

sign

Sept/Oct 2016 - No.153

directions

A river runs through it

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A FESTIVAL OF PRINT - THE PRINT SHOW PREVIEW

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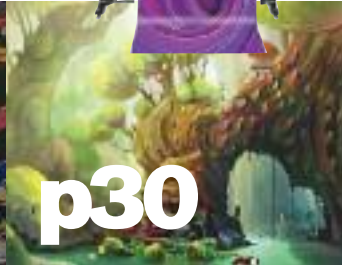
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Sign Directions Hotline:

If you would like the contact details of any of the companies featured in this issue of Sign Directions, please ring **Tel: 01636 819375** for full company information, or alternatively, e-mail signdirections@btconnect.com for a response by return

Coming Next:

The next issue of Sign Directions will be the November/December issue, which will include the winners of The BSGA British Sign Awards 2016, plus special features on Sign and Display Systems and Lighting



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Introduction

setting the scene

Once upon a time, when digital printing was still very new, I used to get extremely frustrated with printer manufacturers who were so thrilled with their own cleverness that they concentrated a lot more on how their machines worked and much less on what they could actually do.

Happily, those days are long past and now every printer manufacturer worth its salt, together with all of the material manufacturers and suppliers, are busily seeking to identify new markets and applications for their wares. In fact, there is also now an annual exhibition, InPrint (which takes place in Milan on 15th-17th November this year) that is purely dedicated to promoting the efficacy of all the major printing processes to the widest possible range of industry sectors.

Unsurprisingly, one of the sectors that has been most receptive to printing technology in general and digital printing in particular, is the Décor sector, which is lucky because it is also the one that the majority of sign and digital print companies are best equipped to service. Many of you, I know, are already using your resources to provide stunning interior graphics, some of which are functional, but all of which are aesthetically pleasing. I know this, because increasingly, examples of your work are passing across my desk and because this year, the BGA British Sign Awards' category that boasts the largest number of entries by far, is the Interiors category, which includes some amazingly creative decorative projects. A lot, but by no means all, involve digital printing – however, there are also some incredible entries, which despite incorporating traditional signmaking skills and techniques, defy any traditional categorisation. If pressed, I'd simply describe them as art installations. These and the other truly splendid entries that have been received in 14 other categories, will be revealed on 3rd November, when the competition culminates in a gala luncheon and presentation ceremony at East Midlands Conference Centre. If you want to be one of the first in 'the know', then turn to page 24 to learn how you can obtain tickets for the event.

Fittingly enough, this month's cover features a decorative mural that flows through Hatchette UK's new Thames-side offices in north London. This and two other equally noteworthy and novel projects are celebrated in this month's Décor section on pages 26-29. On pages 30-33 you can learn why it's imperative that you attend the second edition of The Print Show, which takes place at the NEC on 11th-13th of October, while this month's special feature, Moving Messages, which begins on page 38, takes a fresh look at vehicle graphics. Elsewhere you'll find all of our regular news pages and on page 50, Mark Godden tells you where you can stick it – in the nicest possible way, of course!



Next month's issue will be a bumper one as it includes two special features – sign and display systems and lighting – as well as a special pull-out insert detailing all of the Sign Award winners.



Meanwhile, if you are still ruminating on whether or not to get involved in Décor, let me share with you a photo I found on Pinterest, which perfectly illustrates the possibilities that it offers. This room with a view could be a private sitting room or a corporate reception area – sadly, I have no details as to precise location or participants – but wherever it is, the space has been brilliantly transformed with a printed street view that adds an intriguing third dimension. I think it's totally fab, to the extent

that the photo is on my computer desktop and I have to keep looking at it! I wouldn't mind betting that you have a client that could be equally impressed or a project that would benefit from a similar treatment. Inspired? I hope so and if you are, be sure to let me know, so that I can feature the result in a future issue!



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Fastsigns goes full throttle

Fastsigns' franchise owner Mark Davies has put the pedal to the metal by achieving a podium finish in a Ginetta Supercup car race.

After becoming a keen go-karter as a child, Mark, owner of the company's Huddersfield franchise, graduated to racing cars and competed in his first racing championship in 2007.

The Ginetta Supercup is the car manufacturers' flagship championship



and comprises eight competitive rounds across the year. Mark recently finished third in the Ginetta Supercup's race at Oulton Park, and is on course for further success as the

competition continues.

When he's away from the tracks, Mark runs the franchise, which he set up with his family after leaving college 11



years ago and now owns.

Fastsigns' UK Managing Director, John Davies, commented: "The whole Fastsigns network is really pleased for Mark and it's a real thrill to see the logo on his car as it speeds around the track – clearly being fast is in our nature!" ■

Appointments



Duncan Ferguson has been promoted to the senior management team at **Epson Europe** as Executive Director, Professional Printing & Robotics.

As Director of ProGraphics for Epson Europe since 2007, Duncan has played a major part in establishing Epson's digital inkjet technology in a variety of production printing markets, something he will continue to do in his new position, while also extending Epson's portfolio of professional inkjet solutions and its expansion into new markets and applications. Duncan's remit also now includes the sales and marketing of Epson's advanced robotic automated manufacturing technology into industrial applications.



[l-r] Lauren Randall, Wayne Jobling, 'Charlie' Charlton and Paul Shorton

Your Print Specialists (YPS) has recruited two new personnel to its Support Division. **Philip 'Charlie' Charlton**, who previously spent 26 years with Toshiba, is now the company's Service Engineer, while Lauren Randall, who formerly worked for a YPS customer, will provide Technical and Software Support, thus further demonstrating YPS's commitment to its customers and their businesses.

In addition, long-serving YPS staffer **Paul Shorton** has recently been promoted to Service Manager and is heading up the Support Division, while Purchasing and Distribution staffer **Wayne Jobling** will also be taking on a service support role.



Graphic Printing Technologies (GPT) has appointed **Dave Moore** as its Media Sales Manager. Dave,

who joins GPT from Intercoat, where he was UK Account Manager for nine years, will help to consolidate GPT's commitment to delivering complete large format printing solutions.

Hollywood Monster has appointed **Simon McKenzie** as its new Managing Director.



Simon takes over the role from **Tim Andrews**, who now plans to concentrate his energies on a growing number of different projects, including the charity LoveBrum, which he co-founded in 2014 and Le Creux, a new corporate boat charter service. ■

Sign Build ramps it up

Sign Build, the specialist house builder signage provider, has invested significantly in its website in order to properly reflect its stature as one of the industry's leading manufacturers.

The new site has been given a new fresh look and is now easier to navigate, while also providing visitors with a better idea as to the full scope of the company's operations.

Managing Director, Mark Cowin, said: "We have been looking forward to

unveiling the site for a while and now feel that it will form an integral part of our overall marketing strategy. Whilst in the past, we have kept a low profile, we think that it's now time to highlight the true extent of our capabilities."

The launch of the upgraded website follows a six-figure investment in kit, which includes the UK's first installation of Canon's Arizona 1280GT flatbed printer, thus providing Sign Build with the capacity to accommodate all work in-house. ■

Keep up with the data

In the face of the commercial requirement for up-to-the-minute market intelligence and industry information, AWA Alexander Watson Associates is responding to this demand with its Data Transcripts series of monthly online market data and information updates.

Data Transcripts draws upon AWA's current and ongoing research, end-use market analysis, and sector news, providing convenient and regular data and information.

Data Transcripts are now offered on three topics: Self-adhesive and Release Liner Materials and Markets, Labeling and Product Decoration Markets and Materials, and Flexible Packaging Markets and Materials, three segments in which AWA is an established specialist monitor and publisher of market data.

They are available on annual subscription, either separately or together. **Further information is available at www.awa-bv.com, where it is also possible to subscribe online.** ■

Visit Euro Trophex



Euro Trophex 2016, Europe's largest Trophy, Awards and Personalisation event, which will be taking place at The PTA (Passenger Terminal Amsterdam) for three days, from 15th – 17th October 2016, is the must attend exhibition for anyone working within the trophy, awards, engraving and personalisation sectors.

Exhibits at the show will include a wide range of trophies and cups in a variety of materials and finishes, innovative medals and awards, glassware, silverware

and stylish plaques and plates, as well as an impressive range of promotional items and corporate gifts.

In addition, visitors will also be able to see the latest crop of engraving machines, lasers and heat presses and learn more about the newest operating techniques, while other show attractions will include live demonstrations and displays.

Show registration is now open and visitors who register at www.eurotrophex.com will receive a free entry pass. ■

A printer with benefits!



The winner of the competition Hybrid Services ran at the recent Sign & Digital UK exhibition has been announced as Martin Cherry, of Ebbsfleet Printing Solutions.

Martin, who is more commonly known as 'Stan', got more than he bargained for when he visited the show. Having placed an order for a new Mimaki JFX200-2513 flatbed printer with specialist reseller Granthams, his subsequent demo secured his entry into Hybrid's prize draw.

Commenting on his delight at winning the star prize, a luxury holiday at Spanish resort, La Manga Club, which is famed for its superb golf courses and world class sporting facilities, Martin said: "Sign & Digital UK provided a great opportunity for us to preview the Mimaki JFX200 flatbed printer, which we quickly realised was everything we were looking for and more. However, the holiday was a totally unexpected extra bonus – we couldn't be more pleased!" ■

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Sign & Digital UK to celebrate 30th anniversary

Sign & Digital UK has announced that its 2017 anniversary event will be a celebration of 30 years of applications, ideas and advice.



With almost half of the exhibition stands rebooked on site at the 2016 event, Faversham House Group, the show's organiser is confidently expecting next year's exhibition to be even bigger in terms of space. Companies that have already confirmed they will be exhibiting in 2017 include Blackman & White, Epson (UK), Grafityp, Graphic Printing Technologies (GPT), Perfect Colours, PrintMAX, Ultima Displays, Your Print Specialists and Vivid Laminating, as well as A.P.A. UK and Ribbon Print, both of which will be making their show debut.

Rudi Blackett, the exhibition's Event Director, said: "The industry has



witnessed lots of ups and downs during the past 30 years, but Sign & Digital UK has been consistent throughout and has always offered visitors the stability, advice and support they need to make sense of an ever-changing marketplace."

He added that Faversham House Group is planning a host of exciting new features designed to commemorate the show's heritage, further details of which will be revealed over the coming weeks.

Sign & Digital UK 2017 will take place on 28th-30th March at Birmingham's NEC and entry will be free. For further information and to register interest in attending, visit the show's new look website at: www.signanddigitaluk.com ■

showtime

DIARY DATES FOR 2016

Viscom Italia 2016

13th-15th October

Fiera Milano, Milan

Organiser: Reedexpo Italy

www.viscomitalia.it

EuroTrophex

15th-17th October

Passenger Terminal Amsterdam (PTA)

Organiser: Hill Media

www.awardsandimaging.co.uk/euro-trophex

Viscom Frankfurt 2016

2nd - 4th November

Messe Frankfurt

Organiser: Reedexpo Germany

www.viscom-messe.com

InPrint 2016

15th - 17th November

MiCo, Milan

Organiser: FM Brooks

www.inprintshow.com

Sign & Digital UK 2017

28th-30th March

NEC, Birmingham

Organiser: Faversham House Group

www.signuk.com

If you would like your event to feature on this page, please send full information via e-mail to Val Hirst at signdirections@btconnect.com

Survey confirms that signage still cuts it

In today's digital age, where Google, Pay-Per-Click ads and Social Media are assumed to be the marketing kings, a survey implemented by Signs Express has revealed that an impressive 83 percent of businesses across the UK still consider signs, graphics and displays to be a major part of their marketing strategy.

The survey collated answers from over 1,000 business decision makers to discover what challenges they are facing and to better understand the role that signage plays. The results proved to be very positive for the industry, with the survey revealing

that 98 percent of participants would be less likely to conduct business with an organisation whose signage is in disrepair.

Almost all businesses in the survey (99 percent) stated that good quality, attractive signs and graphics help to provide a good first impression. Most notably, the participants named exterior signage as the second most important resource to have when advertising a business, only falling behind the possession of a website.

For further information about the survey results, please visit www.signsexpress.co.uk ■



Signs Express UK
Business Survey 2016

83% of businesses still consider signs, graphics and displays to be a major part of their marketing strategy

92% of businesses stated that good quality, attractive signs and graphics help to provide a good first impression

98% of businesses stated that they would be less likely to conduct business with an organisation whose signage is in disrepair

99% of businesses stated that good quality, attractive signs and graphics help to provide a good first impression

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new projects



▲ **Signwright (UK)** enlisted the assistance of **William Smith's** technical sales team to help it secure and complete a prestigious contract for **Beverley Race Course**.

Having been commissioned to refurbish the race course's bar and other areas used by trainers and owners for corporate entertaining, Signwright (UK) asked William Smith to recommend a material that combined a high-end finish with a competitive price tag. William Smith suggested 3M's DI-NOC self-adhesive laminate film, which is available in over 900 patterns that offer a wide variety of shades, surface textures and finishes that simulate materials such as wood, metal, marble, leather, stone and stucco. Suitable for application to walls, floors, furniture and machines, DI-NOC can be successfully used to enhance both modern and traditional surroundings.

In order to help all concerned parties visualise the efficacy of the material in-situ, William Smith supplied sample boards, which were also subjected to vigorous testing to



ensure long-term durability. Once approval was given, Signwright (UK) applied the product in accordance with 3M's instructions, producing and installing a total of 500 panels, the largest of which were those used to decorate the back wall.

The whole project was completed within the allotted 12-week time span, with Signwright (UK) adding the final decorative touches with just hours to spare. Beverley Race Course was delighted with the final refurbishment, which achieved the desired effect at a much lower cost than it had originally anticipated. ■



▲ Hillington Park based signmakers, **Signs Express**, collaborated with **Glasgow Science Centre** on a brand new interactive exhibition, '**Powering The Future**', which focuses on the science and technology used to supply energy in the UK.

