GET MORE FROM YOUR IMAGES

How Epson kit can help you enjoy your photography even more

CHOOSING THE RIGHT KIT

Authoritative reviews on printers, scanners and projectors

PERFECT RESULTS EVERY TIME

Essential advice for superb prints and scans

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EXPRESS YOURSELF!

Don't leave your files languishing on your hard drive, get high-quality prints to display or share using the Epson Expression XP-960 inkjet

Fewer of us are printing our images. After spending hours filling our memory cards in pursuit of the perfect image, it seems that many of us are happy to let the resulting files gather fluff on a hard drive. This, obviously, is a bad thing.

Producing a print is the ultimate accolade for your photographic endeavours. It's a physical confirmation that you've produced shots to be proud of; shots that you want to instantly share with friends and family members or frame and put on a wall so everyone can enjoy them for years to come. That's why we want to get photographers printing again and one of the best ways to produce a high-quality print that shows your work at its finest is to use an Epson inkjet printer.

Epson's range of Expression models puts high-quality printing within reach of every photographer, regardless of space, ability or budget. The Expression range comprises three different line-ups: Home, Premium and Photo.

As this brochure is all about getting the best prints possible, we tried the range-topping Expression Photo XP-960. This model combines printing, scanning and copying functions for an all-round home printing solution. Here we've picked out just a small selection of our favourite features that will help you get high-quality results in a matter of minutes.

Getting connected

The XP-960 offers Wi-Fi connectivity so the only cable you have to plug in is the mains lead. What's more, setting up the Wi-Fi connection couldn't be easier.

Pop the CD into your PC or Mac and let the software do the rest. Or, if you have one of the growing number of computers without a CD drive, just head to epson.sn and follow the on-screen instructions.

The Wi-Fi Direct functionality means you don't even have to connect to a wireless router – just connect straight to the printer. Either way, it takes less than 15 minutes from unpacking the XP-960 for it to be ready for action!

The XP-960 also has its own email address for more versatile wireless functionality. This means you can print from a smartphone or tablet, and you can use cloud printing services to print from anywhere in the world! Plus, with Epson Connect, you can scan photos and documents direct to cloud-based storage such as Dropbox.

For those users who don't want to use Wi-Fi, the XP-960 also provides standard Ethernet and USB connections.

Easy to use

With a whole host of features on offer, the XP-960 could be daunting to use, but it sports a refreshingly clean design thanks to the 10.9cm touchscreen control panel. Whether you want to print, scan or scroll through images on a memory card or change printer settings, it's all done through the touchscreen and it's as easy and intuitive as using a smartphone.

The touchscreen panel also provides access to ink levels and displays simple status updates so you know exactly what the printer is doing.

Impressive print quality

The XP-960 delivers a consummate printing performance that will show your work off at its very best, enabling you to print out at up to A3.

Six Claria Photo HD inks are used to deliver great prints in both colour and black & white. They produce results that wouldn't look out of place in an art gallery and will certainly grace any mantelpiece.

Two sizes of the Claria Photo HD inks are available – standard and XL for even better value for money – and with the vibrant colours, smooth tones and deep blacks we saw on offer, you wouldn't want to use anything other than Epson's own inks for the very best results.

Using Epson's inks also guarantees that your images will last a lifetime, and beyond. Store them carefully in a photo album and they'll last up to 300 years.

As for the printer itself, the XP-960 model features a motorised output tray so there's no need to worry about prints getting mangled in the printer.

"The XP-960 delivers a consummate printing performance that will show your work off at its very best"

ABOVE The XP-960's wireless connectivity allows you to print, scan and copy with ease.

BELOW The built-in card reader means you can print images without needing to even switch on your computer.

The paper tray accepts a wide range of paper thicknesses and if you want to print onto thicker card, this can be fed through the back of the printer. Even CDs and DVDs can be printed on to using the removable tray.

All-round versatility

To be honest, we were already sold on the XP-960's capabilities simply after setting up and printing a selection of images, but it has much more to offer.

For those times when you don't want to print out high-quality images and just want to print documents, for example, the duplex (double-sided) printing option will save paper, plus the 4800dpi scanner can also be used as a copier.

There are some fun features too, made possible by Epson's Creative Print software. This gives you the option to print out personalised greetings cards, stationery and – our personal favourite – colouring book pages of your own images for the kids to colour in!

