

# sign

directions

June/July 2015 - No.145

## A Fresh Look at Décor

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**CELEBRATION** - NOVA IS A STAR!

**BSGA BRITISH SIGN AWARDS** - TIME TO ENTER!

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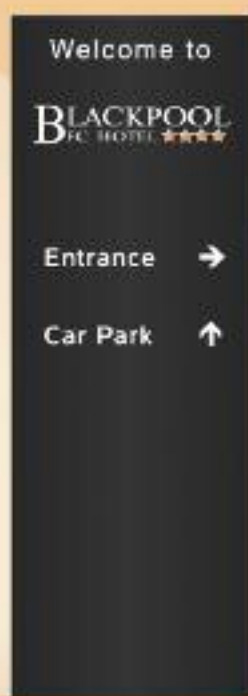
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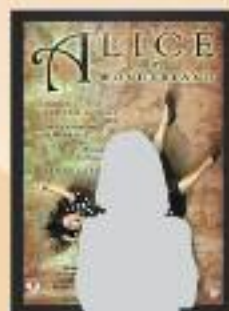
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### Sign Directions Hotline:

If you would like the contact details of any of the companies featured in this issue of Sign Directions, please ring **Tel: 01623 882398** for full company information, or alternatively, e-mail [signdirections@btconnect.com](mailto:signdirections@btconnect.com) for a response by return.

### Coming Next:

The next issue of Sign Directions will be the September issue, which will celebrate the magazine's 20th anniversary.



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Introduction

## setting the scene

What are your plans for this summer? The chances are that, you're looking forward to taking a well-deserved break somewhere reliably hot, where you can laze by a pool with a good book and a long cool drink.

That would certainly be my preferred option, but this summer I'll be sacrificing my tan in order to work on the September issue, which will celebrate 20 years of Sign Directions. With the anniversary rapidly approaching, I've been scouring old copies of the magazine and it's predecessor, Signs, which illustrate just how much the industry – and the companies working within it – have changed over the last two decades.

When Sign Directions first started, in the days before digital printing first made its appearance, the definition of a sign was something made of rigid materials, decorated with paint and vinyl and installed on the outside of a building or retail outlet. Alternatively, it could be a wayfinding sign that imparted information or directions, but at that stage, interior signage and vehicle liveries weren't really regarded as 'proper' signs at all. There were still a lot of traditional sign writers around, some of whom took a decidedly Luddite stance and decried the growing proliferation of computerised signmaking systems as the work of the devil. How times have changed! Nowadays, the definition of a sign is so elastic that it can be stretched to include everything from vehicle wraps to billboards, point of sale to banners, light boxes to monoliths and much else besides. And, in addition, many sign companies have also diversified into specialist niche areas that enable them to use their resources to good and lucrative effect.

One such area is décor, which has the advantage of providing signmakers with a new customer base and one that is also often less concerned with cost and more concerned with aesthetics. Décor also offers limitless possibilities for companies to use both their digital printing facilities and their traditional signmaking capabilities, as decorative elements can be seamlessly added to almost any signage scheme to make it a more worthwhile enterprise, while also opening up fresh areas of application too. One signmaker admitted that rather than using his wrapping prowess on vehicles, he now spends his time wrapping furniture for domestic interiors, to much more profitable effect. Another company revealed that it was currently using its fabrication facility to produce the intricate sculptural designs that are destined to enliven the reception area of a merchant bank and that its customer was prepared to pay handsomely to have the work completed to its precise specification. Some examples of the projects we have unearthed are included in Decorative Dimensions, this month's special feature, which begins on page 36, and also highlights how standard signmaking hardware and



some of the new décor friendly materials can be used to best effect.

On page 26, Structure Flex is hoping that its latest project will enable it to diversify into new and exciting areas, and in Celebration on page 34, Nova Aluminium Systems explains why it's a star. Vink Lighting's Graham Pritchard explains the intricacies of achieving colour consistency with LEDs on page 28 and in this month's Last Word, Mark Godden urges readers to look for new horizons on page 54. Elsewhere you'll find all of our regular news pages.

Now, if you do nothing else this summer, please at least find some time to review the projects you have completed over the past 12 months and enter the best of the crop for the BSGA British Sign Awards, which will culminate in a special gala lunch and presentation ceremony on 13th October, 2015.

The event, which will be held at Nottingham's splendid East Midlands Conference Centre, is designed to showcase both the collective skills and artistry of the wider industry, whilst also recognising – and rewarding – the individual companies who have produced the best work in 14 different categories during the past year. For further information, turn to page 16, and remember, if you don't enter, you definitely won't win!

Finally, although we are now taking a break until September, don't forget that you can still find regular news updates on our websites, [www.signdirectionsonline.co.uk](http://www.signdirectionsonline.co.uk) and [www.décordirections.co.uk](http://www.décordirections.co.uk)

Meanwhile, because our offices are undergoing a lengthy, if not particularly expansive, renovation process, I'll spend my summer ploughing through the dusty magazine archive for inspiration, to the accompaniment of endless drilling, banging and Radio One, while also being exposed to a larger expanse of builders' bum than could ever be considered decent. No one can say that I don't suffer on your behalf!



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# New Retail Display Directory out now!

The Shop and Display Equipment Association has published the SDEA Retail Display Directory 2015/2016, a new guide to the shopfitting and display industry.

Brimming with new ideas, creative concepts and innovative retail display solutions, buyers can select from over 100 leading designers, manufacturers and suppliers of

specialist retail display products and services.

In addition, the exclusively commissioned editorial reveals some of the latest retail store launches both near and far, including everything from a minimalist shoe store in London, where jelly shoes are showcased within a gallery inspired interior, to a small, yet perfectly

formed, fashion store in China and an art deco supermarket in France!

Normally priced at £10, a free copy is available to the first 50 readers who call Tel: 01883 348911 or e-mail [directory@sdea.co.uk](mailto:directory@sdea.co.uk) mentioning Sign Directions ■



## Appointments



As a sign of its continued confidence in the future of the UK graphics sector, **Agfa Graphics** has recruited three graduate trainees to strengthen its sales teams in commercial print, inkjet and workflow.

**Liz Morrice**, who studied international science and politics at the University of Birmingham, is interested in art and how pigments are mixed to achieve different colours and following her training programme, she will become a valuable new member of the inkjet sales team at Agfa Graphics.

**Sean Coker** is a graduate in chemical engineering from the University of Western Australia. Although educated down under, he holds a British passport and after his introductory training will take up a position with Agfa's workflow team.

**Henry Stevens** studied business and sports at the University of

Hertfordshire and, following his induction course into print, he will join the commercial print sales team at Agfa Graphics.



**Spandex** has appointed **Camiel Bosma** to the dual roles of Group Vice President, and General Manager, Netherlands, with immediate effect. He will be based in the Spandex Netherlands offices in Veenendaal.

Camiel Bosma began his industry career at Spandex in 1984, where he remained for 16 years, eventually becoming Managing Director for Spandex Benelux, before moving on to become Division Director for the Netherlands and Germany with Buhrman Ubbens and most recently, Divisional Director for VTS Europe within Paperlinx.



**Zünd UK** has expanded its sales team with the appointment of **Greg Heather**, who takes on the new role of Sales Account Manager

Greg, who moves to Zünd UK from Esko, brings with him many years of experience and a solid reputation in

the sign, display and packaging sectors. In addition to these markets, he will also be working with customers in the composites, textile and leather industries, thus covering the full reach of Zünd's digital cutting technology.

Based centrally in Rugeley, Staffordshire, Greg will cover sales in the Midlands, North-West England, Wales and Ireland.



Following the recent retirement of David Cheesman, **Xaar** has announced the appointment of a new Non-Executive Director, **Margaret Rice-Jones**, who will join the Board on 1st August 2015.

Margaret, who has held Non-Executive Directorships with established PLCs and VC backed e-commerce businesses since 2000, also has extensive experience of managing complex international technology businesses, with over 25 years in senior leadership positions. In addition, she has had direct responsibility for operations and customer relationships in Asia, EMEA and North America, as well as leading acquisitive growth strategies within multiple businesses.



**Onyx Graphics** has appointed **Rigte Groenbroek** to the position of Territory Sales Manager for Central and Eastern Europe, in the Onyx Graphics Europe-Middle East-Africa (EMEA) Region.

In his new role, Rigte, who previously served as an account manager for Antalis, as well as gaining extensive sales experience in large format and textile printing at Spandex Benelux, will provide sales and business development to the Onyx Graphics channels in Benelux, Germany, Austria, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Russia.



**Complete CNC Solutions** has appointed **Gillian Allen** as Consumables Sales Account Manager.

Gillian, who has a wealth of experience in the print sign and display sectors, will be based at the Company's headquarters and demonstration facilities in the South-West, near Bristol, but will also be visiting customers to advise them how to enjoy optimal benefits from the production systems they employ. ■

## Getting off to a good start



The latest apprentice giving Yorkshire's Leading Edge Signage the 'edge' is 19-year-old Jake Render (pictured)

**Leading Edge Signage, which specialises in the design and production of display graphics, is currently investing heavily in apprentices in order to further support the growth of its expanding operation.**

In the seven years since its launch, the West Yorkshire-based company has grown from a workforce of just four to 40 and first began employing apprentices after just six months in business. So successful a process has this been, that now, Managing Director Matthew Evans has pledged that over the next five years, 10 percent of the company's growing workforce will be made up of apprentices.

Its first apprentice signmaker was its Installation Manager, Joe Addison, who began his career when he originally joined Leading Edge Signage in 2009. After winning Apprentice of the Year in 2010, Joe qualified in 2011 and now leads a team of 10 people on a multi-

million pound UK retail graphics contract.

He has since been joined by recently qualified apprentice and fitter Joe Bowman, who originally had his sights set on teaching sports until an interview with Matthew Evans led to a two-year apprenticeship. Meanwhile 19-year-old Jake Render, who is half way through his three-year fabrication and welding apprenticeship, is also studying for his NVQ Level 2 in Engineering Operations at Bradford College.

Matthew Evans, who confirmed that a further two apprentices will be appointed this year, observed: "Because this is a skilled industry that continues to evolve, its future lies in the hands of the next generation of young people and we're proud to be playing a part in providing the skills they will need while also enjoying the valuable contribution they can make to our business." ■

## Sign & Digital UK 2016 now a week earlier

**Faversham House Group, the organiser of Sign & Digital UK has confirmed that due to exceptional demand for stand space, the 2016 show will now take place on 19th-21st April, a week earlier than originally announced.**

It will also return to Halls 17 and 18, the venue for the 2015 exhibition, which will enable it to accommodate the expected growth.

Rudi Blackett, Portfolio Director for Sign & Digital UK, explained: "By the end of the 2015 show, we had already sold over one third of the available floor space for 2016, and this, along with demand following the show closing,

meant that we needed to move halls in order to accommodate the higher than anticipated number of exhibitors. Following negotiations with the NEC, we are pleased to announce that Sign & Digital UK will now be held in halls 17 and 18 on 19th-21st April 2016 and we are looking forward to working with current and new exhibitors over the coming months to ensure that the next edition of the event is the best yet for all those working in the sign, display and digital printing sectors."