Signs Express was tasked with the manufacture of an impressive array of new displays and signage that included interactive display

panels, exhibit interpretation boards, built up text and other bespoke items, as well as various illuminated displays, the Biowall Sign and The Dancefloor.

Working in conjunction with numerous other contractors, Signs Express integrated the graphics with set work and exhibits, to deliver the project to the requisite standard, on time and within budget. ■

► **W&Co** collaborated with branding expert **Integrity**, to create a fully illuminated feature wall in the main reception at the Brentford premises of **Inchape**, Volkswagen's new flagship dealership, together with illuminated way finding signage.

The impressive illuminated feature wall was constructed from numerous large, fabric-face LED light boxes, which adorn a central doorway and a nine screen video wall, as well as extending around a corner.

The majority of the light boxes have been covered with plain white backlit tensioned fabric, whilst some of the larger areas have been digitally printed to feature the VW models that have been introduced since 1945.

To accompany the main feature light box, W&Co also supplied a



seven metre long, double sided version to help guide customers around the four-storey showroom. This giant wayfinding sign was fixed to the ceiling to provide maximum visibility for customers



ambience stipulated by the centre's owners, **Catalyst Capital**.

Working to the design provided, Signs Express supplied the external signage that combines built-up LED illuminated letters with the centre's logo, together with additional internal branding and wayfinding signs.

In total, the rebrand took 18 months to complete, with Signs Express using scaffolding towers and scissor-lifts to complete the installation during a four week period, during which time it had to coordinate its on-site activities with both the local authority and the Edinburgh tram operator, due to the close proximity of the tram lines, whilst also minimising the disruption to shoppers. ■

▼ Using its extensive experience in shopping centre rebrands, **Signs Express (Warrington)** has recently completed the rebranding of **Edinburgh's Waverly Mall**, which was previously known as Princes Mall.

Located next to Waverly Station, the 84,000-sq.ft centre had already had its ceilings restructured and its aisles widened, in preparation for Signs Express (Warrington) to add the final decorative touches, in the form of new signage that is designed to further enhance the sleek and contemporary



entering the dealership.

W&Co also provided suspended ceiling mounted LED illuminated light boxes for other VW showrooms. This square shaped, multi-faced, feature lighting unit

essentially comprises four double-sided light boxes that are neatly connected with mitre joins to create the rectangular signs that hang above some of the new cars on display. ■

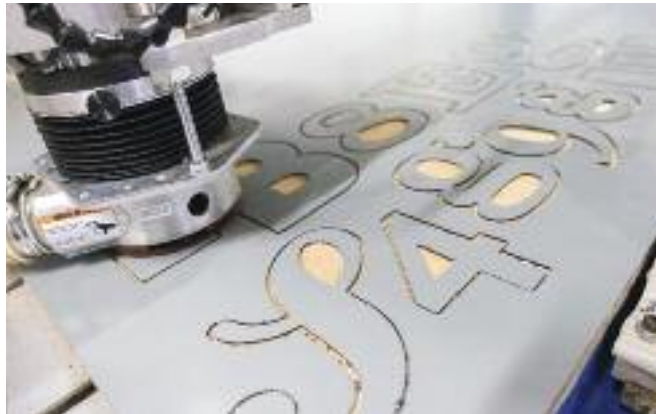
Supplier News

William Smith honours its heritage



William Smith is returning to its roots with the launch of a new manufacturing division, which will be simply known as Smith.

Although, nowadays, William Smith is probably best known as a distributor of self-adhesive vinyls, the company, which was originally founded in 1932, actually invented the first mechanical road sweeper. The introduction of the Smith brand thus serves to underline



its commitment to its manufacturing heritage, while also strengthening the fabrication side of its business and differentiating it from the distribution arm.

Smith will be offering customers a

wide variety of products, including CE marked traffic signs, illuminated and non-illuminated commercial signs, plus wayfinding signage for use in both internal and external applications. ■

PPB expands Leeds facility



Further underlining its confidence in its future growth and expansion within the UK, PPB is planning to move into a specially converted warehouse and office premises at Cross Green in the north east of Leeds.

The new unit extends to 61,000 sq. ft. and offers up to 4,000 pallet spaces where PPB will store both its paper based products and its new industrial plastics and Westland digital display portfolio. It is anticipated that the move will be completed over the Christmas period, when PPB's in-house sheeting and re-winding equipment, saw and guillotine will

be relocated to the new site.

The move into the new premises, which is located one mile from Junction 45 of the M1 and is close to PPB's current Leeds address, follows the company's investment in a specially designed new warehouse and office premises in London last year.

There will continue to be very close stock management between London and Leeds, with same day delivery available, as well as an out of hour's delivery service if required, with larger accounts often benefitting from two-three deliveries per day. ■

Avery completes MACtac acquisition

Avery Dennison has now completed the acquisition of the European business of MACtac from Platinum Equity, a California-based private equity firm, for the purchase price of €200 million, including assumed debt.

MACtac's manufacturing facility in Soignies, Belgium, along with sales offices and warehouses in Europe and Asia, are now part of Avery Dennison's global footprint. Export sales will continue to serve customers in South America, Asia Pacific, the Middle East, and North Africa. The transaction excludes the MACtac business in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, which will continue to be owned by Platinum Equity. ■

Roland DG introduces new Adobe Course

Roland DG UK has announced that the Roland DG Academy will shortly start offering Adobe Illustrator modular courses, thus providing users with the opportunity to use their technology more effectively.

Especially targeted at sign and print companies that want to further expand their knowledge of Illustrator, and/or integrate the software into their print workflow, the course comprises two flexible modules spread across two full-day sessions.

The first module provides a full overview for basic or novice users, which will enable them to maximise the software's potential and, improve the design processes. In addition, attendees will learn about basic shape editing, the creation of cutlines, and how to make proper use of the many tools Illustrator offers.

For those that already have an understanding of the basics, but want to learn more, an intermediate/advanced module is also available, at an additional cost. This is designed to help attendees develop a deeper understanding of the many tools and workflows possible, including elements such as clipping masks, compound paths, transparencies and advanced layering.

For maximum training flexibility, it is possible to attend both courses consecutively, to attend just one of the two days, or to split attendance over time to allow for personal development in between sessions. ■

Signs Express selects Easymount

Signs Express has selected the Easymount range of laminators from Vivid Technologies as its preferred wide-format laminator.

This decision, which followed a comprehensive assessment of the Easymount range by Signs Express, will see the installation, product training and servicing of the laminators being carried out at Signs Express franchise centres by Vivid's team of engineers.

Justin Pearce, Franchise Manager at Sign Express, commented: "The Easymount laminator perfectly complements our other equipment and with some laminators already installed at some centres, we are

looking forward to specifying further machines for new branches and also advising franchisees on the most appropriate upgrades to their current machinery."

The Easymount enables sign and print companies to laminate their printed output in-house, thus saving both time and money. It can be used to provide a professional finish to a wide range of applications, including posters, signs, exhibition stands, roll-up banners and vehicle graphics, can lay down application tapes and vinyls and used with a variety of substrates up to 30mm in thickness.

Many of the systems within the range benefit from a patented pressure gauge handle, lift-up feed



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table, a magic eye safety feature and optional take-up unit for reel-to-reel lamination, together with speeds of up to 10 metres per minute,

In celebration of this new

collaboration, Vivid has announced that it will be attending this year's Signs Express National Convention, which will take place at Heythrop Park in Oxfordshire on 24th and 25th November. ■

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Supplier News

Applelec invests in new paint facility

Applelec has invested in a new, dual-purpose powder coating and wet spray plant as part of the continuing development of its 6.3 acre Wharfedale Business Park in Bradford.

The new facility has been kitted out with a five metre wide Modulair Waterwash Spraybooth, large and small drying ovens and an auto-wash machine that is used to prepare materials prior to painting.

The generous internal measurements of the large oven can accommodate the largest single sign tray panels possible from a standard four-metre aluminium sheet. Sign panels comprising multiple sections, built-up letters, flat cut letters and snap frames can all be painted in the new facility. The second oven is ideal for quick, low volume projects, such as small sets of letters or prototypes and is more economical to run for such jobs.

Ian Drinkwater, Applelec's Managing Director, said: "This investment marks the development of a better, quicker and more cost effective service and we are now welcoming visits to the new paint shop alongside tours of our wider factory premises at the Wharfedale site."

The new paint shop will enable Applelec to manage all sign



manufacture and related processes, ranging from fabrication to paint, LED population to wiring, plus any required programming, in-house. In addition, the new paint facility also enables Applelec to accommodate last minute scheduling changes too, such as a customer requiring additional letters. As well as the company's own paint requirements, the facility will be available for use by its customers for paint projects, including overflow work.

Andy Armitage, Head of Signage Sales at Applelec, commented: "Previously, due to space restrictions a paint shop was never a possibility, which meant that, post construction

items had to be ferried elsewhere for painting and returned, thus extending production times and the possibility of transit damage. However, now, the paint shop is located adjacent to our metal fabrication department, enabling us to significantly reduce turnaround times.'

Applelec purchased Wharfedale Business Park in late 2014 and has already relocated its signage and lighting manufacture, together with warehousing and, following the paint shop investment, all office staff will shortly relocate to the new premises too. ■

Avery Dennison strengthens manufacturing

As the demand for pressure-sensitive materials in Europe continues to grow, Avery Dennison is strengthening its European manufacturing footprint with a \$65 million investment to expand its Rodange, Luxembourg production facility.

The investment, one of Avery Dennison's largest operational initiatives globally in recent years, will fund an expansion that will incorporate a multi-capability coater, additional slitter capacity, a new packaging line, and an automated warehouse. The total space used in Rodange will increase by more than 12,000 square metres and will be designed to deliver maximised sustainability related to waste management, energy consumption and water-use efficiency.

Following an assessment of potential locations, Rodange emerged as the preferred option on two particular fronts: high productivity and efficiency and shorter customer delivery distances, which enhances service capability, while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

A permit to begin the expansion is expected from local authorities in Rodange by the end of September, with construction expected to begin later this year. Initial production from the expansion is expected in the second half of 2018. ■

New directions for Sihl Direct and SwissQprint

Starting in April 2017, SwissQprint and its exclusive German partner Sihl Direct, will be realigning themselves, with Sihl Direct focusing on its core media business, and SwissQprint managing the supply of its large format printers to the German market via a new subsidiary.

A joint statement from Siegfried Zilliger, Managing Director of Sihl Direct GmbH,

and SwissQprint CEO Reto Eicher announced: "Both our companies have changed significantly in recent years, and so has the market. A realignment is the logical consequence and the best thing for our customers."

Sihl Direct employees previously working on SwissQprint business have been offered positions at the new SwissQprint subsidiary, thus enabling them to maintain uninterrupted

customer service.

It is envisaged that news about the location of the headquarters of the German subsidiary and the composition of the team will be revealed during the forthcoming Viscom Frankfurt exhibition, which takes place on 2nd-4th November, an occasion that will also mark the final joint appearance of the two companies. ■

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VM Illumination is a new range of single and double-sided LED display frames by Applelec. Available in A-series sizes from A4 to A0, the frames reflect modern design aesthetics and are super-slim, robust and elegant.

With simplicity of use at the foundation of their design, the frames have been created in conjunction with practical mounting solutions including wall-mounted support rods, a cable suspension system, portable display stands and countertop docking products.

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Equipment & Material

Super slim and stylish

Applelec has launched VM Illumination, a new range of LED poster frames for the UK sign and display sectors.

The frames, which have been created to reflect modern design aesthetics, are super-slim, robust and elegant and the range includes single and double-sided LED poster frame styles in sizes from A4 to A0 that are all supplied with a two year warranty.

Each double-sided frame delivers 5000 Lux whilst maintaining energy efficiency, with A4 frames drawing 5W and frames available in the largest A0 size drawing just 35W each.

Combining style and substance, the frames feature a series of practical mounting solutions that accommodate a wide range of display requirements, including wall-mounted support rods and cable suspension systems, plus a variety of portable stands and counter-top docking products.

In order to reduce visible wiring, each mounting system has been designed to carry power to the LED poster frames that illuminate once they are attached to the rod or cable fixings. The same principle is employed for the portable display stands, which power multiple LED frames that clip on and off the stands with ease.



Speedily constructed, without the need for tools, the portable stands are ideal for use at exhibitions, events and for all temporary display requirements.

The cable, rod, mobile stand and docking systems are each compatible with one or more frame designs, allowing customers to select the most appropriate mounting system for their

needs before choosing their preferred frame option. Many frames can be used with multiple mounting systems, thus enabling the customer to reconfigure displays more easily.

Available in a choice of neutral black and silver borders, the frames also have super-slim profiles of between 7mm and 10mm. ■

The Impossible Arrives



TheMagicTouch has introduced a new and unique transfer paper for use in garment decoration.

T.One transfer paper facilitates full colour printing (including white) designs to any pastel, white or non-dark garment/textile, regardless of colour or composition, including those made from cotton, polyester, denim, soft-shell, polypongee and most performance fabrics.

The new paper, which is the latest addition to the existing transfer paper range and complements the existing



Two-Step WoW transfer process used on all black and dark colour garments/textiles, is quick and easy to use in conjunction with heat press application at temperatures as low as

140°C. Once printed, the transfer is sealed using the silicon sheet supplied, to ensure outstanding durability and a pleasingly soft touch that ensures wearer comfort. ■

Improving on perfection



Spandex has added two new ImagePerfect films to its ever-expanding product portfolio.

The new films, IP2561PA and IP2562PA, are additions to the company's ImagePerfect ETU (Easy to Use) range and incorporate Spandex's own PA (PerfectApply) Technology, which enhances the ease of application, helps ensure bubble-free installation and offers durability of up to three years.

