

Seascape Layer Cake Recipe [Digital Painting: Building a Seascape] by Barbara Burns

1. Save your file [i.e., beginning]. Use a sea inspiring background color.
2. [Save with a new file name – i.e., beginning-1] Add a layer for the sky area (top 1/3 of canvas). Add colors, blend, add more color(s) if needed for a pleasing sky area and then blend again. For a stormy flavor, strokes in various directions can add lots of wind and cloud movement. Lock the layer.

NOTE: Blending – I do a lot of blending - I create my own gradients and I usually work towards a very soft, blended, multi-color look without much texture until I get to the “top” layer. If you examine my oil or watercolor paintings, this is one of the first things you will notice is that I blend, soften and blur a lot in my paintings, especially the background colors. You may want lots of texture in your paintings so either would not blend at all or do very little blending.

3. [Save with a new file name – i.e., beginning-2] Add a layer for the water area (middle 1/3 of canvas). Add waves leaving some background color showing. Paint in a horizontal direction using long or short choppy lines or subtle rocking sideways C or S line strokes. If wanted, blend your lines gently back and forth using a very soft, short motion.
4. [Save with a new file name – i.e., beginning-3] Add a layer for the beach area (bottom 1/3 of canvas). Add sand colors, leaving some background color showing. Blend, add more color and blend again if you want. Create sand dunes / lay of the land for your coastline.

Figure 1 Background

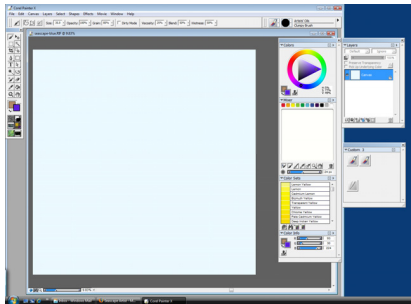


Figure 2 Add Sky Area

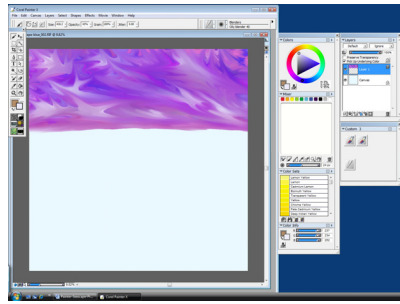


Figure 3 Add Wave Area

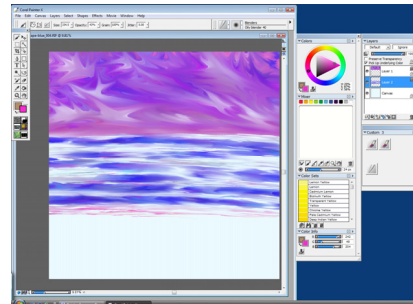
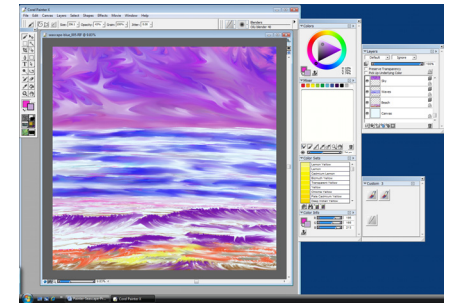


Figure 4 Add Beach Area



5. [Save with a new file name – i.e., beginning-4] The horizon line needs to be a straight line across and if yours is not (mine isn't), it needs corrected or disguised. You can add more layers, perhaps a sailboat, a lighthouse, an island to break up an uneven horizon line and make it appear a straight line across, perhaps some swimmers in the water or kite fliers on the beach. Have fun and enjoy creating your painting.

NOTE: I used Corel Painter X (digital painting) for this painting project. I use these exact same steps for wet-on-wet painting using oil and watercolor paints too. When using wet media, I could allow each step to completely dry before adding the next layer. When using digital media, you do NOT have to use layers. This project is adaptable to your paint medium(s), i.e., acrylics, pastels, digital / computer programs, etc.