

EPSON

FIRST LOOK: EPSON 3800

EPSON STYLUS PRO 3800

McNamee travels to
DCP Systems
to play with the new kid
on the block



AT A STROKE, EPSON HAS ANSWERED A COUPLE OF ISSUES THAT USERS HAVE HAD SINCE THE CHANGE FROM THE Stylus Pro 4000 to the 4800. They dropped the ability to carry both Matte Black and Photo Black inks when they brought in the 4800 and another problem, especially those working in a domestic environment, is that the footprint of the 4800 is large. The brand new 3800 solves both issues, with a nine-slot printer that has dispensed with roll feed to create the smallest footprint currently available in this very important class of machine (A2 or 17" throat, take your pick). It is actually 27"x15"x10" (W x D x H), weighing 43lb.

The printer was on view at the recent DCP Road Show, a real coup for our hosts, who had the only machine in the country, there for all to see. We lost no time in running out some test prints and very impressive it all was!

This is a sheet-fed printer that will take up to 1.5mm board and up to 120 sheets of plain paper. It has a nominal maximum size of A2 (420x594mm that's 16.5x23.4in) but will actually print the American size of 17x22in. At the other end it can go down to 4x6in and it can print borderless at A2 on both sides, top and bottom. As with other inkjet machines borderless is available on a range of set sizes only.

The cartridges are pressurised, 80ml capacity of the K3 UltraChrome series (ie PK, MK, LK, LLK, C, LC, M, LM, and Y). They cost £30 ex VAT. Changing from Matte to Photo Black loses you 4.5ml of ink, going the other way loses you 1.5ml. The time to auto-change a black ink type is 2 or 3 minutes, depending upon the direction. The ink type is auto-selected via the media setting – MK for art and matte papers and PK for gloss and lustre. This is a huge improvement over the ink loss for changing the 4800 over. Since you get nine cartridges in the box when you buy the machine, you actually only pay £725 for the ironmongery of the printer making it a highly competitive price for such a performer. The price is set at £995 ex VAT.

We tested using Epson UltraSmooth Fine Art paper at 1440dpi and Matte Black ink. The audit results were in line with much of our other data using this paper – vanishingly small skin tone

errors and the higher errors in the blues. We are confident we could coax even better results with some profile tuning, but for general work the machine is first-class right out of the box. Interconnectivity is via USB 2 or Ethernet and those with a need for proofing can drive through a RIP. No doubt the major RIP providers will be working on their solutions already. Print times are 6m 45s for an A2.

Overall then this printer is going to be a real hit with many *Professional Imagemaker* readers. It is the right size physically, quick, accurate and has the long-lasting, low-metamerism K3 UltraChrome ink set – what are you waiting for?



“...this printer is going to be a real hit...”

