

Canon Inc.

2014 Wide Format Graphic Arts
Printer Line of the Year



Canon

Canon Inc
30-2, Shimomaruko 3-Chome,
Ohta-ku,
Tokyo 146-8501
Japan

Offering outstanding products across all common size ranges for both the production/proofing and high-end graphic arts markets, Canon Inc. has earned BLI's 2014 Wide Format Graphic Arts Printer Line of the Year award. Presented once a year, the Line of the Year award acknowledges the vendors whose products are the best in their respective categories based on their cumulative test results in BLI's comprehensive lab evaluation. In this past year, every imagePROGRAF model tested turned in an exceptional performance, earning Highly Recommended ratings and Pick awards.

Most notable among the devices' numerous triumphs is the ability for users to readily manage colour output using the Colour Calibration Management Control (CCMC) software, and more importantly, for the devices to consistently deliver precise colour output across multiple compatible models that employ the same number of inks—even an entire fleet—as long as just one of them is equipped with the company's SU-21 spectrophotometer. (The SU-21 is optionally available for the two 24"/609-mm models containing a hard drive—the 8-colour imagePROGRAF iPF6400S and the 12-colour iPF6450.) In evaluating Canon's claim of being able to achieve tight colour control between multiple compatible devices, with a Delta E value of 2.0 or less, BLI's testing proved the Canon units were up to the task. In fact, the recent lab evaluation of the iPF6400S and iPF8400S showed extraordinary consistency of colour, with amazingly low Delta E values of 0.92 and 0.79 in output on two non-Canon media types. "This kind of colour consistency is indispensable for proof printing applications," said Joe Tischner, BLI wide format printer analyst. "Canon builds colour tables directly

into these printers for each Canon-branded media, so consistency is the expected result. However, with non-Canon media, users of these Canon devices have the tools to readily achieve extremely stable colour output.” He added that the CCMC utility is invaluable for keeping track of the calibration status of most media and performing the calibrations when needed across all of Canon’s 8- and 12-colour printers. “Conveniently,” said Tischner, “this can even be accomplished remotely for all networked iPF printers no matter their locations.” And since only one spectrophotometer is needed across all S-series devices and one for all 12-colour units to perform these tasks, Canon’s graphic arts wide format line makes maintaining fleet-wide colour consistency economical and efficient.

Impressive Image Quality

Representing Canon’s 12-colour models, the 24"/609-mm imagePROGRAF iPF6450, which is suitable for photographic, fine art and proofing print applications, excelled in every category tested during its lab evaluation, winning it a Pick last year. Notably, this highly-reliable unit, which employs Canon’s LUCIA EX pigment ink set, delivered natural-appearing skin tones on photographs, while also producing a vibrant spectrum of colour on poster output. Monochrome prints were equally impressive, exhibiting neutral grey tones and dense blacks, while still producing exceptional highlight and shadow details, earning excellent print quality ratings. The iPF6450 was the first Canon wide format device tested in conjunction with the company’s SU-21 spectrophotometer and the Colour Control Management Console (CCMC) utility.

Versatile Utilities

Among the recently-introduced 8-colour units in Canon’s iPFX400S-series of printers, aimed at the proofing, signage, photography and production print markets, BLI has just completed evaluations on the 24"/609-mm imagePROGRAF iPF6400S and 44"/1118-mm iPF8400S, each of which gave Pick-worthy performances. Like the aforementioned 12-colour iPF6450, the 8-colour devices delivered impeccable colour consistency when using the same tools and the newly-available, optional SU-21, as well. The S-series printers were lauded for their ease of use, as well as for their versatile print drivers and administrative utilities. “Canon has bundled a great many ‘extras’ into its imagePROGRAF printers,” said Tischner. “The company gives the user not only a printer that delivers great looking and consistent output, but numerous invaluable tools that provide all-around exceptional ease of use and can definitely benefit a business’s bottom line.” For instance, the print drivers’ Free Layout function enables easy job nesting for consumables savings. In addition, Canon’s free, template-based PosterArtist Lite software provides a straightforward method for creating posters for virtually any application. Repeatedly earning high marks from BLI technicians is the Canon Status Monitor, which tracks print jobs, and the Accounting Manager, which enables consumables cost accounting. A productivity enhancement over competing

