



DETAILS

CONTACT
epson.co.nz

SPECIFICATIONS

- Handles A4, A5, A6, B5, letter, legal, half letter, 4R, 5R and envelopes
- 2.5-inch colour LCD
- Transfer from: USB, PictBridge and card reader (including CompactFlash (Type I and II), xD-Picture Card, SmartMedia, Secure Digital, miniSD, MultiMediaCard, Magic Gate Memory Stick, Memory Stick, Memory Stick Pro and IBM Microdrive and Memory Stick Pro Duo with an adapter),
- Scans at 3200 x 6400dpi (interpolates to 5760 x 1440)
- 48-bit colour depth
- Suits both Mac OS X and Windows

PROS

- + Outstanding prints
- + Bypass your PC if you wish
- + Fast-ish

CONS

- ✗ No fax if you have a PC
- ✗ Slow, fiddly set-up and install

VERDICT

A good all-round multi-function device with top-class printing abilities

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Aesthetics | 70% |
| Performance | 93% |
| Features | 85% |
| Functionality | 90% |
| Price Value | 90% |
| Overall | |



Jack Of All Trades

EPSON STYLUS PHOTO RX650 \$499

The Photo RX650 is Epson's latest foray into the multifunction printer category and aims to be a Swiss Army knife for photographers.

With a 3200x6400 Matrix CCD scanner and built-in transparency unit, Epson's Ultimate Photo All In One Printer is a good home, small business or educational scanner. It also functions as a stand-alone colour and black-and-white copier. It features a 2.5-inch high-resolution colour LCD photo viewer, 90 nozzle-per-colour Micro Piezo print head and six individual ink cartridges. It prints border free photos (great teamed with Epson's just-released Ultra Glossy Photo Paper), as well as on compatible CD/DVD discs.

There's an infrared communications port fitted as standard and a Bluetooth adapter is available as an extra.

As a unit, it's a little corporate PC-looking with its gunmetal and silver trim, although the rounded edges help this a little. It's not too imposing size-wise, considering how much it's capable of. To set up, peel off the bits of tape and a couple of protective sheets, unlock the scanner's platen and find the USB input. I'm embarrassed to say it took me 20 minutes to find it, as it's by no means clearly indicated in the manual or on the quick-start poster. Finally, I realised I had to flip up the entire top of the unit and thread it through to the socket internally.

Then there's the install. On a Mac - and with my Apple bias it's hard to believe it's any easier on a PC - it's a lengthy and laborious process that requires your attention, typing in the system password several times at different stages, 'Okaying' this and that and even having to turn the unit on when prompted. Crikey!

Finally, the thing is sitting there all ready to go. Printing straight text is a simple and quick operation, but this thing is really designed for photos. Using Epson's Premium Glossy Photo Paper, results are first class, while Epson's new Ultra Glossy Photo Paper is a step above even that. As the French say, the

prints are 'bloody beauty' (except I believe they say it in French).

Memory cards slip into slots hidden behind a flip-down lid just above the paper exit tray - this is when the LCD comes in really handy (I also appreciate seeing ink levels whenever I want on this display, rather than in software.) The images appear in shunts like progressive-set JPEGs on websites. It's easy to flip through; set how many copies you want for each picture, press another button at the end and off it goes.

Printing times are very reasonable on the RX650, although there seemed to be a little system hesitation on my Apple Core Duo 20-inch iMac (dual-processor Intel-based machine running at 2GHz). This may be because the Epson printer drivers are not written as Universal Binaries yet.

Scanning and copying is better than average for a consumer device (we do like Epson's scanning technology), but copying a lot of documents in colour is going to be far less expensive per unit on a proper carbon-transfer-style photocopier. However, if you're caught short, it will handle it.

A transparency holder is supplied. However, this will not handle faxes (which Apple OS X can do anyway) or answer your phone, as a few multi-functions will. PC users might also miss networking functions (but that's also handled in OS X, which lets you share most printers. Get a Mac). ■ MARK WEBSTER