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BIGGER IS DEFINITELY BETTER

To really see your images in all their glory, print bigger. Epson's SureColor SC-P600 A3+ printer is easy to use and delivers superb results as Roger Payne discovers

My first taste of A3+ printing came a few years back when I sampled the delights of the Epson Stylus Photo R3000. As the owner of a DSLR with 20+ megapixels, I regularly had to downsize my images to print them out on my A4 unit at home. And while a high-quality A4 print can still cut it as a way to display images, there's no doubt that when it comes to prints, bigger is most certainly better. Since I tried the R3000, I've never looked back and my orders to postal labs have become virtually non-existent.

Epson has recently introduced a replacement for the R3000, the SureColor SC-P600, and I've ploughed through plenty of ink and paper over the past few weeks trying its considerable charms. I was pleased to find that much of what I liked about the R3000 remained, but there have also been some significant updates, which means you get even better prints.

While the old machine could never be described as ugly, I also think the SC-P600 is smarter looking in its all black costume and is no larger than its predecessor, despite the extra features.

The wonders of wireless

If you're thinking of making the switch to an A3+ printer and are feeling daunted by the prospect, don't worry, you're amongst friends here. I used to think a bigger printer demanded a broader knowledge of the technology, yet the SC-P600 is remarkably easy to get up and running – largely due to the improved Wi-Fi functionality.

Connecting it to a home or office broadband router is easily achieved and is the best way to go for out-and-out flexibility. This is because you can park the printer anywhere, rather than having to be tethered to a specific location. Of course, you can still connect by USB or Ethernet cable, but I stuck with Wi-Fi. The necessary drivers come supplied on a software CD, but as an owner of an Apple Mac without a CD drive, I was still able to get set up quickly, downloading the necessary from the Epson website at epson.sn.

The SC-P600 adds further Wi-Fi sophistication with the provision of Wi-Fi Direct, which enables printing from smartphones, tablets and PCs, plus it's also compatible with Apple's AirPrint and Google's Cloud Print services.

Ease of use

Once up and running, I set to work. I'd already calibrated my monitor and would advise you to do the same, then chose to print all my images through Photoshop, allowing the software to manage the colours while I resized them before selecting paper type and image quality.

I started with the standard 1440dpi output, which produces an A3+ print in just over two and a half minutes – that's a good 30 seconds faster than the previous model – and found it to be more than adequate for most of my shots. I used the ICC profiles that came as part of the downloadable software and if I found an image that I wanted to print at the ultimate quality, I went for the 5760dpi option. You can read the steps I went through to produce my prints on page 9 and I can safely say that the only rejects I had were user errors – the printer performed superbly.

ABOVE **The smart-looking SC-P600 will look the part at home or in the office, and thanks to Wi-Fi connectivity, it can sit anywhere.**

"From the moment your first A3+ print drops into the tray, you'll be hooked"

Another improvement is the 6.8cm touchscreen, which can be tilted for ease of use. While it's probably a tad smaller than the rear LCD on your DSLR, it's bright and very easy to use. Ink levels are always on display and it also has an easy-to-use menu system should you want to run simple maintenance checks or use different print media. It also takes you through ink cartridge changing, step by step.

When it comes to printing on different paper, the SC-P600 is much like the R3000 before it. Normal printing papers are fed through the rear, but thicker media can be fed through the front of the printer via a dedicated tray. There's even the capacity to attach rolls of paper via the feeder supplied, plus the ability to print on to CDs and DVDs.

Print quality

Trust me, from the moment your first A3+ print drops into the tray, you'll be hooked. The print quality is truly exceptional. This is most likely down to the nine UltraChrome HD inks, the ninth colour being a Vivid Magenta to help produce an even wider colour gamut and the highest black density of any A3+ photo printer. The subtleties and tonal gradations are also stunning. The ink droplets are as small as 2pl, so fine details are beautifully rendered.

It's the same when it comes to black & white prints, which are superb. I love the fact that you can add a tone to your monochrome work directly through the printer driver, which is just as good as any effect that I've spent ages faffing around with in Lightroom.

Also impressive is the ink cartridge capacity. Each one holds 25.9ml of ink and, although the initial outlay will be higher than with an A4 printer, the SC-P600 will work out more cost-effective on a print-by-print basis.

TOP **Print on various media, including thicker papers, rolls and even CDs and DVDs with the SC-P600.**

ABOVE **Boasting nine UltraChrome HD inks, the SC-P600 outputs prints of exceptional quality time after time.**

BELOW **The Wi-Fi Direct connection means you can print from a smartphone or tablet without needing to connect to a network first.**

PRINT YOUR WAY TO BETTER PROFITS

Printing images for clients keeps margins and quality high. We tried Epson's SureColor SC-P800 inkjet to see just how much it offers the pro looking for a new revenue stream

When was the last time you looked at the prints you supply to your clients? And when we say 'look' we don't mean a cursory glance, we mean thoroughly studied the print quality. There are many high-quality labs around the country that will deliver fantastic results for you and your clients, but for real peace of mind and unrivalled quality control you can't beat printing the images yourself, after all they'll reflect well on your talent.

