

# J. H E R B I N

## SPECIALTY INKS – J. HERBIN - REVIEW AND COLOR DESCRIPTION

Review by Mandy Young  
Boston area calligrapher

### SPECIALTY INKS

In addition to a uniquely broad range of fountain pen inks, J. Herbin offers four specialty inks. They are all completely lightfast. The first is a black “Encre Authentique” which is an old Herbin recipe used in legal documents for its permanent archival properties. J. Herbin boasts that the ink is legible for 300 years! It is a rather cool grey black. It has a nice flow out of a dip pen and is not to be used in a fountain pen. Water drops did not disturb the ink. Another is the ink Victor Hugo commissioned for his writing. Drying time is fast. “Victor Hugo” is an intense, shiny, opaque black that has characteristics normally seen in Japanese sumi inks. It is dense while still holding hairline thin lines when used with a steel calligraphy nib. It was intended for use with a quill. The bottle is an art in itself. The bottle is packaged in a clear plastic box with a sealing wax covered cap. Again, water when sprayed did not affect the writing until smeared.

Another special ink is a royal blue produced for Louis XIV, the Sun King. It is packaged just like the Victor Hugo ink. This resin ink writes out with a charming variable intensity result depending on speed of writing and frequency of dipping. “Louis XIV” dries fast. Water only affected the ink when smeared.

For stealthy communication J. Herbin offers an Invisible ink (Encre Sympathique). This water-based ink goes onto the writing surface clear in spite of looking rather rosy in the bottle. There can be little traces of blue where the dip pen is put onto the paper and where it is lifted away, lending the page a ghostly look. The letters become visible when heated by a light bulb or other heat source. Once the paper cools the blue disappears again. This ink is used with dip pens, quills, reeds and glass pens. It flows with medium speed.

**“ENCRE AUTHENTIQUE”** – Black

**“VICTOR HUGO”** – black, dense and shiny

**“LOUIS XIV”** – royal blue, deep, rich, slightly opaque

**“ENCRE SYMPATHIQUE”** – invisible, slightly blue at edges