The 2015 show held on 24th-26th March attracted 6,807 unique visitors, a 11.3 percent year on year increase and 196 exhibitors, up 30 percent compared with 2014. ■

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## Two signs collapse in Tooting in 24 hours



**Following well-documented sign failures in Camden and Blackpool, Tooting in South London was the recent scene of two more serious incidents involving signs**

In the first, a four-tonne digital advertising billboard, operated by Clear Channel, fell from the side of a building during morning rush hour and pinned a woman to the ground. Witnesses said she was 'lucky to be alive'. She was taken to St George's Hospital in Tooting where, it was reported, she was treated for hip and leg injuries.

Unbelievably, later the same day a fascia sign installed above a stationer's shop just yards away, also crashed to the ground narrowly missing two pedestrians.

In the first incident, the digital billboard had only been installed on the wall above a charity shop for a couple of days and had replaced a wooden hoarding that had been in place for some years. Owners Clear Channel launched an immediate investigation into the accident and also carried out checks on 39 other sites in the UK.

Local councillors in Tooting called for safety checks on signs and billboards throughout the area following the second accident.

David Catanach, Director of the BSGA, commented: "It is not for us to speculate about the reasons for these accidents – the statutory authorities will determine the causes.

"However, both incidents highlight once again the vital role signmakers and installers have in protecting the public and the BSGA will continue to campaign for the highest standards in sign design, fabrication, installation and maintenance."

**For further information on the Tooting sign visit: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3077896/Woman-crushed-metal-advertising-billboard-fell-building-morning-rush-hour.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3077896/Woman-crushed-metal-advertising-billboard-fell-building-morning-rush-hour.html). For further information on the second sign failure visit: [www.wandsworthguardian.co.uk/news/](http://www.wandsworthguardian.co.uk/news/). For further information on the BSGA visit: [www.bsga.co.uk](http://www.bsga.co.uk) ■**

## The Print Show gets a boost

**Link Exhibitions, the organiser of The Print Show has confirmed that this year's inaugural edition of the event has secured the backing of all of the industry's major print-focused trade bodies and charitable organisations.**

Taking place at Birmingham's NEC 13th-15th October, the show has attracted plenty of interest from companies across the industry, with many major print brands having already confirmed their participation.

This high level of support has now been given a further boost with the news that all major trade bodies from within the print sector are also endorsing the event, with several key organisations due to attend the show.

One such body is Two Sides and Print Power, which is known throughout the industry not only for its backing of print as a sustainable media, but also for highlighting the many benefits such material can offer to the brands that opt to use it.

## showtime

DIARY DATES FOR 2015

### Viscom Paris 2015

**29th September - 1st October**

Pavilion, Porte de Versailles, Paris  
Organiser: Reed Expositions Paris  
Tel: +33 (0)1 47 56 21 19  
e-mail: [jennifer.gras@reedexpo.fr](mailto:jennifer.gras@reedexpo.fr)  
[www.viscom-paris.com](http://www.viscom-paris.com)

### The Print Show 2015

**13th - 15th October**

NEC, Birmingham  
Organiser: Link Exhibitions  
Tel: 0117 980 5049  
e-mail: [Page@theprintshow.co.uk](mailto:Page@theprintshow.co.uk)  
[www.theprintshow.co.uk](http://www.theprintshow.co.uk)

### Viscom Italia 2015

**15th - 17th October**

Fieramilano, Milan  
Organiser: Reed Exhibitions Italia  
Tel: +39 02 435 170.1  
e-mail: [viscomitalia@reedexpo.it](mailto:viscomitalia@reedexpo.it)  
[www.viscomitalia.it](http://www.viscomitalia.it)

### Viscom Dusseldorf 2015

**4th - 6th November**

Messe Dusseldorf  
Organiser: Reed Expo Germany  
Tel: +49 211 90191-222  
[info@viscom-messe.com](mailto:info@viscom-messe.com)  
[www.viscom-messe.com](http://www.viscom-messe.com)

### InPrint 2015

**10th - 12th November**

Messe Munich  
Organiser: FM Brooks  
Tel: 01372 370 892  
e-mail: [stefanie.thiele@mackbrooks.com](mailto:stefanie.thiele@mackbrooks.com)  
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In addition to confirming that the show has the backing of all the major trade bodies, including the BPIF, BAPC, IPIA, St Brides Foundation, PICON, ProSkills, and The Printing Charity, Link Exhibitions has also confirmed the signing of a number of new key industry players, such as OKI, which specialises in the manufacture and supply of digital printing equipment, inks, and media and Ricoh, a key manufacturer of digital technologies, which will be using the show to introduce some of its products to a UK audience for the first time.

In addition, visitors to the show will have the opportunity to view the creative endeavours of some of the best young print talent in the UK, as PrintIT!, the popular education initiative run by Proskills, will be hosting a competition that will provide talented youngsters with the chance to win a special prize, while also displaying their latest work. ■



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# new projects



◀ Vehicle wrap specialist **Funkeefish** has been named as winner of **Arlon's** first 2015 **#Wrap Wars** competition, with its sensational wrap of a modified Audi TTT.

Funkeefish used Arlon's Ultimate Premium Plus Series 2600LX in Blue Aluminum, with detailing and accents in Sunkiss Aluminum, one of the newest colours in the range, together with Matt Black and Matt White graphics, all of which were supplied by William Smith.

The final design for the wrap, which was chosen by Funkeefish staff from ten original designs and colour-ways created by the company's MD, Mark Chamberlain, cleverly used the way the light reflects off the colours to achieve a real WOW factor. ■



▲ A **Ginetta G55 GT** racing car competing in the **G4** class of the **2015 British GT Championship** has been wrapped with self-adhesive materials supplied by Spandex.

The car, which is engineered and managed by the team at **Bolton University's** specialist

Automotive Performance Engineering (Motorsport) department, as a key hands-on element of the degree course, was wrapped with six metres each of 3M 1080 Metallic Blue, 3M 1080 Gloss White and Avery Supreme Wrapping Film in Matt Black, by Northampton-based motorsport graphics specialist and regular



Spandex customer, **3SixtyWraps**, which also provides expert wrapping services to many high-profile racing teams, including round the clock trackside support where necessary.

The Bolton University Ginetta G55's first outing was at Rockingham circuit in Northamptonshire, where it

achieved 11th place, hampered by a puncture during the race. The car is also set to race at Silverstone, Brands Hatch, Snetterton and Donington Park during the summer.

**A video of a Ginetta G55 being wrapped can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHpJF8E8uME](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHpJF8E8uME)** ■

► Whether **Siltbuster** is a familiar name, or whether it isn't, chances are you've passed some of its hardware on a low-loader making its way along the motorway, and you may have even wondered what it is, and where it's going.

Here's the answer - we have Siltbuster to thank for the fact that construction sites, among others, can prevent water contamination and stay on good terms with today's far tighter environmental legislation.

Siltbuster, in turn, has Monmouth-based **Chillipepper Signs** to thank for the branding of its impressive looking

hardware. Chillipepper and Siltbuster are practically neighbours and Chillipepper keeps the manufacturer supplied from a long list of available graphics, applied by the Chillipepper team, when it's time for hardware to leave the factory and begin its journey to the customer.

Construction site plant leads a hard life and so does the branding it wears. Chillipepper uses Metamark M7 processed on its Summa plotter to produce the Siltbuster graphics and the applied results do the required job and do it well.



Chillipepper Signs has been in the signing business for about thirteen years and has an impressive clientele in the locality and further afield, although its work for Siltbuster

has probably been seen in more far-flung places than any other. Siltbuster products are in demand and sold all over the world and every unit is branded locally by Chillipepper Signs. ■



▲ **Severn Signs**, which has been in business since 1990 and has always invested in the latest technology to help it push its creative boundaries, is also one of the largest independent sign and

display manufacturers in Gloucestershire, with clients that are drawn from both its local catchment area and nationwide.

In response to a recent brief from

**Willow Catering**, Severn Signs' Trevina Watts designed a jaunty livery using a beach hut theme for the company's mobile catering unit. Despite what the eye might fool the brain into believing, most of the design is printed and the subtle shades and tones in the finished result create a convincing impression of physical construction, detail and depth where there actually is none. MetaWrap MD-X was used for the parts of the wrap where surfaces were challenging and Metamark MD5 features on the flat panel work. Despite using two media, colour matching is flawless and application highly skilled.

The fascia panel above the printed

elements of the wrap, which also features lettering crafted from mirror-finished Alucobond, alerts the public to the fact that it's actually an enterprise selling fish and chips rather than a row of beach huts, but the sign's background matter is printed to the same high standard as the body of the wrap.

The overall effect is highly attractive and clearly achieves a high impact for the business it represents. More than that though, the design evokes memories of days at the seaside, summer sun and, of course, a raging appetite for a large portion of cod and chips - plenty of vinegar please! ■

Supplier News

# Pyramid Display to distribute Avery

**Pyramid Display Materials has been appointed as a national distributor for Avery Dennison's range of screen, digital and signmaking vinyls.**

The deal provides Pyramid with access to products from all of Avery Dennison's graphic range, which includes a wide selection of pressure-sensitive materials that can be used to create impactful informative, brand and decorative graphics.

This arrangement will enable Pyramid to further enhance its service to its customers, many of whom are already regular users of



Avery Dennison products, while also allowing Avery Dennison to better target key markets for its range.

At the same time Avery Dennison has also appointed Quantum

Europoint as a further new UK distributor along with Pantoon NV in Belgium and Vink Kunststoffen BV Visual Technology Solutions in the Netherlands. ■

# Avery Dennison launches mobile colour app



**Avery Dennison Graphics Solutions recently launched a new mobile app that features a**

**novel tool that enables sign and print companies to gain immediate mobile access to a broad selection of Avery Dennison product ranges.**

The Avery Dennison Colour Swatch app provides a variety of practical and convenient functionalities and can be used to browse and explore the company's sign range and the new Supreme Wrapping Film, compare and select colours, and request a sample.

Among the ranges covered by the app are Avery Dennison's 900 Super Cast Film, 800 Premium Cast Film, and 777 Cast Film; plus its 700 Premium Film, 500 Event Film, 5500 QM Translucent Film and 4500 Translucent Film, Supreme Wrapping Film, Supreme Wrapping Film Extreme Texture and Conform Chrome Series.

The app is suitable for use with both Android and iOS platforms, and is available from the Apple App store and Google Play. ■

# It starts with the finish

**When Complete CNC Solutions exhibited at the recent Sign & Digital UK 2015 show, it used the occasion to officially debut its Protek Unico TT production router and print-finishing cutter.**

Visitors to the company's stand were thus able to witness the creation of a demonstration sample that perfectly illustrated the high cutting quality of the Protek Unico TT, the output of which comes straight off the bed

without the need for manual intervention or finishing. The sample piece was produced using Perspex Glass-Look 6T21, supplied by Perspex Distribution and featured engraved lettering, profile cutting, bevelling and finishing cuts, all of which were produced in a single, hands-off workflow.

The demand for the finished samples, which were variously compared to, and confused with,



that produced with laser cutting and flame polishing, was such that Complete CNC Solutions' couldn't keep pace! However, the company is now providing further samples,

# Wrights Plastics is the champion!



**Wrights Plastics is celebrating following its success at a recent Express & Star Business Awards 2015 presentation ceremony, when it scooped the 'Manufacturing Champion' award.**

This was the second time the West Bromwich-based plastics manufacturer has received an accolade in the space of 12 months, as it was also named 'Manufacturer of the Year' at the Birmingham Post Business Awards in 2014.

