumbnail sketch. This allows us to manipulate the shapes and proportions, and work out where our focal point will be before launching into our watercolor paper. I have put more variation into the size of the buildings.

The position of the focal point in the photo is too far to the right, so we will adjust this in our thumbnail.



## Drawing

Use your sharp charcoal pencil to simply draw the basic outline of the shapes we established in our thumbnail sketch. If you tend to make vertical lines lean over, measure in and draw a couple of the important verticals before you start. Make sure you line up the windows - vertical alignment is most important. The windows in individual buildings will usually be aligned horizontally, but horizontal alignment can vary from one building to another.

Keep your lines crisp, light and confident and don't over do the drawing.



## Building Wash

Use some Indian Yellow (Or Quinacridone Gold) and Alizarin and paint the buildings varying the mixture as you go. Let the colors bleed into one another, then drop in some Permanent Rose to add more variety. Cut around the windows as we will adjust some of these areas of white for details. The same colors can be put loosely into the water.



## Sky and Reflections

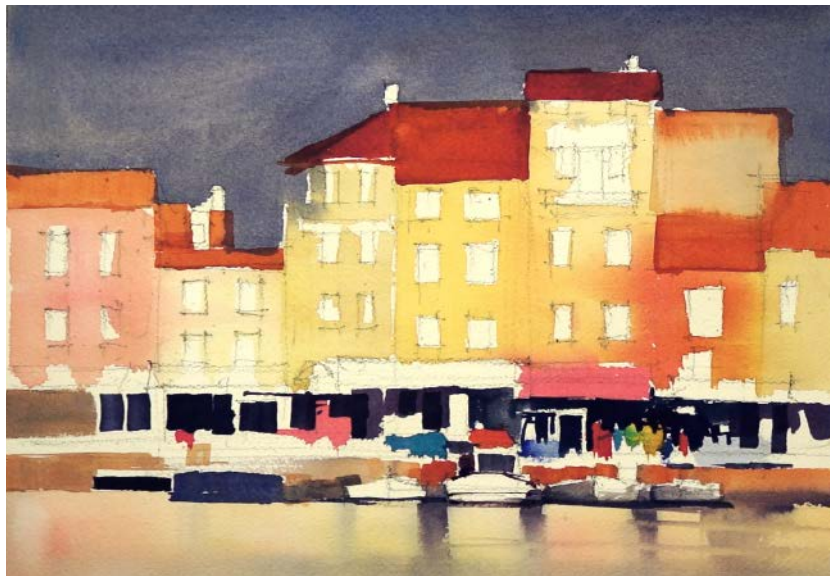
The sky is a mixture of French Ultramarine Blue, Alizarin Crimson and a small amount of Indian Yellow. Mix the color thoroughly then cut it in carefully with your 1/2" bristle brush or, if you find it easier, your 1/2" flat Brush.

In between the boats you can drag down some vertical lines of this color to serve as reflections of the dark masses between the boats. Darken the water at the bottom with a horizontal flick then soften the reflections with your dry Hake.



## Figures and Details

Put in some colored shapes to suggest figures and waterside paraphernalia. Keep them pale as we will cut around them with a dark background shadow. The dark shadow is a mixture of French Ultramarine Blue, Alizarin Crimson and a small amount of Indian Yellow. Cut this dark in with your 1/4" flat brush to define the figures, then move on to your 1/2" flat brush to put in the randomly spaced areas of dark along under the awnings. A dirty Orange/ Brown can be mixed from Indian Yellow, Alizarin Crimson, and a small amount of French Ultramarine Blue to paint the wall behind the boats.



