

# Plein Air Landscapes in Oil

## *Workshop with Jim Coe*

### MATERIALS LIST

#### 1. **OIL PAINTS** — any brand, artist's grade preferred.

##### RECOMMENDED BASIC COLORS:

White (Titanium or Titanium-Zinc)

Ultramarine blue

Cadmium Yellow Pale, Light, or Lemon (shade varies with manufacturer: Gamblin or Williamsburg Cad Yellow *Light* are equivalent to Winsor Newton or Utrecht Cad Yellow *Lemon*)

Burnt Sienna (or Transparent Red Oxide)

Cadmium Red Light or Medium (shade varies with manufacturer),

Permanent Crimson, Permanent Rose Deep, or Quinacridone Rose (all modern synthetic equivalents to Alizarin Crimson, which is no longer rated as light-fast)

- **ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL COLORS:** Cadmium Yellow Deep or Orange (a warm yellow), Cobalt or Cerulean Blue (both cool blues), and Viridian (a cool green).
- **NAPLES YELLOW** was historically ground from a compound of lead and antimony and was poisonous. That formulation is extremely rare in today's market of art supplies. There are many mixes called "Naples Yellow" that are offered today – all intended to approximate the original lead-based compound. I have recently added Naples back onto my palette after many years. My choice of a modern Naples Yellow hue is not a mix of common colors (as many are), but a single substitute pigment that is close to the original in texture and density, as well as hue. The compound is *Chrome titanate* and it is offered as Winsor Newton's Naples Yellow (#422), as well as Williamsburg's Naples Yellow Italian.
- Other **EARTH** colors, including Yellow Ochre, Burnt Umber, Raw Sienna and Raw Umber can be useful additions to the palette, individually. I prefer Burnt Sienna as my one earth color; although recently I have been using Yellow Ochre, as well. But any of these earth colors can be mixed from the primary pigments on the palette listed above.
- Please try to avoid Pthalo (Winsor) Blue, Prussian Blue and Pthalo (Winsor) Green, which are very strong and staining pigments and can be difficult to control
- Flake White is made from lead and is poisonous.
- I do not often have black on my palette. Although many doctrinaire teachers advise students to avoid it, I once included Ivory Black on my palette during a weeklong workshop and found that it was very useful in mixing certain dark values, as well as rich, earthy greens. Gamblin recently introduced *Chromatic Black*, which is actually a proprietary mix of pthalo green and quinacridone red, so dark it approximates black in its intensity and value. Chromatic black is transparent and is very useful in mixtures. I use it in the studio and occasionally in plein air.

#### 2. **PORTABLE EASEL** – Folding "French" box easel is optimal; but expensive. Other collapsible easels will work fine, as well, but I recommend that students paint standing up if they can. *Open Box M* in Wyoming makes a range of beautiful, but expensive pochade boxes for plain air painting, which mount on a photographer's tripod. The entire set-up is very portable and lightweight. Art Essentials has a comparable set-up called the *EasyL*, which is considerably less costly and also comes in a variety of

sizes. On the lower end of the price scale, *Mabef* offers a “universal folding easel” that can be found for about \$30. And just recently introduced by some dealers is the *Beauport*, a low-priced adaptation of a traditional Gloucester-type tripod easel, which is particularly versatile because it can accommodate small panels as well as a huge canvas.

3. **PALETTE** -- Wood (preferred) or paper pad palette – 12x16” is the recommended size—and if you do not have a French style field easel that provides a shelf for your palette, or a pochade box with an integral palette, then make sure your palette has a thumb hole so you can hold it while you work. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** brand new wood palettes are untreated and need to be rubbed with a coating of linseed oil the night before first using them.
4. **RAGS OR PAPER TOWELS** -- I always have several rags available; the best are pieces of old cotton clothing or flannel sheets torn into square-foot pieces. Some artists prefer paper towels.
5. **SOLVENT AND A WIDE MOUTH JAR OR CAN** – An “odorless” thinner, such as Weber Turpenoid or Gamblin Gamsol is best. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** The “natural” or citrus-based thinners are appropriate **ONLY** for cleaning brushes after you are finished painting. They should not be used to thin your paint.
6. **PAINTING MEDIUM AND A SMALL JAR OR CLIP-ON PALETTE CUP** --Gamblin “Galkyd”, Winsor & Newton “Liquin”, or Grumbacher Copal Painting Medium, or a mixture of turpentine and linseed or stand oil (traditionally with a bit of dammar varnish added, as well).
7. **PAINTING OR PALETTE KNIFE** --I prefer a painting knife, with an offset handle and a narrow, diamond or tear-drop shaped blade about 2 ½ “ long.
8. **BRUSHES:** AN ASSORTMENT OF LONG-HANDLED, HOG BRISTLE BRUSHES. I recommend Robert Simmons’ Signet series and Utrecht’s series 209 (dark handles, made in Japan) as the best values; also fine are Isabey Special (yellow handles) and the Winsor Newton Artists’ series. In particular, I like Winsor Newton’s unique double-thick filberts, available in odd sizes #3 to #9. Finally, I think Silver Brush’s Grand Prix brushes are superb – especially the smaller-sized rounds -- but they are expensive.