The films incorporate a thick film

(100mym) for easy handling and are suitable for a host of short-term promotional or advertising applications in a variety of environments, including retail spaces, exhibition stands or offices. As with all other ETU products, these latest films also have high levels of repositionability during application, as well as the advantage of clean removability at the end of a product's lifecycle. Both film are compatible with solvent, eco solvent, UV and Latex print technologies. ■

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Equipment & Material

Simply samples

Until the end of October, ArtSystems is offering free A4 sample packs of James Cropper's popular pre-mounted photo board to users and resellers.

Recently repackaged and rebranded, the one-side printable, ready-mounted photo boards come in a choice of pearl, satin and lustre finishes and are available in packs of

10. There are five sizes ranging from 11 x 12 inches to 20 x 30 inches.

Ideal for use in a wide range of applications, from portraiture to POP to museum displays, the boards feature a forgiving surface that can be used in conjunction with inkjet printers using both water-based and UV inks to produce professional quality photographic prints. ■



Sparkling seasonal displays

At this time of year, when retail designers focus on Christmas displays, they often turn to vinyl supplier Doro Tape, which offers a host of festive films.



Options include the snow patterned clear window film from the Aslan 'Illustra' range that can be plotter cut and/or printed. Further, when used in combination with Aslan's CT113 coloured transparent film, which is available in a choice of 25 colours, it facilitates the creation of colourful and impactful graphics.

In addition, while metallic silver and gold vinyls are the obvious seasonal

choices, Doro Tape also supplies an incredible range of brightly coloured metallic films from both Aslan and R-tape's VinylEfx ranges. These include Aslan's 'Champagne' film from its Metal Shadow range and the sparkly VinylEfx Metal Flake, both of which are ideal for adding extra pizzazz to Christmas decorations.



For those seeking something completely different, Doro Tape's dichroic, colour change films, Nebula, Aurora and Andromeda, are

eye-catching enough to ensure a truly head turning Christmas display. ■

Bespoke without tears

Whenever a new, exciting and high value project arises there is always a dilemma for signmakers; should they use a bespoke product or select an off-the-shelf alternative? The challenge is to produce a custom made sign at an affordable price that also allows for a reasonable profit margin.

Happily, Ashby Trade Sign Supplies is on hand to provide a workable solution, as is exemplified by a project it recently completed with Sign Select of Waterford, which comprises six stunning visual displays that were fabricated in Ashby's factory.

Sign Select custom routed the acrylic sections of the units, which incorporated coloured LEDs and RGB controllers, to provide a visually striking display in a darkened exhibition room at Waterford's Medieval Museum.

Due to the complex nature of the project, Ashby initially produced technical 3D drawings, a service that the company is happy to provide when necessary, in order to ensure that the end result achieves the requisite degree of perfection that clients demand.

Struan Bickerton, Director at Sign Select Waterford declared himself delighted



with the level of workmanship and service provided by the Ashby team, which resulted in the project being completed precisely to specification, on time and within budget.

Best known for manufacturing Sign Blanks, Ashby also produces less

standard and highly bespoke products at its Basingstoke facility, which is superbly equipped and also offers the level of skill and expertise that comes with 20 years of experience in the design, production and finishing of highly specialised sign and display products. ■

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En-route to success

A preferred UK partner of and reseller for global software specialist SA International (SAI), Graphtec GB is now distributing the company's latest EnRoute Version 6 program.

This latest release includes a raft of new design and production tools that will greatly enhance the CNC routing, cutting, milling and engraving capabilities of sign and print companies.

EnRoute Version 6 is said to be the most advanced software of its kind

so far developed by SAI, offering both 2D and 3D design and production capabilities. It combines a suite of over 40 new design and productivity tools and is available in a choice of four different editions (Basic, Plus, Pro and Fab Advanced) to accommodate specific user requirements.

Key features of the software include individual programs that cover more advanced component-making, nesting and cutting, increased font utilisation and the ability to add highly innovative relief textures and



special effects. It is also possible for customers to view what a finished product will look like prior to commencement of the manufacturing process, while integrated online movies enable access to informative on-demand explanations of the more advanced

design and production capabilities now available. These will be of benefit not only to new entry-level users but also existing users with possibly higher levels of proficiency to enable maximisation of the software's full potential. ■

Upgrading in style

Following its unveiling at Drupa, the brand new Zünd D3 digital cutting table will be installed at point-of-sale (POS) specialist Wilmot-Budgen.

The Surrey-based company invested in a Zünd G3 XL3200 with Board Handling System earlier this year, making it the first business in the UK to install the complete system. However, it was keen to push its production even further and thus selected the Zünd G3 on the basis that it could be upgraded to the even more productive Zünd D3 following its May launch.

The company, a specialist supplier of print and POS to major retailers and leading brands, already used an older Zünd G3 XL1600 for the creation of prototypes, but was impressed by the increased automation offered by the newer models and the Board Handling System, so ordered an additional Zünd G3 table for its production department.

"We were the first business in the UK to have the Board Handling



System and are really pleased with it," reports Peter Burford, Operations Director at Wilmot-Budgen. "It feeds, cuts and delivers material automatically, enabling longer runs to be unattended.

"We had been keeping an eye on Zünd's R&D and when we were told about the new Zünd D3, we made the purchase based on having it installed after its launch."

Originally designed for the

leather-cutting market and now re-engineered for display graphics and other applications, the Zünd D3 features two beams to significantly increase productivity while retaining the highest levels of automation, accuracy and safety. Four models are available, the Zünd D3 L3200, Zünd D3 XL3200, Zünd D3 2XL3200 and Zünd D3 3XL3200 to cater for many different applications.

Wilmot-Budgen will be swapping

its existing Zünd G3 XL3200 for the new Zünd D3 XL3200, but keeping all of the Board Handling System elements at either end. This is possible thanks to the flexible, modular design of Zünd cutting tables, which enables expertly engineered tools and systems to be changed and replaced as users' needs evolve, thus helping to retain the table's performance and value over time. ■

Escott Signs on the up



Escott Signs, the Gateshead-based corporate ID and high street retail signage specialist, has upgraded to a large-format XYZ CNC router supplied by XYZ International.

Purchase of the new machine was facilitated by the generous trade-in discount given by XYZ against an old Pacer router that no longer effectively met the requirements of the company's rapidly expanding customer base.

Established in 1986 by two managers from one of the UK's largest sign manufacturers, with the aim of providing a high level of service at a keenly competitive price, Escott Signs has evolved rapidly to become one of the most successful companies in the sign industry. It now operates out of a purpose-built facility located on the Team Valley Trading Estate in Gateshead, employs 40+ plus people and offers a full nationwide package comprising everything from design through to

manufacture, installation and ongoing maintenance and technical support. A team of directly employed specialist installers carries out installation.

Managing Director, Alan Ramsay commented: "The market has changed dramatically over the years, from the time when the major financial institutions were the dominant source of work, to the move to the high street retail sector, which is continually developing and which now represents the progressive spending area of the market. Escott Signs has been, and continues to be, particularly successful in securing long-term signage contracts with many of the national blue chip high street brands."

Part of the 6000 series of large-format routers, the 6014 machine now installed at Escott Signs incorporates the XYZ ATC (Automatic Tool Change) facility and a special unit that enhances its processing capabilities on

aluminium, a material widely used in the sign industry. With its oversized production bed, the router is also used to process a disparate range of associated signmaking materials such as acrylic, plastics and their derivatives, foamed sheet and timber. The 6014 is supported by ArtCAM design and production software that was also supplied by XYZ International.

The 6000 series of large-format routers offers processing widths of up to 2159mm and lengths from 3048mm up to 10 metres. In common with all XYZ routers, the 6014 can be supplied with a raft of optional production tool enhancements. These include the XYZ Auto Zone Management facility that ensures the material being processed is always held securely throughout the routing/cutting cycle and the latest A2MC machine control system with a massive memory capability for program storage, as well as providing network connectivity for error-free program transfer. A

Summa introduces the F1330

At the upcoming Viscom exhibition in Milan, which will take place on 13th-15th October, Summa will be unveiling the F1330 flatbed cutter, the latest addition to its F Series range.

With a working area of 1.29m x 3.05m, the F1330 is designed to cut both rigid boards and vinyl, thus making it the ideal machine for signmakers. It is also compatible with all of the same tools used by its predecessors, the F1612 and F2630 models.

F1330 units are available for order now, with pricing dependent on the precise configuration of the unit. ■

further optional enhancement is the latest XYZ helical rack and pinion drive system, which incorporates a multiple gear teeth configuration that helps spread the workload more evenly, leading to greater routing/cutting accuracy, faster throughput speeds, reduced material wastage and ultimately a longer than normal machine life.

Commenting on the machine's success so far, Jeff Lumsden, Escott Signs' Sales Director, said: "While it is too early to make a full evaluation of the 6014's effectiveness, early signs indicate that it will help increase output dramatically and make us even more competitive when tendering for long-term signage contracts. The service provided by XYZ International, prior to, during and after installation, has been excellent." ■

Keeping pace with trends



Thames Graphics is a business that has kept pace with the trends and developments of the print sector since it was founded in 1984, but it was the acquisition of the business by husband and wife team Alex and Ivan Povey that really drove the company through its most successful decade of growth.



A recent investment of over £450,000 has enabled Thames Graphics to extend its premises and invest in a three-metre by two-metre Jetrix KX7R large format flatbed printer and a slightly larger DYSS X7 2230C digital cutter from AG/CAD, both of which were specified following a visit to the recent Sign & Digital UK exhibition.

Company Director, Alex Povey explained: "We found we spent most of our time printing self-adhesive vinyls and then mounting them onto various substrates, so we decided that it would be quicker and easier to print direct, which is why we acquired the Jetrix printer. However, we also realised that cutting large boards was an increasing challenge, which either lead to us having to turn work away or subcontract it to external suppliers, so to fully capitalise on the efficacy of the new printer, we also had to buy a digital cutter too!"

Alex continued: "We considered a number of machines and decided that the DYSS X7 was the only one that offered the complete package, as it combines a robust build with the sturdy Super Head 3-tool cutting unit. Further, the KASEMAKE software enables us to knife cut, crease and route a multitude of medias, as well as creating virtual 3D designs and rendered visuals for our clients."

Thames Graphics specified the DYSS X7 machine with a roll feeding facility for cutting the batch-runs of posters that are output on its roll-fed printers and Alex reported that this facility has saved the company the equivalent of one full-time member of staff, as it automates the cutting process, while also providing a greater level of accuracy and consistency than hand cutting.

During the summer months Thames Graphics is inundated with work for music festivals, with no fewer than



seven regional festivals placing orders this year, which varied from stage banners and stand graphics to local signage.

Alex observed: "In total we produced over 400 metres of one metre wide banners and 700 metres of Correx boards. In previous years, our team has struggled to get this work finished, but this year the X7 enabled us to eliminate the hand cutting, while also working to tighter deadlines."

Whilst the music festivals provide the company with a welcome seasonal fillip, its bread and butter business includes graphic walls, posters, presentations and point of sale displays for both direct customers

and the trade. Now, with the X7 reducing labour costs, eliminating bottlenecks and providing more capacity for new projects, Thames Graphics is keen to target new markets and it is making a concerted effort to alert customers of its enhanced capabilities.

Alex concluded: "We are aiming to attract larger corporate clients and are taking on a sales person to specifically target this market. Our investment in new kit has already enabled us to increase our turnover by over 15 percent and we are working towards trebling the size of our business over the next two years –an achievement that will more than justify the money that we have spent!" ■

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The die is cast!

By the time you read this article, the judging panel will have met, the die will have been cast, the winners and highly commended entries will have been chosen and plans for the unveiling will be well underway, with trophies being produced and the presentation show being scripted.



The great reveal will take place on November 3rd at the East Midlands Conference Centre, which is conveniently located on the campus at Nottingham University. The event kicks off at noon and will be hosted by Bill Turnbull, one of the BBC's best-known presenters, having occupied the Breakfast sofa for 15 years. Guests will be able to enjoy a drinks reception at noon during which they will have the opportunity to visit the Sponsor's Showcase, followed by a four course lunch and then the awards presentations.

"The awards are now in their third year and it is fair to say that, judging by both the quality and quantity of entries, they are now firmly established as a fixture in the sign industry calendar," said David Catanach, Director of the BSGA. "This year, we have received more entries than ever before and a quick glance through the different categories reveals just how capable and creative British signmakers are. The judges, who are independent of the BSGA and represent all facets of the sign industry from design, through engineering and construction to printing and vehicle wrapping, really are going to have their work cut out."

He added that every one of the 14 award categories was well supported and extremely competitive and continued: "We are, however, really pleased with the level of interest in some of the newer categories, especially the Young Signmaker of the Year, which is supported by Roland, and the new 'Wrap of the Year', which is sponsored by Spandex.

"The standard of the entrants for the Young Signmaker is exemplary and the shame is that we can't reward them all. All the entrants have gone through the signmaking apprenticeship or equivalent and all are now making real contributions to the businesses they work in.

"We hope the award will help highlight the value of apprenticeships to the sign industry and encourage more sign businesses to take on young people and use the apprenticeship scheme."

The Wrap of the Year is a new award for 2016 and recognises the growing importance of vehicle wrapping to signmakers and specialist businesses. It covers the wrapping of cars and smaller vehicles for personal and/or sports use. Competition for the award in its first year is very healthy and the judges have some outstanding projects to view.

One of the most intriguing awards this year is for Interior Signage, sponsored by Metamark. David Catanach observed: "It may well be an indicator of a future direction of the industry, because this category attracted more entries than any other and what's more they all serve to demonstrate the incredible ability and technology of modern sign businesses."

