

permajet papers

PermaJet is the paper brand for the Imaging Warehouse, which started life in a different era as Nova and the Darkroom Warehouse. The attention to technical detail which founded their success is even more evident in the digital age.



TWENTY TWO different paper types are included in PermaJet's 2008 Test Pack, which also features a swatch manufactured in the tradition of companies like Ilford. A lot of effort goes into this swatch of 6x2" samples, each printed with its type and weight.

An equal effort has gone into thinking out the on-line ICC profiles which are individually downloadable for the entire range of inkjet media (visit www.permajet.com). Not only is every paper type profiled, the filenames and visible profile identities are designed to make *Photoshop* dialog settings easy.

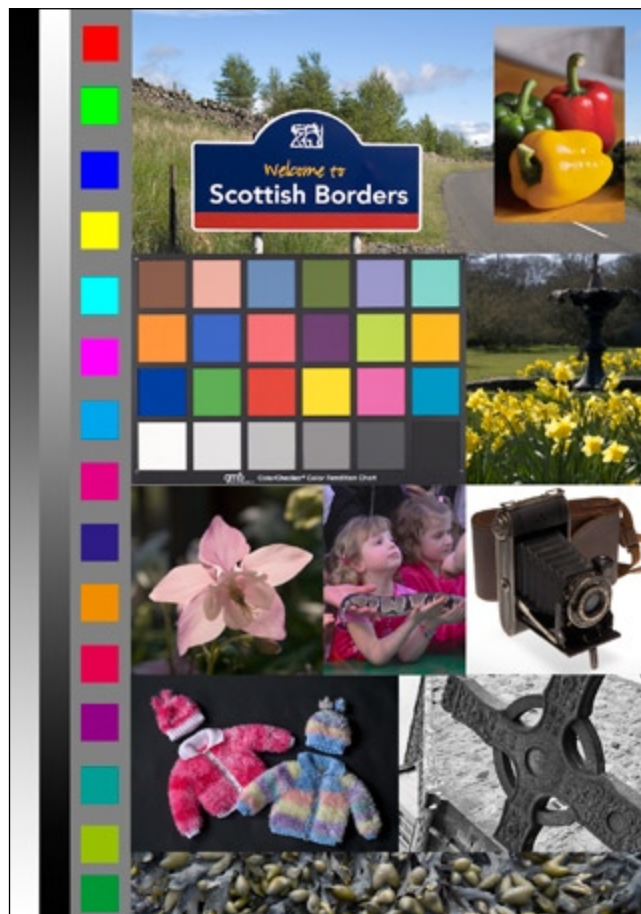
Each profile includes in its name not only the PermaJet identity, but the printer type you have selected, and the appropriate media settings which may in turn decide what kind of ink is used.

For example, from their PDF instruction document also downloadable, PermaJet label all Generic profiles in the following way:

Manufacturer: APJ
 Ink Set: KC
 Printer: 2400
 Ink Variation: Gloss
 Paper Media Setting" PGPP
 Profile Version: #1

This becomes a file called APJ_KC2400PK_Gloss_PGPP_#1 or `apj_kc2400pk_gloss_pgpp_v1`.

When you select this profile in *Photoshop*, you also know that the next stage will involve selecting Premium Glossy Photo Paper as



your media type and on the printer you must switch to Gloss ink.

Compared to the obscure naming of many paper maker profiles, this protocol is helpful and avoids errors.

I had the task of printing my

standard test file (above) on all 22 paper types in the sample pack, plus *Digital Photo Canvas*, a new semi-gloss material which can be fed through the Epson Stylus Pro 3800, my own printer.

Though the sample pack con-

tains three sheets of four popular paper types (Gloss 271, Oyster 271, MattPlus 245 and Matt Proofing 160) it contains one sheet only of the remaining 18 types. I managed to make only one printing error in *Photoshop* (failure to set Colour Management to OFF as the last step before clicking 'Print') but this wasted one test type. When using this pack to choose the paper types you want to order, it may be better to cut the sheets in half! Fortunately, I also had the Fine Art sample pack which contains five sheets of each of four media, and the one I'd wasted was duplicated in this pack.

While the test pack is stacked in order and a guide sheet provided, the samples are not labelled. My first job was to write the paper type carefully on the back of all the sheets.

Printing the tests was surprisingly fast and easy with the 3800, but the heavier fine art type media had to be loaded into the rear manual feeder. This is notorious for throwing up feed errors, and sure enough it did despite great care. The canvas was extremely difficult to feed, and showed small ink blobs on its edges, indicating that a custom adjustment to the paper thickness setting in the driver was needed.

The 'Digital Photo' paper types listed above can all be fed from the main front hopper, meaning a small stack of paper can be loaded. The same goes for some

of the thinner art stocks, anything 271gsm or under can usually be loaded this way.