The category, sponsored by UTC Aerospace System, aimed to recognise innovative organisation and investment in people and skills and Wrights Plastics scored highly for all three criteria. The company has enjoyed recent massive growth, having generated a 40 percent increase in turnover and increased staff levels, as well as expanding its business through its successful work for clients including Marks & Spencer, Tesco and Selfridges.

In addition, it has also invested over €500,000 in cutting edge technology and plant in order to support its expansion aims. ■

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## Wrap Like a King!

**Avery Dennison Graphics Solutions has launched the 2015 'Wrap like a King' Challenge, which runs until 30th September and invites vehicle wrappers from seven geographic areas in the United States, Canada and Europe to submit commercial or colour-change wrap projects, to be judged by a panel of industry experts.**

The first 25 submissions received will be rewarded with a special entry prize.

Eric Ide, Global Director, Wrapping Films, Avery Dennison Graphics Solutions, explained: "After great success with our 2013 and 2014 'Wrap like a King' Challenges in North America, we are now also including Europe to make it a challenge of global proportions and I can't wait to see what

creative designs our customers will submit!"

He added "We are encouraging wrap installers to show off their creativity and techniques using commercial and colour-change wraps and this year's 'Wrap Like a King' Challenge winner will earn significant bragging rights plus the title 'King of the Wrap World'."

Submissions will be evaluated by a panel of industry experts and regional winners announced in October, with the overall winner being crowned the 'King of the Wrap World' at the 2015 SEMA Show, scheduled to take place on 3rd-6th November 2015 in Las Vegas.

All regional winners will receive a trip to the 2015 SEMA Show and prize packs will also include a 2016 Avery Dennison



wrap class; personalised 'Wrap Like a King' swag; a variety of promotional and marketing tools for the winner's wrap shop and exposure on Avery Dennison's Instagram, Facebook page and website.

Both wrappers and fans are encouraged to use #WrapLikeAKing on Instagram to enter to win the fan prize package, which includes an Avery Dennison Wrap Like a King swag bag complete

with Avery Dennison T-shirts, retail and restaurant gift cards and signed merchandise from West Coast Customs.

**Wrap installers are encouraged to enter a vehicle wrap project using Avery Dennison Supreme Wrapping Film or digital cast films via [www.wraplikeaking.com](http://www.wraplikeaking.com), where official rules, judges and prize information are also posted. ■**

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## Supplier News

## Hybrid shows support for students

**For the second year running, Hybrid Services played host to graphic design students from its local educational institution, South Cheshire College.**

Following the complete showroom rebrand of Hybrid's showroom facility created by last year's students, this year's crop of 16-18 year olds were given free reign of both the showroom and Hybrid's complete portfolio of Mimaki printers in order to create finished products from their own designs.

This year the students each created a unique piece of design within the areas of surface pattern or digital imaging, using everything from the newly released Mimaki CJV150-75 entry-level printer-cutter, up to the grand format JFX200 LED UV flatbed to bring their designs to life while also gaining some real

'hands-on' experience.

The extensive Mimaki showroom at Hybrid's Crewe HQ houses a raft of wide format printers and cutters, including its solvent, UV, latex and SUV ranges, which facilitate the production of a wide range of diverse applications.

Commenting on the value of the project for the students, Laura Summer, Assistant Director for Arts and Media at South Cheshire College, said: "It has been a great opportunity for the graphic design students to see a tangible realisation of their ideas. They have gained tremendous perspective from the whole experience and it has provided them with the confidence to think further about where design can take them, especially in relation to the print industry." ■



## Innotech launches new identity

**Innotech Digital & Display, a leading UK supplier to the large format print sector, has announced the rebranding of the company, which follows a period of rapid business expansion and includes the launch of a fully updated website that uses the**

**new visual identity.**

Kieran Dallow, Marketing Manager at Innotech explained: "We have enjoyed expedient growth, in terms of both new business and product development, and, following this evolution, we felt the

need to implement a corporate identity that accurately reflects who we are and what we do."

He continued: "Our new branding is a much better reflection of our commitment to customer service, as

# INNOTECH

DISPLAY MEDIA INK

well as our progressive, forward thinking culture, and the fact that we are always on the lookout for new ideas and opportunities in order to stay at the cutting edge of the market." ■

## Learn all about LEDs

**Applelec is holding a series of LED training courses for the trade at its Bradford and London showrooms.**

The entry-level course will provide participants with a grounding in the basics of LED illumination for signage and is suited to everyone, from sales staff to production teams.

The simple to follow, technical and practical workshop aims to erase any fears about working with LEDs and the course covers areas including general and technical information, advice regarding the selection of the most appropriate LED for specific applications and information on wiring and assembly.

Andy Armitage, Applelec's Business Development Manager, will be hosting monthly workshops at the company's Bradford head office showroom and at its London showroom at the Business Design Centre in Islington.



**For further details on the course, or to book a place, contact Applelec's Sales Director, Sam**

**Armstrong, on Tel: 01274 774 477 or e-mail to: sam@applelec.co.uk ■**

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# Rewarding achievement

The British Sign Awards, organised by the BSGA and sponsored by 3M, provides UK sign businesses with an opportunity to showcase and receive recognition for their best work. Open to ALL UK-based sign businesses, with judging being carried out by an independent panel of industry experts, entry is free and easy – simply complete the online form at [www.britishsignawards.org](http://www.britishsignawards.org)

And there are plenty of awards to go after – no less than 15 categories, reflecting the wide-ranging skills that exist within the modern sign industry and the diversity of the projects produced.

This year the awards will be presented on Tuesday October 13th at a gala ceremony to be held at East Midlands Conference Centre (EMCC), a superb, purpose-built facility located on the campus at Nottingham University

David Catanach, Director of the BSGA commented: "This is an occasion that brings the whole industry together to celebrate the best in signmaking and we aim to make it a day to remember!"

He added: "Once again, the event will be compered by Bob 'The Cat' Bevan MBE, a legend on the after-dinner circuit and although the awards obviously have a serious side, the aim is to make the whole event a thoroughly enjoyable experience for all who attend."

Tickets are available online at [www.britishsignawards.org](http://www.britishsignawards.org) ■

## The 2015 Awards

### Vehicle Liveries



**William Smith**  
established 1832

This year, William Smith is supporting two awards, the first of which is for Commercial Vehicle Graphics, covering everything from vans and trucks to planes and trains, while the second award is for Personal Vehicle Wraps.

### Illuminated Sign



Supported by Vink Lighting Solutions, the Illuminated Sign of the Year award will go to the business that makes the most dramatic and impressive use of the myriad lighting technologies now available to signmakers.

### Interior Signage



Signmakers are increasingly being asked to enhance interiors through the use of signage and/or graphics produced using traditional and/or hi-tech skills and materials. Supported by Spandex in association with DI-NOC, the award will go to a business that has used its skills to create an outstanding interiors scheme.

### Small Signmaker of the Year



Supported by Amari Plastics, this award recognises that most of the UK's sign industry comprises smaller enterprises. Any sign business employing five or less people is invited to enter. Entries can be for a specific project or a body of work completed over the past 12 months.

### Innovation



EXCEED YOUR VISION

Instigated and supported by Epson, the Innovation Award will be presented to a sign business that demonstrates real ingenuity and invention in the delivery of a product or project.

### Roll-out



Signage schemes implemented across multiple sites present sign makers with one of their greatest challenges. This award, which is supported by Nationwide Platforms, will be presented to a roll-out programme that delivers maximum impact with great consistency.

### Wide Format



Wide format printing technology has added a new dimension to sign making in the UK and this award, supported by Soyang Europe, is designed to celebrate this growing sector.

### The Craftsman Award



Traditional craft skills, such as sign writing, gilding, etching and engraving still play a major role in signmaking. Entries can be complete signs created using traditional crafts or signs produced using modern technology, which incorporate a handcrafted element. The award is supported by Trade Etching

Direct, which is also putting its skills to work by creating this year's unique trophies.

### Architectural Sign



Supported by Blackburn Metals and Plastics, this award is for major structural signs that are designed to make a statement.

### Wayfinding



This award, supported by Atlantic Tech, recognises the vital role that Wayfinding signage continues to play in our daily lives.

### Sign Industry Product of the Year



Entries are invited from manufacturers and suppliers of technology, equipment, materials and services to the sign industry. Sponsored by Signs Express, it will be judged by a panel of signmakers who will be looking for a product, launched to the UK market during the past 12 months, which has made the greatest impact on the industry.

### Other Awards

Other awards to be presented will include The Sign Construction Award, Retail Sign of the Year and Leisure Industry Sign of the Year. ■



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## Equipment &amp; Material

## Patch it up!

**Eurobond Adhesives has introduced Multifix Proputty, a very fast curing, hard wearing putty that can be used to fill and repair holes, cracks or dents in most materials, including metals, plastics, fibreglass, Dibond, wood, concrete and stone.**

Quick and easy to use, it is the perfect toolbox standby for all of those everyday signmaking mishaps. For example if a hole has been

accidentally drilled in the wrong place, Proputty can be used to fill it and similarly, it can also be used to repair damage on the edge of a sign too.

After selecting a suitably sized piece of putty to suit the application, it can be rolled or kneaded by hand until it becomes an even dark grey colour, before being gently pressed into place. Edges can then be smoothed using either a blade or finger and, after 10 minutes, it can be sanded to



provide a smooth finish.

Proputty can also be drilled or

tapped after one hour and can even be successfully used in wet conditions or underwater. ■

## Adding an extra spark

**A further four colours have been added to Avery Dennison's Supreme Wrapping Film range, including two new 'spark' films and a unique hidden gold.**

The four new colours bring the total number of colour options to

86, including 81 colours and five chrome accent films, thus enabling sign and print companies to offer their customers more choice than ever before, while also helping them to achieve the look that they desire, whether it be stylishly classic or something with an altogether edgier vibe.

The new colour choice comprises SWF Metallic Meteorite, a black film with built-in 'sparks' that bring the car surface to life, SWF Metallic Milky Way, which features 'sparks' in an understated grey film, SWF Gloss Metallic Hidden Gold, a film that looks black when viewed from a distance, but which reveals gold elements as it catches the light

and SWF Gloss Metallic Blaze, a vivid metallic orange.

All the new colours are available with Avery Dennison Easy Apply RS Technology, which enables the film to be repositioned as necessary, to help eliminate air bubbles and to minimise installation time. ■



## Sturdy safe and stable seating


**Brandžit Furniture provided sturdy safe and stable seating for even the most full figured visitors to FESPA's Printeriors Café at the recent FESPA 2015 exhibition in Cologne.**

A stylish range of printed cardboard pop-up furniture with myriad uses, all Brandžit products are available under a cost effective, one-off fee licencing agreement, which includes the provision of design files, cutter guides, assembly instructions and substrate recommendations.

Extremely lightweight and easy to assemble, these products are the ideal choice for sign and print companies that can use their wide format printing facilities and ancillary cutting equipment, to create customised designs that are tailored to suit clients' specific requirements.

There are three ranges available, each of which is specifically designed for use at events or exhibitions, for POP/POS applications, for children's furniture or toys, or use within the retail space. Each range is priced at £5,000, plus VAT. ■





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## Equipment &amp; Material

## Magnetic appeal

**Spandex has launched a new collection of high quality ImagePerfect printable substrates for use in magnetic applications.**

The range comprises three products. IP 2922 Magnetic Film Premium (300 micron) and IP 2923 Magnetic Film Premium Heavy (500 micron) have a white matt surface enabling photo-quality printing, and are optimised for use on large-format digital inkjet printers with a range of solvent, eco-solvent and UV-cured inks.