In addition to the above, the other Awards that will be presented on November 3rd include the Architectural Sign of the Year (sponsored by Blackburns), the Craftsman Award (sponsored by Trade Etching Direct), Wayfinding Award (sponsored by Atlantic Tech), Commercial Vehicle Graphics Award (sponsored by William Smith), Small Signmaker of the Year (sponsored by Pyramid Display Materials), The Innovation Award (sponsored by Epson), Roll-out Programme of the Year (sponsored by Nationwide Platforms), Illuminated Sign of the Year (sponsored by Signfab UK), Retail Signage Award (sponsored by Complete CNC Solutions), Sign Construction Award (supported by Signlink), Leisure Industry Award (supported by JMH Digital) and the Product of the Year Award (which is supported by Sign Directions).

And, to top things off, there is the most coveted award of all – the 2016 Sign of the Year, which will be presented by the Awards' major sponsor, 3M.

Commenting on the purpose of the awards, David Catanach explained that they serve several purposes: "Firstly, it's a highly visible celebration of the great work done by UK signmakers and provides a tremendous boost to all those businesses that win an award or a highly commended certificate.

"Secondly, it is a great social and fun day that brings the whole industry together away from the 'coal face'. It's also a great networking event that enables suppliers and their customers, friends and rivals, to catch up on industry news and gossip in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere."

He concluded: "Attendance currently stands at around 300, but we have room for more and we'd be delighted to see you there!" ■

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Young Signmaker of the Year

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Wide Format Award

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Wrap of the Year

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Small Signmaker Award

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Product of the Year

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Tickets (£70.00 each or £600.00 + VAT for a table of ten) can be purchased online at www.britishsignawards.org or call James on Tel: 01636 816078.



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Young Signmaker *Sponsored by Roland DG (Closing date: August 9th)*

Roll-out Programme *Sponsored by Nationwide Platforms*

Wayfinding Award *Sponsored by Atlantic Tech Services*

Architectural Sign *Sponsored by Blackburns Metals and Plastics*

Wrap of the Year *Sponsored by Spandex*

Wide Format Award *Sponsored by Soyong Europe*

Commercial Vehicle Graphics *Sponsored by William Smith*

Interior Signage *Sponsored by Metamark*

Illuminated Sign *Sponsored by SIGNFAB*

Small Signmaker Award *Sponsored by Pyramid Display Materials*

Retail Signage *Sponsored by Complete CNC Solutions*

The Innovation Award *Sponsored by EPSON*

Sign Construction Award *Sponsored by SignLink*

Product of the Year *Sponsored by SignDirections*

CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES – FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH

Winners will be announced at the BSGA Gala Awards Event at East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham on Thursday, November 5

For full details on how to enter visit www.britishsignawards.org



A river runs through it

When the various publishing companies that comprise Hachette UK moved from their separate London Offices into Carmelite House last year, the company decided to celebrate its coming together under one roof for the first time by commissioning a mural featuring some of the authors whose books it has published.

Situated on the north bank of the River Thames, Carmelite House offers enviable views across the river and over London, a vista that helped to inspire the spectacular artwork that runs right through the building, in just the same way as the Thames flows through London.

Hachette UK's Communications Director, Clare Harington, explained: "We commissioned the mural to commemorate both our combined, distinguished publishing history and our beautiful new building, selecting the names of 3,500 authors from the 55,000 or more we have collectively published since 1768, the year the founding company, John Murray, was first established.

Clare admitted that the production of the mural proved to be a mammoth undertaking, but she added: "It has been an absolute joy working with illustrator Kate Forrester of The Graphic History Company, and Signbox who handled the production and installation aspects of the project. They all understood our unique requirements and the end result is a work of art that not only represents who we are,



but also illustrates our great pride in our writers and our history."

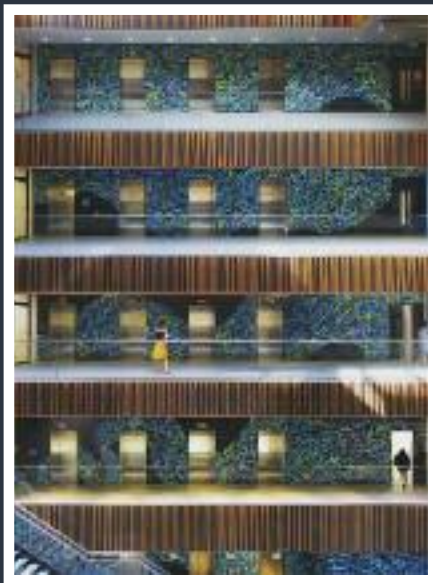
Commenting on the initial design process for the mural, Emma Pike, the founder of The Graphic History Company said: "We began by researching the names of every author ever published, from 1768 to the present day, but quickly realised that there were far too many of them to include in a meaningful way. Accordingly, we worked closely with Hachette to reduce the list to a more manageable 3,500 and then arranged them chronologically by decade and colour coded each name, together with its individual

publisher, to reflect the federal structure of the company. And, as we also wanted to celebrate the art of writing, we commissioned Kate Forrester to draw each name by hand."

She continued: "We were very proud of our concept and design and thus needed to ensure that the production and installation did it full justice and, as Signbox had been personally recommended to me as being a company that could offer the requisite level of expertise and professionalism, we sought its help."

Taking up the story, Mark Bartlett,





Managing Director at Signbox, said: "This project has been both challenging and rewarding in equal measure, as we needed to ensure the highest possible quality finished product within a tight timeframe. We digitally printed the mural on our new HP

Latex 360 printers, using Class O fire retardant LG 3880 high tack vinyl – there was approximately 450 linear metres of it in total – before matt laminating, CAD-cutting and weeding prior to application.

"The installation process posed challenges of its own, as the work needed to be completed over just two weekends, so it was essential that we chose the right products for adhesion to acid-etched glass and prepared the surfaces to ensure a successful end result."

Of course, visitors to Hatchette UK will judge the artistic merits of the mural for themselves, but suffice it to say, the general consensus of opinion seems to be that the 'river' view inside the building is every bit as captivating as the one outside! ■

Esme rules!

The great thing about having a dad who's in the graphics business, is that when it's time to revamp your bedroom in a style more befitting your age, you can pretty much ask for anything you want, decoratively speaking, and get it!

Andy Cobb, the owner of Andy Graphix has been supplying printed and applied graphics in Folkestone and further afield for over eighteen years, but on this occasion, the customer, was none other than Andy's daughter, Esme, who had very definite ideas of what she wanted on her bedroom wall.

Tasked with providing something a bit more 'street', Andy decided to use a material

from Metamark's DecorMark range, selecting a sand-textured version of Metamark WallArt. This polymeric PVC film, which combines a high level of opacity with a textured weave finish, can be used in conjunction with solvent, eco solvent, Latex and UV printers to provide a highly vibrant print image without the need for lamination.

He then set about finding a suitable stock image that depicted just the right shade of grungy brick-block, before personalising it with the addition of a number of tags, the largest and most legible of which reads 'ESME'. The colours are spot on and the whole thing is as discordant and migraine inducing as any teen could desire.

The team at Andy Graphix printed the larger than life colour on a Roland Pro 4, running EcoSol inks and, thanks to the combined forces of the company's print expertise and the quality of the consumables, the whole thing comes together beautifully.

Application to the prepared wall was quick and easy and the end result screams for itself. Job done. One happy girl and one proud dad!

Better still, the project has also had further positive ramifications - Andy Graphix now aims to



pursue more work in the Décor market and is also looking beyond domestic applications to the retail and leisure sectors. To this end, the company is planning a new website and will be spreading the word in its own locality too, although as Andy Cobb is at pains to point out, as well as the eye-catchingly subversive, Andy Graphix is equally capable of delivering décor that is sleek, stylish and understated for those with slightly more refined tastes! ■

décor

Transformative tiling



Making a house a home is something of a project without end and if, when you give the house back, the owner expects to see the it in the same condition it was when it was handed to you, it can be a challenge too.

Kerry Grady and partner James Mingay recently met such a challenge in the overtly brown form of a tiled fireplace at their home in the making. The attractive cast iron centrepiece and the wooden surround were dominated by an expanse of very plain looking tiles that contributed nothing to the fireplace itself or to the room they were improving.

Ripping out the fireplace or retiling it wasn't an option and it was essential that whatever was done was easily removable so the fireplace could be returned to its original state at the end of Kerry and James' tenancy.

Happily, Kerry and James are perhaps better equipped than most to effect the level of transformation needed. Kerry numbers among her hobbies and talents the decorative refurbishment of furniture and isn't short of ideas or deep creative reserves. In her day job she runs Marketing Matters, a marketing agency in Norwich, and also spends time on Bcreative, the internet site that provides artistic people with a marketplace for their ideas, which enables her to flex all of her other creative muscles.

James, who is now a Senior Manager at Signs Express in Norwich, a company with

can also look back on a sign industry career that has spanned twenty-three years.

So it wasn't surprising that between them, James and Kerry used their joint resources to transform the distracting brown fireplace into a centrepiece that attracts attention for all of the right reasons.

No stranger to the art and science of wrapping, James suggested that the technique might be applied to the fireplace tiles. They were, and are, substantially flat but with just enough dimensional detailing to demand expert application, coupled with a material suited to wrapping compound surfaces. Delighted with the idea, Kerry managed to source a suitable high-resolution stock image of an expanse of colourful, Portuguese tiling.

However, the stock image, as delivered, was of no use when it came to producing the desired 'all over' wrap. Instead, James overlaid vector detailing on the high-resolution image so each tile could be scaled and contour cut as an individual element. Kerry then arranged the tiles into a cohesive design and the job was composited and printed.

James output the print on Metamark MD5 vinyl. Part of the MD-Class media and DécorMark portfolio from Metamark, the material offers all the right mechanical and handling attributes required and holds resolution to the point where it can challenge the need for photographic

the means and materials needed to get things done,

fidelity. To provide additional durability and aesthetic appeal the print was then finished with Metamark's matched matt laminate.

Application of the individually cut and printed MD5 laminated tile wraps was a painstaking affair with much time being invested in the heating and burnishing of the material over and around the tiles' contoured edges, but it was, without question, time very well spent.

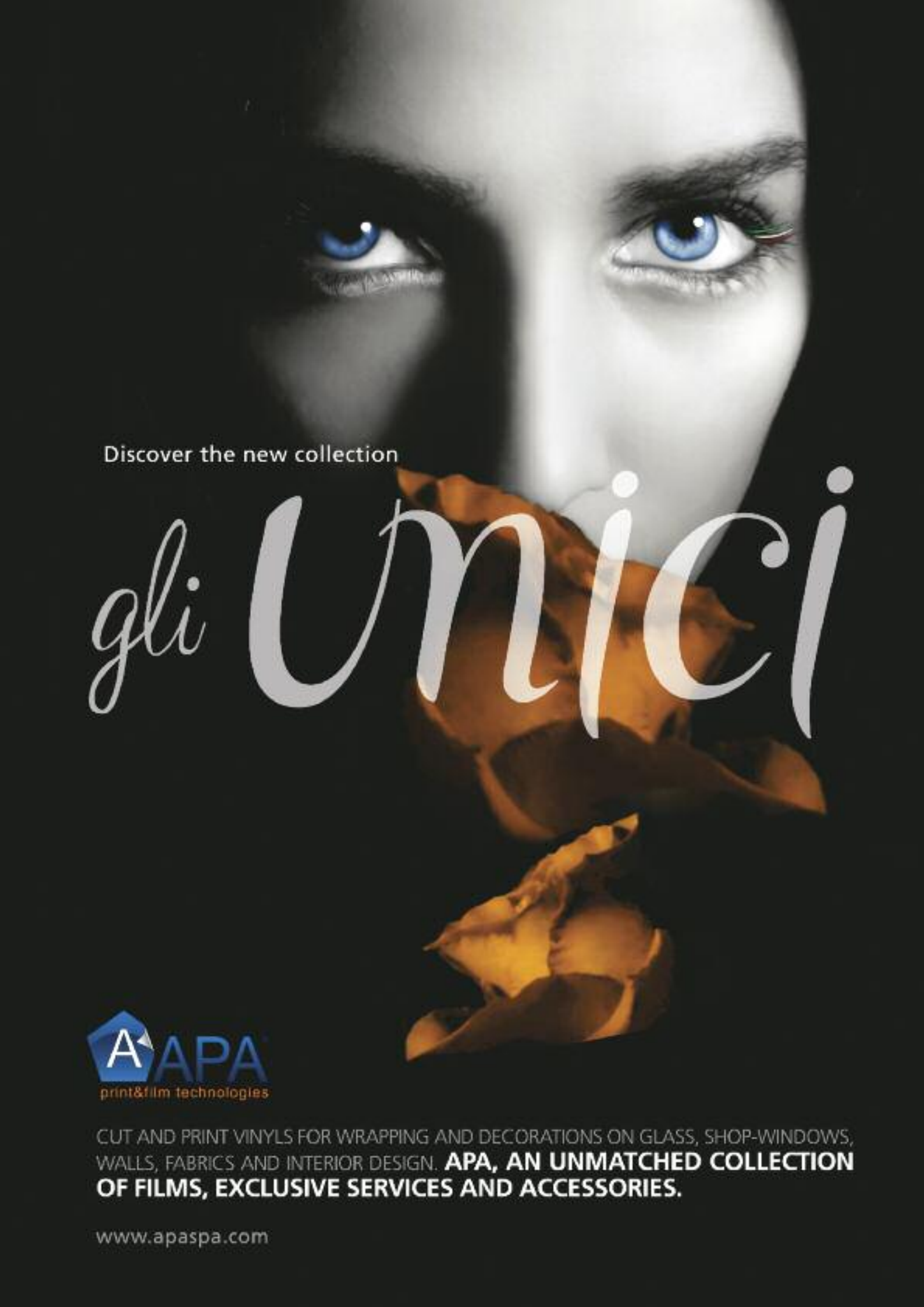
The final result gives life to Kerry's original vision. In fact, the effect is so convincing it just begs to be touched and rewards when it is, because the individual wraps have perfectly preserved the dimensional qualities of the tiles.