Epson produces a huge range of inkjet printers and media to cater for every printing need and budget. When it comes to the professional, however, one model in the range stands out as a real workhorse that can sit at the heart of any pro photographer's workflow, the SureColor SC-P800. We took one for a test drive.

Outstanding versatility

The SureColor SC-P800 replaces the Stylus Pro 3880, the previous pro workhorse in the Epson line-up, and sports a range of new functions. One of the most significant for the pro user is the option to use rolls of paper via the optional roll paper unit – perfect if you want to print panoramic images or onto canvas up to 17 inches wide. If you prefer to work on single sheets, the SC-P800 also accepts up to 17" paper width and up to 1.5mm or 850 gsm thick. Despite this impressive media handling capability, it's a relatively compact unit. It will comfortably fit into the corner of an office or studio, providing you leave enough space behind it to accommodate the heavier weight media that initially protrudes out of the back on loading. 'Normal' papers feed from the top and land in the extendable front tray.

The SureColor SC-P800 uses the same Epson UltraChrome HD inks as the company's large-format printers with nine pigmented inks delivering a huge range of colours and the deepest blacks of any A2 photo printer currently available. The inks are available in 80ml cartridges – an economical solution.

Not only do you get great colour from the UltraChrome HD inks, they're also designed to offer optimum longevity and reduce effects such as bronzing to keep your clients happy. The three level black ink technology ensures you get great mono results, too.

With the inks in place, the printer driver loaded and the nozzles checked, it was time to get down to printing. Another notable addition over the 3880 is the wireless connectivity. It makes computer to printer connection remarkably easy. You can use an existing Wi-Fi network, or simply connect directly to the printer making it easy to print from a PC, smartphone or tablet. Epson Connect, Apple AirPrint and Google Cloud Print services are also possible.

ABOVE The nine pigmented inks are available in 80ml cartridges. This makes the SureColor SC-P800 more economical than smaller models.

ABOVE With the optional paper roll holder you can print panoramic images with ease.

High-quality prints in minutes

Once we were connected, we went straight for a borderless A2 print – who wouldn't? – and were immediately impressed with the output quality. Two printing resolutions are available – 1440dpi and 2880dpi – both were excellent, but we'd be inclined to stick with the lower resolution and make those cartridges last a little longer.

All the prints were produced through Photoshop where we left the software to manage the colour accuracy and chose the necessary profiles for the variety of media tested. All compatible profiles as supplied as part of the driver installation process. Third-party media profiles are also supplied but you may need to download additional ones.

Producing high-quality prints that both you and your clients will be delighted with is extremely easy. Just as you would have produced test prints in the darkroom, getting the initial print right may take a few pieces of paper, but this likelihood is reduced with an accurately (and regularly) calibrated monitor, plus a few minutes spent tweaking settings.

When it comes to maintenance, the maintenance tank is user replaceable, which means you won't have to pay for an engineer. That means less down time and more profit for your business. It's also easy to keep an eye on printer functions thanks to the tilting touchscreen menu.

It's hard to argue against taking more control of your printing output. Of course there's the initial outlay for the printer, but doing so opens up a wealth of new revenue opportunities that today's working pro would be foolish to dismiss.

"Producing high-quality prints that both you and your clients will be delighted with is extremely easy"

USING THE TOUCHSCREEN LCD

Among the long list of improvements to the SC-P800 over its predecessor is the provision of a tilting touchscreen LCD. This more intuitive interface makes it easy to scroll through functions and quickly ascertain the printer's status. Features at your fingertips include:

1) Paper Size
Offering up to 17", the SC-P800 offers a huge range of other sizes, too.

2) Maintenance
The printer can be user maintained without having to call out an engineer – that's useful extra functionality if time is money. You can keep an eye on the printer's status and wireless connections through the Setup menu.

3) Media Load Guide
The SC-P800 takes paper and board up to 1.5mm thick. Use anything other than the Auto Sheet Feeder and step-by-step instructions for loading appear on the touchscreen LCD.

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PRODUCE YOUR BEST EVER PRINTS

Stick with Epson inks and paper and you'll be producing great prints in no time. We show you how simple it is to get results good enough to hang on your wall

When it comes to getting great prints of your favourite photographs, the best option is to take matters into your own hands. And the best way to do that is to print your images at home using one of the comprehensive range of Epson inkjet printers. Packed with the latest inkjet technology and user-friendly features including wireless connectivity, Epson's latest models deliver high-quality results, print after print, and are far more economical than going to either a high street or professional lab.