They can be applied to almost any steel-based surface, enabling the creation of easy-to-apply graphics and visual merchandising materials that can be quickly and cost-effectively refreshed as promotions, campaigns or decorative themes change.



IP 2924 Ferro Film is a white ferrous print media coated with micro-iron particles to create a strong magnetic attraction. A thin, smooth, flexible and printable option, IP 2924 is particularly suited for use in point of sale and point of purchase signage systems.

M517 completes the new collection as a match-component, high quality, self-adhesive magnetic sheet for use with IP 2924 Ferro Film. With a brown



top layer and UV-hardened under-coating, the flexible sheets can be overlaid to almost any material to create a strong and effective magnetic surface.

The entire collection of ImagePerfect magnetic products can be score cut or contour cut, thus enabling users to create custom shapes, while also making the materials suitable for cut-to-size applications, such as fridge



magnets and shelf-edge markings and displays. ■

## Brighter and cheaper

**A leading European supplier of technically advanced LED lighting solutions to the sign industry, German-based Majert has introduced two important new developments to its popular third-generation Chiplite X-Series.**

With the CL-XOL system, it is now possible to include up to 100 individual modules soldered in a continuous chain without the need for additional power input, thereby dramatically reducing installation costs.

In a second and equally important development, the company has added two new LED systems to the X-Series (CL-EL3 and CL-EL4). These have been designed specifically for edge-lighting larger light box installations and bring the number of different systems in the series to 10.

Available as standard in white, warm white, red, green and yellow and

with the option of special colours, the CL-XOL system is fitted with two 5050 SMD LEDs (including optic) and generates a luminous flux of 40 lumens. It has a compact size of 57 x 15.6mm and uses only 0.48W of power, thus making it suitable for virtually any size of light box or sign lettering requirement to a depth of 50mm.

Effectively illuminating the edges of both single- and double-sided light boxes, CL-EL3 and CL-EL4 have common as well as individual design characteristics. Measuring 100 x 26mm, CL-EL3 is fitted with three LED modules, as well as a specially designed elliptical optic. It provides 240 lumens of luminous flux with a 2.8W power requirement and is wired to form a 20-unit chain.

CL-EL4 is suitable for light box installations up to a size of three metres square, attributable to the generous luminous flux of 400 lumens generated by 4.5W of power. The system measures 63 x 53mm



and is wired to form a 15-unit chain and has to be installed in groups of three modules. In common with all systems in the X-Series, CL-EL3 and CL-EL4 are backed with a five-year performance warranty.

The CL-X Series has been tested and approved for use in the most extreme temperature conditions (typically -40 up to +85 degrees C). The systems also carry the CE seal of approval, are RoHS-certified and incorporate an IP65-rated transparent housing for optimum safety and reliability.



The Chiplite X-Series is now widely specified by sign manufacturers throughout continental Europe and is backed by a large stockholding capability and 24-hour delivery. ■

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# More than just cutting

Esko has introduced a new range of Kongsberg tools, which further extends a portfolio that includes more than a hundred high-quality cutting blades, router bits and accessories.

The new additions include a psaligraphy (paper cutting) knife tool, perforation wheel and braille tool, all three of which are available for use on the Kongsberg XN, Kongsberg V and Kongsberg XL Series digital finishing systems.

Esko's online Kongsberg store for bits, blades and other accessories offers all the certified consumables for use with the full range of digital finishing tables. ■



## Cut and foil

**i-Sub has become the first Mimaki reseller to install the new Mimaki CFL605RT flatbed cutter in its showroom, thus enabling real-time demonstrations in conjunction with its own exclusive Digi-Foil digital foiling solution.**

The new Mimaki CFL605RT flatbed cutter, which is designed as an all-round cutting and plotting system for the production of on-demand packaging prototypes, signage, labels, decals and much more, is suitable for use with a wide range of substrates, including coated board,

soft foam material, synthetic leather, vinyl and PET sheet, to name but a few.

In addition, it also features a creasing and folding option, plus a pen tool for the creation of line drawings.

The system offers a number of options, including a tangential cutting tool for use with PET and similar media, a reciprocating cutting tool for use on thicker materials, an eccentric cutting tool for use with thin substrates, such as coated board or PVC and a creasing roller that facilitates carton creation.

Further, it also features a mark-sensor for accurate cutting, a back side cut function for the best front finish, and vacuum and roll holder units to keep the media safely in place.

When used in conjunction with the Mimaki UJF-6042 UV-LED inkjet printer and Mimaki Rasterlink software, the Mimaki CFL605RT cutter offers a complete solution for the creation of original items, especially when i-Sub's Digi-Foil innovation is also added to the

process to facilitate the creation of special foil effects for packaging prototypes and personalised products that are identical in appearance to those produced by traditional dies and foil presses, but in a fraction of the time.

Users can thus transform their original design inspirations into finished mock-ups in under ten minutes, with significantly less waste than would be possible when using more traditional methods. ■

# Coasting along with a Kimla

Continued investment has seen Orchard Melamine steadily increase both its production and market share of high quality melamine promotional products, with the company's latest acquisition, a high speed Kimla CNC router, thus helping to raise its bespoke coaster production beyond 2.5 million units per year.

The midlands based company, which was established in 1964 and bought by the current owners in 1999 when manufacturing was moved to its purpose built factory in Rutland, has since grown substantially and has a diverse customer base with companies operating in the promotional, catering, retail and educational markets.

Its customised melamine products include coasters, place mats and, since the beginning of the year, fridge magnets. Each item is hand finished with a choice of backing, including felt and cork, but a bottle neck in the physical routing of the material was limiting any further increase in productivity, with Orchard Melamine's four dedicated Wadkin UX CNC routers unable to keep pace with demand.



After extensive market research, Orchard Melamine's Gary Chamberlain contacted Daltons Wadkin, the Nottingham-based supplier of a comprehensive range of composite and panel processing equipment, to discuss the issues. He explained: 'Processing time was, of course, key, but it was also imperative that the high standard of quality with which we are synonymous, was maintained. We use melamine for our coasters as it is an extremely durable product, but of course, this makes it all

the tougher when machining.'

He continued: "Each of our four Wadkin UX CNC machines are loaded with a sheet of 10 coasters at a time and they take approximately six minutes to machine".

Fortunately, Daltons Wadkin had recently taken on the agency for Kimla, a leading European manufacturer of CNC machines, including high-speed routers, waterjets and laser cutters.

The company's Managing Director, Alex Dalton advised that the Kimla offered a number of advantages over other CNC options. He said: 'Orchard Melamine needed a high volume production machine that would run almost continually and, since each Kimla is custom built to extreme tolerances, features only the very best components and is also equipped with the unique Dynamic Vector Analysis (DVA) system for fast operation while maintaining an exceptional cutting finish, it was the

ideal solution."

A customised vacuum bed was developed to secure the coasters. Alex observed: "Under normal conditions securing a 100 x 100mm component would not be a problem, but in order to ramp up the processing time, we developed an individual vacuum pod system to sit behind each coaster in order to provide the maximum vacuum pressure to enable machining times to be further reduced'.

The Kimla now processes a full sheet of 40 coasters in under four minutes, a speed that is six times faster than that previously attainable.

Gary Chamberlain concluded: 'I am delighted with the Kimla. We have been operating it for two years now with no issues whatsoever, and it produces more units than the other four machines put together! What's more, the installation support, training and backup provided by Daltons Wadkin has been first class too.' ■



# Total support

**The selection of the correct tooling for any CNC router is just as important as the choice of machine, which is why CNCRouterShop, a division of AXYZ International, has been supplying a vast range of tools, accessories, spare parts and consumables to owners of AXYZ and Pacer routers for the last 15 years.**

The range, which has been progressively expanded with the addition of the best products from leading European suppliers, can now offer a total support facility, not only to AXYZ and Pacer router owners, but also to the owners of virtually any other make of machine, regardless of type or country of origin

Available 24/7, with same-day

turnaround on orders invariably guaranteed, CNCRouterShop offers an easy to navigate online ordering facility that also maintains an archive of customers' previous orders to enable quick and easy re-ordering. In addition, order status notification and special offers and discounts are also immediately accessible.

The facility is clearly segmented to cover a wide choice of routing, engraving and cutting tools, accessories, spare parts, consumables and software that range from the highest quality router bits, collets and cones to accommodate various spindle types, plus oscillating and tangential knife blades for multiple material processing requirements and special-purpose tooling.

Supplementing all of these is a range



of technical support facilities that includes breakdown cover and standard or bespoke training courses conducted at either the customer's own facility or the AXYZ International Training Centres in Nottingham and Wolverhampton.

Completing the CNC RouterShop

offering are a series of continuously updated information downloads, plus access to a team of technical engineers capable of providing tailored routing, engraving, cutting and finishing solutions, together with a range of attractively priced used routing machines. ■

# High performance, low cost

**The CE6000 series of plotter/cutters from Graphtec GB has been upgraded to offer a higher performance capability comparable to that of the company's flagship FC8000 series, but at a more competitive price point.**

The CE6000 series, of which the CE6000-60 is a preferred model for sign and graphics producers, now offers a wider and longer length cutting area, an increased cutting speed of up to 900mm/sec and a maximum cutting force of 500gf. In common with all Graphtec cutters, the CE6000 series features the fifth generation of Graphtec's innovative ARMS (Advanced Registration Mark System) facility that provides unparalleled media plotting and cutting accuracy via the use of four-point rather than the traditional three-point

registration function.

Other key enhancements include an automatic panelling facility for longer-length tracking and cutting requirements, a choice of operating modes to complement the operator's skill levels and a range of different tool condition settings.

The CE6000 series now also incorporates the latest ISM (Intelligent Scan Mode) within the ARMS function that further enhances tracking and cutting accuracy in longer-length print and cut applications, as well as expanding the range of materials that can now be handled. The Graphtec Studio design and production software is supplied as part of the package and now has EPS support to enhance its compatibility with other software



programs such as Adobe Illustrator and CorelDRAW.

The upgraded flagship FC8000 series, which claims 'fastest in class' status, has a maximum cut area of 1,662mm x 50m, a maximum speed of 1,485mm/sec and an enhanced 600gf cutting force.