Now, instead of an unremarkable expanse of brown tiles, the story is one of evocative colour and detail, which brings Portuguese warmth and sunshine into the room and provides it with the stunning feature that it previously lacked.

At some point Kerry and James will move into a new home and when that happens, the expectation is that the heat gun will come out and an expanse of brown tiles will once more see the light of day.

That would be like turning the lights out though.

So although the option is there to be taken, it is highly likely that Kerry and James might be invited to leave their artwork exactly as Kerry designed it. And we certainly know which option the house would choose if it had a vote! ■



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the print show preview



A festival of print

Taking place at Birmingham's NEC on 11th-13th October, the second edition of The Print Show is designed to inform and interest print companies of all denominations.

Visitors will, of course, be able to see some of the industry's leading manufacturers and suppliers, who between them will be showcasing a wide variety of printing equipment and consumables, but according to the event's organiser, Link

Exhibitions, the show will also provide an opportunity for both exhibitors and visitors to celebrate the print sector's unique culture and history, via a host of innovative features.

These will include **The Printers' Bazaar**, which will show a collection of the latest niche print technology in action, together with product samples that will hopefully help to inspire sign and print companies to diversify into new and lucrative

areas.

Another interesting innovation is the **Traditional Print Masterclass**, where visitors can learn more about the time honoured skills, which despite the recent technological advances, continue to underpin the UK print industry.

One feature that everyone is certain to enjoy is **The Printer's Arms**, The Print Show's very own pub, which will provide visitors with a

comfortable place to enjoy good food, sink a pint or two, and network with colleagues, industry friends and customers.

Those who wish to brush up on their computer skills will find all of the help and advice they need in the **Software Training Theatre**, where training sessions and free one-on-one consultancy will cover all of the intricacies of the Adobe, Corel, and Quark platforms. ■



On **Stand B01, Grafityp** will be debuting its new M Series media range, which is compatible for use with many digital printing technologies and includes printable monomeric and polymeric self-adhesive vinyls, high quality cast vinyl, block out films, banner materials, and poster and photo papers, as well as a wide range of laminates, including those which sparkle and glow in the dark!

In addition, it will also be promoting its Colibri range, which offers

ecological films for use in signmaking, lamination and print and its large collection of garment films from Siser, plus a selection of heat presses from Siser and Stahls and a range of ancillary accessories.

Other stand highlights will include a variety of cutters and printers from Roland DG, Easymount laminators and cutting plotters and laser engravers from GCC. ■



Visitors will find a comprehensive range of wide format and signmaking equipment and materials on the **Spandex stand (Stand E3)** where those who pre-register at www.spandex.co.uk will also be able to collect a special 'Brand Bag'



A special feature of the stand will be the material application wall, which will display a broad range of coloured and digitally printable films from leading manufacturers such as Avery Dennison, 3M, Orafol, ImagePerfect, and Arlon, while the Spandex hardware offering will include SwissQprint's Impala 2 UV inkjet printer. Making its UK debut, this modular flatbed system features

nine freely configurable colour and varnish channels. Another new machine on display will be the Roll-X multipurpose applicator from Rollroller, which is available in two models, and three different size options, together with a selection of machines from the Spandex printer portfolio, including those from HP, Roland, Epson, Mutoh ■



3M will be showcasing its graphic films on the Spandex stand (**Stand E3**) where it will demonstrate its non-PVC Envision Print Film 48 and Envision Print Wrap Film 480CV3, the 3M Wrap Film Series 1080 and 3M Wrap Film Series 1380, plus DI-NOC Architectural Finishes from 3M.



The Spandex stand will feature a wrapping area that is dedicated to 3M products, thus enabling visitors to experience first-hand the high performance and versatility of 3M films. ■

Solutions on display from **EFI** on **Stand B37** will include the new EFI Quick Print Suite, a workflow platform built around the flexible and powerful EFI PrintSmith Vision MIS system. The Suite offers scalable industry-focused solutions for eCommerce, information management and print management that provide users with the flexibility to exercise stronger control through streamlined integration with EFI Fiery digital front ends.

Also on display will be the latest version of the EFI Midmarket Print Suite plus the advanced GamSys MIS platform. ■

the print show preview



Drytac Europe will be supporting its exclusive UK distributor **Antalis** on **Stand B24**, where it will be showing a number of its leading products, including SpotOn film, ViziPrint Illuminate and FloorTac, together with its recently launched ReTac Textures film.

This 150µ (6 mil) printable, matte white polymeric PVC film with ReTac ultra-removable adhesive, which is flame resistant and compatible with (eco)solvent, UV and latex printing technologies, is available in two embossed finishes, Linen and Canvas that add depth and visual appeal to static, flat graphics. ■

For the second year running **Epson**, which will be represented on the **Colourbyte** stand (**Stand A30**) is donating a SureColor SC-T5200 large format printer as the star prize in the Golden Ticket Prize Draw that will take place during the event. The 36-inch wide high-speed, four-colour inkjet printer will be presented to one lucky winner on the day of the draw.

Visitors to the Colourbyte stand will also see a range of models from Epson's SureColor Series, including

the 64-inch SC-S80600 nine/10 colour eco-solvent signage printer and 24-inch SC-P7000 eight colour, large format aqueous proofer/printer.

Newly appointed as a value added partner of the Epson SureColor SC-F series of dye sublimation printers, Colourbyte will also showcase the 44-inch SureColor SC-F6200 – the complete package for creating high-quality textiles and promotional goods. ■

Friedheim International will be showing a selection of finishing equipment on **Stand E37**, including a MBO T535 Perfection buckle folding machine, a Komfi Amiga 52 thermal laminating machine, a

Schneider Senator 78 Advance guillotine, which will be making its UK debut, a Baumann-Wohlenberg 115 high speed cutter and an Audion Elektro CS Matic 100 automatic shrink sealer + TE-Matic TM18L shrink tunnel. Samples of the machines' output will also be available on the stand. ■



Many of the exhibitors at the show are already familiar to signmakers and include **Soyang Europe**, which will be showing lots of examples of printed stickers and decals in the 'Stickers 'R' Us' section of The Printers' Bazaar. Showing on **Stand P21**,

the company will be presenting self-adhesive media from DECAL and Intercoat and the Soyang team will also be on hand to advise on the appropriate usage of its extensive range of printable materials. ■



Fujifilm will be exhibiting on **Stand C40**, where it will be using the theme "Go Creative, Be Creative" to

highlight the benefits of its wide format product portfolio. It will be supported in this endeavor by representatives from a number of its national partners, including Service Offset Supplies, Mayday Graphic Products, Offset Supplies and Intuprint, all of whom will be on hand to dispense help and advice.

The joint centrepieces of the stand will be an Acuity LED 1600 II printer, and a video demonstration of the Jet Press 720S, together with an extensive range of samples it has produced, in order to illustrate the incredible versatility and creativity that can be achieved using Fujifilm Inkjet Technology. ■

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New software options from Mimaki

Mimaki has introduced three new software solutions: the Artista Textile Color Collection, Mimaki Profile Master 3 (MPM3) for advanced printer profiling and RasterLink6 Version 5.0, all of which are designed to help printers deliver accurate, repeatable colour across multiple devices and locations.

The Artista Textile Color Collection is designed to make it quicker and easier for textile and apparel printers to achieve their desired colour without wasteful trial and error. Currently, the initial collection, which is designed for use with the Mimaki TS300P-1800

textile printer, includes 520 colours for sublimation printing, including fluorescent inks that are ideal for sports apparel and interior fabrics.

The new Mimaki Profile Master 3 (MPM3) colour management software enables users to reproduce equivalent colours when printing on different types of media with the same printer, or when printing with different printer models and inks, thus vastly increasing the flexibility of a production platform, even when it comprises printers from multiple vendors.

Mimaki's market-leading printer RIP software, RasterLink6, now includes



the PANTONE Color Collection, as well as the Adobe Illustrator-compatible DIC colour collection and Mimaki's original colour collections including metallic. PANTONE colours in print files are automatically detected and converted to equivalents for faster colour matching on RasterLink6-driven printers, thus saving time and reducing waste. Further, this latest

version enables the creation of cut marks for FOTOBA cutters.

All three software programmes are available through the authorised reseller network of Hybrid Services, Mimaki's exclusive distributor in the UK and Ireland. ■



Following its appointment as a reseller for Vivid Technologies, Quality Print Services (QPS) has added the Easymount range of laminators to

QPS to sell Easymount laminators

its product portfolio.

The Lancashire-based company, which also supplies Nazdar digital inks, Longier wide-format printers and Roland dye-sublimation systems, is now offering both the Easymount and Easymount Sign ranges of film laminators, both of which are designed in the UK and competitively priced.

The range includes laminators from 650mm wide up to 1600mm wide and offers a variety of different options.

In addition, QPS will also supply the Vivid Boss range of wide-format pressure-sensitive laminating films, available in a choice of finishes and widths. ■

Roland extends TrueVIS range

Roland DG has added two new wide-format eco-solvent inkjet printer/cutters, the SG-300 and SG-540 to its TrueVIS range, which was launched earlier this year.

Designed to suit the needs of businesses entering the wide format arena for the first time or for those looking to extend their existing wide-format offering, the new TrueVIS SG series delivers the vibrant colours and glossy finish required for high-impact graphics at a very affordable price.

Atlantic Tech partners with Ricoh

Atlantic Tech Services has been appointed as a Ricoh Partner for the sales, services and support of the Ricoh Professional Printer range, including the Pro 4100 Latex wide format printer series, Pro C5100, C7100 and C9100 Colour Cutsheet Production Printers and the complete Multifunctional printers.

In addition to the Ricoh printers, Atlantic Tech will also offer the new AR Latex Inks, which during tests have proved to increase the print speeds of the Ricoh L4100 series by up to 30



percent, when compared with similar machines.

The L4100 Series Latex Printers are available in four and six colour versions

variable 14, six and four picolitre drop sizes, delivered via 2,560 nozzles, thus reducing ink and energy consumption. ■



As part of the TrueVIS family, the SG series, which is available in both 762mm and 1371mm models, offers excellent colour quality, versatility and ease-of-use along with significant enhancements, including the new Roland DG FlexFire printheads, new four-colour TrueVIS Ink and advanced integrated print and cut technology. ■



Mimaki expands printer portfolio

Over the past few weeks, Mimaki has introduced a number of new printer innovations, including the JFX200-2531 LED UV flatbed, the latest addition to its popular JFX200 product family.

Featuring a print area twice the size of

its predecessor, together with a unique 'toggle print' function that increases productivity and improves continuous running capability by facilitating the loading of one board while another is printing, the JFX200-2531 is compatible for use with media up to 2.5 x 3.1 metres and can accommodate two

1,220mm x 2,440mm sized boards at once. This enables users to deliver large signs, wall decorations, doors and other outsize items, thus making it the ideal choice for growing sign and display companies.

Additional features include improved

media handling, an ionizer that eliminates the electrostatic discharge, anti-banding functions, variable dot printing and a wide range of inksets. Finally, a vacuum pedal is now also included as standard for hands-free operation of the media vacuum function ■

In addition, Mimaki has also recently unveiled the UJF-3042 MklI and the UJF-6042 MklI, the latest generation of UV flatbed printers, which replace the earlier UJF-3042HG and UJF-6042 models.



Featuring print speeds that are 20 percent faster than previously, the new printers can be used in conjunction with a wide array of different ink sets, thus supporting a diverse range of

applications, including membrane switches, smartphone wallet cases, indoor signs, trophies and other acrylic items, accessories and stationery products, as well as printing graphics

onto glass, metal and resins.

The UJF-3042 MklI and the UJF-6042 MklI offer maximum speeds of 2.48 sq.m/hr and 3.52 sq.m/hour, respectively, and can be used to print on objects up to 153mm thick.

The printer's functionality has been further enhanced with the addition of a print table that moves during printing, the automatic detection and cleaning of

clogged nozzles and Mimaki Circulation Technology (MCT), which circulates white ink at regular intervals to prevent the pigment sedimentation that can lead to nozzle malfunction.

A further significant development is the inclusion of a fully covered print table that is designed to improve safety while maintaining print quality by preventing dust and other contaminants from entering the system. ■

Finally, Mimaki has introduced the Tx500P-3200DS 3.2 metre direct sublimation printer, which features a built in, in-line heat fixation unit that significantly reduces production time.

The Tx500P-3200DS is uniquely suited to the production of soft signage, customised apparel, and fabrics for home décor and furnishings. It offers print speeds of up to 130m²/hour in

four-colour print mode and up to 105m²/hour in six-colour mode. It also delivers unmatched print quality with print resolutions up to 720 x 1080 dpi, using 12 printheads in a staggered three-line array. The in-line heat fixation unit, which is capable of generating temperatures of up to 200°C, ensures the machine is able to perform its full 'single-step' print and fixation process even at the highest operational speeds.

In addition, a pulling roller, which maintains appropriate pressure during printing onto rolled textiles with widths up to 3.2 metres and up to 130kg in weight, ensures the consistency and stability of print quality, while the machine's ability to automatically detect and clean clogged print nozzles facilitates the continuity of operation and reduces waste.



All of the new machines are exclusively distributed in the UK and Ireland by Hybrid Services. ■

Agfa completes the Anapurna range

Agfa Graphics has introduced the new 3.2m wide Anapurna H3200i LED, which completes its family of hybrid Anapurna printers.

This brand new 3.2m hybrid solution for printing both rigid and flexible media, is a belt-driven hybrid machine which handles all types of roll media in sizes up to 3.2 metres, both in a single-roll and a dual-roll configuration, and also facilitates printing on to 2m x 3m rigid

substrates, fed with the long size first.

