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Marcus Bell

2005 was a year to remember for Queensland wedding and portrait photographer, Marcus Bell. Having won both the Epson AIPP Queensland Professional Photographer of the Year and Queensland Professional Wedding Photographer of the Year, he then went on to receive further accolades for his work by winning the Australian Institute of Professional Photographers (AIPP) Wedding Photographer of the Year. In all cases, his submissions to the awards were printed using Epson Large Format Photographic Printers.

A focus on quality

When Bell started his photography business, Studio Impressions, in 1996, his goal was to establish a professional yet boutique studio where quality and imagery excellence were given greater emphasis than profits. "I believed then, just as I do now, that if you focus on providing the best possible quality service and product, achieving profitability is something that almost looks after itself," he says.

For Bell, though, photographic quality is much more than the *art* of taking photographs. It relies heavily on the final product - the prints delivered to the clients. In order to gain this total quality, he has been working for over three years with a range of progressively advanced Epson photo printers.

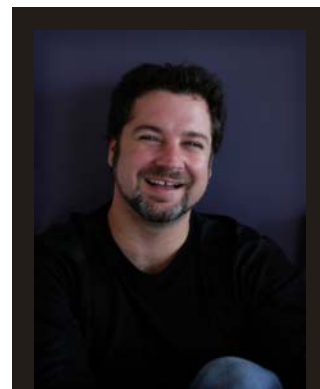
Starting with the Stylus Color 740, then moving on to the Stylus Photo 1290, Stylus Photo 2100 and eventually a Stylus Pro 4000, Bell has constantly sought what he previously regarded as being an almost unattainable goal with inkjet printers - gallery quality prints. In early 2005, though, with the purchase of an Epson Stylus Pro 4800, which uses the newly developed Epson UltraChrome K3 Inks, the goal became well within his grasp.

The black-and-white difference

According to Bell, one of the most immediately noticeable features of the new UltraChrome K3 Ink is its black-and-white reproduction. "When I saw the ink being demonstrated at this year's PICA exhibition, I was totally blown away by the incredible quality in black-and-white prints," he says. "Where I previously considered large format printers to be convenience machines, with the new K3 Inks they are machines that can provide professional photographers with a definite competitive edge in the market."

As an award-winning photographer and one who has a particular love for black-and-white works, Bell takes an extremely critical and discerning view of black-and-white photo printing. As such, he looks at the entire solution, examining each component that contributes to the final print product.

"Definitely one of the main contributing factors is the inclusion of the new light, light black [LLK] ink," Bell says. "The detail you can now achieve with black-and-white prints is far superior



"It has been an evolution over the years. Epson has consistently introduced improvements in key areas such as inks, media, printer drivers, print head...the list is virtually endless. Even though I'm firmly committed to using Epson large format photographic printers, I always look at what other vendors have on offer. To be totally frank, where some companies are absolutely clear leaders in specific areas such as digital still camera technology, Epson is undoubtedly at least two steps ahead of the nearest rivals when it comes to high quality photographic printing."

Marcus Bell
Photographer



to any other output I've seen. The depth and clarity is simply superb."

By utilising the LLK ink, the UltraChrome K3 ink is able to reduce the colour twists in grey areas by decreasing the use of colour ink consumption, which has long been an issue in the world of professional black-and-white photo printing. This reduction results in greatly improved colour accuracy in both colour and black-and-white printing.

More than the ink

While Bell regards the UltraChrome K3 ink as a major milestone in the continued development of photographic printing, he is quick to point out that the results he is now achieving with the Stylus Pro 4800 are due to the combination of numerous advanced technologies.

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Delivering value for money

Having used the A2+ Stylus Pro 4800 for several months, Bell and his team of photographers and production staff are working on creating a production environment where, with the Stylus Pro 4800 and a newly acquired A0+ Stylus Pro 9800, all the company's photographic prints will be done in-house.

Bell's decision to base his company's entire print operations on the Stylus Pro 4800 and 9800 printers along with UltraChrome K3 Ink is one that he considers to be the realisation of a long-term goal. "It has long been my dream to print everything in-house," he states. "The big problem has been that to achieve this, I needed equipment



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that would deliver nothing less than world-class gallery standard prints.

"When we sell a canvas print for \$1,500 to \$2,000, it's imperative that our clients know their investment is not only one in great imagery, but one that is going to last more than a lifetime. This, with the new Stylus Pro printers and the UltraChrome K3 inks is what we're finally able to offer."