



A guide to Tsukineko inkpads

by Cath Stonehouse

All of the following Tsukineko inks are water based, acid-free and archival. They are all fade resistant. All can be re-inked with refill ink that comes in little bottles. And all of them can be layered to make transparencies and textures. The exception is the VersaFine Clair inks, which are opaque and can't be layered and they are not all fade resistant (the warm colours can fade).

Memento

Bright and **transparent**. My personal favourite. They can be layered to create texture and transparency. They dry very quickly and don't smudge easily. The colours are elegant. The prints at the top of the page are made with memento ink.

VersaMagic

Multi-surface chalk ink. This means they can be printed on paper, fabric, wood and even metal. Very elegant colours. They have a creamy texture, but they can still be layered. I really like this range, although they can smudge while you are printing, so you need to be careful.

VersaCraft

This is also a multi-surface ink. The colours are more classic/normal, and they are bright and clear. The orange and red are bold and bright and I think very good. They can smudge while you are printing (just need to be a bit careful).

VersaColor

A huge range of colours. They are very similar to VersaMagic. They have a creamy texture and can be layered. I have found that the ink pads can dry out quite quickly. They can smudge while you are printing, so you need to be careful.

Delicata

Shiny metallic ink. I use the gold and copper a lot. They have a delicate shimmer.

VersaFine Clair

Pigment ink for fine detail. This ink is the one that is closest to the effect of rolled lino-print ink. The colour is opaque, and it really does pick up the details very well. However, I find they can fade a little and the orange and the red fade a lot. It's better to use VersaCraft if you want a bold red or orange. The Yellow Versafine Clair is strong and beautiful and I use it all the time.

The colours come out best on acid-free, smooth-surfaced paper, especially paper made for etching, lino printing or woodblock printing.



Artists and supplies

Artists from different continents, whose art I adore and who use Tsukineko inkpads. I asked them where they buy their ink pads and what sort of paper they like to use.

EUROPE

First me! Cath Stonehouse



I buy all my ink online from Innspi.ro. They have a vast range of inks and ship to most countries in mainland Western and Eastern Europe. Their webpage is in Spanish and French (no English).

My favourite papers are [Somerset satin white printmaking paper](#), which I use for finished pieces. It is smooth and keeps the colours of the inks very well. I also use Japanese washi paper for printmaking, one of the most popular manufacturers is <https://awagami.com>. I use [Hahnemühle Nostalgie paper](#) for playing and experimenting.

AUSTRALIA



Rowan Sivyer makes bright, bold, fun and feminine block prints. She has written a beautiful and informative book called “Modern Block Printing: over 15 Projects Designed to be Printed by Hand”, which is widely available.

She says: Tsukineko Versafine, Versafine Clair and Versacolor are my fave ink pads and I get mine from two main places: Spotlight and Craft Online www.craftonline.com.au.

With regards to paper, I prefer non-coated, non-textured papers. I get mine from my local art store but more ubiquitous chains include Officeworks and Eckersleys. Officeworks has nice packs of blank card and card stock cut for card making. I use these packs in my workshops. For my own arty needs I like to use Hereford bookbinding paper - very smooth and beautiful (has replaced Zerkal as my paper of choice). It comes in large single pieces or in packs of 25.

Artsuppliescastlemaine.com.au is a good place to get a pack from. I also like Awagami papers like Kozo, Shirikaba and Silk Pure White. You can get these papers from arthousedirect.com.au

The USA



Renee Fly makes striking, colourful, geometric repeat patterns. Her work is so clever that you really need to look at it to figure out how she made it. On Instagram she always shows the stamps she uses to make the patterns (very interesting!). Her patterns are used on fabric and home goods.

She says: I generally order my inks and re-inkers from imaginecrafts.com. If I need something quickly, I will order from Amazon or go to JoAnn (joann.com).

The paper I use the most is the Yasumoto Hosho Sketch Paper. It's a thin Japanese paper and it's very reasonably priced. The primary reason I use it is because it holds the vibrancy of the ink better than any other paper I have tried. I get a tiny bit of fading, but it's minimal comparatively. I occasionally use Kitakata and Legion Stonehenge, but the Hosho paper is my go-to. I purchase my paper at dickblick.com.



Alexis Lesnick makes exquisitely detailed prints inspired by popular culture and nature. Her prints have a sense of story and folklore, magic and monsters, they are clean and elegant and have a vintage-style charm.

She says: I get Versaclair ink pads from the Blick website dickblick.com and other Tsukineko pads and ink refills from a few sellers on Etsy (etsy.com/shop/DelBellosDesigns) It's harder to find Versamagic pads and refills here, so I usually turn to eBay or Etsy for those.

For stamping, I really like all of the washi papers from Awagami factory <https://awagami.com> and Black Ink's Unbleached Mulberry paper pack. They will all absorb ink nicely and give good printing results with ink pads. For a heavier paper, I like Legion Stonehenge. These are all available from the Blick website as well.

I also get lots of my paper from Mulberry Paper & More (mulberrypaperandmore.com) and they have an amazing selection of colors and textures; lots of thin mulberry and lokta papers, as well as cotton rag paper that will give you some color and texture if that's what you're looking for.



Jennifer Zee makes awe-inspiring, nature-themed prints, which are often intricate tessellations. She has now also branched out into ceramics. Her work is an expression of her delight in natural beauty and deep interest and love for nature, combined with a clear and magical graphic style.

FRANCE



Nathalie Chapuy (Le Heron Graveur) makes extremely elegant nature-inspired stamps with a definite Japanese feel. She sells beautifully carved stamps on her website www.leherongraveur.com as well as a wide range of Tsukineko inks (including VersaFine Clair, VersaFine, VersaCraft, Delicata, and VersaColor).

She has an online course in stamp carving in French.

For paper she says that Graphigro / Rougier & Plé <https://www.rougier-ple-lyon.fr> has a large choice of papers.



Ludmila Leonidovna makes beautiful, multi-coloured, nature-inspired prints and fun stamps. Her work is bright and magical.

She buys Tsukineko ink pads on two websites: www.centrale-beaux-arts.com and cultura.com and uses Simili Japon paper in 180 and 250g, which is a special printing paper, but she also uses simple drawing papers from www.geant-beaux-arts.fr

There are so many colours of Tsukineko ink pads and there are even more ink ranges (including Neon, Memento Luxe, and Brilliance). The following is a sample of my favourite colours, the ones I use all the time and that are bright and fade resistant.