Complementing the CE6000 and FC8000 series of plotter/cutters are

the desktop Silhouette Portrait eight inch-wide and Cameo 12 inch-wide plotter/cutters. The Silhouette Portrait is an ideal plug-and-play entry-level solution that requires only a USB cable linked to a standard PC or Mac. Both machines come bundled with Silhouette Studio design and production software and are available with a wide range of consumables. ■



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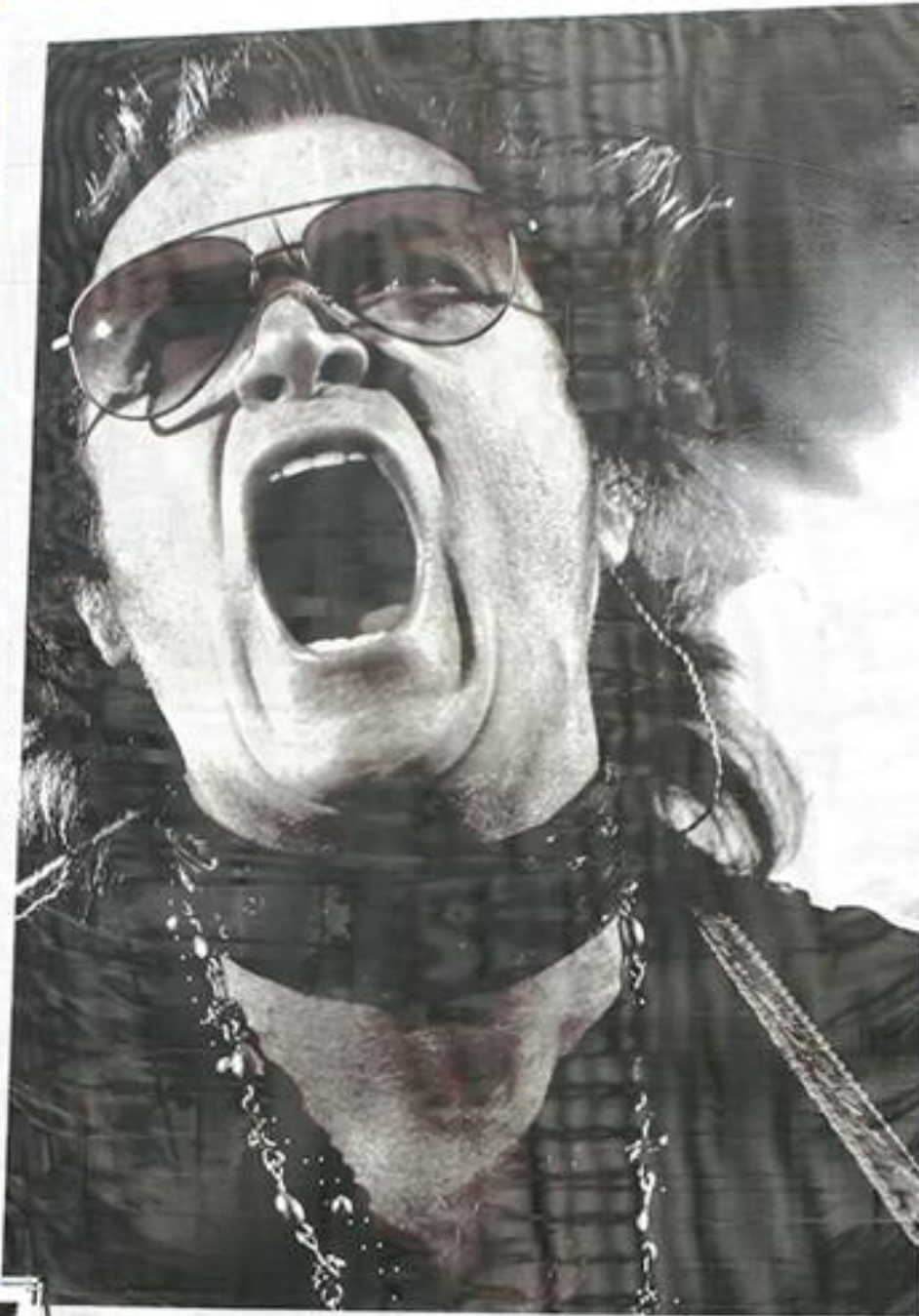
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# SIZE MATTERS

As a company that is better known for its work on commercial vehicles, Structure Flex seized the opportunity to show its edgier side when it was commissioned to digitally reproduce images of some of the world's most famous rock musicians. Val Hirst reports.



very  
wide  
format



**Having built its reputation as one of the foremost European suppliers of a diverse range of products manufactured from heavy duty PVC coated products, Cromer-based Structure Flex was only too delighted to be invited by iconic rock photographer, Nick Elliott to collaborate on his exhibition entitled 'Size Matters', which featured 13 giant images of a range of artists including Beverley Knight, Motörhead's Lemmy, The Darkness' Justin Hawkins, Simple Minds' Jim Kerr, Europe's Joey Tempest and Skunk Anansie's Skin.**

Structure Flex, which was first established 45 years ago, has recently invested a further £450,000 in the latest digital printing technology and thus, as Managing Director Paul Reeve, explained, it relished both the opportunity to demonstrate both the full scope of its operation and the versatility of its impressive printer portfolio. This includes a VUTEK 5000, a Durst Rho 320S and Mimaki's latest 1.6 metre JV33 printers.

He said: "We supply a wide variety of

print in the form of trailer side curtains, vehicle covers and tarpaulins, but this project represented a new challenge, as it required us to do full justice to Nick's much celebrated photographic artistry, while also taking full account of the practical and logistical considerations too."

Nick Elliot, a 20-year veteran of the music industry is famous for the images he has created for album artwork, as well as the most widely read musical press, and has also exhibited in galleries across the UK and Europe. He commented: I've often shown my work as limited edition fine art, but this time I wanted to produce images on a scale that would really convey a wealth of intimate detail to the viewers so that they could truly experience the excitement of the live performance."

In order to accomplish all that was required, Structure Flex first produced a number of prototypes and tested a range of different fabrics, before making its recommendations. In addition, it also had to ensure that the images were framed in a way that was

aesthetically pleasing, whilst still meeting all of the necessary health and safety obligations.

After some initial trial and error, Structure Flex produced the eight metre by five metre images for installation by a professional team of scaffolders. The result was suitably electrifying with the printed images providing the same intricate wealth of detail that Nick so expertly captured in the original photographs, at a size that made them equally striking, whether viewed at a distance or close up.

Paul Reeves observed: "We were very pleased with the final outcome and, more importantly, so was Nick! We hope that this project will provide us with a passport to more work of this

kind. The width of our VUTEK printer certainly came in very handy for printing seamless images of this size and we are now actively seeking further avenues where our print expertise and facilities can combine to produce similarly stunning artistic effects."

The exhibition, which was premiered at the recent Pageant of Power classic vehicle boat and helicopter festival held in the grounds of Cholmondeley Castle in June, before an audience of 65,000 people, prior to touring across the UK, culminated in performances by the Rick Parfitt Jnr Band and Tenors of Rock on the Friday and Saturday evening of the event, where some of the exhibits were used to grace either side of the stage. ■

# CONSISTENT COLOUR

In the early days of LED development, signmakers were offered a choice of at best, two colour variants of White illumination, generically described as either Cool White or Warm White. How times have changed! Graham Pritchard, Technical Sales (Internal) at Vink Lighting, advises how to achieve the best results

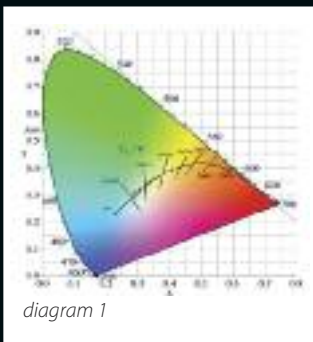


diagram 1

Once upon a time colour temperature from module to module was at best patchy and if the sign box or built-up letter did not have a sufficient return depth to allow the light from each module to diffuse, then the result was a very uneven illumination.

During production, LED chips vary in colour, flux and forward voltage and need to be sorted into bins according to their CCT (Correlated Colour Temperature) and the x,y coordinates (or colour point as it appears on the CIE diagram. (See Diagram 1)

These two factors need to be taken into consideration due to the fact that White LEDs with a similar CCT can still have a different colour appearance depending upon the colour point on the chart.

As LED production developed and the major suppliers improved upon their market offering, the need to provide a more consistent product meant that LED chip

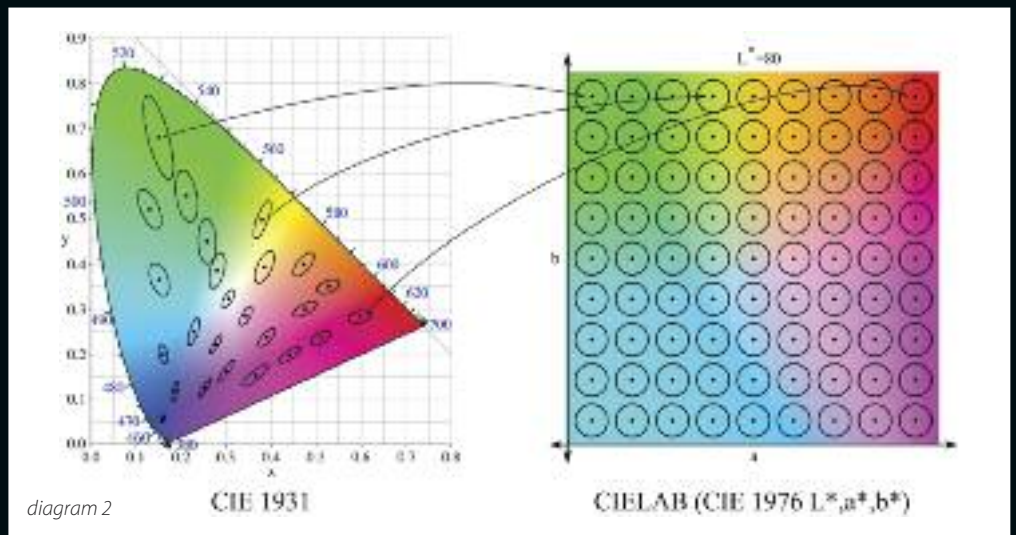


diagram 2

categorisation (or binning) would need to become more sophisticated. Accurate batch sorting at the production stage and tighter specifications from the module manufacturers required better methods of measuring the colour differences from one chip to the next.

Scientific methods of discerning colour difference had to be used and a specification established by Dr. David MacAdam in 1942, which relied upon visible observation of the Just Noticeable Differences (JND) between two very similar coloured lights provided a useful measure. JND is defined as the colour difference where at least half of the people observing the lights cannot see a difference. These areas of similarity are then plotted on the CIE chart in a series of elliptical zones. These zones are known as 'MacAdam's Ellipses'. (See Diagram 2)

A convenient method of expressing the colour difference within a particular bin is the number of ellipse steps the LEDs within that bin fit in to. The lower the number of ellipse steps, the less likely it would be that differences would be noticed. For



LEDs used in backlit signage, a minimum acceptable standard should be four ellipse steps. In terms of colour temperature variation, four MacAdam's Ellipses equates to a tolerance of +/-100 Kelvin.

Being able to specify from a tighter bin ensures that there is no difference in batch-to-batch production. This advantage provides the sign owner with the peace of mind that all signs made from a specified colour throughout the roll-out programme, regardless

of time span.

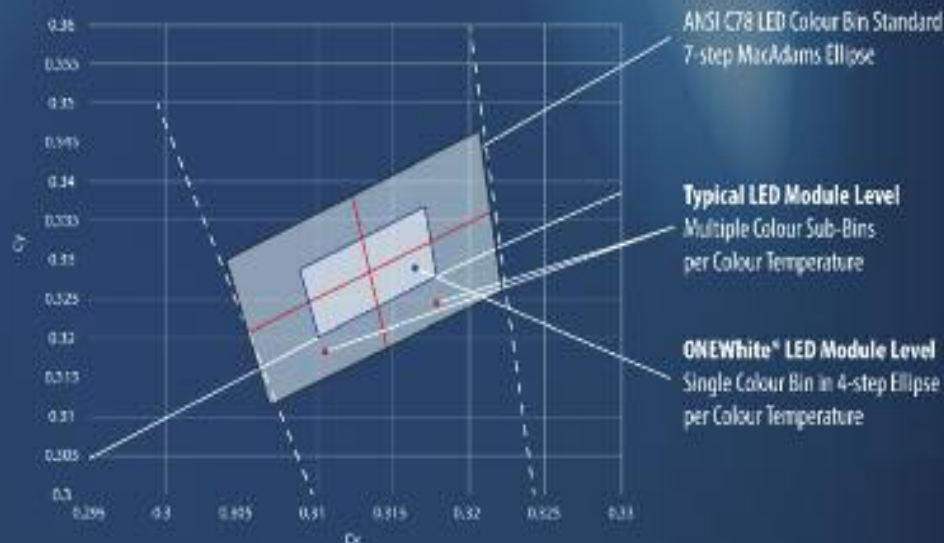
Tighter binning also enables the end user to be more discerning as to the colour warmth chosen, with some LED manufacturers offering as many as eight different shades of white. As well as the obvious aesthetic benefit, certain coloured acrylics are better suited to different white variants allowing for higher Luminance results to be achieved and, in certain circumstances, reducing the quantity of LED modules required to illuminate the sign to the desired level. ■



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## Grab a Mimaki bargain!