models, the company's unique sub-ink tank system, now available on all of Canon's 8- and 12-colour imagePROGRAF printers, allows for ink tank replacement while jobs are printing. Plus, the tank capacities are higher than those of most competing units. Additionally, the iPF8400S is among the fastest printers in its class, producing 18 large-size (A1) high-quality prints in Standard mode on Premium Glossy paper in one hour. The iPF8400S also provides effortless roll and cut-sheet loading and both the iPF8400S and iPF6400S support a wide-range of media types. The Media Configuration Tool is handy not only for adding custom media types, but for removing unused types as well, thereby uncluttering the control panel and print driver.

Another feature new to these models is Canon's Direct Print & Share utility, which enables the submission of multiple files at once to the imagePROGRAF printers, bypassing software applications and print drivers, thus saving considerable time. Additionally, cloud storage is available and readily accessible from workstations via a Google drive account.

Fleet-Wide Innovation

The combination of the SU-21 spectrophotometer and the CCMC utility gains much greater significance when used with an entire fleet of imagePROGRAF printers, especially in colour-critical, proofing print applications. "As BLI proved several times during lab evaluations, the ability of one 24" model configured with a spectrophotometer to provide outstanding colour consistency across two networked 8- or 12-colour imagePROGRAF devices is an unrivaled achievement," remarked Tischner. "And the ability to monitor and maintain consistency remotely and fleet-wide is an astonishing breakthrough."

"Canon's iPFX400 and iPFX400S series of printers are known for their high efficiency, reliability, colour consistency and productivity," said Sam Yoshida, vice president and general manager, marketing, for Canon U.S.A.'s Business Imaging Solutions Group. "It's an honour to be the recipient of BLI's 'Wide Format Graphic Arts Printer Line of the Year' award, and to be recognized for the series' ability to execute frequent, large-quantity requests that meet the highest standards."

About **BLI Pick Awards**

With its Pick awards, BLI gives special recognition in each category to those products that provided the most outstanding performances in BLI's exhaustive lab tests. "Line of the Year" awards recognize the vendors whose product lines are judged to be the best in their respective categories based on their cumulative test results.

BLI's awards stand alone in that they are based on a rigorous battery of lab tests that takes approximately two months to complete. The evaluation includes an extensive durability test, during a portion of which each unit is run at the manufacturer's maximum duty cycle. BLI's durability test is unique among office product evaluations and uniquely qualifies BLI to assess reliability, a critical factor for buyers and IT directors. Other performance attributes evaluated include image quality, ease of use, media handling, productivity, colour management and value, among others. Each product that successfully passes BLI's lab test earns BLI's "Recommended" or "Highly Recommended" seal and a BLI "Certificate of Reliability" and qualifies as a "Pick" award contender. Consequently, BLI "Pick" awards are hard-earned awards that buyers and IT directors can trust to better guide them in their acquisition decisions.

For more information on Buyers Laboratory LLC, please call 201-488-0404, visit www.buyerslab.com, or email info@buyerslab.com.

BUYERS LABORATORY LLC • North America • Europe • Asia

John Lawler, CEO

Anthony F. Polifrone,
Managing Director

Gerry O'Rourke, Managing
Director, BLI International

Patti Clyne, VP of Sales

Joe Douress,
Chief Marketing Officer

Daria Hoffman,
Managing Editor

Dr. Simon Plumtree,
European Managing Editor

Lynn Nannariello,
Assistant Managing Editor

Tracie Hines, Senior Editor,
Competitive Analysis Reports

Jamie Bsales, Senior Product
Editor, Solutions

George Mikolay, Senior Product
Editor, A3 MFPs

Marlene Orr, Senior Product
Editor, Printers and A4 MFPs

Lisa Reider, Senior Product Editor,
Scanners and Environmental

Carl Schell,
Associate Editor

Dan DiGiacomo,
Associate Editor

Priya Gohil,
Senior Editor

Jessica Schiftenhaus,
Research Editor

David Sweetnam,
Head of European Research
and Lab Services

Pete Emory, Manager
of Laboratory Testing

Martin Soane,
European Lab Manager

Pia Beddiges, Manager
of Competitive Services

T.R. Patrick, Art Director

Anthony Marchesini,
IT Director