## Tip

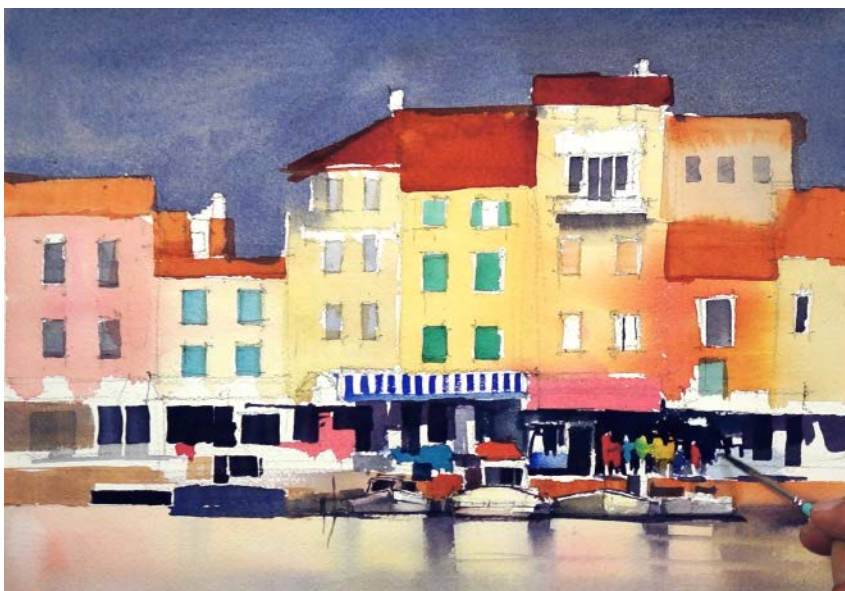
Lots of pigment and very little water is the secret to mixing dark colors ( don't rinse your brush between colors, it only dilutes the mix).

## Terracotta Roofs

The roofs are a mixture of Alizarin Crimson and Indian Yellow, cut in carefully with your 1/2" flat brush. Vary the tone and color of the roofs slightly.

## Windows

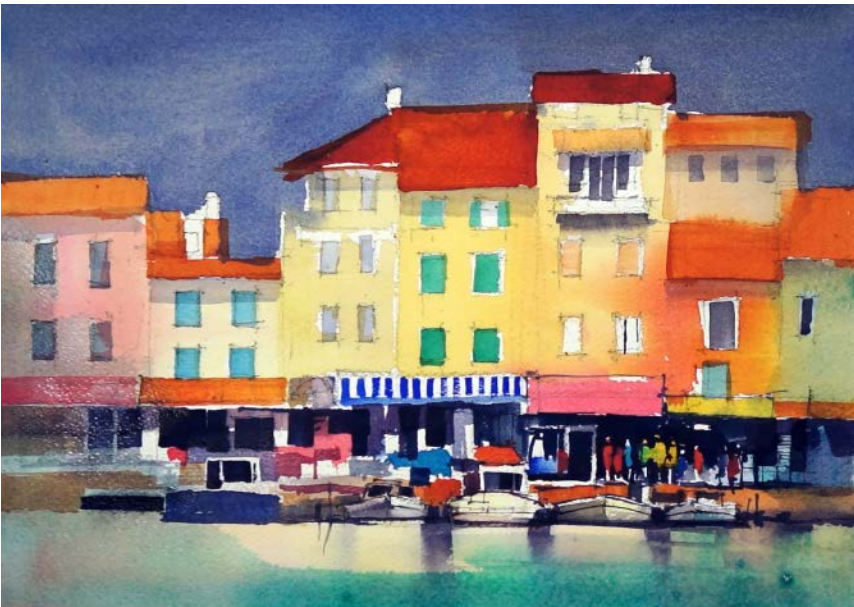
The four blue windows are pure Phthalo Blue, the green windows, a mixture of Phthalo Blue and Phthalo Green (Phthalo Blue and a cool yellow like Aureolin or Lemon Yellow will give the same result). The rest of the windows are mixed from dregs on your palette. Notice how some of the windows have areas of the with paper left around or beside them. This will add variety as more details are added. We can also put in the blue striped awning. Use Ultramarine Gouache if you have it, otherwise French Ultramarine watercolor. Apply the stripes evenly with your 1/8" flat brush. Use this brush to model the boat hulls and add some detail. The hulls are darker at the bottom and on the left hand side.





### Awnings and Details

Put in the rest of the awnings with various mixtures of Alizarin Crimson and Indian Yellow. We can also build up the detail in the shadows under the awnings. A pale cool grey can be used to add shadows under the roof overhangs.