It also delivers a high throughput and excellent print quality, and features a built-in white ink function that includes pre, post, spot and even sandwich white. In common with the other models in the Anapurna range, it uses Agfa's Asanti 3.0 software.

Equipped with powerful, air-cooled 16 Watt/cm² LED UV lamps, the H3200i LED uses Agfa Graphic's



dedicated ink sets that are designed to match the specific UV frequencies of the curing LEDs. Thanks to their reduced heat emission, they can print

on to heat-sensitive substrates, such as thin-layer styrene, self-adhesive sheets or stretched ceiling materials made of PVC fabric. ■

Worthwhile Investments

Companies explain why they chose the equipment they use

Kettering-based **Artisan Signs** has bolstered its already impressive kit list with the purchase of a new **Mimaki UJV55-320** grand format LED UV inkjet printer.

Established back in 1997 as a signmaking operation and now run by Graham and Alison Davey, who are supported by a team of ten, the business has always been keen to diversify and seek out new market opportunities.

Graham Davey explained: "We have always focused on our future development and adapting to suit both market and customer needs, which is why one of our key strategies has been to continually invest in good quality equipment and to keep abreast of the latest technological developments in the wide format print sector."

This has led to the company forming a close working relationship with Granthams, the Preston-based Mimaki reseller, from whom it first purchased kit some 18 years ago and consequently to forming a n equally positive attachment



to Mimaki machines.

"As with any business, we have used, and continue to use, a whole variety of machines", observed Alison Davey, "but it's the Mimaki equipment that always seems to have delivered the reliability and performance that we've needed."

Fuelled by changing customer needs and the demand for higher quality and wider format print in higher volumes, Artisan Signs sought a new UV printer to help it meet its clients' increasingly exacting demands.

Graham continued: "We had been outsourcing all print over two metres wide and felt it was time to bring

production back in-house in order to properly meet challenging timescales. However, the cost of large flatbed printers was daunting, with many of the 3.2m machines we looked at costing anything between £150k and £200k. So, when we heard that Mimaki had launched the UJV55 with a price tag of around £60k, we could scarcely believe our luck, especially since our positive experience with Mimaki equipment reassured us that despite its low cost, it would prove to be another trusty workhorse."

With the UJV55 now installed, Artisan is in the enviable position of being able to satisfy a broader range of customer requirements in-house,



while also exerting a greater degree of control over deadlines and output quality, as well as enjoying increased profits.

Currently, the company is producing a lot of grand format PVC banners, but is also experiencing a rapidly growing shift towards printed textiles for applications such as exhibition and backlit graphics, which the UJV55-320 also takes in its stride.

Alison concluded: "Graham and I did a fair amount of research before making this investment and now we have seen for ourselves the impact it has had on our productivity and profitability, we can't help but agree with the widely held industry view that the UJV55-320 is a real 'game-changer, particularly at this price point!'" ■

Print professional **Scott Evans** was just 18 when he opened **Customised**, his own sign company, and, with little knowledge of the

sector, he quickly realised that he needed to learn the tricks of the trade in as short a time as possible.



Accordingly, following a recommendation from a colleague, he approached **Roland DG** and sought the company's advice regarding the purchase of a compact desktop cutter. After acquiring a **Roland DG CAMM-1 GX-24**, the predecessor to the CAMM-1 GS-24, Scott was soon able to produce small graphics and signs that provided him with the stepping-stone he needed to get his fledgling business off the ground.

However, Scott soon realised that in order to stand out in a crowded marketplace he needed to further expand his product range. Thus his

next investment was a **Roland DG VersaCAMM VS-540i**, an integrated print and cut machine that enabled him to specialise in the production of wall murals, a decision that also prompted him to change the company's name to **WallpaperInk** in order to properly reflect the new direction of its output.

WallpaperInk quickly took off and despite the increasing clamour for Scott's bespoke wall murals, the DG VS-540i was able to meet the company's growing production requirements with ease. But when demand doubled in the space of two years, Scott sought to further bolster

This Redditch-based digital print specialist, **PSW Paper & Print**, is the first UK company to invest in a 2.5m wide-format hybrid **Anapurna H2500i LED** system. A high-speed UV LED-curable inkjet hybrid printer, which is capable of imaging up to 115m²/h, it offers six colours, plus white and is fitted with air-cooled UV LED lights.

Explaining his company's purchasing rationale, Philip Skinner, a Director at PSW, said: "Our aim was to replace our existing two metre wide hybrid inkjet machine with a 2.5m wide printer with LED curing so that we could print onto materials such as heavy gauge acetate. We had looked at a number of printers from several manufacturers, but on some the LED option was too expensive, whilst others simply didn't meet our requirements. We were planning to visit Drupa when Litho Supplies introduced us to its parent company, Agfa Graphics, which was preparing to launch the Anapurna H2500i LED at the show. However, we visited Agfa's showroom in Belgium to get a sneak preview of the machine and were so impressed that we placed our order there and then!"

Philip Skinner added that he was particularly impressed with the printer's air-cooled UV LED lights, which can be switched on and off instantaneously, thus saving time



and reducing energy costs, while also enabling it to print on to thin, heat-sensitive material.

PSW's Managing Director, Matthew Skinner continued: "The Anapurna was installed on a Monday in mid-July, by the Tuesday afternoon it had delivered its first commercial job and by the Wednesday it was in full production! What's more its ability to process acetate covers has already increased our business."

This latest investment complements the company's recently purchased Indigo 7800 digital printer, as well as an extensive range of other production and finishing equipment

that enables PSW to cope with almost any print requirement its clients demand. Its digital print division, which accounts for approximately a third of the group's £2.2m turnover, is manned by nine staff and supported by a specialist team of display installers. Other aspects of the business include three retail outlets based in Studley, Worcester and Alcester, which offer artist, design and office materials, as well as a dealership selling copiers and inkjet printers.

The company produces an extensive variety of print, ranging from stationery to brochures, together with display material for exhibitions,

shopping centres and office interiors, with clients varying from small businesses to some of the UK's largest and most prestigious companies, including Jaguar, EON, Volkswagen and NFU Mutual.

Matthew Skinner concluded: "As well as the benefits of LED, the UV inks deliver top quality images on a wide selection of materials, further adding to the printer's all round versatility. We are delighted with its performance so far and are equally pleased that Agfa allowed us to enjoy a pre-Drupa preview – it certainly saved us a long slog around the show as well as an awful lot of shoe leather!" ■

his printer portfolio and WallpaperInk became the first UK company to install the newly launched **VersaEXPRESS RF-640**, which combines high quality printing with impressive speeds.

WallpaperInk used the printer to output up to 50sq.m/hr for 12 hours each day, a level of productivity that has enabled it to ship its murals all over the world and enjoy repeat business from customers from the UK, Germany and even America! Furthermore, during the last six months WallpaperInk has also seen traffic to its website grow by double digits, too.

In order to sustain its high levels of production, Scott further complemented his printer line-up with the addition of a second VersaEXPRESS RF-640, which will enable WallpaperInk to continue its rapid growth.

Scott explained: "What we love about Roland DG is that it offers much more than just machines; we also use Roland inks, attend Roland training courses and benefit from the on demand support and advice whenever we need it."

He added that following attendance of an Intermediate Digital Print

course at the Roland DG Academy, WallpaperInk was able to make much better – and more profitable – use of a number of advanced features on its Roland printers, which in turn, enables it to provide higher quality products for its clients, with the obvious positive ramifications for the business.

Scott asserted: "Attending the course was really beneficial, because as well as learning more about the full extent of the printers' capabilities, we were also shown how they could be used to produce a diverse range of creative products that we would never have thought of!"

Looking to the future, Scott has ambitions to further expand the diversity of WallpaperInk's product range with the acquisition of a Roland **DG SOLJET PRO 4 XF-640** printer, one of Roland DG's most productive machines to date.

He concluded: "With its 64" width, the SOLJET will enable us to offer larger wall murals and bespoke canvases, items that command the kind of premium prices that will help to take us to the next level. However, at present we are working hard to consolidate everything we have achieved so far – thanks, in part, to Roland!" ■



Moving messages



With the advent of vehicle wrapping, the creation of vehicle liveries is now considered to be one of the sign industry's most popular and lucrative areas of operation. Here, Mike Connolly invites Metamark to comment on the latest material innovations and Hybrid and Roland to report on the way that signmakers are able to use digital printing technology to produce more imaginative and eye-catching designs, followed by the latest crop of liveries and information on some of the equipment and materials that can be used to enhance vehicle graphics.

Metamark's Ian Simister ruminates on the latest media developments that are currently powering the future direction of wrapping.

"Vehicle livery is one of modern signmaking's longest established markets and one that continues to ride high, thanks to the creative potential embodied in current print production technology and application targeted media, such as that designed for use in wrapping.

Wrapping yields simply sensational results, but exercises every muscle. Design has to be very deliberate,

production needs to be expertly managed and the application itself is a hard-won skill, which is sometimes referred to as the signmakers' Everest. Making the climb a bit easier is a task that falls to media manufacturers.

These days, it's not enough to rely on traditional media, for example, conventional cast vinyl as the market expects something more application compliant, which tolerates the wrapping process well and delivers the very best result possible. Our response to this demand is our Cylinder Cast MetaWrap MD-X, which sits at the

centre of our MD-Class media portfolio.

When we first developed the product, the goal was to have something that bound together a family of media with broadly matched colour gamuts and exemplary handling. Now we've got that and the Metamark MD-Class portfolio enables wrappers to use exactly the right product for the job in hand, secure in the knowledge that they'll achieve consistent results. That in turn changes the whole economic basis for wrapping and livery work in general, as it's simply unnecessary

to use very expensive traditional media.

Delivering a uniform handling experience continues with the complementary matching laminate that we developed. Needless to say, it is as colourless as a flexible plastic film can possibly be and the crystal clear adhesive doesn't betray its presence either. More notable still though, are the physical characteristics the film embodies. Because the laminate is mechanically matched, it shares practically identical DNA with the MD-X base film and thus doesn't compromise its handling



characteristics.

In addition, all of our Metamark MD-Class media has a big appetite for ink, which means a correspondingly wide gamut that yields larger than life colours. That's important, because although some livery work is colour critical, in a more general sense, it's big bold colour that's the design target and that's what all MD-Class media delivers, wherever it's used on the vehicle. From the MD-X on the curvy bits, to MD5 on the flat panel work, the results make a uniform impact.

This has been the experience of Simon James who runs Elite Signs. Headquartered in Bridgend, Wales, the company has been in business for over twenty years and is thus a long-standing exponent of our media. Simon has succeeded in using it to extend the range of design possibilities Elite Signs offers and in so doing, the company has won a reputation locally and beyond for its work. Simon notes that the dominant theme in vehicle liveries nowadays seems to be that a lot of things are done for no purpose, other than that it's possible to do them. He cites, as an example, a livery created for a company that sells conservatories,

which featured a big, four colour picture of a conservatory and, hopelessly lost within it, the company's name, which was rendered practically illegible by all the surrounding detail. For good measure, there was also reams of text and bullet points detailing all of the attributes of the product, with the net result that the promotional messages the livery sought to display were all but lost.

Elite Signs though, is taking a contrary stance. It divides the vehicle with bold expanses of colour and often uses Metamark M7 coloured material, which it cuts on the vehicle using Knifeless Tape. It also pays a lot of attention to the size and style of the typeface and uses images and four colour in ways that are appropriate to the design. As a result, its liveries are distinctive, legible and very effective, to the extent that it has often received new commissions from people who've seen them and want something similar.

Simon James and the team at Elite

have made the transition from traditional media and now use the MD-Class portfolio from Metamark, which has changed the economic basis of its operation. The company represents an exemplar in its design approach to livery works too and extracts impact and performance from the materials.

If Elite Signs' work makes a broader point, it's this. With modern media and production technologies, livery design really can work with the vehicle. Detail can be big and bold and it doesn't have to avoid the vehicle's challenging parts either. Design doesn't have to be contained within panel work; it can go wherever it wants to lead the eye.

For our part, we will continue to drive the innovation process, but it's customer and market demand that ultimately inform our decisions and although the outcome is products that reflect market need, we like to think that they are also products that actively encourage the market by extending the application possibilities too." ■



John de la Roche, National Sales Manager for Sign & Graphics at Hybrid Services reviews the opportunities offered by vehicle liveries

"The vehicle graphics market has become a well-established and

exciting arena of vibrant colours, dazzling decals and endless special effects and, as more private car owners and commercial fleets look to personalise their vehicles, using everything from basic lettering, up to full wraps, this is an ideal time for both existing sign and print companies

and new businesses to get on board.

The benefits of applying decals and wraps to vehicles in the corporate world are many, - the most obvious being the facility to advertise and generally promote a business or service. A professionally branded vehicle can also add credibility to a business, instil confidence and create familiarity, something that many brands spend millions in achieving online. The beauty of vehicle graphics is that the message can be tweaked and updated easily and cost-effectively to include new branding and/or details of promotional campaigns.

Vehicle graphics and wraps are also big business in the motorsport industry, where sponsorship and aesthetics play a major role. Eye-catching metallic decals, which can be changed before every competition, are a sought after

application that add a high-end finish.

Fortunately, the cost of entry into this fast-paced, yet financially rewarding area of print is relatively affordable. Mimaki's CJV150 series of solvent printer/cutters provides everything that is required to make a big impact, including excellent output quality and fast speeds, plus the versatility to print, print and cut, or print, laminate and then cut, enabling users to produce full colour, cut-out graphics and smaller text.

