

Speaking of red, Fiona Ellis checked in this weekend with this dispatch about her feminine cabled design, [Rebecca](#).

When choosing the yarn for Rebecca, I felt strongly about going with a red colour. Winter is after all the season when, if you are anything like me, we are inclined to wear more red. It happens to be one of my favourite colours and I consider it a classic, so I don't save it for just the holiday season. Sure it looks wonderfully dramatic worn with black for this season's parties. But I think that it also goes well with the glowing fall colours of oranges and brown. In fact, don't we describe the leaves as turning red anyway? So I begin wearing red in October and then right through the holiday season. But I'm not tempted to put it away after New Year because there is still Valentine's and Chinese New Year in February to think of.



So why is it such a classic colour I hear you ask? One of the reasons that it's a perennial fave is because I have dark hair (well I seem to remember that my natural shade is dark) and pale skin, so I pick bright fire engine reds or dark purpley tones. These would also work if I had dark skin. If you choose the right shade, red can look great on everybody. So if I were blonde I would look good in coral tones or if I looked like Julianne Moore I would choose strong orangey reds, or if I looked like

Halle Berry...well no I digresses.

I always chose to wear red when I need a kind of pick-me-up. I guess I never got over seeing Dorothy's ruby slippers, so I have a great pair of red boots that always cheer up me when I wear them. I have found that you can't shrink into the background when you wear red, so when I put it on I have to put my shoulders back and my best foot forward and live up to the drama that it imparts- it does wonders to lift my confidence!

Of course I have spent a lot of time studying colour theory, but my expertise with reds came from my former life as a cosmetic formulation scientist. A lot of us who now work professionally in the knitting business have had former working lives in another industry. So for me, coming up with new shades for lipsticks for 8 years means that I have a really great eye for the subtle differences between reds. In fact the very first colour of lipstick that I formulated was for a winter season - a classic "true" red. I eagerly awaited to see what it's name would be, I was at first disappointed but then basked in the knowledge that I must have come up with a classic when it was named "Lipstick Red". To compliment my lip colours I also have a wide range of red nail polishes, and I love the names that OPI come up with for their polishes- what a fun job that must be. I'm with Paolma Picasso on this one, that the classic colour for nails and lips is red all the way!

When I was researching material for the anecdotes for my book *Inspired Fair Isle Knits*, I loved finding out what meaning and emotions colours evoke for us. In our age and culture (they change depending on culture and eras), red is seen as having lots of energy, it is therefore considered a passionate, aggressive, even dangerous colour. It is eye catching (because it is an "advancing" colour) so it is used for signage and for warning symbols. It makes us think activity and drama - nothing is sportier looking for cars than red. Women of questionable morals are described as being scarlet women, and red letters were used to denounce such behavior in ages past - I prefer to overlook this when wearing it myself of course. But in both India and China red is worn by brides to bring good luck. And in the practice of Feng Shui red is placed carefully for the best use its high energetic value.



Creativity tip: I keep a photo journal taking a photo everyday regardless of whether I am doing anything exciting or not. But just recently I have decided to keep a colour journal and take snaps of everyday items in a particular colour - red seemed like a great place to start. Hey: Paloma's more famous father (Pablo Picasso) had his blue period so I can have my red one can't I?

By the way, if you are more of a shrinking violet than an attention grabbing red wearer, I think Rebecca would look equally stunning in lavender or blue. And if you want to make this sweater a wardrobe building, rather than statement piece, camel or tan would also be great.