



Photo perfect

EPSON STYLUS PHOTO R350 PRINTER \$399

The Epson Stylus Photo R350 printer is an updated version of an earlier model, the R310 and in this case, the company made a great printer even better. As the name suggests, the printer is another inkjet designed for photo printing. There are a couple of things that set it apart from the herd, the first being its ability to print directly onto blank CDs and DVDs and secondly, the ease with which a whole gamut of printing and image transfer functions can be accomplished without a PC.

The R350 is a six-ink printer, which means you have a light cyan and a light magenta cartridge, as well as the usual cyan, magenta, yellow and black. The upside of this is the step up from the print quality possible with ordinary four-ink printers. The downside is you've got two more cartridges to keep topped up.

There's an old design adage that says what looks right usually is right, and the R350's appearance and overall layout scores very highly. It is finished in grey and black, and when the paper input and output trays are neatly tucked away, you could almost be looking at a stylish portable hi-fi unit.

The R350 is quite wide at just over 48cm, which exacerbated one minor gripe: the power and printer-to-PC (USB 2.0) sockets are located at opposite ends at the back. Ideally, these sockets should be as close to each other as possible, because your PC is likely to be positioned near a power supply.

At the centre of the front is a 2.4-inch LCD screen, which doubles as a menu display and as an image viewer. A memory

card reader with five slots supporting 13 formats sits behind a hatch at the front (a nice touch is that any image on an inserted card can be played as a screensaver on the LCD).

A final, but important front detail is a PictBridge USB port that can be used for printing directly from digital cameras, or from Flash USB or CD-R drives.

Epson has thoughtfully provided a 40-page manual (all in English), but the large LCD screen and intuitive controls make this a very easy printer to use without a PC. I was also impressed by the available functions sans PC.

For example, along with paper or border-less photo printing in a range of sizes, you can print on blank CDs or DVDs. What's more, you can adjust the inside and outside diameter of the printing area, and move it up, down and sideways to get the alignment exactly right.

Epson quotes a respectable 15 pages per minute for colour or black and white text printing in economy mode, but with a maximum printing resolution of 5760 X 1440dpi (optimised), photo printing speeds at best quality were on the sedate side.

The quoted speed for a 10 x 15cm photo print comes in at just under one minute, but an A4 borderless print at the max quality setting will take a few minutes.

That said, the R350 is such a rock-steady printing platform, you can safely leave it to do its stuff unattended, and the quality you end up with is well worth the wait. I started to print some of my favourite shots onto A4 Premium Glossy stock and well before I was half way through the packet, I was already in love. ■ MICHAEL FOREMAN



DETAILS

CONTACT

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SPECIFICATIONS

PRINTER RESOLUTION: 5760dpi (optimised)
PRINTING SPEEDS:
BLACK TEXT: A4 up to 15ppm
COLOUR TEXT: A4 up to 15ppm
Photos (10 x 15cm) from 58 seconds
PAPER SIZES* A4, A5, B5, 4x6, 5x7, Envelopes (No. 10, DL, C6, 123 x 220mm)
ENVELOPE SIZES: DL, C6, 220 x 132mm
BORDER-LESS PRINTING: A4, 100 x 150mm, 4x6, using Photo Paper, Premium Glossy Photo Paper, or Matte Paper Heavyweight.
SPECIAL PRINTING: Suitable blank CD/DVDs
BORDER-LESS PRINTING SIZES (ON PHOTO PAPER ONLY): 13 x 18cm, 10 x 15cm, A4
I/O: USB 2.0 port, PictBridge
MEMORY CARDS: Compact-Flash, SmartMedia, Memory Stick, Memory Stick PRO, Memory Stick Duo, Memory Stick PRO Duo, MagicGate Memory Stick, MagicGate Memory Stick Duo, Microdrive, SD (Secure Digital) Card, MultiMediaCard, miniSD Card, xD-Picture Card, xD-Picture Card Type M
WEIGHT: 6.1kg
DIMENSIONS: W483 X D478 X H297mm

PLUS

- ✦ Produces outstanding border-less photos, with or without a PC
- ✦ Feature-packed at an attractive prices

MINUS

- ✦ Six inks means more cartridges

VERDICT

An affordable six-ink printer that produces outstanding results, the R350 is hard to beat.

Aesthetics	98%
Performance	92%
Features	98%
Functionality	95%
Price Value	96%
Overall	

