At $2195 (recommended retail price including GST), the Epson Stylus Pro 3800 is simply unbelievably good value. No, it’s better than that – it’s a steal!

Until now, obtaining a truly professional quality inkjet print meant using a large-format printer. Only the large format inkjet printers are made with the fine manufacturing tolerances and build quality necessary for them to consistently output a top class print, but while remarkable for what they produce, not all professional photography studios have room for a large printer and not all enthusiasts have the budget.

Epson’s solution is a small size printer which produces even better quality than the pro models, but at an amazingly affordable price: the Epson Stylus Pro 3800.

Better Quality

Is the Epson Stylus Pro 3800 really producing a print quality that is superior to its big brothers, the 4800, 7800 and 9800? Yes!

According to Epson, the Stylus Pro 3800 debuts a new screening algorithm that consistently places ink droplets more precisely, producing smoother tonal transitions and great detail from highlights to shadows. So although many of the components are the same or derived from the large-format models, the mathematics in the chips controlling them has been improved. This is only to be expected as Epson is continually researching and developing its products and so the Stylus Pro 3800 is its first opportunity to release the new technology.

Add in new ICC profiles for Epson’s media, specially produced for the Stylus Pro 3800, and the result is simply stunning print quality, especially if you’re producing smaller size prints which people will look at more closely, such as prints for albums, desk frames and competitions.

And your Epson Stylus Pro 3800 will continue to print perfect prints year after year because it has the same build quality and robustness as Epson’s larger brothers. This is an essential aspect of printer design if it is to produce consistent results over the long term.

Small Size, Big Prints

So, the Epson Stylus Pro 3800 is a high quality printer with a very affordable price. Are there other reasons for purchasing this model instead of one of Epson’s larger printers?

Not all photographers have lots of spare space in their studio or home and there’s no argument that a printer like the Stylus Pro 9800 takes up a lot of room. For many professionals, price and wide-format print sizes weren’t as important as literally fitting the printer into their work area.

The Epson Stylus Pro 3800 is small – dramatically smaller than any other A2+ printer on the market. At 684x376x257 mm (w x d x h), measure it up yourself because it really will fit on the desk next to your computer monitor.

Okay, so the printer will fit into your home or studio, but what happens when you do need a slightly larger print than normal. How big is A2+? The Stylus Pro 3800 produces prints up to 17 inches or 432 millimetres wide (this magazine when opened fully to view two pages is 420 millimetres wide). Looked at another way, the two pages you are looking at are A3 in size and A2 is twice as big, so an A2+ is a bit bigger again. And if you’re into panoramic prints, they can be a metre or more long if they need to be.

Fully Featured

The Stylus Pro 3800 offers up to 2800x1440 dpi print resolution using a one-inch wide Micro Piezo print head. Active Meniscus Control produces highly accurate ink placement with variable sized ink droplets (as small as...
3.5 picolitres) to produce an incredibly smooth and accurate tonal rendition. Furthermore, Piezo inkjet technology does not cook the ink like thermal inkjet technology, resulting in great colour consistency print after print.

Best of all, you will be using Epson’s Ultrachrome K3 resin-coated pigment inks, which includes Epson’s revolutionary three level black ink technology. By using black, light black and ‘light light black’ inks, the Stylus Pro 3800 will be able to produce incredibly neutral black and white prints that are so good, even die-hard darkroom workers will be amazed.

And those new mapping algorithms mentioned earlier also reduce graininess at both low and high resolutions, just another example of the professionalism built into this printer.

While some printers have more than eight inks to work with, what’s more important is the colour reproduction and gamut (range of colours) of the individual inks being used. The incredibly wide colour gamut of Epson’s Ultrachrome K3 inks can faithfully reproduce vivid colours and natural skin tones – colour gamut problems simply won’t be an issue.

And last but certainly not least, when printing onto Epson media, your colour glossy prints will last up to 70 years (Epson Premium Glossy Photo Paper) or 200 years for a black and white print (on several of Epson’s matte and fine art papers).

Feeding Paths
Talking of inks, the Epson Stylus Pro 3800 has larger 80 millilitre cartridges. These are smaller than those on the other Stylus Pro models, but significantly larger than the R2400 and the perfect compromise for people who want a small size printer. It means you’ll change the ink cartridges less often and you can set your Stylus Pro 3800 for long print runs without worrying about the ink running out. The cartridges also tuck neatly away, inside the printer. There are three feeding paths and support for media up to 1.5 millimetres thick, so you can put all your special papers, canvases and boards through. You can also make borderless prints to maximize the print area.

Exceptional Blacks
One new feature that is very important for small studios and enthusiasts is the automatic switching between Photo Black and Matte Black inks. This is why you can see nine ink cartridges installed into the Stylus Pro 3800. Gloss papers generally work best with Photo Black ink, while matte papers can benefit from Epson’s Matte Black ink. Both are loaded into the printer so when you switch papers, the printer will automatically switch over to the correct ink (it happens automatically when you select the correct printing paper in the print driver software). The changeover process is very fast (two to three minutes) and uses only a few millilitres of ink (so it’s not expensive to do). This feature alone could see many professionals with a larger Stylus Pro printer adding a 3800 to their studio!

Ink cartridges can be changed on-the-fly, even in the middle of a print run, and if you’re interested in how much ink you’ve used to produce a print, Epson’s Intellidge Ink Cartridge system will tell you with a printed report.

The Epson Stylus Pro 3800 comes with both USB 2.0 (which is also 1.1 compatible) and 10/100 Base/T Ethernet interfaces as standard. For further information about Epson’s Stylus Pro 3800 and Epson’s Ultrachrome K3 inks and printers, visit www.epson.com.au or contact Epson on 1300 131 928.