

# Darran Leal: Beautiful photo prints to last a lifetime

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## CASE STUDY



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### Darran Leal, Professional Photographer

Since starting his professional photography career nearly 30 years ago, Darran Leal has been the name behind some of Australia’s most stunning photography. Aside from being responsible for many of the large images at the World Expo 88’s Queensland Pavilion, Leal’s work has been published in over 100 books, including six of his own, and featured in an Australia Post stamp series.

#### Challenge

- ◆ Provide clients with prints lasting longer than archive life of chemical process prints
- ◆ Take full control over the photographic print production workflow
- ◆ Improve on the image and colour quality of chemical process prints

#### Solution

- ◆ The Epson Stylus Pro 9800 Large Format Printer

#### Benefits

- ◆ 100+ year print archivability - up to 70+ years longer than chemical process prints
- ◆ Freedom to explore creative interpretation with a comprehensive range of print media
- ◆ Prints that deliver totally accurate tones and vibrant colours

Hardly a newcomer to Epson printers, Leal’s first foray into inkjet photo printing was in 1994 with the worldwide launch of the Epson Stylus Colour inkjet printer. “At that time,” he says, “it was amazing. Even though, admittedly, the life of the prints wasn’t that great, it was the first stage in realising the ability for photographers to take total control over the entire photography production process.”

It was with the release of the Epson Stylus Photo 2100 with its high performance Epson UltraChrome pigment inks, that for Leal marked the beginning of a new age of digital photography printing. “When the Stylus Photo 2100 was released with long-life pigment inks, that said to me that inkjet photo printing was here, and here to stay.”

In late 2006, with a greater desire to take total control over all his photographic printing, Leal purchased an Epson Stylus Pro 9800 large format printer. Armed with the ability to print on 44-inch wide media, Leal quickly implemented the new printer in a workflow that finally eliminated the need to rely on external photo labs.

“For the majority of professional photographers who have been in the industry for over ten years, the introduction of printers such as the Stylus Pro 9800 is like a breath of fresh air,” Leal says. “They’re now able to do it all in-house, and take full quality control throughout the entire workflow – and it’s archival!”

#### Prints for life

On the issue of print longevity, Leal is a strong advocate of providing his clients with prints that last more than a lifetime; and it’s the UltraChrome K3 pigment inks used in the Stylus Pro 9800 that deliver on this. “More and more, my clients are asking me about the archive life of the photo prints I produce,” he says. “Where it used to be around 20-to-30 years with chemical colour prints, I’m able to give them the assurance that the prints I create with the Stylus Pro 9800 will last for 100 years before any noticeable fading.

Epson Australia  
Tel: 1300 131 928

Visit our Web site  
[www.epson.com.au](http://www.epson.com.au)

Head Office  
Sydney  
3 Talavera Road  
North Ryde NSW 2113  
Tel: (02) 8899 3666

ABN 91 002 625 783

## Creative interpretation

Importantly for Leal, the Stylus Pro 9800 plays a key part in photographic creative interpretation. He explains: "One of the advantages of the photographic digital workflow is that software tools, such as Photoshop, can be used to manipulate virtually any digital image characteristic.

"Traditionally, the challenge has been to achieve a totally accurate printed representation of the image. For the

## The simple workflow

In stark contrast to the often-held misconception that generating professional, high quality prints in-house requires an inordinate amount of time and technical know-how, Leal states that Epson photographic printing technologies have reached the point where virtually anyone can achieve professional results.

"Given that I shoot to the Adobe RGB format, which I also use in Photoshop, the software supplied with the Stylus Pro 9800 can take the photo data and replicate colours *without* additional – and unwanted – manipulation," Leal explains. "And if you stick to the genuine Epson inks and papers for which the printer is designed, then there's virtually nothing to do in setting up colour profiles.

"Really, whether it's a small print from a Stylus Photo R230 or large format print from a Stylus Pro 9800, then keeping with the Epson printer, paper, ink and colour profile combination it's almost guaranteed that you'll get a fantastic quality print with little time, effort or knowledge."

For Leal, an aspect of employing the Stylus Pro 9800 as the final piece in the digital workflow is a more streamlined sales process. "I constantly receive orders from people having attended exhibitions of my work or have been at one of the resorts or hotels where it's on display," he says.

"The advantage of having the Stylus Pro 9800 is that I can take those orders via e-mail, create the print and post it out all on the same day. If I was relying on a professional photo lab, aside from not getting the quality I want – and having to pay significantly more for the product – the process would take days as opposed to hours.

"I've been selling my prints for over 20 years, now," he continues, "and the quality of product that I'm now able to create using the Stylus Pro 9800 is far better than anything I've yet come across."



Darren Leal: "...the quality of product that I'm now able to create using the Stylus Pro 9800 is far better than anything I've yet come across."

majority of my work, I'd have to say that the Epson Premium Lustre paper gives the optimum result, delivering a realistic representation of my natural history style photographs.

"But when I want to experiment, then I can just as easily use any one of the other medias – matte, semi-matte, synthetic and even canvas – to generate results that are as every bit as unique as the photograph itself."

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Epson Large Format Printer solutions  
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