



Hilltop Cloud

Time Travellers Club

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Dear Club Member,

The inspiration for this month comes from a building materials. A building material that has shaped our modern world. Without it we would have no motorways, sky scrapers, and no office blocks, high rise flats.

Concrete was essential to the post-war housing, those high rise flats are now much maligned, but were absolutely essential to replace Victorian slum housing. It wasn't in a very good state before World War II, but bombing raids, and the lack of investment in maintenance had reduced many of them to damp, dark nightmarish places to live.

The modern high rise flat development was pioneered by a man called Le Corbusier in the 1920's. It was his solution to a very real problem of over-crowding, and poor housing in the inner cities of Europe. He wanted to create modern housing, but crucially buildings that were surrounded with open green spaces, and that maintained the community feeling found in the areas where people were being moved out from.

When the flats were first built they were very much desirable, and seemed to be a great success, but unfortunately only parts of Le Corbusier's plans were implemented. They built the high rise flats, but often with substandard materials. They also failed to invest in maintenance of the communal spaces, so green spaces turned in to wilderness, and corridors were dirty, smelly, with no guarantee of working light bulbs.

Concrete itself isn't a new material, the Romans used it, but then the technique was largely forgotten during the Middle Ages. During the Industrial Revolution concrete started to be used again, and we've never really stopped!

The magic comes from concrete's strength, and its ability to be molded in to many shapes. Cement, when combined with water sets in to an incredibly strong material, and to form concrete you add an aggregate. Small pieces of other items makes the material less brittle, and prone to cracking. In modern high rise buildings the concrete is poured around a network of steel making it strong still.

So this months colour is a wonderful neutral, and the building material that has shaped our world.

Happy Spinning,
Katie