

Epson Stylus Pro 4800

David Williams explains why inkjet printing has come of age and how the Epson Stylus Pro 4800 can slip easily into your workflow.



David Williams

David Williams M. Photog. is known internationally for his high calibre portrait and wedding photography. Lecturing and judging in Australia, America and the UK, he has helped many photographers come to grips with digital technology and he himself has a passion for inkjet printing.

"I see inkjet printing as being a great opportunity for photographers to create new and exciting products for our clients", began David. "And a printer like the Epson Stylus Pro 4800 is an ideal size for exploring a range of new paper surfaces and printing techniques.

"Photographers have perhaps been misguided as to how they should approach inkjet printing. Many have the attitude that an inkjet print should first and foremost be identical to a print from the lab, but why should we limit ourselves to one style of print when with inkjet we can choose from an amazing range of papers and surfaces?"

There are over 20 different types of Epson media to choose from, including some that are nearly identical to photographic prints if you need it.

"There are many ways inkjet printing can fit into existing workflows. For instance, a wedding photographer might use the Epson 4800 as I do for proofing and fine art prints, or producing a separate line of prints that are different to photographic paper."

Superb Black And Whites

One of the biggest hurdles for inkjet printing has been the production of consistently neutral black and white prints that would impress the most discerning photographer. Colour casts in greys and a short tonal range have greatly affected the quality of black and white prints from many colour inkjet printers and, in the past, you generally had to resort to a third-party RIP (additional software) to get the best result.

All those problems are gone with the Epson Stylus Pro 4800, the new Ultrachrome K3 inks and a special Advanced B&W Photo feature in the standard Epson printer driver.

Explained David, "You don't even have to convert your colour files to black and white. Simply breathtaking black and white prints can be produced directly from colour images by selecting the Advanced B&W Photo feature in the Epson printer driver software. My initial scepticism gave way to genuine amazement when I produced my first black and white prints this way."

Of course, the Epson 4800 also prints beautiful black and white prints that have been carefully converted to mono in Photoshop.

"Inkjet prints need to be as good as traditional black and white prints in the way they replicate tones, contrast and density – the 'quality' of the image. But once again, I don't think we should be comparing B&W inkjet prints directly with silver-based prints.

"From brand to brand, paper to paper, silver-based prints have always had differences in colour and image tone and photographers not only accepted the difference, but searched out the best combination for their photography. We can do the same with the range of inkjet

papers provided.

"In terms of highlights to shadows and the tonal range, the Epson prints are every bit as good as a hand-printed silver-based print. And if you want a sepia or a cool-toned print (or a fine variant of a tone), Epson has these built into the Advanced B&W Photo feature. Just select the menu item through the easy interface and it's yours."

Epson Profiles

To produce the best quality prints, an ICC profile for the paper and ink combination being used is essential, especially in a professional environment.

"Epson's supplied profiles are sometime referred to as being 'canned' and by intimation perhaps not as good as a 'custom' profile, but my experience with the Epson 4800's profiles is that they're extremely good.

"My approach to testing a printer is to see what it can do straight out of the box without having to do all sorts of adjustments.

"I found the Epson 4800 quite exceptional. It's fast and efficient and, providing you're working with a properly profiled monitor, you can use the 'proof view' feature in Photoshop so that what you see on screen is what you'll see on your print.

"For anyone who has experienced the daily drudgery of keeping a wet-line processing and printing system in line, the fact that you can make superb prints through the 4800 day after day, week after week is very exciting."

Another issue solved by the new Epson 4800 and Ultrachrome K3 ink combination is 'gloss differential', where parts of the print (like the whites) are less shiny than the rest, and 'bronzing' where the inks can appear coppery or bronzed when viewed obliquely.

"With the Epson 4800, if you're printing black and white images, all you have to do is tick a box called 'Highlight Point Shift' and any gloss differential is all but eliminated. And if you're printing in colour, add an adjustment layer with four



Photo: David Williams

percent black over the entire picture and it does the same thing. Both techniques produce an even surface texture. Great control – and simple control.

“I’ve also found that the cost of inkjet printing is extremely economical. Recently I did a series of prints on Epson’s Archival Matte paper and worked out that the average cost for an A3 size print was \$2.78 to around \$3.00, depending on whether you used 110 ml or 220 ml ink cartridges (the larger size is more economical).

“You can determine how much ink the printer is using by printing a ‘Job Report’ straight from the 4800 and

it tells you the ink usage not only per print, but per ink colour. It’s very easy to ‘do your sums’ and compared to conventional printing, the Epson 4800 is extremely competitive.”

For further information about Epson’s Ultrachrome K3 inks and Epson’s Ultrachrome K3 printers (including the 4800), visit [www.epson.com.au] or contact Epson on 1300 131 928.



Epson Ultrachrome K3 Printers



Epson Stylus Photo 2400

- Media Handling up to A3+



Epson Stylus Pro 4800

- Media Handling up to A2+ Wide



Epson Stylus Pro 7800

- Media Handling up to A1+



Epson Stylus Pro 9800

- Media Handling up to B0+