

EPSON TRADITIONAL PHOTO PAPER

BETTER THAN THE DARKROOM

Grand Master of Photography David Oliver leaves the darkroom behind and embraces the beauty of Epson Ultrachrome ink and Epson's new Traditional Photo Paper.

I haven't used a paper like this since they stopped making Agfa Record Rapid" enthused David Oliver, "and even with Record Rapid you had to use Viridon toner to get the rich blacks and creamy tones." David is talking about Epson's brand new Traditional Photo Paper, a paper that unashamedly challenges everything photographers thought they knew about fine art printing.

Known for his love of traditional photography, the darkroom process and hand-printed fibre-base papers, David Oliver G.M. Photog., FAIPP is one of Australia's leading wedding, portrait and fine art photographers. He's grown up on a diet of film and paper developers and learned to appreciate the finer points of print making, so he knows what he wants and has taken his time to move across to a digital workflow. No, he's not giving up on film completely, but a Nikon D3 is now found in his gadget bag and an Epson Stylus Pro 7800 large format printer in his studio.



David believes the combination of Epson Traditional Photo Paper and his new Nikon D3 is producing wedding and portrait photos far superior to what he could achieve in the darkroom.



And now he's using Epson's Traditional Photo Paper. Traditional Photo Paper is a breakthrough paper designed exclusively for use with Epson's UltraChrome ink, offering photographers greater creative control due to its extraordinary D-Max and tonal transition characteristics in black and white, and the ability to print stunning colour on the same paper, something that was not possible with silver gelatine fibre based papers.

From Fine Art ...

Recently one of David's fine art prints was discussed in detail on the Luminous Landscape website (www.luminous-landscape.com). Depicting Balmoral Beach in a thick summer mist, the photograph has also scored Gold Awards in Australian and New Zealand print competitions.

The photo is a blend of technologies with the original captured on film and the output from David's Epson 7800.

"My first prints of this image were made on Epson's Watercolor Radiant White paper and I loved the fine art feeling of the matt media. However, this new Epson Traditional Photo Paper has transformed the image yet again, giving it a depth I haven't seen before. It really is reminiscent of the beautiful old Agfa papers, except it's even better!"

Asked if he felt he could create the Balmoral image in the darkroom, David was emphatic in his response.

"No. In fact, I tried several times, but it was impossible to get the split tone the way I created it in Photoshop. I knew exactly the effect I wanted, so after several failures in the darkroom, I turned to the computer. I had so much more control. In fact, I'm now re-visiting a number of my old darkroom prints and I'm amazed at how much better they look on the Epson Traditional Photo Paper. It's better than anything I could have printed in the darkroom."

So what makes a good print? What separates a good one from a great one,



Balmoral In Mist. Photographed on a medium format Rolleiflex, processed, scanned and now printed on Epson Traditional Photo Paper.

a photograph from a work of art?

"I'm looking for a depth to the image; beautiful blacks, nice clean whites and detail in the shadows. I want the image and its tones to have a richness to them. I think this paper is going to be the answer to a lot of photographers' prayers, especially since we've lost so many of the best darkroom papers anyway."

... to Everyday

However, David isn't just using the new Epson Traditional Photo Paper for his fine art work. It's also sitting as the premium product for his wedding and portrait price lists.

"Until recently I've been printing a lot of fibre-based prints myself. Clients are offered a choice of standard RC prints from the lab or a traditional fibre-base print hand made by me in the darkroom, but now that I'm also shooting digitally this has changed.

"With the Nikon D3, I set the ISO

from 800 to 3200 and leave the aperture open at f2.8. This combination gives me a similar softness to what I was achieving with film, so I'm very happy with the results. And now that I can team up my files with Epson's Traditional Photo Paper, I'm still able to offer my clients a premium product and I can do it in both black and white and colour!"

Although best known for his black and white work, David is really excited about being able to offer a premium service in colour too. "You're talking about a 330 gsm paper that feels unbelievable. The skin tones are fantastic and the colours seem more saturated and stronger. I don't know how Epson does it, but there's a beauty in the colour prints that is really exciting me."

David sees the new paper as a way of distinguishing his studio, both from other studios and the keen amateurs. "It's getting harder to separate yourself from everyone else these days. Of

course, experienced professionals have the eye that amateurs don't have quite yet, but it doesn't hurt to also produce a product that is just so obviously superior." Compared to a print from the local minilab or print kiosk, the Epson Traditional Photo Paper is a luxury item with a colour gamut and tonal range to match.

"We'll still offer our RC type prints, but the Epson Traditional Photo Paper will be our premium package.

"This paper has replaced my darkroom. In fact, it's got me out of the darkroom - yahoo! The quality we're getting now is better than anything we've had in the past and it will probably last longer as well. It just oozes quality and my clients love it."

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