



Color Clues


The simple austerity of black or navy clothing provides a blank canvas to showcase brightly colored jewelry. But what about the days when clothing reflects life's complicated, colorful glory? The subtle art of color theory is a vital that is an often overlooked skill in selecting clothing and jewelry to bring out their greatest beauty. Here are ways to develop this aesthetic sense when combining clothing and gems or putting together a jewelry ensemble of different colored gemstones.

Combine Colors That Sing

Are the colors crisp and icy, or muted and dusty? In the crisp and icy column are ice blue, cotton candy and daffodil; slate blue, mauve and butter are muted and dusty. By combining the icy with the muted, the colors will deconstruct and can-



Top: Maija Neimanis' warm citrine and 22-karat gold necklace glows beautifully when worn with earthy forest green. Citrine is a great jewelry wardrobe basic that can be worn with a wide range of colors. *Bottom:* The deep pink tourmaline in this ring by Frank Ruebel is set off to perfection against a muted chocolate brown fabric. Pink tourmaline also looks fabulous paired with brights such as royal blue or citrus orange.



Combining colored gemstone jewelry with the colors in your wardrobe can be a challenge. Color expert Cynthia Renée offers a few pointers to make it easier.

cel each other. Combining like with like, the blend is constructive, creating combinations that sing, like a musical chord.

Combine Colors with Similar Feeling or Weight

There are endless color shades, blends and textures, each summoning different dreams and images. Sometimes you're on a misty shore in a green that is a soft whispering seafoam; other greens are solid and as still as a forest of giant sequoias. A woman wearing a forest green tourmaline pendant (heavy and muted) with a sheer, floating seafoam chiffon blouse (light and crisp) is likely to be mixing color feelings in a way that drags the seafoam chiffon down, like a rock in a pond, nullifying both pieces. Instead, she should pair the green tourmaline with a heavier-textured material in a muted burgundy or accent the icy seafoam chiffon with blue topaz or pearl. The key is to mix colors of similar depth and strength so they don't overpower each other.

Combine Equally Strong Opposites To Contrast or Use Tones for Harmony

Have you ever thought, "I love this pink tourmaline, but I



Top: Clear, bright colors need colors of similar intensity to balance them. This lapis lazuli, 18-karat gold and leather cord necklace by Slane and Slane worn with solar orange is simple, strong and memorable. *Bottom:* Icy and monochromatic, this blue topaz, aquamarine, apatite and silver bead necklace by Deborah Armstrong is quietly layered with a similarly colored fabric.



The softness of rose quartz, green aventurine, nambulite, 18-karat gold and silver in this necklace by Tina Segal is just right on pastel pink. This necklace is soft enough for a chiffon-type fabric but textural enough to hold up when worn with a sweater in this same color.



The bold design and color combination of bright yellow citrine with blue enamel in this ring by Alarva are even stronger against a quiet fabric such as denim.

don't wear pink"? That's good! Pink is beautiful with navy, cream, chocolate, sky blue, mint green or olive. A pink gemstone will stand out more when contrasted with another color of the same strength and icy tone. Conversely, an icy pink pendant with a pink silk satin blouse is a delightfully feminine, harmonious combination of like hues.

Passionate Red

How to Wear: Contrast with clear bright gems that match the red's intensity such as Emerald, Tanzanite, Blue Sapphire, Yellow Sapphire, Yellow Beryl, Citrine, Amethyst, Lapis, Peridot and Yellow Diamond. You can also harmonize with Ruby or Red Spinel; layering with orangish gems can work if they are clear and bright. Passionate Red is a clear bright red, so use caution in combining it with dusty roses, earthy greens or muted tones.

Solar Orange

How to Wear: Sunny, bold and lively; contrast it with clear bright gems such as Amethyst, Peridot, Blue Topaz, Tanzanite, Blue Sapphire, Lapis, Hot Pink Tourmaline, Tsavorite and strong Pink Sapphire. Or subtly layer it with flame-colored gems such as Yellow Sapphire, Yellow Beryl or Citrine. Harmonize with intense Orange Garnets or Fire Opal. Use caution in combining it with dusty, earthy or muted shades, which may drag down this clear bright color.