**Hybrid Services is continuing its run of sizzling summer promotions with special offers in respect of its Mimaki UJF flatbed LED UV printers and its CJV300 Series of printer/cutters.**

Purchasers of the UJF flatbed LED UV printers, which print directly onto promotional items, gifts, point of sale and bespoke products, can take advantage of a special cashback offer until 28th August, which includes £2,000 cashback on the A3 UJF-3042FX, £3,000 on the UJF-3042HG and £4,000 on the A2 UJF-6042.

At the same time, sign and print companies that are looking to ramp up their print and cut productivity can take advantage of a cashback deal and a Gold



two-year warranty when they trade in their existing printer/cutter and purchase a machine from the CJV300 series, which comprises a 1.3m and 1.6m model with print speeds of up to 105.9sq m / hour and fully automated print and cut functionality. With over 3.5 litres of SS21 solvent ink included, together with a powered take-up unit and a professional suite of RIP and cutting software, trade-in printer/cutters will be collected as the new machine is delivered and cashback

of £4,000 for the CJV300-130 and £5,000 for the CJV300-160 will be paid by Hybrid directly to the customer following installation.

This offer ends on 30th September 2015 and is available only through Hybrid's reseller network. ■



## Epson offers a complete package



**Epson has introduced a new SureColor SC-F9200 printer and HDK Black ink to enable users to produce high-quality, mass-production textiles quickly and consistently, while also keeping costs low.**

Sublimation papers are also available, to ensure that every element works in harmony to deliver a range of textiles, for use as clothing, sportswear, home furnishings, soft signage and flags and the printer also comes complete with full warranty and service support.

Epson's PrecisionCore technology and two TFP printheads work in tandem with a new high-density HDK Black ink, the latest addition to the UltraChrom DS ink range, which has been especially developed for use in textile printing to produce deep, neutral blacks and dense shadows.

Users will also benefit from two high-capacity ink supply systems that

facilitate the production of longer, uninterrupted print runs, and a large after heater and optional air dryer.

The SureColor SC-F9200 will be available from October 2015. ■



## Mimaki unveils new dye sub printer

**Mimaki has launched the TS300P-1800, a 1.8m wide roll-to-roll sublimation inkjet printer, a dedicated transfer paper machine that offers improved levels of quality and productivity in digital textile printing.**

The TS300P-1800 brings a number of new capabilities to textile printing, including the ability to print onto very lightweight transfer paper for lower running costs, plus a powerful vacuum

feed platen that reduces cockling, while also offering print speeds of up to 115m<sup>2</sup>/h maximum when using four colours and 62m<sup>2</sup>/h when using six colours.

The printer features four printheads with a total of 3,200 nozzles and up to three different drop sizes, which are automatically determined by ink type and print mode, together with accurate dot placement, even with high head gap printing that is adjustable from two

to seven millimetres.

Continuous quality printing is also assured with the automatic Nozzle Recovery System, which kicks into action when a clogged nozzle can't be cleared via the machine's automatic nozzle cleaning system. In addition, it uses a newly developed sublimation transfer ink, Sb410 that is available in bulk ink packs and an Uninterrupted Ink Supply System that ensures continuous

printing, and an external dryer for up to 30 percent faster drying.

Excellent colour management, including colour replacement, accurate profile creation and fast file processing is provided by the new Tx3Link RIP, which can be placed in different locations and monitored remotely from desktop or mobile devices. ■



## GPT to sell HP Scitex FB500 and FB750

Following on from its success with HP's Latex range of printers, Graphic Printing Technologies (GPT) has become a key reseller for HP's new range of flatbed industrial printers, the HP Scitex FB550 and FB750.

The company which has confirmed that it will have an HP FB550 in its own showroom in time for its Printoberfest event that is scheduled to be held on 7th-8th October, is also encouraging customers to book a full demonstration session to learn more about the printer range and how it can drive revenues and profitability in their business.

HP Scitex FB550 and FB750 Printers are equipped with an enhanced loading



system that increases workflow for improved profitability and now offer a new tabletop roll holder design for flexible substrates, thus enabling easy, fast and efficient short-run printing, plus new tapered wheels for easy and safe

media loading, thus preventing media edge damage. The printers also offer greater image quality and full bleed on maximum widths of rigid and flexible media with a thickness of up to 2.5 inches. ■

## Two new acquisitions for EFI

EFI has announced two new acquisitions, the first being the privately-held Matan Digital Printers, an award-winning provider of printing technologies for super wide-format display graphics and other industrial printing applications.

Based in Rosh Ha'Ayin, Israel, Matan has developed digital printers and presses for a wide range of industrial applications and its digital industrial inkjet printers are designed to offer high productivity, quality and durability, while also ensuring a low cost of ownership. Matan's focus on roll-to-roll workflow has also resulted in one of the industry's strongest offerings of

material-handling features, such as in-line cutting and slitting.

The company's work force of approximately 70 employees has joined EFI and Matan's former President and CEO, HananYosefi has joined the company as Vice President and General Manager, EFI Inkjet Israel.

In a separate development, EFI has established an industry-leading presence in the high-growth inkjet textile printing sector following the strategic acquisition of Reggiani Macchine.

Based in Bergamo, Italy, Reggiani, which is

a leading technology provider with an extensive line-up of industrial inkjet printers using water-based inks when printing on fabric, will be rebranded as EFI Reggiani and address the full scope of advanced textile printing, with versatile printers suitable for water-based dispersed, acid, pigment and reactive dye printing inks. In its 60 plus year history, the company has become a leading innovator of a full range of industrial solutions for textile manufacturing, including high-quality printers for fashion and home furnishing textiles and offers a comprehensive portfolio spanning its original rotary screen technologies to the most advanced inkjet textile printers and inks. ■

## OEKO-TEX approval for Roland

Roland DG has announced that its dye sublimation transfer technology has achieved certification of OEKO-TEX Standard 100, product class one.

The certification has been awarded in respect of inkjet printing on polyester fabric when using the company's Textart ink in conjunction with the Textart RT-640, Roland DG's latest dye sublimation transfer printer. ■



## Mimaki gets gold



Mimaki has received the GREENGUARD GOLD Certification for its market leading inks, including SS21, LX101, LH-100, LUS-150 and LUS-200.

The GREENGUARD GOLD Certification demands stricter certification criteria and considers safety factors to ensure that a product is acceptable for use in environments, such as educational and medical facilities. GREENGUARD Certification is part of UL Environment, a business unit of UL (Underwriters Laboratories). ■

## Mutoh and Grafityp granted an IAC

Mutoh and wide format media manufacturer Grafityp have announced that they have obtained an Indoor Air Comfort Certificate (IAC) in respect of the Grafityp Ecological non-PVC self-adhesive film (GEF-ES) when printed with Mutoh Universal Mild Solvent (UMS) inks.



The inks have been specifically formulated to offer a unique blend of high quality durable colour pigments, plus a new mix of resins and a new combination of milder and non-aggressive solvents. ■

# Worthwhile Investments

Companies explain why they chose the equipment they use



Lancashire-based **Babywise** has been manufacturing high quality mattresses for babies and children for the past 25 years and is reputedly the UK's largest manufacturer of baby changing mats, play mats and high chair liners.

The company has recently completed an order for 40,000 printed PVC changing mats for the supermarket giant, Aldi, using **Roland** wide format printers, equipped with **Lightbar** solvent-UV ink technology.

Babywise prides itself on manufacturing all of its products within the UK, producing over 300,000 items every year, all of which adhere to the very highest safety standards associated with the nursery bedding industry. In order to offer both custom printed designs in low volumes and larger production runs, the business boasts an in-house design and print production facility and has recently replaced two older wide format inkjet printers with high performance Lightbar printers in order to meet an increasing demand for its range of colourful PVC changing mats and nursery products.

Printing custom designs on a soft PVC material, which is then filled



with foam inserts and heat welded together, has become big business for Babywise, which numbers many well-known High Street names and designer brands amongst its long and impressive customer list.

The introduction of digital inkjet printing revolutionised its production of PVC changing mats, as it has enabled the company to accept low volume orders, even personalised one-off prints, and to do so profitably. Unsurprisingly, this service has proved particularly appealing to the designer outlets and small nursery shops that Babywise supplies, but, at the same time, the popularity of the custom printed designs has also resulted in requests for increasingly larger quantities that require longer print runs, persuading Managing Director, Kathy Cunliffe, to replace the company's existing printers with faster and more efficient print technology in order to meet this growing demand.

Having received print samples from printer manufacturers offering a range of different inkjet technologies, including solvent, Latex and UV, Kathy was impressed by the exceptional print quality and low investment cost of the Lightbar solvent-UV technology. She



explained: "The Lightbar samples really stood out, as the colours were incredibly vibrant and the print itself was practically impossible to remove from the PVC."

Lightbar printers exploit the latest solvent-UV ink chemistry, cured by a stationary, low energy UV light, to produce bright, durable print that's ready to use the moment it leaves the machine. Babywise purchased its first 1625mm wide, Lightbar printer shortly before receiving the order for 40,000 changing mats from Aldi. This prompted an immediate requirement for a second Lightbar printer to service the additional workload. Both printers were configured with dual CMYK inksets to deliver intense, colour saturated print at high speeds and automatic material take up systems to facilitate long print runs. Over a four month period, the two Lightbar printers worked side by side, printing around the clock, to supply the day and night shifts at Babywise with thousands of metres of printed PVC to convert into changing mats.

Although working to a very tight deadline, thanks to its two Lightbar printers and team of hardworking employees, Babywise was able to complete the Aldi order on time and, as a result, Kathy and her team were rewarded with a further order for 40,000 mats! ■





A substantial investment in a raft of wide and grand format **Mimaki** printers, including an 8' x 4' **JFX200 LED UV** flatbed and a pair of high performance **JV300** solvent machines has enabled Cheshire based **Print On** to enjoy a bouyant period of expansion as it cultivates an impressive client list of major high street names.

Established over 20 years ago and despite its seven figure turnover and blue chip customer base, Print On remains very much a 'family affair' and is now run by Managing Director Alex Oldfield, who is ably assisted by his mother Patricia and father Keith. Having successfully evolved from its early days as a copy shop, the company now offers a

comprehensive range of commercial print services, including business stationery, promotional brochures and numerous items of marketing collateral, much of which is available via an impressive on-line ordering system, and, most recently large format prints, bespoke POS items and exhibition graphics.

Marketing Director Keith Oldfield explained: "Having built up strong customer relationships over the years we knew that there were additional services we could offer and consulted **Granthams**, our regular equipment supplier for advice. With its guidance we invested in a Mimaki JFX200 flatbed and a brace of Mimaki JV300 production solvent printers, which

have enabled us to really extend our service offering."

