

Undercover Operation

Taking a mate on holiday isn't always a good idea, but Fraser Kitt discovered it was well worth the effort



The EPSON PictureMate accepts a range of cards, making it very easy to print from your digital.



"The PictureMate resembles a ghetto blaster radio with its carry handle and toaster shape, but hidden under the covers is one of the best personal printers you'll find."

I WAS GOING on vacation when the EPSON PictureMate arrived at the door. Its convenient carry handle made it easy to transport from the car to each of our destinations, so it was always available to print our digital snaps.

The PictureMate resembles a ghetto blaster radio with its carry handle and toaster shape, but hidden under the covers is one of the best personal printers you'll find.

Designed to print 4x6 (postcard) prints, it is ideal for the hobby photographer or the digital scrapbooker (see Issue 2 of *D-Photo*).

Lift the rear cover to load EPSON's fabulous Premium Glossy Photo Paper (Cat # SO41729), then open the ink cartridge packet and shake it several times before locking it into place in the rear of the printer.

The cartridge contains five colours and black for an incredible tonal range, providing users with near photo-quality images.

ON THE CARDS

The main front cover is a receptacle for your completed prints while the right side cover houses three card slots. It accepts nearly every card, including xD, Smart Media, Compact Flash, Microdrive, SD, MMC and the plethora of Sony Memory Sticks, including Memory Stick Pro. Cards like miniSD cards can only be used in the PictureMate with an SD card adapter.

Once you have inserted your memory card, you can print out a proof sheet using the menu on the PictureMate's large LCD screen. It's then a simple matter of choosing the pictures you'd like to print from the proof.

This printer also provides plenty of control, including the ability to zoom.

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Setting up the printer with my computer was a breeze. I just slipped the CD into the computer and followed the instructions. Everything went smoothly and I was printing without problems. The only hiccup I experienced was trying to print an image with the wrong orientation – the image was vertical and I had told the

printer it was horizontal!

Perhaps best of all, the PictureMate acts as a card reader when connected to your computer (those using Windows XP or Mac OS X won't even need to load the drivers), allowing you to access the images on your card without having to use up valuable camera batteries.

PICTBRIDGE SUPPORT

If you own a Bluetooth camera phone you can get a Bluetooth module, so you can transfer images from the phone to the printer. I tried plugging my D-Link Bluetooth module into the USB socket in the back of the printer, but the unit wouldn't recognise it. Buy the genuine EPSON one and you're away laughing.

This little printer also has 'PictBridge' support, which means you can plug your camera directly to the PictureMate without having to remove the card.

The major advantage to using the PictBridge facility is that you can use your camera's LCD screen to review the prints rather than making a proof sheet.

HOLIDAY HEAVEN

This printer was great fun on holiday, allowing me to share my images without having to run to a photo lab for postcard prints. Even better we could use cards from different cameras to make proof sheets and decide what images we

"This printer was great fun on holiday, allowing me to share my images without having to run to a photo lab..."

wanted to share without having to power up a PC. Images were frighteningly photo-realistic and the B&W images I printed had a lovely tonal range.

I'm sure just showing my friends these results has helped sell at least one of these personal printers!

D

EPSON PictureMate \$449

- + Very portable, easy to use, loads of options, ink dries immediately.
- Doesn't print from Tiff files.

Design	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Print Quality	★★★★★
Value for Money	★★★★★

OVERALL RATING ★★★★★

CONTACT www.epson.co.nz