Hot Pink

How to Wear: Like solar orange, this is a color with a madly tropical feel; contrast it against strong bright gems such as Peridot, Tanzanite, Blue Topaz, Blue Sapphire, Yellow Sapphire, Yellow Beryl, Yellow Citrine, Tsavorite and Lapis. Layer it with the related shades of Amethyst or Red Spinel or Purple Sapphire. Harmonize it with Hot Pink Tourmaline, Sapphire and Spinel. Use caution in combining it with dusty, earthy or muted shades, which can look dull against this color's intense vibrancy.

Soft Baby Pink

How to Wear: Contrast with soft, icy-colored pastel gems: Aquamarine, Blue Topaz, Seafoam Tourmaline, Light Blue Sapphire, Daffodil Yellow Sapphire and Lilac Amethyst. Subtly layer it with peachy-pink Tourmaline or Morganite. Harmonize it with Pink Tourmaline, Pink Sapphire or Pink Spinel. Be careful with peach, which may have too much brown in it to play well with soft baby pink. Some grass green gems such as Tourmaline and Tsavorite may also work if they are of an intensity that doesn't upstage the soft pink.

Glacial Blue

How to Wear: Contrast this with soft, icy-colored pastel gems: Daffodil Yellow Sapphire, Lilac Amethyst, Pink Tourmaline, Pink Sapphire or Pink Spinel. Tonal layer with Seafoam Tourmaline and harmonize it with Aquamarine, Blue Topaz, Light Blue Sapphire or Iolite. Stay away from earthy muted tones, which will muddy the effect. Dark or intense gems can overpower or weigh down glacial blue, so use caution with these colors.

Navy Blue

How to Wear: Consider this basic color a dark canvas on which you can showcase almost anything: clear bright gems such as Yellow Sapphire, Tsavorite, Peridot, Ruby, Red Spinel and intense Orange Garnet or earthy gems such as Mocha Zircon, Rhodolite, Sunflower Citrine, Green Tourmaline, Ametrine, and Precious or Imperial Topaz. Harmonize with Blue Sapphire, Tanzanite, Iolite or Lapis. Soft pastels work with navy blue if they are of a size that takes notice — otherwise they can get lost against the dark expanse.

Chocolate Brown

How to Wear: This is an extremely versatile color you can wear with earthy, bright and soft colors. Brights include Yellow Sapphire, Ruby, Red Spinel, Peridot, Tanzanite, Blue Sapphire, Pink Sapphire, Hot Pink Tourmaline and Amethyst. Play up the earthy shades such as Mocha Zircon, Citrine, Ametrine, Rhodolite, Green Tourmaline, Iolite and Merlot Tourmaline, as well as Precious and Imperial Topaz. Layering chocolate brown with some shades of Amethyst, Ametrine or Rhodolite gives a particularly restrained, sophisticated effect. Have you seen how beautiful Aquamarine and Blue Topaz are with brown? Try it, along with Light Blue Sapphire, Lilac Amethyst, Pink Tourmaline and Pink Spinel. It's like flowers in a wooden basket.

Forest Green

How to Wear: This shade is like the earthier green of forest pine trees — not a clear grass green. Wear with “earthy” or “muted” shades such as Rhodolite, Ametrine, Mocha Zircon, Citrine, “Merlot” Tourmalines, Iolite, Imperial and Precious Topaz. Use caution so that bright gems don't overpower the earthy green, but try Blue Sapphire, Yellow Sapphire, Ruby, Red Spinel and Tanzanite.



Blue sapphire set in a platinum and yellow gold pendant by Steven Kretchmer pops when worn with bright red. The varied textures in this piece work well with simple fabrics so that the jewelry and the fabric are not fighting for attention.



The clear bright vibrance of the Peridot in this ring by Krespie & White is a good choice to combine with hot pink's tropical feeling.