

Brilliant Prints

Print excellence without any room for compromise



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Liam Tovey
Owner and Managing Director
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For Liam Tovey, the owner and managing director of Brilliant Prints, the road to a highly successful international photographic and fine art printing business started – just as it does for so many entrepreneurs – in his parents' garage.

There, in 2004 with an Epson Stylus Pro 7000 large format printer he purchased second-hand from eBay, he set the foundation for a company that now has production offices in Brisbane, Singapore, The Philippines and London.

Challenge: Industrial strength printing

In Australia alone, Brilliant Prints provides printing services to in excess of 2,000 professional photographers, along with a massive retail operation serviced primarily via an Internet-based store, and a growing number of artists seeking fine art reproduction.

Having long ago moved to an Epson Stylus Pro 10600, Brilliant Prints was looking for a new generation large format printer that delivered on the key requirements of quality, speed, durability, flexibility and, critically, reliability.

Solution: The Epson Stylus Pro 11880

It was with the launch of the 64-inch Epson Stylus Pro 11880 that Liam identified that next generation. "We saw the Stylus Pro 11880 as the natural successor to the 10600," he says, "and with the outstanding performance and quality we'd been receiving with those printers, it was a fairly straightforward decision."

Within a short period of time, the company had purchased a total of seven Stylus Pro 11880s, which now form the print production foundation for Brilliant Prints' production facilities in Australia, England and Singapore.

A continuous and varied print queue

Total print versatility is a key tenet within Brilliant Prints, and it's a tenet that can be met only with printers that have the ability to take virtually everything in their stride.

With a seemingly endless stream of print jobs coming in from artists and photographers at all levels of expertise – each requiring prints that can be anything from family portraits through to professional wedding photographs and even nature landscapes – it's the Stylus Pro 11880 that Liam's team relies on.

"It's difficult to find a single printer that can deliver high quality prints right across the board," Liam states.

"But with the Stylus Pro 11880's extended colour gamut and reliability, we're able to queue print jobs without having to worry about changing ink sets, colour profiles or flushing ink lines between different job types.

"It means we can queue a series of fine art prints, followed by portrait photographs then slot in nature landscapes. Essentially, the Stylus Pro 11880s take everything we throw at them and deliver the quality we – and our customers – expect."

Four weeks without a break

Reliability is nothing short of critical for the Brilliant Prints production rooms, and Liam's decision to adhere to an Epson-only print production environment with the Stylus Pro 11880s is being clearly justified at the reliability level. So much so, that in the lead up to Christmas, the Brisbane office's four Stylus Pro 11880s operate on a 24 hour and seven day a week basis for at least four weeks.

"The Christmas period is where we are well and truly pressed," Liam states, "and we have someone manning the production room around the clock for that entire four week period. Apart from the occasional change of ink cartridges, the printers are left alone while they're constantly printing. They are simply that reliable."

While not as busy as during Christmas, the rest of the year is by no means slow, and the Epson printers are being subjected to levels of use that few other production house printers would experience. "Some of the Stylus Pro 11880s have clocked up over 16 kilometres of prints," Liam states. "And they're doing that without any sign of faltering at all."

A harsh production environment

Given the high volume production environment of Brilliant Prints, Liam acknowledges numerous features of the Stylus Pro 11880 that support the company's ability to meet its constant level of high demand. Among those features are the printers' high capacity hot-swappable ink cartridges.

"It's a real advantage for us that we can swap over cartridges and know that they're going to keep track of how much ink they have in them," Liam says.

"At a cost level, it means we can swap over those with low volumes before big print jobs then put them back in during off-peak times and we're not wasting any ink – and in this business, that represents a significant saving."

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The Canvas Printing People

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Even the ability to manually adjust the gap between the Stylus Pro 11880's print head and platen is put forward by Liam as an important factor.

"Unlike paper, even the highest quality canvas may have a small amount of loose surface material that can be picked up by the print head," he explains.

"But being able to adjust the gap means we can take it that little bit higher to avoid that happening without any impact on the quality of the print."

Clothesline tested

With a business model based entirely on "if you don't like it, don't pay for it", there is an enormous amount riding on the quality of prints generated by Brilliant Prints' Stylus Pro 11880s. Yet according to Liam, the only times customers have enforced that policy is if the print has been damaged in transit or they've changed their minds.

"Everything we print and ship has to be 100 per cent perfect," he states. "And that goes with everything from colour and print quality through to print longevity, which we guarantee for 75 years regardless of hanging conditions."

While Liam expresses full confidence in Epson's stated durability and lightfastness ratings for the Stylus Pro 11880 and its UltraChrome K3 Ink, he has always been a very hands-on type of man; and devising his own test for the Stylus Pro 11880's print longevity was as simple as pegging one on his clothesline.

"I've had a laminated canvas print generated by one of the Stylus Pro 11880s hanging on the clothesline under the hot Queensland sun for the past four years," Liam explains.

"Interestingly, there's not one discernable change to the quality of the print. Even though we use a special laminate, there's no doubt in my mind that this type of durability is due primarily to genuine Epson ink.

"It all boils down to what our customers think about our service and the quality of our prints," Liam points out. "And since we implemented the Stylus Pro 11880s, the response we get from our customers is that 99.6 per cent of them are saying they will continue to use our services. In that, we know without a shadow of a doubt, that the Stylus Pro 11880 is a major factor."

For more information about Epson Large Format Printers, please call 1300 130 194 or visit www.epson.com.au



Epson Australia

Tel: 1300 361 054

Visit our Web site

www.epson.com.au

Head Office

Sydney

3 Talavera Road
North Ryde NSW 2113

Tel: (02) 8899 3666

ABN 91 002 625 783

Epson New Zealand

Tel: 0800 377 664

Visit our Web site

www.epson.co.nz

Brilliant Prints: www.brilliantprints.com.au

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