With a client portfolio that includes an impressive number of major UK high street names, as well as local businesses and even customers from mainland-Europe, the demands on Print On are such that it now operates a split shift pattern to keep up with the volume of work required, while the company's large-format specialist, Matt Peters, is full of praise for the new flatbed LED UV printer. He reported: "The JFX200 is an amazing piece of kit and delivers stunning print quality and that and the two new JV300s have really helped us to expand both our capacity and creativity. We're now producing high volumes of large-

format point of sale graphics and long-runs on a much wider variety of different media and substrates."

The Oldfields are confident that the new investment has not only enhanced their company's ability to provide a broader service to existing clients, but has also been pivotal in attracting new business. As Alex Oldfield concludes: "We have always believed in investing in the key resources of equipment and staff and an investment of this magnitude underlines our commitment to current and potential customers. As a result, we've already had some very interesting new enquiries and are now fully confident that we can fulfill them!" ■



The Lutterworth-based full service print company, **Blink Print**, has upgraded its inkjet output with an investment in an **Anapurna M2050i 2.05m** six-colour printer.

Over the past four years, since the company first invested in an Agfa Anapurna Mw, the size of its business has almost doubled and it now boasts a turnover approaching £1m. A

rebrand two years ago helped to attract further new commissions, as did a well publicised highly commended SME Company of the Year award.

Blink Print offers its customers a complete print service, which includes litho, digital and silkscreen printing, as well as inkjet. In addition, the inkjet department also has a digital cutter, so

it really can offer the full print package.

Most of its assignments come from advertising and design agencies, shopfitters and event organisers, and it produces a wide variety of display material for the fashion and cosmetic sectors, plus many well known high street brands. It also provides advertising posters and hoardings for sports stadiums, as well as short-run packaging projects.

Esther Butterfield, a Director at Blink Print explained: "Our previous Anapurna had performed very well, but we needed to increase our inkjet productivity. After reviewing several options, **Litho Supplies** introduced us to the Anapurna M2050i, which offered both the output speed we needed together with a high level of service and support from Agfa, which has proved to be invaluable."

A high-speed UV-curable inkjet system that outputs print up to 205cm wide, the Anapurna M2050i, also delivers a white ink option that is ideal when working with dark or coloured substrates, as well as offering top class productivity, with speeds of up to 101 m<sup>2</sup>/hr.

Building on the success of the Anapurna M2050, the bestselling hybrid printer in its segment, the M2050i features a redesigned electromechanical system and is available at a highly competitive price.

Esther Butterfield concluded: "We have continually invested in the latest technology to provide efficiency as well as quality and this latest acquisition will hopefully help us to attract more new customers and further increase our turnover." ■

# Nova is a star!



**First established in 2005 by Paul Vickery and Paul Harvey, who had previously worked together for a rival aluminium supply company, Nova Aluminium is both celebrating its landmark 10th anniversary whilst also keenly anticipating the next decade.**



The two Pauls, who are both Bristol born and bred, describe their decision to establish their own business as a wholly organic one, with Paul Vickery explaining: "When we first started, we had just four employees and now our team has grown to over 50, although happily, three of the original four are still with us and, in fact, 60 percent of our people have stayed with us for over six years."

He added that the name 'Nova' was chosen because it means 'new' in Latin, something that seemed to be very apt when the duo first embarked on their new adventure. He said: "In addition, we were aware that a Nova is one of the brightest stars in the heavens and, since it also spells Avon backwards, it cryptically reinforces our loyalty to our great city too!"

When reflecting on Nova's success to date, Paul observed that its fresh approach to product development, plus its service offering and continual reinvestment programme has enabled it to steadily grow its market share.

He said: "At the beginning we were operating from one main building that housed our offices, workshops

and some warehousing, with a single satellite unit nearby. Nowadays, we still work from the same main headquarters, but we've had to expand into five new satellite units in order to meet the current level of demand."

In the same way, whereas in the beginning, the company had a only second-hand Mercedes sprinter van, it has since graduated to a transport fleet that comprises three brand-new sprinter vans and two specially commissioned curtain-sided trucks, to carry both fabricated goods and profiles, thus helping ensure that customers' goods are safely delivered in pristine condition.

Paul commented: "As any successful business understands, consistent and reliable delivery service is a vital part of our offering, which is why we invested in our own delivery vehicles and drivers. After all, you can produce the greatest product in the world, but if it regularly arrives late or broken you've lost a customer."

According to Paul another important component of Nova's success is the level of helpful advice and information that it can pass on to its customers. He opined: "Good product knowledge is essential when selecting the ideal solution to meet customers' needs and to this end, all of our staff have been thoroughly trained in every aspect of the systems we supply. Luckily, a good proportion had already gained sound industry experience when



they started with us and this has proved to be an invaluable asset. We are very proud of our team; we have chosen well and they have rewarded us with hard work and loyalty. By small way of thanks, we will be hosting a family fun day at a local rugby ground for all our employees and their families this summer, which should prove to be a very entertaining event!"

Although Nova always strives to do its best for its customers, Paul readily admitted that sometimes things do go awry. He says: "In a perfect world we would satisfy our customers 100 percent of the time, but if things do go wrong, which is rarely, we believe in dealing with the problem with the same energy and enthusiasm that we put into winning the sale, in fact more. Customers always remember when issues are properly resolved and we believe they appreciate the fact that we accept responsibility and do our best to put things right as speedily and efficiently as possible."

Over the past 10 years the two Pauls have seen the industry change considerably and have tried to keep pace of the new directions with the timely provision of new products. However, Paul maintained that the original classic products that have always formed the bedrock of Nova's portfolio, such as Novacase, Novatrim and Novaflex, are all still very much in demand, even though, these days, they are mostly illuminated with LEDs, rather than traditional fluorescent tubes.

Looking to the future, he believes that during the next 10 years digital signage will gain real momentum and promised: "We'll always embrace the new and will always ensure that whatever signage developments come around the corner, we'll be able to provide the perfect aluminium system to house them!" And in so doing, will further underline the fact that Nova really is a star! ■

# New CANDY SERIES

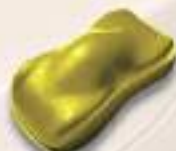
Copper



Red



Limé



Green



Blue



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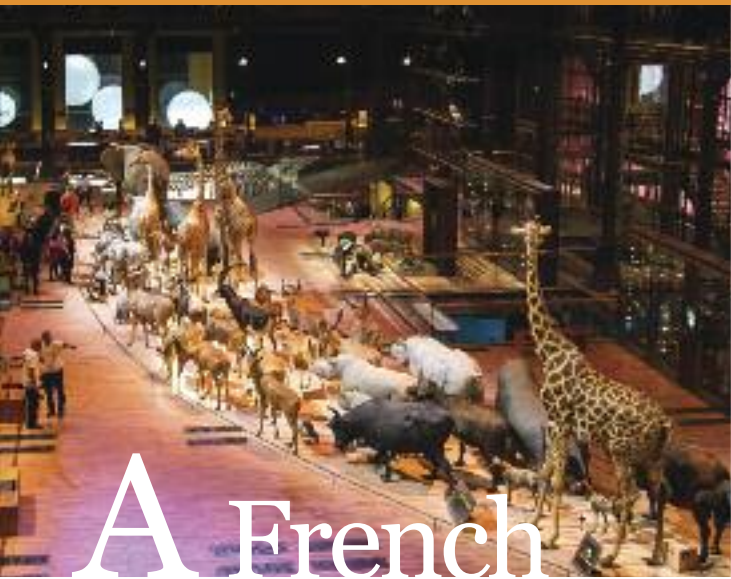


Projects



# Decorative dimensions

Any signmaker currently seeking new horizons could do worse than to consider décor, an area that opens up a wealth of creative opportunities, as well as many lucrative new revenue streams. Here, Mike Connolly presents a selection of inspirational applications, which feature both digital printing technology and more traditional signmaking skills and resources, plus ideas on how the current crop of commonly used signmaking hardware can be used for décor related purposes, together with a selection of some of the materials that have been specifically developed to produce striking decorative effects.



# A French connection

Part of the work recently completed to mark the 20th anniversary of the original renovation of the Grande Galerie de Evolution building in Paris involved the installation of five gigantic Airstar printed lighting balloons and a further six balloons hanging

from the ceiling above the large historical stairs inside.

These balloons now welcome visitors to this unique venue with its majestic 1,000 square metre glass roof under which over 7,000 different species are housed.

With different shapes and heights, the balloons appear to be floating in the air. Apart from the obvious aesthetic consideration, they proved the perfect answer to the various challenges posed, including lighting, space utilisation and signage. Significantly, the balloons meet all of the exacting specifications that forbid alteration to the existing architectural structure by being linked to the ceiling aperture with two cables, the first of which powers the balloon ventilation while the other controls the lighting.

for sharp and bright lighting. In consequence, the balloons are fitted with low-consumption, compact fluorescent light bulbs managed by a time switch. The result was uniform ambient lighting that attracts attention from outside of the building, thanks to an efficient and diffused light.

According to a representative of the architects responsible for the work, the purpose of the lighting balloons was to refresh the signage in the entrance hall, while respecting the historical dimension of the building. ■

The project managers involved were looking for an innovative solution to fully exploit the volumes of space in the entrance hall, while the graphic designers were looking

## A futuristic feature

LED and solar-powered lighting systems specialist Zeta, in association with leading sign manufacturer Tara Signs, created a cost-effective futuristic LED lighting feature wall for a newly refurbished office building at an industrial park in Maidenhead, Berkshire.

One of the key architectural-led design elements of the refurbishment was the inclusion of a colour-changing feature wall at the back of the building's reception area and the creation of a similar effect on the reception area front desk. A combination of Zeta's expertise in LED technology and Tara Signs' specialist sign manufacturing knowledge enabled the two companies to recommend an alternative solution to the client's original plan to use an expensive acrylic substrate

featuring an embedded pattern. As a result, the cost of the LED lighting feature was reduced by over £10,000.

Tara Signs created an innovative four x two metre fabric-covered installation with a Novatec light box fitted with Zeta's RGB embedded LED panels. The feature wall is equipped with four DMX controllers that provide access to over 2,000 colour options. The wall has also been made future proof by providing the building's tenants with the opportunity to add a company logo or new background to the skin whenever they wish, without the need for any additional technical support.

The second stage of the project included the creation of a similar colour-changing feature on the front desk. Five-metre x one-metre



opal polycarbonate panels featuring a digital print pattern were treated with a UV laminate and backlit with Zeta's RGB embedded LED panels that were controlled via three DMX controllers to work harmoniously together in conjunction with the feature wall.



The result was an impactful and customisable interior design

feature as well as lower energy bills and carbon emissions. ■

Projects

# Whiskey Galore!



**A new and interactive museum tracing the history of whiskey distilling in Ireland has opened its doors in the heart of Dublin's fair city. The Irish Whiskey Museum features a series of exhibitions as well as a whiskey tasting room for which a special LED display was required.**

The Irish Pub Company and its

architect, MJ Architecture commissioned light box display specialist W&Co Design Solutions to supply the 14metre-wide LED display feature for the wall of the whiskey tasting room. The designer's brief was to supply LED light panels that would be easy to install, could be recessed behind shelving and would produce a warm amber colour that



complemented the backlit whiskey

As the wall to which the panels were to be mounted had a convex curve, the panels were manufactured in 12 1.2 metre-wide sections to fit the shape and the television screens and whiskey bottles that were placed on the shelves are now backlit by the diffused LED lighting panels. These were supplied with

LED modules mounted to both long edges, together with a dimmable transformer that powers all of the panels simultaneously.