#### RECOMMENDED SIZES AND SHAPES OF BRISTLE BRUSHES:

#4, #2 round

#4, #6, and #8 filberts

#8, #10 bright or flat.

9. **PANELS OR STRETCHED CANVAS:** For a weekend workshop, I request that students bring at least three surfaces to paint on. I recommend any of the following:
  - Commercially prepared canvas panels
  - Pre-primed linen or cotton canvas on stretcher bars
  - Masonite panels primed with acrylic gesso

(Suggested sizes: 9 x 12 or 11 x 14, up to 12 x 16... but please, no larger than that).

#### 10. **OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT:**

- SKETCHPAD with pencils or charcoal for preliminary sketches.
- UMBRELLA - A clamp-on artist’s umbrella to shade your work (clamps on to the easel). Some painters prefer a larger beach umbrella that stands up from the ground; the problem is that one

often needs a hammer to pound the pole into hard ground. Obviously, avoid any brightly colored umbrellas that will affect the light on your painting.

- VIEWFINDER – a piece of board with a rectangular hole cut in it for viewing and framing the scene. An empty 35mm slide holder works. I use two corners of matboard from a discarded mat that was cut to fit a watercolor painting. The corners can be clipped together to make any rectangular shape.
- WET-PANEL BOX – a wooden or plastic box with slots to separate and hold panels or stretched canvasses with wet paint.
- HAT with a wide brim for shade
- SUNBLOCK and INSECT REPELLENT
- DRINKING WATER

## ART SUPPLY SOURCES

These are some of my favorite sources for paints, brushes, linen and other supplies. A few have storefronts; all will sell materials by mail order, and all of them have websites.

**Artwork Essentials** *Easels, panels and plein air supplies – EASYL pochade box.*  
5622 Highgate Terrace, Irvine, CA 92603 949-846-2196, <http://www.artworkessentials.com>

**Art Supply Warehouse (ASW)** *All art supplies; usually the best sale prices, but not always the best service.* 5325 Departure Dr., N. Raleigh, NC 27616, 1-800-995-6778, [www.aswexpress.com](http://www.aswexpress.com)

**Daniel Smith, Inc.** *All art supplies – excellent source of fine paper; offers a house brand of oil paints.*  
4140 First Ave. South, PO Box 84268, Seattle, WA 98124, 1-800-426-6740, [www.danielsmith.com](http://www.danielsmith.com)

**Dick Blick Art Materials** *EVERYTHING for the artist; most complete catalog of all; good sale prices.*  
P.O. Box 1267, Galesburg, IL 61402, 1-800-828-4548, [www.dickblick.com](http://www.dickblick.com)

**Guerilla Painter** *Many supplies for the plein air painter; good quality wet painting carriers.*  
Phantom Canyon Ranch Co., Old Schoolhouse Road, 851 CR76h, Livermore, CO 80536, 1-866-762-4233, [www.pochade.com](http://www.pochade.com)

**The Italian Art Store** *Carries top quality imported and domestic paints and brushes. Good service.*  
84 Maple Avenue, Morristown, NJ 07690, 1-800-643-6440, [www.italianartstore.com](http://www.italianartstore.com)

**Jerry's Artarama** *All art supplies; good prices when on sale, but highest shipping costs.*  
P.O. Box 58638, North Raleigh, NC 27658, 1-800-827-8478, [www.JerrysArtarama.com](http://www.JerrysArtarama.com)

**New York Central Art Supply** *My personal favorite art supply store in NYC; well worth a visit.*  
62 Third Avenue (@ 10<sup>th</sup> St.) NY, NY 10003, 800-950-6111, <http://www.nycentralart.com/>

**Pearl Paint** *All art supplies; huge, excellent storefronts in NYC, Paramus, NJ, and elsewhere*  
1033 East Oakland Pk Blvd, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334, 1-800-221-6845, [www.pearlpaint.com](http://www.pearlpaint.com)

**RayMar Panels** *Good source of plein air painting panels; also light-weight cheap drying boxes.*  
1721 Rose Garden Lane, Suite 6, Phoenix, AZ, 05027, 1-888-809-3314, [www.raymarart.com](http://www.raymarart.com)

**Rochester Art Supply** *One of the best ONLINE art stores; excellent service, great selection.*  
150 W. Main Street, Rochester, NY 14614, 1-800-836-8940, [www.FineArtStore.com](http://www.FineArtStore.com)

**Upper Canada Stretchers** *Best supplier of high quality stretcher bars; great personal service.*  
1750 16<sup>th</sup> Ave., East, Owen Sound, ON, Canada N4K 5R4, 1-800-561-4944, [www.ucsart.com](http://www.ucsart.com)

**Utrecht Art Supplies** *All art supplies; best source anywhere for unprimed imported linens; also offers its own excellent line of paints, mediums, and brushes.*  
6 Corporate Drive, Cranbury, NJ 08512, 1-800-223-9132, [www.utrecht.com](http://www.utrecht.com)

**Open Box M, LLC** *Manufacturer of top-end pochade boxes and other plein air equipment.*  
1392 Southfork Rd, Cody, WY 82414, 1-800-473-8098, [www.openboxm.com](http://www.openboxm.com)