Models such as the Epson SureColor SC-P600 enable you to produce high-quality A3+ prints at home, but many users make the common mistake of buying the printer and then skimping on media or inks. That's akin to cooking fillet steak and serving it up on paper plates! While Epson papers and inks may cost that little extra compared to some third-party products, there's good reason for that. And after taking a trip to the company's ink manufacturing plant in Telford, we've seen at first-hand exactly why that is.

THE SECRET'S IN THE INK

The SureColor SC-P600 uses nine UltraChrome HD inks, which represent the pinnacle of Epson's ink technology. UltraChrome inks are pigmented so they deliver superior results over dye-based inks on a wide variety of media, including a large gamut of colours, deeper blacks and impressive water resistance. Print longevity is also excellent – stored in optimum conditions, a print from the SC-P600 will last more than 200 years, so your work will be enjoyed by many generations to come!

Every aspect of cartridge manufacture is strictly monitored in Epson's Telford plant, which produces more than 80% of the cartridges for the whole of Europe. From the moulding of the cartridge itself through to the ink that is put in it, all aspects are checked and double-checked throughout the manufacturing process to stringent quality control standards. There are also numerous patents covering the cartridges' design, so although other cartridges claim to be the same, they aren't. In short, using Epson's inks ensures not only that you'll get the best images, you'll also extend the longevity of the printer itself.

"Print longevity is excellent – stored in optimum conditions, a print will last more than 200 years"

ABOVE With rigorous quality control throughout production, Epson UltraChrome HD inks are guaranteed to produce excellent results, every time you print.

ABOVE Thanks to Epson's wide range of media you'll always find the right paper.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT MEDIA

Photography is all about self-expression and that isn't limited to how you frame an image or how you set the exposure, it also comes down to how you print the resulting file – and the media you use. Epson offers a vast range of printing media, all of which can be used to convey a different feeling or mood in your shots.

If you want to produce prints that will look great on any wall or mantelpiece, the more conventional Premium Gloss, Semigloss and Luster papers will deliver superb, bright colours that show your shots at their very best. But if you want to be more creative, consider one of the matte, fine art or traditional photo papers. Black & white images, meanwhile, look superb on Epson's Hot and Cold Press papers, which are available in both Bright and Natural finishes, plus there are also canvas materials and thick boards that can be used to personalise your images further.

For more on getting the best possible print, see the step-by-step guide on the page opposite.

GET GREAT RESULTS, EVERY TIME

You can get great prints straight out of the box, but spending a few minutes on each file helps you get consistent results every time. Here's how we used the SureColor SC-P600 and Photoshop CC 2014 to get a perfect A3+ print

1) Make sure your monitor is calibrated
Monitor calibration is vital in your quest for consistently high-quality prints, so if you don't have a monitor calibrator, we'd advise you to get one. A variety of models are available, but they all do essentially the same thing, ensuring that what you see on the screen is what you get from the printer. Be sure to recalibrate your monitor regularly – at least once a month – and more often if you do a lot of printing.

2) Set up for soft proofing
Soft proofing enables you to check that what you see on screen is what you'll get on the resulting print. With the image open in Photoshop, start by creating a duplicate (Image>Duplicate) and on the duplicated version perform a Gamut Warning by choosing View>Gamut Warning (shortcut Ctrl+Shift+Y). This will give you a quick visual indication of the areas of the image that may not print exactly as they are on screen. That's because monitors have a wider gamut than printers. If it's a large area, you may wish to make some tweaks to the image.

3) Use the correct ICC profile
The software supplied with the SC-P600 contains a number of different ICC profiles for different Epson media. In addition for being used to print out, these profiles are used for soft proofing. Select View>Proof Setup>Custom and the Customize Proof Condition dialogue box will open. Under the Device to Simulate pop-up menu, select the correct profile for the printer and media you're using. If the profile isn't available, visit the Epson website.

4) Make corrections as required
Once the ICC profile is selected, from the Rendering Intent menu choose Perceptual, then make sure that the Black Point Compensation and Simulate Paper Color boxes are both ticked.

Now click on Preview to view what the image will look like. There could be a large difference, in which case you may want to bring the duplicated copy as close to the original as possible before printing. Once you're happy, you can save the profile and give it a name by clicking on Save, or simply OK if you want to move on.