Selecting the media indicated in the ICC name (Gloss, Lustre, Enhanced Matt and Watercolor were the four types used between the range of papers) automatically changes the black ink from gloss to matt as needed in the 3800.

If the paper needs the Watercolor setting, it can only be loaded using manual rear feed as this media type can not be selected when the page setup specifies the main feeder.

Overall, the downloadable generic profiles proved very accurate. My detailed comments follow each paper type. The prints were viewed using the Colour Confidence GrafiLite.

Results

Taking the papers in order of their listing in the 2008 Test Pack:

Gloss 271: most closely resembling photo RC gloss, this paper produced an optimum result tonally with good neutral transition to deeper shadows. The 3800 inks stand slightly glossier than unprinted paper. Rating: ●●●●

Oyster 271: the matching pearl-lustre type white RC. Slightly richer black, crisper b/w contrast. Again, the ink is gloss and stands in reflected relief on the surface. Rating: ●●●●

Matt Plus 245: a heavy bright white paper ideal for contact sheets and mini proofs. Slightly lower saturation and d-max, dull tones on the b/w celtic cross, some shadow tone break. Perfect matt ink and paper. Rating: ●●●●

Matt Proofing 160: economy proof paper. Visibly weaker black and saturation, very dull for mono, feels flimsy. Rating: ●●●

Photo Art Pearl 271: with a fibre-base feel, this lustre paper glosses up when inked, but unless there are plain white areas it will not be noticed. Long tone scale and excellent d-max, separation, shadows. Rating: ●●●●●

Fibre Base Gloss 295: as good tonally as the lustre, but proved very susceptible to marks and scuffs, with the 3800 ink lying in a visible layer. Probably better on a different printer type! Rating: ●●●●

Fibre Base Royal 325: difficult to load (rear only), ultra heavy, but much better ink lay. Some relief and gloss variations remain. Superb tonal range. Rating: ●●●●

Fibre Base Gloss Warmtone 295: as with the white tone version, very easily to mark and the ink is in too much high gloss relief. Rating: ●●●●

Delta Matt Fibre Base 271: a velvet finish matt with beautiful soft tones and best highlight detail. No ink issues; modest contrast. Ideal for portraits. Rating: ●●●●●

Portrait White 285: would need a custom profile, strong tone break to shadows. Lovely feel and texture, moderate d-max, resists handling well. Rating: ●●●●

Portrait 300: a touch less brightening than the 285, similar surface, similar need for a custom profile. Good substantial 'carton' paper. Rating: ●●●●

Portfolio 200: light weight variant, almost as smooth as matt proofing, slightly off-white. Very poor tone break to shadows, would need a custom profile. Rating: ●●●●

Alpha 310: this is a heavy, nearly smooth calendered art paper with a natural white. Rich, good tones into the shadows, good saturation. Rating: ●●●●

Omega 310: identical to Alpha but with a whiter base. Equally good. Rating: ●●●●

Smooth Art Silk 300: this has a lovely texture which the Epson 3800 gloss ink picks up well. One of the best looking prints, a bit dense but with clean tones. Rating: ●●●●●

Artist 210: a lightweight strongly textured natural white paper. Slight tone break to shadows, very sharp, slight lack of punch. Rating: ●●●●

Museum 310: heavy, less textured, natural paper. Prints with open midtones, shadow transition shows a break (custom profile could fix). Tactile quality! Rating: ●●●●●

Parchment 285: stiff, character paper ideal for exhibition prints. Needs a custom profile. Superb under display lights. Rating: ●●●●

Papyrus 300: warm, heavy, rugged textured stiff paper. Rich printing but sharp break from shadows to black. Rating: ●●●●

Textured Art Silk 271: prints dense, rich and looks good with the 3800 inks slightly glazing its natural texture and slightly cream base. The generic profile worked well. Rating: ●●●●●

DS Matt 220: prints much as Matt Proofing 160 but double-sided. OK for economy proofs. Rating: ●●●●

DS Lustre 285: good enough for single sheet use in double sided self bound parents' albums. Handling marks are covered by the 3800 ink. Good tones and sharp detail. Rating: ●●●●●

Digital Semi-Gloss Photo Canvas: lovely feel, the ink glazes it well (avoid blank white areas), naturally warm tones, good shadows. Rating: ●●●●●

The trial pack



The 30-sheet 2008 Test Pack is available from PermaJet for £14.99 plus £5.95 postage. All the papers are very good value for money. You will need to repeat a similar test to mine, to establish which papers work best with your own printer. This test only indicates what the results are with the Epson 3800.



The time taken to do a test like this is considerable. The ideal would be to test all the papers, and several printers, and perhaps a couple of ink types like PermaJet's new CIS for the 3800.

The downloadable profiles save hours and cut waste. If you buy packs of paper, you qualify for a custom ICC profile, produced free for your own printer by PermaJet. We shall be reporting on this service in a future issue.

– David Kilpatrick



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