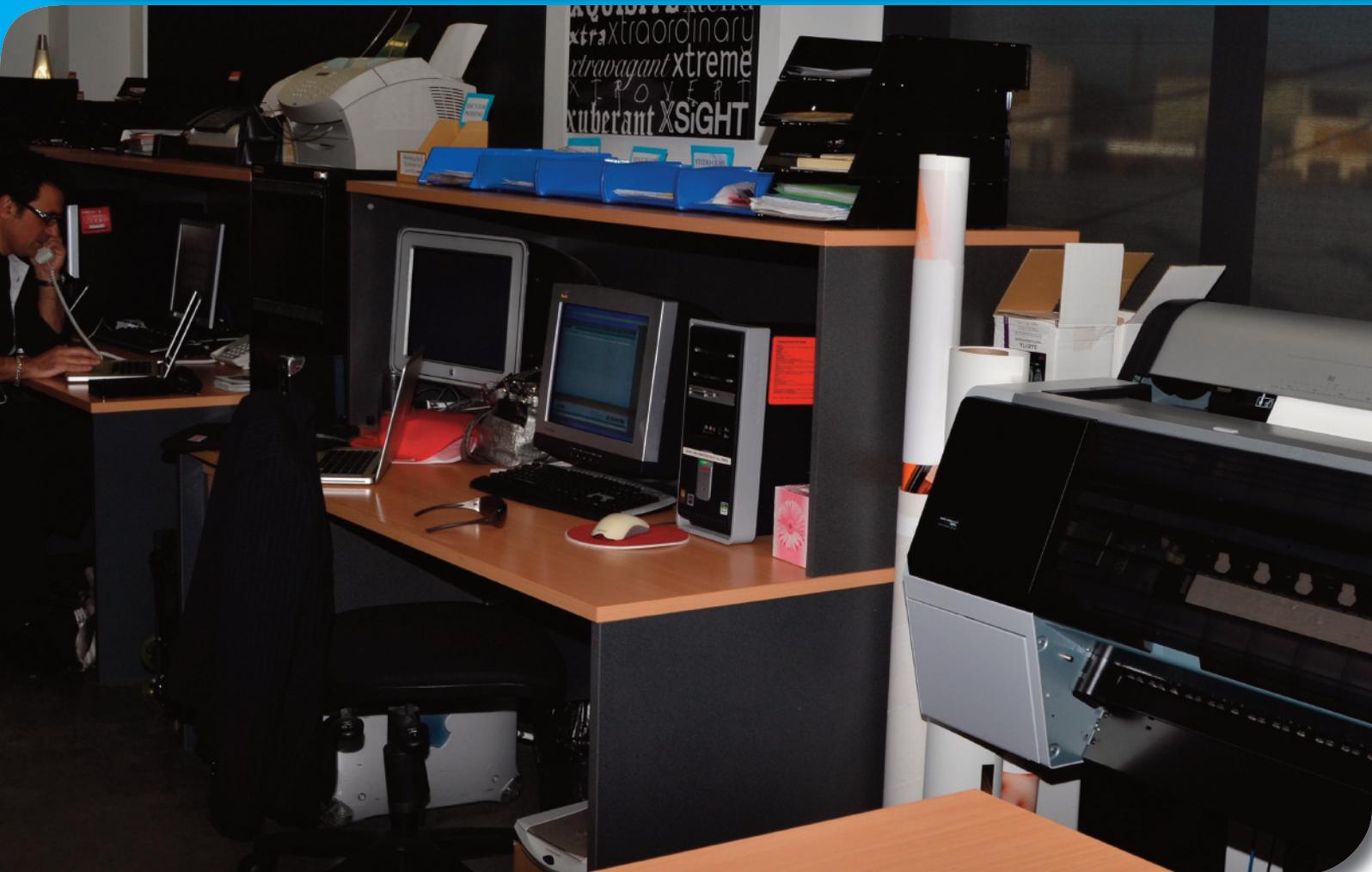


Rocco Ancora

An Epson solution for “no challenge” printing



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Rocco Ancora
Creative Director

Xsight Photography and Video

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Rocco Ancora

Rocco Ancora, creative director of Xsight Photography and Video, has an enviable reputation as a professional photographer. Along with being ranked by *American Photo* magazine as one of the 10 best wedding photographers in the world, he has received the Australian Institute of Professional Photography's wedding photographer of the year award four times.

It is a printing solution from Epson, though, that is ensuring the beautiful images Rocco captures with his camera are being translated into equally stunning printed works.

Challenge: Quality without compromise

"I've been shooting weddings for about 17 years now," Rocco says. "I got into photography in the days when we shot with film and had our own darkrooms. But that changed when we progressed to the digital age, and we had to put our trust in labs to do all our printing."

Rocco and his colleagues at Xsight were never satisfied with the lab process, particularly in terms of print quality and response time, and he recognised that the quality he – and his clients – demanded could be achieved only with an in-house printing solution and total control over the entire process.