5) Preparing to print
Select File>Print to open Photoshop's Print dialogue box. Start in the Printer Setup section, click on Print Settings and from the correct Paper Size before hitting Save, then choose the correct Layout orientation. Move to the Color Management box and under Color Handling choose Photoshop Manages Colors then select the correct ICC profile from the Print Profile menu.

6) Final steps
Staying in Color Management, make sure Perceptual is selected in the Rendering Intent menu. Click the black triangle next to Color Management, or simply scroll down in the same window to find the Position and Size option. Here you can choose where and how big the image prints using the preview on the left to see what you're getting. When you're happy, hit Print and let the SC-P600 do the rest.

"Soft proofing enables you to check that what you see on screen is what you'll get on the print"

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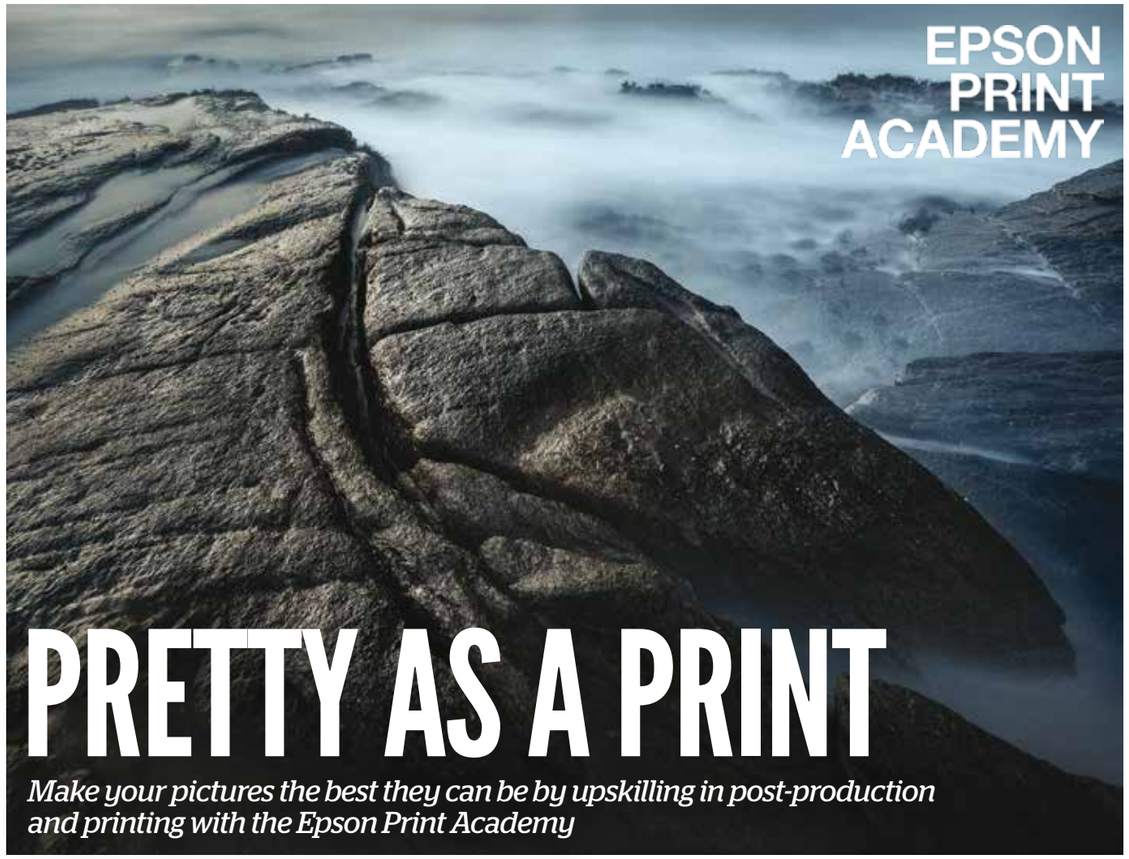


PRETTY AS A PRINT

Make your pictures the best they can be by upskilling in post-production and printing with the Epson Print Academy

Taking a great photograph is only the start of the journey. Mastering your camera is one thing, but knowing what to do with your photos next is a different realm of image manipulation, editing and printing – making your photography skills really shine through post-processing and printing techniques. Sure you could have a fiddle around in Photoshop and connect up your printer and have a go at getting frame-worthy prints, or you can make like an expert and have Epson's experienced tutors show you the ropes, whatever level you're coming in at.