The Mimaki CJV150-130 1361mm printer/cutter is the most popular model in the range, but the smaller, entry-level CJV150-75 prints and cuts media up to 800mm wide and is keenly priced at under £6k. It offers all of the same advantages as the wider models in the series, thus providing exactly the same reliability and quality. ■

special feature – vehicle liveries



Rob Goleniowski,
Sales Support Manager at Roland
DG, believes that the acquisition
of wrapping skills can open up
myriad possibilities

"If it has a motor and it moves, the opportunities are endless and it doesn't stop there. Once a wrapping skill is acquired, it can also be used for a wide range of different items, including appliances, furniture and giftware too.

For those new to the industry, or professionals looking to increase their understanding and experience in this area, we offer the Roland DG Academy Vehicle Wrapping course. Designed to provide the knowledge

required to maximise a machine's capabilities, the two-day Vehicle Wrapping course is an effective way to gain hands-on experience while learning top tips and tricks from one of our experts.

As far as equipment goes, there are a wide variety of options. A two-part print and cut solution is the ideal choice and our print and cutter bundles offer two different options, including the economical VersaEXPRESS RF-640 + GX-640 from the CAMM-1 PRO GX Series, or the high-speed SOLJET EJ-640+GX-640, both of which can boost production capabilities and provide a highly diverse business solution.

Whether it's for one-off personalised wraps or large volume fleet graphics, these machines can be used to create professional and versatile die-cut vehicle graphics, decals, stencilling and lettering.



The economical RF-640, facilitates the output of high-quality, vibrant graphics that are ready for lamination, while the cost effective EJ-640 is designed for the production of commercial level high-volume printing and is thus the perfect partner for use in a busy and fast-paced working environment. Once printed, the graphics can be transferred to the GX-640, which has

been engineered with powerful cutting motors to seamlessly finish each printed image to the highest standard possible. Furthermore, by using the ECO-SOL MAX 3 ink, which is available in nine different colours, including metallic and white, users can offer even more creative variations to the liveries they produce." ■

The Do's and Dont's of Vehicle Wrapping

Roland DG advises that there are 10 crucial points worth bearing in mind in order to ensure a happy customer and a perfect wrap!

See the vehicle

See the vehicle first and ideally take photos for reference. You'll be able to inspect the condition of the paint, assess contours and identify any accessories. Knowing what you're working with will help you provide an accurate quote.

Take before and after photos

With your customer's permission, take before and after photos. Not only will you benefit from having great photos for your website, brochures and other marketing materials, it will also safeguard your company if the wrap has to be removed because of faulty or defective paint jobs.

Measure the vehicle

Measure the exact height and width of each side of the vehicle as well as

the back, roof, bonnet and bumpers to assist in accurate scaling of the graphics. Take a note of any body breaks and keep in mind how you're going to print the panels.

Manage expectations

Understand what your customer wants to achieve with the wrap and discuss longevity, the materials you'll use, previous customers' experience and ways to preserve the quality of the graphic. Look over the vehicle with your customer and highlight known problem areas and/or where the seams will be.

Keep it in

During cold weather, keep the vehicle indoors for one extra day before returning it to your customer. A drop in outside temperature too soon after the application could result in media failure. Plus, a fresh pair of eyes the next day will help you double check tucked areas, deep contours, heated and stretched areas.

Seamlessly done

Ideally a seamless wrap would be best, but eventually you have to panel or seam the wrap. But which is better horizontal or vertical panels? Horizontal panels force you to lay bottom to top and are usually large panels – get them on straight and you're done. With vertical panels, you can work with smaller sections that are easier to handle. However you need to dry-fit vertical panels first. It's your decision.

Price it right

Your pricing should be determined by three factors: 1) how many square metres of media you'll use, 2) design/production time for the graphics and 3) how long it will take to apply. It's important to know what sort of budget your customer is working with before designing the wrap.

Attention to detail

You may have the best design, printer and media, but if you don't

have a great installation, you don't have a great wrap. A great wrap doesn't have noticeable seams, bubbles or other imperfections. Get up close to identify your wrap at close range – after all that's what your customer will do.

Customer approval

Discuss the final wrap with your customer – show print samples on the media you intend to use and secure colour and image quality approval. Make sure you get a signature and a deposit before any printing commences.

Check your wrap down the road

Invite your customer back in six months after the wrap for a check up and assess how it looks. Is the media holding up? How is the image quality? Are there any things to note that can help you learn moving forward? The wrap is also an advert for your company and by identifying any problem areas and solving them, you will help your business too. ■



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3M materials hit the marque

In collaboration with SMC Automotive and GT Cars Chester, APM Customs recently held an open day during which the 3M Authorised Vehicle Wrapper conducted a series of vehicle wrapping and detailing demonstrations, which involved leading-brand super cars such as Ferrari, Lamborghini, Porsche and Maserati and an array of bikes from the PR Racing British Superbike team.

A firm advocate of 3M vehicle-wrapping films, APM Customs used materials supplied by 3M's largest stockist and distributor William Smith

for the demonstrations. Managing Director, Kevin Gelsinan commented: "We consider 3M materials to be among the best available, due to their quality, ease of application and purposeful removal."

One of the more unusual vehicle wrapping projects undertaken by APM Customs was the wrapping of a restored classic Alfa Romeo Touring Car that required the meticulous recreation of all the artwork to the original style. Kevin Gelsinan added: "It was a painstaking process that was achieved by working from photographs in old magazines." ■



A finishing touch from Brunel

When vehicle restoration specialist, Frontline Developments, wanted to add a bespoke finishing touch to its new classic two-seater MBG Roadster car in order to replicate and re-engineer the iconic MG Abingdon Edition, it turned to engraving specialist Brunel Engraving.

The company supplies customised plates, panels and associated products to many of the most prestigious car manufacturers in the UK, including Aston Martin, Rolls Royce and Jaguar.

Voted Best Car in the most recent Top Gear TV series by motoring enthusiast and host, Chris Evans, the MGB Roadster had finishing touches applied to the car courtesy of Brunel Engraving, which supplied engraved sill plates to Frontline Developments to identify the restorers and the individuality of the model. To prevent rusting, the plates were manufactured from

high-quality 316 Grade stainless steel, cut to size and deeply engraved with the distinctive MG logo faithfully replicated from original artwork.

Managing Director of Brunel Engraving, Martin Wright commented: "Our skilled engravers are trained to interpret very exact product specifications, which certainly prepared them for this project, which required a high degree of precision and attention to detail when preparing the plates for the MG Abingdon Edition, in order to reflect the quality of the restoration."

Ed Braclik, Sales Director at Frontline Developments, added: "We have been using Brunel Engraving for many years to provide detailed engraved parts for all of our cars. This has enabled us to offer an even more bespoke service to customers whilst maintaining, if not increasing, the quality of the fine detail." ■





Massive 3D bus wraps

Using a 1800 3D printer supplied by Massivit 3D Printing Technologies, New York-based Carisma has created 10 eye-catching printed 3D graphics to promote Sony Pictures' Ghostbusters film.

The campaign involved the production of 10 4.27 metres-wide 3D printed images of the iconic 'No-Ghost' sign that served as the logo for the film. These were applied as illuminated vehicle wraps to a fleet of double-decker buses. Founder and CEO of Carisma, Moshe Gil commented: "When it comes to creating stunning and attention-grabbing vehicle graphics, then the Massivit 1800 3D printer is our chosen method. Visually appealing bus wraps are not new to companies like ours, but the ability to offer 3D printed

versions takes the application to a new creative frontier. The combination of the printer's high speed and the robust nature of the material used for the wraps enabled a rapid turnaround on the project."

The Ghostbusters campaign followed an earlier project for Sony Pictures involving similarly visually striking 3D printed bus wraps to promote The Angry Birds movie. Previously, Carisma completed large-format projects involving a mixture of substrates, including acrylic, PVC sheet and lenticular lenses. The company can now combine 3D elements with traditional 2D ones to elevate the creative possibilities for its vast client base.

Vice President (Marketing & Business Development) at Massivit, Lilach Sapir



commented: "Carisma is a prime example of a printing house that is active in the visual communication and large-format printing sectors and

has adopted 3D printing to enable companies to quickly and cost effectively produce stunning graphics that stand out from the crowd." ■



An eye-catching wrap



A prolific user of vehicle wrapping materials supplied by HEXIS, Staffordshire-based Signs & Graphics recently adopted the manufacturer's stunning Super Chrome blue film for a prestigious vehicle wrapping project involving a high-powered off-road rally car.

The chosen colour was part of the family of 90-micron Super Chrome high-gloss and mirror-effect

vehicle wrapping films that also includes red, purple, green, titanium, silver and gold formats. These highly conformable films can be used to wrap vehicles with deeply recessed, curved, embossed and textured surfaces. Sign & Graphics Managing Director, Richard Keasey explained: "HEXIS products have enabled us to explore new and exciting applications and increased the profitability of our business. The introduction of products such as the HEXIS Super Chrome series has also enabled us to diversify by adding stunning chrome wraps to our offerings, alongside our existing full-colour digital print vehicle wrap applications." ■



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The white stripe

Lettering-based Signs of photographs that grace this the Times, which supplied all feature, also completed this of the incidental this stunning Red Bull wrap.



Unusually, the central white band running along the sides and the rear of the vehicle is, in fact, the car's original paintwork, which has been further adorned with decorative vinyl lettering, while the rest of the bodywork is also covered with vinyl ■



RGVA has it framed

Vehicle branding and 3M Gold-tier Select Graphics Specialist, RGVA has completed Europe's largest ever installation of the TraxxOne graphics framing system, for which it is an official distributor and installer, having used the system to completely re-livery the commercial vehicle fleet of the nationwide furniture retailer DFS.

RGVA applied the quick-change high-tension aluminium framing system, which is used to apply ripple-free and high-definition printed banners to the sides of commercial vehicles, on to 400 demount truck bodies and 89 tri-axle trailers in the DFS fleet.

The installation was completed within seven weeks in order to coincide with a major sports-related marketing campaign featuring DFS athlete ambassadors Laura Trott, Max Whitlock and Adam Peaty, with the rollout involving two- and three-manned RGVA teams of specialist installers working at 60 DFS sites nationwide to apply the frame and side banners. RGVA also installed new graphics on the rear shutters of each asset. These were printed on

high-quality 3M Scotchcal IJ14-10 series film, incorporating 3M 8030G over-laminate, that provides a durability of five years.

The decision to install the TraxxOne framing system on the entire DFS fleet followed a successful 70-vehicle trial. Commercial Director at RGVA, Richard Cox commented: "RGVA and DFS worked closely together to ensure that no vehicle was ever taken out of service during the applied graphics project and therefore there was no impact on our daily operation."

Using the system, DFS now has the facility to change campaign graphics as often as it chooses with a process that can be carried out in all weather conditions and in a time scale that equates to just 15 minutes per vehicle side. The system is said to be the lightest, slimmest and most environmentally aware of its kind and is backed by a seven-year 350-change performance warranty.

In a separate project also involving the TraxxOne framing system, RGVA has applied a striking brand image to vans that have been added to the fleet of UK home assistance



provider, HomeServe. The company is taking delivery of more than 200 new vans for which a team of RGVA technicians will be applying one of two different branding themes involving either a full vehicle wrap, or pre-pigmented cut-vinyl graphics. The graphics were printed via the latex process onto 3M IJ180 film, with the 3M 8518 over-laminate applied to each. All of the vehicles also feature 3M reflective/fluorescent chevrons applied to the rear for maximum safety.

was preserved. RGVA has to date applied new liveries to 70 percent of the vehicle fleet, with the remaining 30 per cent scheduled for completion by the end of the year.

Away from the main fleet, HomeServe has also turned to RGVA to livery the company's franchise vans in order to maintain brand consistency throughout, with RGVA currently completing two franchise vehicle wraps each month. ■

Both the full-wrap and the cut-vinyl graphics processes were carried out in a dust-free and temperature-controlled environment to ensure that the 3M Matched Component System (MCS) warranty





Stay tuned to ADS

Amari Digital Supplies (ADS) offers a range of high-performance tuning films for vehicle decoration and detailing, as well as films for full and partial wraps that can be applied to both flat and curved surfaces and specially engineered films for vehicle protection and preservation.

MACtac tuning films offer a wide choice of coloured options and special finishes in a range of thicknesses and lifespans to meet specific end-user requirements. They are supported with repositionable low starting tack adhesives to ensure a perfect and bubble-free finish.

Key products in the polymeric vinyl tuning films range include the Velvet, Sublime, Carbon, Brushed, Iridescent, Pearl Cream and Stellar formulations. Available in five colours (Ultra Black, Sport Red, Burgundy, Grey and Green), the 170-micron TF Velvet features an ultra-matt finish and offers a four-year durability (black) and two

and a half years durability (coloured). The 85-micron TF Sublime is available in 19 matt and 16 gloss colours and offers an eight-year durability (black and white), seven-year durability (coloured) and six-year durability (metallic).

The 130-micron TF Carbon is available in four carbon-effect finishes (Black, White, Silver and Graphite) and provides a durability of six years (Silver and Graphite) and five years (Black and White). The 140-micron TF Brushed provides an eye-catching brushed metal-effect finish and is available in Black, Titanium, Graphite, Steel and Aluminium. It offers five years durability (Black, Titanium and Graphite), four years (Steel) and two and a half years (Aluminium).

The 120-micron TF 800 Stellar has an ultra-gloss finish and is available in seven colours (Black, White, Light Orange, Fuschia, Red Violet, Sea Blue and Apple Grey), all of which have a five-year durability. The 100-micron TF Iridescent and 130-micron TF Pearl



Cream cast vinyl materials are ideal for creating special effects on vehicles. TF Iridescent varies in colour, depending on the ambient light and angle of view. It is available in White, Light Rouge and Green with glints, Fuschia/Green and Blue/Green and has a durability of four years. TF Pearl Cream BF has a mother of pearl finish and provides a durability of five years.