Solution: The Epson Stylus Pro 9900

The transition back to in-house printing was achieved only after an extensive and lengthy evaluation of an enormous number of possible alternatives. Ultimately, though, it came down to a short-list of one – the 44-inch Epson Stylus Pro 9900.

"Epson has always been a trusted name in the industry and the one with a proven track record in large format photo printing," Rocco states. "With the Stylus Pro 9900, we recognised a printer that would provide us with the black-and-white and colour quality, versatility and print durability on large media we were looking for."

With regard to versatility, it was the Stylus Pro 9900's ability to handle a broad range of media types up to 44 inches wide and 1.5mm thick, that contributed to the decision – and it's a decision that now has a Stylus Pro 9900 delivering a streamlined workflow, full quality control and, importantly, optimum photographic print output.

Outstanding quality and colour

"Print quality was the number one factor in choosing the Stylus Pro 9900," Rocco states. "After all, there are enormous expectations placed on photographers when it comes to wedding photography, and the printer's quality is such that we're now in the best possible position of meeting those expectations."

That quality, which is so crucial to Rocco and his clients, is the result of numerous Epson print technology innovations such as Variable-Sized Ink Droplet Technology and Advanced Ink Meniscus Control.

Those, along with the industry leading Epson Micro Piezo print head technology and UltraChrome HDR inks contribute also to the Stylus Pro 9900's ability to deliver best-in-class colour.

"Colour reproduction is crucial, especially when it comes to the delicate hues of a wedding dress or bouquet," Rocco says. "If the dress is a particular shade of white, then that's what must be represented and nothing else!"

We work with very subtle tones, muted colours and delicate colour palettes so we need those to be printed with incredible accuracy – and this is precisely what we're able to do with the Stylus Pro 9900."

Central to this precise colour reproduction is the printer's 10-colour ink system, which includes orange and green inks to provide an incredibly wide colour gamut, as well as three levels of black ink for outstanding black-and-white image reproduction.

Stunning black-and-white

Rocco says the latter feature is a "must have", as a great number of his most highly acclaimed images are taken in black-and-white. For those images to translate into printed works he needs the most minute of details in shadow and colour gradation to be reproduced with incredible accuracy – and it's what he is achieving with the Stylus Pro 9900.

"With the Stylus Pro 9900 and its three-level black ink system, we're able to achieve black-and-white prints that are true to the original image," Rocco states. "If I had to provide a single comment on black-and-white printing with this printer, it would be: There are absolutely no challenges. It just does everything we want it to do."

Rocco is quick to point out that the benefits of the three-level black ink technology extend beyond just outstanding image reproduction, with dedicated matte and photo black inks resulting in savings in both time and money.

"In the past with other printers, changing from matte black to photo black involved stopping the run, changing the ink cartridge and bleeding out the ink lines," he explains. "This meant wasting about a hundred dollars worth of ink in the process. With both those inks installed permanently in the Stylus Pro 9900 we've totally eliminated that wastage."

Industry-leading durability

According to Rocco, the print quality of the Stylus Pro 9900 is ideally complemented by its print durability. This is an especially important benefit for a photographer in Rocco's line of work as it allows him to make some impressive guarantees on the life of its prints.

"A wedding album is a family heirloom that is going to last generations; and we want the quality to remain throughout the years," he says. "We've done experiments over the years with lab prints and they do fade, especially when you expose them to daylight every day. But with the Stylus Pro 9900 we're able to guarantee 100 year permanency on our prints."

Rocco says it is the combination of the printer's UltraChrome HDR inks and Epson's Cold Press fine art papers he uses that allow him to make this guarantee. Ink is absorbed quickly and deeply into the media substrate, meaning colours stabilise quickly and become resistant to change.

Improved control and workflows

With clients paying up to \$12,000 for a shoot, it's of paramount importance to Rocco that the Stylus Pro 9900 ensures he has total control over every aspect of print production.

"We're definitely getting better quality results than we were with a lab," Rocco states. "But more than that, it's giving us control. With a lab we would send the files through then wait a week for them to come back. And if something was missing or not right you'd lose even more time. With the Stylus Pro 9900 we have the convenience of doing everything quickly and on demand in-house."

Saving time is a huge benefit for Rocco and Xsight. He shoots up to 200 weddings every year and each one generates a substantial volume of printing, but his studio now turns jobs around faster than before with absolutely minimal downtime. "The printer has been very reliable," he says. "We've had it up and running for almost a year and we've had no technical or reliability issues in that time – none at all."

Given that Rocco's job is to capture one of the most important days in his clients' lives, however, it is only fitting that they should have the final word. "The feedback we're getting from customers is one word – 'amazing'," Rocco says. "That's what we always hear. Our clients are really enthusiastic about the beautiful tonal ranges provided by the Stylus Pro 9900. From our perspective, there's simply no comparison to labs or anything else."

For more information about Epson Large Format Printers, please call 1300 130 194 or visit www.epson.com.au



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