Epson has teamed up with Aspect2i to deliver their Epson Print Academy classes. Aspect2i have been helping photographers make perfect prints for around five years and are one of the leading photography workshop companies in the UK. So rest assured you'll be in capable hands. There's no typical kind of person who comes along to the Epson Print Academy; total newbies looking to pick up basic post-processing or printing skills will benefit just as much as those with more experience wanting to hone their expertise even further.

There are classes aplenty to choose from covering a whole range of specialist interests and techniques, so whatever your niche, you'll find something to suit your experience and interests at the Epson Print Academy.

Looking to show off your work in a gallery or submit your images to a print competition? The Exhibition Quality Printing class will hook you up with expert advice from pros in fine print reproduction, printmaking and proofing. If you can't quite nail black & white prints, at the end of the Perfect Black and White Print class you'll know exactly how to manage your workflow for truly magical monochrome prints from your Epson printer. In fact, there are masterclasses in everything from post-processing, to Lightroom and Photoshop, right through to Advanced Post Processing and Printing for the more experienced shooter.

These aren't the types of classes where you're packed in and lost in a crowd. Far from it.

"You'll get plenty of face time with your tutor and lots of opportunities to receive tailored expert advice"

ABOVE Produce exhibition worthy prints with pro help on an Epson Print Academy class.

Groups are kept small so you'll be getting plenty of face time with your tutor and lots of opportunities to receive tailored expert advice and pro guidance.

Take those photographs you're proud of and make prints you're even prouder of, all with a little help from the Epson Print Academy.

>> More information
www.epson.co.uk/printacademy
www.aspect2i.co.uk

PRINT PERFECT BLACK & WHITES

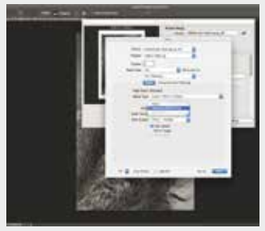
Want to produce black & white prints as good as the pros'? It's easy with the Epson SureColor SC-P600

The real acid test for an inkjet printer is its ability to print black & white images. Epson's SureColor SC-P600 offers an advanced black & white printer driver and three black inks to deliver a superb range of tones. Better still, you can even select a tone to add to your monochrome images. Here's how you can create brilliant black & white prints in four simple steps. We used a Mac, on a PC the layout is slightly different, but it's just as easy

1) Convert your image to black & white
Using Photoshop CC 2014, we converted the original colour image to black & white with the Channel Mixer (Image>Adjust>Channel Mixer). Don't use the Grayscale conversion as this gets rid of lots of vital image data. Make any further tweaks until it looks perfect on screen.

2) Let the printer manage colours
Go to File>Print to open the Photoshop print dialogue. Leave the printer to manage the colours so in the Color Management section set Color Handling to Printer Manages Colors. Further down in the same section, choose Perceptual on the Rendering Intent menu.

3) Select Printer Settings
Now move to the Printer Setup section at the top of the dialogue box. Click the Print Settings button and in the window that opens make sure the correct Paper Size is selected. Now choose Color Matching from the drop-down menu and make sure that EPSON Color Controls is selected.



4) Select Advanced B&W settings, then print
From the same drop-down menu, choose Print Settings and Advanced B&W from the Color menu. From Color Toning select your tone of choice, then hit Save. Now, back in the Photoshop box go to the Position and Size section, and size up the image accordingly. Finally, hit Print.

CASE STUDY: NAOMI

Knee-deep into a three-day Post Processing and Printing Masterclass, Naomi tells us how she's getting on

"I have a wonderful passion for taking pictures and I want to get that passion for actually producing really good prints. I have been involved with Photoshop since 1995, but due to personal circumstances I've had a two-year gap. This course was a way of giving me back my confidence. It's not only a refresher but as everything moves on, it's about bringing me back up to date as well.

"I chose this Epson Print Academy class because it's run by Aspect2i. Having been on some of their workshops out in the field, I knew I was going to get really good tuition on a post processing masterclass. The other class I attended was a Lightroom workshop, which was a completely new program to me, and I knew the place to learn it would be on an Epson Print Academy run by Aspect2i.

"So far, it's been brilliant, absolutely wonderful. The class covers everything and is suited to those who only just know how to use Photoshop, through to those who are more advanced but still want to learn new techniques.

"For me the class is about making sense of things that I have seen done, but not really understood how to do them myself. I know that by the end of the class I will be able to produce a print that mirrors the picture that I took in the first place."

ABOVE On an Epson Print Academy, you'll get plenty of guidance from expert tutors to make your prints reach their full potential.