### Cool Water

Let the painting dry then use a pale mixture of Phthalo Blue and Phthalo Green to wash into the water and up into the buildings on either side. Keep the edges of this wash damp so they don't form hard lines. The wash can be dragged down vertically with your dry hake brush to emphasise the reflections under the boats.



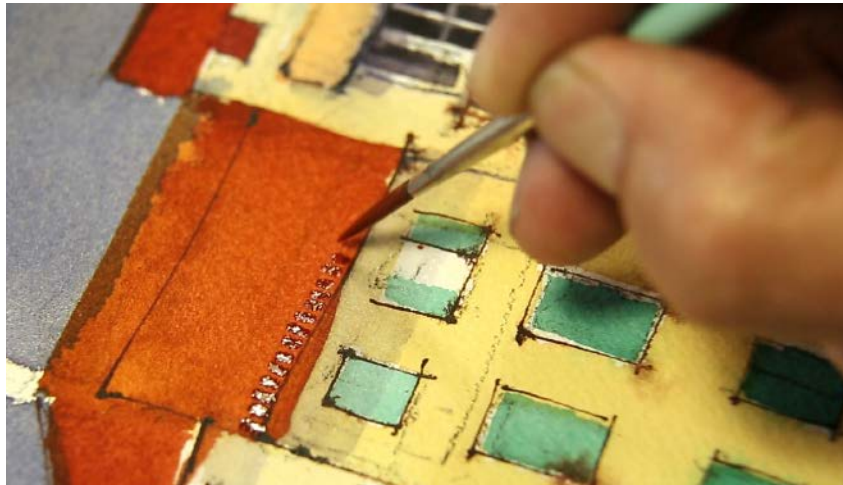
### Ink and Details

We can use some Burnt Sienna pigment ink to thread some fine detail lines through the painting. Spray some of these lines with a fine mist of water to make them bleed and feather - adding a weathered patina to the facades. More window details can also be added.



### Water Intensity

I was a little cautious with my green/blue water wash, so I can build it up again now that everything is dry. It's a safer approach to under do these Phthalo based washes due to the staining nature of the pigment - they can always be built up, but are difficult to wash out if they are too strong. This time we will take the wash right up into the sky. Remember to keep the edges damp to avoid hard lines and use your hake brush to feather out the wash over the foreground reflections.



### Roof Tiles

Use your 1/8" flat brush and a mixture of Indian Yellow, Alizarin Crimson and a small amount of French Ultramarine Blue to make the small rectangular tile shapes. Pack them close together and fill around half the roof area then break up the perimeter with a damp 1/8" brush



### Sky

Mix up some Cobalt Blue and carefully cover the entire sky. While the Cobalt is still wet drop some White Gouache, mixed to a creamy consistency, into the left hand region of the sky indicated by the circle. Feather the Gouache out with your dry Hake brush.



### Gouache In Water.

Work some of the Gouache into the water under the boats. Keep the edges damp and use your dry Hake to drag the wash down vertically, softening the reflections.



### Adjusting The Ink Bleeds.

Sometimes the feathering ink can become a distraction. If this happens tinted white gouache applied over the problem area and then softened around the outer edges will ease off the distraction.



### Brick Walls

While we are using the tinted Gouache we can add some Alizarin and Indian Yellow and carefully paint some bricks into the wall behind the boats. Make the bricks small and even with your 1/8" flat brush and stagger the joints between the bricks.



### Charcoal Pencil Details

When the painting is thoroughly dry, the final step is to use your sharp Charcoal Pencil to put some loose, sketchy detail into area where the White Gouache was used in the sky. Don't over do the charcoal marks - just enough to add some contrasting sketchy detail to that area of the painting. Keeping this area understated helps our focal point dominate. The cool colors of the sky and water also help draw the eye to our focal point.

## Extra Images

After finishing this project, use these images to build on the skills and techniques you have learned. Think about where your focal point will be, do some thumbnail sketches to work out a plan then have some fun

Cheers,

