

Allan Kirk gets on his bike in SW France

I am lucky to live in beautiful countryside, where the light is amazing, the scenery is stunning and the roads are quiet, and whilst art will always be my favourite pastime, cycling comes a close second. I love nothing more than to pack my sketching kit and a sandwich in a small backpack, and set off for the day.

One of our guests once described our region as having "a picture at every turn" and whether the bike is propped against a tree, or the railings of a cafe in town, there is always a wealth of subjects to sketch. The sketchbook is not just a picturesque journal of a holiday or day out, but also serves as source material for rare rainy days.

My kit is small and very portable, and I carry it wherever I go, cycling or not, because you never know when a subject will present itself. It all fits into a tiny rucksack, or will fit in a bike pannier if I go on a cycling holiday.

A5 sketch book or watercolour pad
Elegant writer calligraphy pen fine
Faber Castel Pitt artists pen fine point
Pentel Waterbrush medium
Tissue



In a day's sketch and cycle I can produce three sketches, and the examples in this article are from various days out. I have included them to demonstrate different techniques and to show what can be achieved.

Technique

I use a couple of techniques, Firstly I like to use the Elegant writer pen and then apply the waterbrush to create the tonal values in the sketch. The waterbrush causes the black Elegant Writer to bleed into beautiful subtle shades of cyan and magenta. The step by step of the road at Garrevaques is an example of this technique.

Another technique I use is to combine a watersoluble pen (like the Elegant Writer) with a permanent pen (Faber Castel Pitt drawing pen). The latter being waterproof remains unaffected when I add water.

Hold the pen loosely and try to keep it moving, gliding across the paper, try not to press hard or slow down. In essence do not be careful and don't worry about mistakes.

The château and church on the hill are very near my home. This drawing shows the single pen method.

1. Use the Elegant Writer pen to draw and to add shading.
2. Using the Pentel waterbrush apply water to the tonal shading (I keep a tissue ready lighten the ink in places).



The Boulangerie I can buy a croissant here and take it to the cafe, next door to eat with my coffee. This demonstrates the two-pen method.

1. Using Pitt drawing pen create a line drawing
2. Using the Elegant Writer shade in the tonal values.
3. Using the Pentel waterbrush apply water to the tonal shading (I keep a tissue ready lighten the ink if needed).

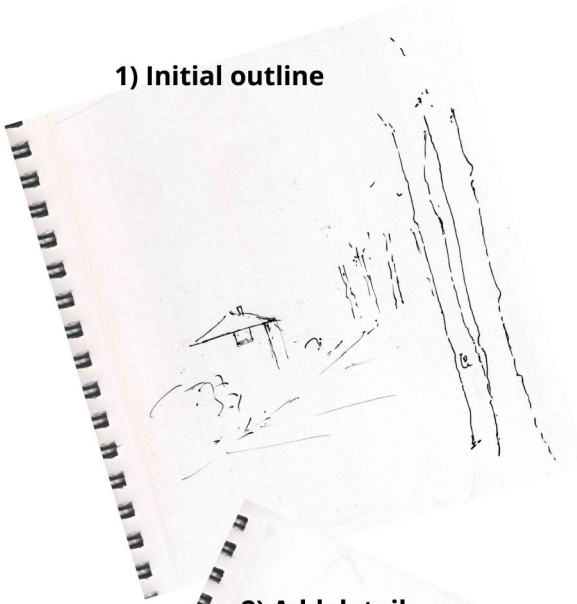


One pen or two.....

The one-pen method

This simple drawing demonstrates the beauty of the Elegant Writer used on its own with the waterbrush.

1) Initial outline



2) Add detail



3) Wash down



You may like to add some final details with your Elegant Writer.

The two-pen method

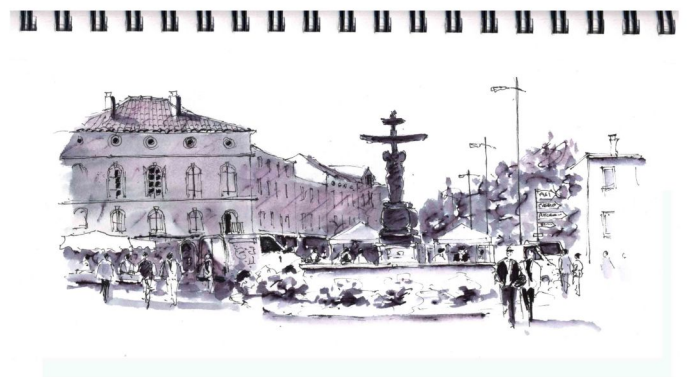
The detailed outline in the drawing below was done with the permanent Faber Castel Pitt drawing pen fine point.



Some lines and squiggles have been added with the Elegant Writer to wash down with the waterbrush.



Washed down, we see the beautiful blues and pinks created by the chromatographic effect of the watersoluble ink in the Elegant Writer. The Pitt drawing pen lines remain unchanged.



Allan Kirk runs Watercolour Holidays and Sketch 'n' Cycle holidays in SW France. He will be visiting UK in March 2016 to do demonstrations and workshops. You can watch videos of Allan drawing using these techniques on his website.

Find out ore by visiting
www.tarnincolour.com