"So far, it's been brilliant, absolutely wonderful... The class covers everything"

REVIVE YOUR OLD IMAGES

Start scanning film and prints to breathe new life into your pre-digital shots. We tried the Perfection V850 Pro to see how easy it is

Although it may be hard to believe, there was photographic life before the world turned digital. Photographers used to be limited by the number of exposures they could take in one go and typically had to wait a few days to see results of their endeavours. Crazy, we know.

But if you remember this bygone era, the chances are, you'll have some silver halide proof of this in the form of transparencies, negatives or maybe some well-thumbed prints that have seen better days. What's more, the chances are these will be in a shoebox under the bed. Or at the back of a cupboard. Or in the shed awaiting their final trip to the skip.

Casting old images aside like this is common, but it's also something of a travesty. Not only will you have an emotional connection with the images that you captured on film, the chances are you'll have some really good photographs that simply haven't seen the light of day for years.

Scanning your images is the perfect way to ensure they'll stand the test of time and Epson produces a range of excellent models that can enhance your shots without you having to go anywhere near Photoshop. To see just how easy it is make your memories digital, we set up the Perfection V850 Pro, grabbed a selection of slides from the early 1990s and got down to work.

Simple set-up

Just like Epson's inkjet printers, the V850 Pro proved to be remarkably simple to set up. There's no Wi-Fi capability here, just a good old USB cable, so it's simply a question of installing the software from the supplied CD and you're ready to go. As we were using an Apple Mac that didn't have a CD drive we had to download the software from the Epson website at epson.sn then follow the simple on-screen instructions.

As well as the scanner drivers, the V850 Pro also comes with a copy of SilverFast SE Plus 8 and X-Rite i1 Profiler. The former is scanning software, the latter gets the device calibrated. We chose not to install SilverFast, sticking with the familiar Epson Scan software that comes with Epson's all-in-one printers, but did choose to use the X-Rite software. For the reasons why, see the panel (right). The X-Rite software did a great job, but does slow the process down a little as updates were required and after each installation the computer had to be restarted.

The V850 Pro itself is anything but slow. Thanks to the use of Epson's ReadyScan LED light source which warms up in under a second, it was ready to go virtually instantly.

Feature packed

Sitting at the top of Epson's range of scanners, the V850 Pro comes packed with features. A dual lens scanning system enables both negatives and transparencies up to 8x10in to be scanned at a maximum resolution of 6400dpi, while prints up to A4 can be scanned at 4800dpi – both are more than enough to ensure sizeable images should you want to print out later.

Two sets of film holders are supplied so you can load one holder while the other is being scanned to avoid interruptions to your workflow. The holders themselves are height adjustable so you can be confident of getting a razor sharp scan.

When it comes to the actual scanning, a range of features are built in to the Epson Scan software to help you get the best results. The Digital ICE technology is highly effective in reducing dust, hair, scratches and other gremlins, while the Color Restoration function is handy if you're scanning in older images where the colours have faded over time. The three levels of Backlight Correction are also useful to help lift images where the subject is silhouetted against a bright background.

The Epson Scan interface is simple enough to use. Three modes are available: Full Auto, Home and Professional and we'd suggest the latter to get the very best from your images. While the V850 isn't the quietest machine in operation, it certainly delivers impressive scans. The optical density of 4.0DMax means that even the most subtle difference in tonal shades will be picked up to ensure you get wonderfully clear results.

The quality we got from the V850 Pro means that there's no excuse to let old film shots go to waste. Rescue them from that 'ready for the bin' pile and breathe new life into your shots.

ABOVE The range-topping V850 Pro is packed with features so you'll be able to get the best results from old prints and film.

RIGHT For a smooth workflow, there are two film holders so you can load one while the other is being scanned.

"The V850 Pro is anything but slow. Thanks to the use of Epson's ReadyScan LED light source, it was ready to go virtually instantly"

TOP Clean and simple design makes the Perfection V850 Pro simple to use.

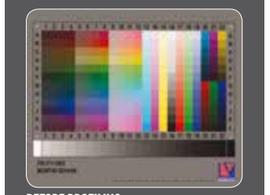
USING THE i1 PROFILER

Before you start scanning, we recommend you use the i1 Profiler to create a bespoke ICC scanner profile to guarantee more accurate colours right from the off. Here's how:

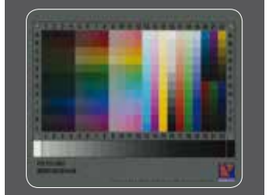
1) Once you've installed the software, place the supplied target 4x5in transparency or 5x7in print on the plate. Turn off any colour corrections and save the resulting file as a .tif. This creates a 'before' scan.

2) Follow the on-screen instructions to load up a Reference file. The software assesses the differences between the two and creates a profile. Before you save the profile, make sure you have ICC Profile Version 2 selected.