For full or partial vehicle wraps, ADS offers the MACal 9800 Pro, MacPoly 900 IMAGin and IMAGin JT5500 plus CastRAP vehicle wrapping films. These are supported by vehicle protective and preservation films that include HORLizon and CastLAM 3D laminates, the PVC-free Permacolor HORLizon laminate for reinforced vehicle protection and the 150-micron CrystalProtect that provides a complete shield for vehicle bodywork.



The JT5500 plus CastWrap series of films are compatible with CastLAM gloss and matt and Permacolor HORLizon laminating films. CastWrap films are ideal for extreme convex, concave, riveted and embossed 3D surfaces, while CrystalProtect offers maximum protection against the effects of stone chips, scratches, UV degradation, colouring and vandalism. The 30-micron HORLizon and CastLAM 3D laminates similarly protect images from potential degradation as well as delaying colour fading due to UV exposure. In addition, the matt finish of the laminates also imparts an anti-reflective quality. ■

Antalis wrapping course

With over 20 years of experience in producing a variety of signage and graphics for its customers, Design Office decided to expand its portfolio by offering a vehicle wrapping service.

However, with no direct experience of the art, the company knew that it needed to gain the necessary expertise and, as it was already a regular Antalis customer, it signed up for Antalis' Digital Academy Vehicle Wrapping Workshop, which was first established last year.



The workshop, which is hosted by experienced signmaker Paul Hughes, is designed to provide an introduction to the basic principles of wrapping, the materials used and the skills that are required to complete a professional wrap job.

Design Office's Tom Forster, who attended the course, admitted that he wasn't quite sure what to expect. He explained: "Being an introductory course, I didn't know how extensive it would be, so I was surprised to discover how



detailed it was. As well as learning all about the practical skills needed, I learnt a lot more about the manufacture of vinyl, how it works and the benefits of vehicle wrapping.

"Paul Hughes, who was very helpful and knowledgeable, created a really relaxed environment and actively encouraged our questions. The best thing was that we were invited to wrap some panels ourselves, thus enabling us to back the theory with some practical hands-on experience!"



Tom added: "Antalis also recommended that we use Oracal vinyl for our wraps, which is really easy to use and provides a smooth finish with no air bubbles whatsoever. Now, thanks to Antalis we are wrapping like true professionals and reaping all the benefits that come with increased business opportunities."

For further information on the Antalis Digital Academy visit: www.digital2business.co.uk/digital-academy. ■





The Italian Job

Manufacturer of the 'Made in Italy' range of self-adhesive films, APA has now introduced a new series that has been specifically developed for use in vehicle wrapping applications and offers outstanding resistance to abrasion and environmental degradation.

For full vehicle wraps applied to both flat and contoured surfaces, the Carbon Racing (CW/RR7-HX) option is a high-performance cast film with a black gloss carbon-effect finish, while Roof (CW/K97=HX) is a cast film featuring an extra-gloss black finish. It is ideal for vehicle marking and detailing and for imparting a particular shine to vehicle surfaces. These vehicle wrapping films complement the existing velvet-effect Ultra Matt Blue (CW/86.0-HX) and the alluring Jaguar (CW/RC87X) films, both of which feature channelled and repositionable Repo Tack Air Free adhesive technology to facilitate ease of use. They also provide excellent opacity and high conformability.



In addition, APA's gloss white cast film (CW/ R00-FX, which was also introduced this year, can be used in conjunction with solvent, eco-solvent, UV and Latex ink technologies and also features a micro-channelled and repositionable adhesive. ■

Make the colour flow



Spandex has added the new Avery Dennison Colorflow Series to the range of Supreme Wrapping Films (SWF). This now comprises over 85 films in different finishes, including pearlescent, metallic, satin, gloss, chrome and textured formats.



The new collection comes with a satin finish in five colours: Fresh Spring in gold/silver, Roaring Thunder in blue/red, Rising Sun in red/gold, Urban Jungle in silver/green and Rushing Riptide in cyan/purple. In common with all vehicle-wrapping films in the SWF

range, they offer outstanding durability and conformability as well as offering a faster application capability, thanks to the Avery Dennison Easy Apply RS adhesive technology employed.

For larger projects that use the SWF range, Spandex also provides a colour-matching facility. ■

A surefire option



The 64-inch SureColor SC-S wide-format printer from Epson offers new levels of productivity, quality and durability combined with lower running costs. It can be used for a wide range of sign and graphics application and is a preferred printing solution for vehicle wrapping aficionados.

The printer is available in a choice of three models to provide four- up to 10-colour options. These include the entry-level four-colour SC-S40600 for fast turnaround work, the higher-volume SC-S60600 and the flagship nine/10-colour SC-

S80600 running on CMYKcLMLk, plus red and orange inks, which can also be configured to use white or metallic silver inks.

All of the models incorporate Epson PrecisionCore TFP print heads.

At this year's Sign & Digital UK exhibition, the versatility of the SC-S range of printers was shown producing a range of eye-catching vehicle graphics printed on the SC-S80600 platform using a cast vehicle wrapping film supplied by Arlon and applied by vehicle wrapping specialist Slam Signs. ■



Flexible options

Multiple vehicle wrapping solutions are available from William Smith, which are based primarily on materials supplied by 3M, Avery Dennison, Arlon and iSEE2.

The company has recently added Avery Dennison's multi-purpose inkjet film MPI 2800 and Arlon's DPF 6100XLP digital print wrap film to its continually expanding materials portfolio. Suitable for use in a wide range of medium-term vehicle wrapping applications involving flat or moderately curved surfaces, the white digitally-printable Avery MPI 2800 film is available in a choice of permanent or removable adhesives, with a dark grey adhesive option providing increased opacity for applications where over-posting of existing graphics is required. The film, which incorporates as an option Avery's Easy Apply air-release technology for faster and bubble-free application, is compatible with solvent, eco-solvent, UV and latex printers and provides an outdoor durability of up to seven years. MPI 2800 complements other vehicle



wrapping films from Avery Dennison, including the Avery MPI 1105 and 104 offerings.

The new gloss white cast DPF 6100XLP digital print wrap film from Arlon incorporates the XLP low-profile X-Scape air-release adhesive technology. This enables repositioning until perfect registration is achieved and facilitates a fast and bubble-free finish. An outstanding characteristic is the film's excellent bonding and conformability with difficult 3D surface features, such as rivets, corrugations and complex curves, thus making it ideal for commercial vehicle wraps. It is further complemented by the Arlon UPP (Ultimate Premium Plus) 2600LX series of self-coloured films and the

6000xrp range of digitally-printable films that provide similar performance capabilities to the 2600LX series. All Arlon digital films are compatible with solvent, eco-solvent, latex and UV ink processes.

The iSEE2 range of solid-colour films is available with ACT (Air Channel Technology) adhesive for enhanced ease of application. Designed for total vehicle wraps and available at a budget-conscious price, they are supplied in a choice of colours and finishes in gloss, metallic, carbon fibre-effect and special formats. A key design feature is the films' excellent elongation of 140 per cent and less than 0.5mm shrinkage.

As a primary stockist and distributor of vehicle wrapping films from 3M,



William Smith provides a wide range of options, including the dual-layer and solid-colour 3M Car Wrap Film 1080/1380 series, the digitally-printable 3M Controltac Graphic Film Series U180Cv3 and the latest non-PVC 3M Envision Print Wrap Film 480. The films combine 3M's renowned Controltac and Complyv3 adhesive technologies for optimum conformability and ease of application.

Supporting the vehicle wrapping solutions available from William Smith are specially developed application tools and accessories, including Knifeless Tape, which dispenses with the need for traditional knives and cutters and the series of training courses that the company hosts at its recently expanded facility in Barnard Castle, County Durham. ■

Increased sustainability

3M offers a wide range of high-quality solutions, which are supported with the 3M MCS (Matched Component System) warranty that is considered to be among the most powerful and comprehensive available.

A major product development and one with a high sustainability edge but at an affordable price, is the intermediate non-PVC 3M Envision Print Film 48 Series, complemented by 3M Print Wrap Film LX 480Cv3 and SV480Cv3 for latex and solvent inkjet printers respectively.

The films combine Controltac and Comply Version 3 adhesive technologies for ultimate repositionability and air release during the application process. They also provide a high-gloss finish and can be used with the non-PVC 3M 8548G and

8549L over-laminates for increased protection against abrasion and UV degradation.

3M U380, the flagship vehicle wrapping solution, offers conformability with surfaces featuring deep corrugations and/or three-dimensional graphics. Complementing 3M U380 and meeting the demand for cost flexibility is 3M Controltac Graphic Film Series U180Cv3, which also incorporates Controltac and Comply Version 3 adhesive technologies to reduce the risk of stretching, cracking and bubbling during the application process.

The dual-layer solid-colour 3M Car Wrap Film 1080/1380 Series is available in multiple colour formulations and is about to be expanded with new Flip colours for the 1080 series in the Autumn. ■





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This month, **Mark Godden** suggests



Where to stick it!

The phone is ringing... You drop what you're doing and prepare to answer. It might, after all, be confirmation that you've got the job you quoted for - fifty vehicle liveries, that'll do nicely. But no, it's someone who wants to engage you on a different subject, media and vinyl.

You don't really have time and it's a conversation lots of people want to have with you. Why not take it to a new level though - see if you can get a conversation going on the subject of adhesives.

The sign industry has an awful lot riding on adhesives. Think about it. All the vehicle liveries you've ever produced, all the window graphics, all the applied lettering. It's all out there, hanging on, entirely self supported by the adhesive that's coated on the back of your media.

Nobody cares much about 'glue' though. The people who design and formulate it do of course and material manufacturers are pretty obsessive about it. They have to be. Reputations rest on it. It's the basis of much of the performance you're buying when you specify materials.

The adhesive you're used to dealing with is delivered to the materials manufacturer in vessels known as IBCs or Intermediate Bulk Containers. During the materials manufacturing process, the adhesive is usually coated first on the liner, then dried and then laminated to the face film. It stays on the face film, you hope, when you peel off the liner.

There are adhesives, and there are adhesives. If ever there was a case to be made for turning to quality, it's this one. There's money, and lots of it, to be saved in manufacturing by tweaking adhesive specifications. Consequences can be dire. Indicated action on your part - stick, literally in this case, with a quality media brand.

One of the most welcomed innovations in recent years in the materials landscape is the air-evacuation feature offered by some manufacturers. For those who've been on an extended holiday, this feature

gives trapped air a way out from under the applied graphic. Little channels in the adhesive form a network of evacuation routes for air to take. So, with a swipe of the hand, bubbles simply vanish.

Though remarkable in itself, the air evacuation feature illuminates a really healthy attitude to innovation at a fundamental level. It saves those who work with materials time that would otherwise be wasted in more laborious application processes. Who would have thought that 'glue' had the capacity to do that?

The inner mysteries of adhesives are many and various. Have you ever wondered how the material you're applying is able to give you seemingly endless attempts at repositioning and yet steadfastly refuses to come off when it's finally applied? It's no accident that it works that way; quality adhesives are formulated to provide this welcome capability by design.

Here's how.

Adhesives are formulated to achieve a primary bond that makes the materials to which they are coated easy to handle. The so-called ultimate bond develops thanks to the intimate inner workings of the adhesive over a period of some hours post application and keeps the graphics applied. Really clever adhesives have yet another labour saving feature in the wings.

Thanks to very precise formulation and design, adhesives are created that have more of an affinity for the face film than the target substrate. That might not immediately send you rushing to the shops to buy some, but you'll be forever thankful when it's time to take the applied graphics out of commission. You'll save hours when all you need to

remove from a vehicle is applied vinyl and not the adhesive that's left behind on the substrate.

Some adhesives are designed and sold as 'removable'. These find useful applications in areas where graphics are temporary in nature. There are specialist adhesives that work well with apolar, or low energy surfaces, which conventional adhesives don't like. There are adhesives with inclusions that make them opaque so underlying colours and details don't show through. There are adhesives that are not really adhesives at all for ultra-removable stickers and the like.

The fact that there isn't a one-glue-does-all situation prevailing signals the importance of getting the right product working for you. This is particularly important for window graphics.

If you're into window graphics in a big way, or even if the need is occasional, you'd better be very particular about the adhesives that are used on the products you apply. If someone tries to sell you things like simulated etch effect films and they have 'less than a clue when it comes to the glue', avoid - avoid - avoid!

Window graphics go through vinyl hell and back again. They are applied in environments that experience repeated cycles of high, then low, temperatures. They experience extremes of humidity and they're bombarded with high doses of UV light. Those conditions closely mirror the artificial environment in which materials are 'pressure tested' by their manufacturers, where machines known as 'weatherometers' are used to subject samples to an accelerated weathering test.

Adhesives used on window films have

to be the best available in all respects. They need to be state-of-the-art in terms of formulation, expertly coated and of unimpeachable pedigree. Why? Conditions aside, with window graphics, adhesives are on open display. They fail - you fail.

The moment your window film's adhesive makes contact with the window or glass panel you're working with, so called 'optical continuity' is, or rather should be, established. If your adhesive is, how can we put this politely, rubbish, then optical continuity may not be complete. You'll soon see if it is. Where contact and continuity is incomplete, you'll find snail trails of silvery nasties all over the place.

Another all too popular mode of failure in window film adhesives is highlighted by the fact that the poor ones like a drink. They readily absorb water wherever they find it and do a good job of letting you know that they have too. Instead of crystal clear adhesive, you get a milky looking layer that readily betrays its presence and literally wrecks the job. It's just not worth the risk.

The right adhesive is a powerful indicator that everything is made to a standard. Putting good adhesive on marginal media is a waste of effort and materials. There are some truly terrible products out there, so do ask questions of those who'd like to be your friend and sell you materials. If they're prepared and able to have a detailed conversation about 'glue' you can bet the farm that the product being sold is cut from the right side of the quality line. But if you get something less than satisfactory at that level of detail, perhaps you should consider looking elsewhere for your materials!

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