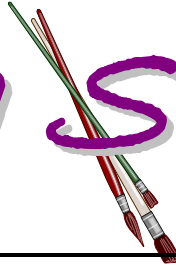




Brush Strokes



By Mary Baumgartner

September 2009 Vol. 2 No. 9

REVEAL YOUR COLORS—FALL IS ON THE WAY!



Labor Day is this month—that's the beginning of lots of things. The most significant is what happens to the variety of greens we experience anywhere in the country.

In the Northeast, the colors begin to change in mid-September. The maples and oaks show color, followed swiftly by weeds and grasses. Berries are already forming on the dogwood trees and the birds are busy consuming them.

If you have a palette that contains New Gamboge, Raw Sienna, Winsor Yellow and Quinacridone Gold, you'll be ready to compete. Also you'll need Brown Madder, Indian Red and Light Red. Alizarin Crimson joins the fray for its place in some areas of your painting. And don't forget the compliment of yellow! Purple will bring out more of the strength in the yellows.

The painting above titled "Country Jewels" was painted on location in Tennessee in the Fall. The barn is from Norris, Tennessee and is very old. The cows were in the pasture foraging for the remaining green grasses. The little boat in the foreground doesn't appear to be going anywhere in the near future except to the bottom of the lake since it is definitely listing to the left. And the trees—Oh, those glorious trees—just lend brilliance to the peaceful scenario. In the distance you'll see the Great Smoky Mountains and if we were closer, you'd also see their brilliance as well.

One of the most captivating areas of this painting are the reflections of the colors in the small lake. A lot has been added to make this into a pleasing composition; however, Mother Nature provided the largest part of the painting.

Remember when you are painting outside or in the studio to lead the viewer through your painting with the lightest lights. Also remember to give them a definite focal point. Here I encouraged my viewer to focus on the cows, then on the barn with the loaded truck outside, and then around the painting to the area with the boat and the reflections. The lightest light is right in front of the cows with the darkest dark appearing as a deep shadow under the boat. How can you miss the focal point with not so subtle directions for your eyes?

This season comes only once a year and is at its peak in the South from about Columbus Day (Oct. 12) through the middle of November. Additionally the weather is usually at its best with long sleeves required and perhaps sunglasses. Get out there and paint!