3) In the Epson Scan software, choose the Professional scanning mode and at the bottom of the dialogue box, choose Configuration. Now check the Color Sync box and from the Source drop-down menu choose the profile you've just named – in our case Scanner.icc. Scan the same target again and look at the difference!



BEFORE PROFILING



AFTER PROFILING

IMAGE Prefect for projecting images in large venues, the EB-4950WU.

IT'S SHOWTIME!

Give your images the exposure they deserve by projecting them using an Epson digital projector. We round up the models and features to look out for

If you want to show your images to a wider audience, the best way to do it is through projection. Thankfully, the days of transparencies getting stuck in projectors or being displayed the wrong way round are long gone. Contemporary digital projectors are slick, powerful and show your work off at its very best.

Epson provides a wide range of digital projectors that are suitable for a variety of applications, plus they come with a range of simple connectivity options to ensure you won't keep your audience waiting. It's also worth pointing out that far from being only suitable for showing images, Epson projectors can also be used to connect devices such as games consoles, home cinema systems and HD video cameras, making them true multimedia devices.

Our experiences of working with Epson digital projectors are nothing but positive. To keep things as simple as possible, we chose not to project images from a computer or wireless device and elected instead to put the edited shots on to a flash drive, which plugged into the USB socket and was instantly recognised by the device. It was then just a case of using the remote control to run through the set.

If you're considering investing in a digital projector, we'd recommend one of the following three models depending on your budget and projection requirements.

EB-U32

A great model for both home and office use. It offers the highest WUXGA resolution, has a bright 3200 lumens output for both white and colour brightness and a 15,000:1 contrast ratio. Equally impressive is the lamp and air filter life; if you were to use the projector to watch a movie every day, it would be 15 years before you needed to change either.

Connectivity is also one of the EB-U32's strong points. It boasts two HDMI inputs and comes with Wi-Fi built-in so you can connect from a smartphone or tablet.

Automatic vertical keystone correction coupled with horizontal keystone correction make it easy to get a perfect projected image.

EH-TW6600

The EH-TW6600 is equally at home projecting images as it is being used to display movies and games at Full HD resolution. It uses Epson's 3LCD technology to ensure there's no trade-off in colour and brightness, plus it has an impressive 70,000:1 contrast and a bright 2500 lumens output.

A recent *What Hi-Fi* test winner, the EH-TW6600 comes with two HDMI inputs and two 10W stereo speakers; perfect if you want to add a soundtrack to accompany your shots. There's also a full range of image correction features so you'll be up and running in no time.

EB-4950WU

Perfect for the photographer who wants to show his work to large audiences in equally large venues.

With WUXGA resolution and a powerful 4500 lumens output, the EB-4950WU won't be found wanting when it comes to image brightness, while the 5000:1 contrast ratio will ensure that your audience will see plenty of detail.

A wide range of connectivity options are available, plus a wireless LAN connection is also available as an optional extra. You can even use the split screen function so you can plug in two devices for a true multimedia extravaganza!

IMAGE Whether's it's Full HD movies or games, or stills, you're projecting, the EH-TW6600 is equally at home.

RIGHT If you're looking for versatility, choose a projector with plenty of connectivity options. It's one of the EB-U32's strong points.

"If you're considering investing in a digital projector, we'd recommend one of these three models depending on your budget and requirements"

HOW TO CHOOSE A PROJECTOR

Our top tips for picking the right projector for your needs:

Lumens
Refers to how bright the projector is. More lumens = more brightness. Lumen ratings should be supplied for both colour brightness and white brightness. If only one number is provided, the chances are it will only be for white, which can be misleading as colour brightness can often be much lower.

Resolution
Like any digital product, resolution is measured in pixels. The higher the resolution, the more detail you'll see. You'll typically find a projector is either XGA (1024x768 pixels), WXGA (1280x800 pixels) or WUXGA (1920x1200 pixels).

Contrast ratio
The difference between the brightest white and the darkest black on screen. A contrast ratio of 1000:1 means that the brightest white is 1000x brighter than the darkest black. Naturally, the bigger the contrast ratio the better the tonal gradation and the more detail on show.

Image adjustments
Horizontal and vertical keystoning, for example, avoid distortion from the projector being placed at an angle to the screen and lens shift ensures you keep sharp focus across the projected image in the same circumstances.

Ease of use
Avoid wasting time setting up by choosing a model with an HDMI connection or wireless capability.

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*Compared against competitors' A3+ photo printers with a 6-colour or greater inkset available as of July 2014.

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