Sean Ryan, who is in charge of interior design at MJ Architecture, expressed his verall satisfaction with the success of the project and the extent to which it helped convey the intentions of the original design concept. ■

# Brilliantly blooming bryony!

**Well-known international artist Bryony Benge-Abbot has used Epson SureColor printing technology to transform her brilliant oil paintings into a range of beautiful and contemporary wall coverings, textiles, soft furnishings and homeware products.**

The artist's designs are inspired by nature and incorporate rich colours and delicate motifs, influenced by the works of many key artists and movements. Using Epson SureColor technology, Bryony has been able to transform her original oil paintings into a wide selection of interior decor products that form part of her popular 'Blooming Bryony' range.



Working with Epson-equipped sign and print companies using the Epson SureColor SC F7100 dye-sublimation printer, Bryony has been able to reproduce her vibrant designs in a consistently high

quality, with the added benefit of being able to print small batches of a particular design whenever she needs to and to react to changing market trends without the danger of holding unwanted stock. ■



# Walls in Worksop

**If anything even remotely related to chocolate has ever passed your lips, there's a very high probability that it owed something to Cargill. The company has supplied a wide range of cocoa based products to manufacturers of quality chocolate products around the world for over one hundred fifty years.**

To help communicate the essence of Cargill and its mission, Lincoln-based Allen Signs was asked to provide a series of photomurals and wall-mounted infographics at the company's facility in Worksop.

The designs, which were provided by Blue Fish Design and developed into print and application ready graphics by Allen Signs, take the form of photomurals that transform interiors where the immediacy of the image is viewed at much closer quarters than images of similar format and are used to impart messages or establish ambience in unique ways. The digital dimension, with its offer of variable data at minimal extra cost also adds to the creative possibilities.



Because the applied images are in very close proximity to the observer, and to other examples drawn from the same design, both printing and application need to be of the highest standards, as comparisons between adjacent panels are easily made and any differences would be easy to spot. Similarly, lack of inter-panel registration or application errors are also readily apparent. Thanks to Allen Signs' expertise, the graphics stand the closest scrutiny and look sensational. Decor finds a new role - functional, commercial and very attractive.

Allen Signs used Metamark MD-TX on



its HP Latex printer to produce the colourful graphics for Cargill. The Metamark product resolved the needed detail well and installation was much easier and less disruptive than traditional wall coverings thanks to the product's pressure sensitive adhesive system.

The finished graphics exhibit fully saturated colour and are odour free



and the whole installation has proved so successful that Cargill now plans to repeat the process at other locations around the world. ■

# The flair of the 50s

**In order to celebrate its 65th anniversary, Aslan used period furniture and its specialist decorative films to great effect when decorating its stand at the recent FESPA exhibition using a retro 50s diner theme.**

To provide a linoleum look floor with a distinctive 50s black and white checkerboard pattern, it used its DFP 43 Print'nGo white film, which, despite its highly textured finish, can be printed directly using solvent, eco-solvent, UV and Latex inks. The film, which doesn't require lamination, is available in a clear version and, due to its textured finish, has a non-slip rating of R13.

Another of Aslan's decorative films

that was used on the stand was the



new CA23 Polished Copper, a beautiful exterior grade metallised film that is becoming popular for retail design applications as it can be printed to provide yet another dimension for designers.

Also featured was its Illustra glass decoration film, which is based on a transparent film from the Illustra range, offers three attractive white patterns, 'Linen', 'Dot' and 'Snow' and helps to provide glass panels



with a snazzy appearance that offers a fresh alternative to the regular etch effect films. Films in the Illustra range have a seven-year life, are scratch resistant and, as they feature dry apply air free technology, they are supremely easy to use.



Doro Tape UK is the UK's main distributor of Aslan films. ■

Projects

# A towering distraction

**QD Plastics, the Glasgow-based approved Perspex fabricator, has recently installed a dramatic Perspex tower at Kilsyth Health Centre, Lanarkshire, in a project designed by Civic Architects.**

The tower features a winning combination of Perspex solid, translucent and transparent colours, as supplied by Perspex Distribution, which were especially selected by Civic Architects to simulate the coded patterns of DNA profiles, which were used to represent the individuals living within the community, while the overlapping Perspex panels cast coloured shadows across the walls, courtyard and corridors of the building.

The text on the sculptures was gathered during a series of meetings with local groups in Kilsyth, when attendees movingly spoke of their own relationship with their local area



and the people residing within it. The aim was to use the messages to provide a positive distraction to patients, visitors and staff at the new health centre, while the vertical structure of the tower is designed to draw their gaze to the sky so that they can feel soothed by the ever-changing panorama of the heavens.

CAD drawings produced by Civic



Architects provided QD Plastics with a wide variety of the messages, which it then cut into the materials

using a CNC router, thus linking the sculpture to local places, memories and ideas. ■

## Click and apply



**Inkmill Vinyl is an easily accessed and effortlessly browsed website that offers a wide range of decorative design elements realised in pressure sensitive vinyl, cut, weeded and ready to apply. It's also a very compelling place to shop.**

The designs are as novel as they're attractive, as inspirational as they are desirable. But perhaps best of all, they're as simple for the end customer to use as they are to find



and pay for in the first place.

Inkmill's decorative elements are produced using top quality Metamark self-adhesive materials and every order also comes with step-by-step application instructions for first timers.

Showing great creative flair, Inkmill's designs are attractive, bold and varied and can be used in all sorts of places and applications, and include children's height charts,



feature wall coverings, silhouettes of skylines from around the world, plus a few novelty pieces thrown in just for fun. The list just goes on. The company also uses Metamark etch effect materials to offer a big range of window manifestation elements for both commercial and domestic use too.

Those who fancy having a crack at designing their own decorative schemes are also well looked

after as there's a facility for users to upload their own unique designs and to receive the application ready design in the post in double quick time.

Inkmill Vinyl defines what to some will be a new way of acquiring décor and a new way of shopping for it and, given the size of its audience it's a statistical certainty it will succeed. ■



# A sleek and speedy transformation

3M's DI-NOC Architectural Finishes films were specified and installed by the Irish company MSi Signs to refurbish the bar counter of the new Guinness Dugout Bar at Thomond Park Stadium in Limerick, the home ground of Munster Rugby, one of the most successful rugby clubs in the world.

MSi Signs is one of Ireland's largest signage, printing and events companies and chose the DI-NOC films as a cost-effective solution to transform what would have been an ordinary-looking bar counter into an extraordinary and aesthetically pleasing design concept.

Thomond Park has a unique history and atmosphere and is renowned for its award-winning design and architectural sensitivity, including a host of state-of-the-art hospitality and conference facilities. All of these



are designed to a very high standard and the refurbishment of the Guinness Dugout Bar needed to be in keeping with the iconic status of the venue and the requirements of the stadium's design partner Diageo, which was involved in the design and redevelopment of the bar area.

To complement the dark rich black and cream colours of the Guinness brand and logo, MSi Signs chose DI-NOC PS-504 Black and LE-702 Cream Leather. The films were applied to the bar counter top and front by two trained applicators over three days,



with no sanding down required. The ability of the films to conform to both flat and curved surfaces facilitated the fast and problem-free application of a fresh and sophisticated new design to an existing asset.

The intricate Guinness logo was applied separately to the centre of each bar panel by the applicators.

3M DI-NOC films incorporate Comply Adhesive Technology, developed by 3M for easier installation and a professional-looking finish. The films also provide

a powerful bond to virtually any substrate, once pressure has been applied to complete the application process. They are available in more than 700 individual patterns and finishes to replicate the appearance and feel of natural materials, including the warmth of wood grain, the sleek feel of metal and the cool look of stone.

DI-NOC films have multiple applications in interior and exterior building design concepts and can be easily removed and replaced when design changes and/or upgrades need to be addressed. ■

# Playing to the gallery



In what is described as one of its most challenging projects to date, Signs Express (Sheffield) was privileged to work with the renowned UK-based French painter, muralist and screen-printer Florence Blanchard in the creation of her latest 'Particles' piece that was featured across the window frontage of the Millennium Gallery in Sheffield.

Taken from an original artwork, the

artist's design had to be completely vectored in individual sections by the Signs Express team, in order to produce an eye catching combination of textures and special effects and so that it could be scaled across the high-profile of the Gallery entrance.

Since it wasn't possible to install any colour section at the same time, it was necessary to create numerous registration marks to build a background framework on which to



insert and build up the colours. A variety of translucent, solid-coloured, fluorescent, special-effect and double-sided gold-coloured

vinyl materials were employed for the project, with each section building on the depth of colour to accurately replicate the overall effect of the original design.

It was the first time Florence Blanchard had worked with vinyl, but she expressed her overall satisfaction at the way the materials had performed and the end result achieved. ■

## Hardware



# Made in Britain



**Love it or hate it, that 70s favourite, flock wallpaper is back! Yet the company responsible for this revival, The Surface Print Company, is in no way a business that is stuck in a time warp. In fact, it is way ahead of the game and the leading innovator of new and contemporary wallcoverings. Better still, its unique range, which also includes digital and holographic foils, is all made exclusively in Britain.**

A family-run business that was originally established in 1990, The Surface Print Company provides high quality, bespoke wallcoverings to a client base comprising high-end companies.

Abigail Watson, Sales Director and daughter of Chairman and founder John Watson, said: "Our clients, which include the London store Liberty, Ralph Lauren and Cath Kidston, often present us with challenging design requirements, but by working closely with them and continually developing new

technical innovations and print processes, we can really push the creative boundaries."

The combination of traditional and modern printing technology that the company employs helps it to replicate the myriad styles and designs its clients demand. Many wallpaper types are printed on Surface and Sur-Flex machines, to create a beautiful hand-painted finish, while holographic wallpaper is printed on a foil substrate and a new innovation, which features the addition of flock and beads on foil, helps to create ever more stunning 3D effects. Further, the flock paper, which, against all of the odds, is still in demand, is produced on a state-of-the-art, custom built machine, which is the only one of its kind in the world.

As some of the print processes for the wallpaper are quite complex, bulk or minimum roll orders are required. However, ever since The Surface Print Company first invested in digital print technology, eighteen months ago, it has been able to offer



its customers greater flexibility, shorter runs, speedier lead times, wider widths and many more colours. The speed of digital printing has also made the order process much easier too, as everything is pre-production approved, with a further investment in an HP LX360 machine for sample production having proved so successful that an upgrade is already planned for later

this year.

Abigail explained: "Although the HP printers will not replace the technology that produces flock, they opened up a new client-base for us that we previously couldn't reach with our traditional methods, while also enabling us to keep up with the increasingly inventive demands of our more design savvy clients." ■

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Hardware

# Routers meet Décor



**Is there a role for computerised routing and knife cutting hardware in the production of domestic and commercial décor? Complete CNC Solutions says there is...**

Many signmakers are now aware of the potential offered by both domestic and commercial interiors. The primary line of interest is drawn from print hardware, straight to walls, where various coverings, now digitally printed, are finding a home. But according to Complete CNC Solutions, for sign companies equipped with the right routing hardware, the application opportunity in the décor sector becomes a far bigger one than printing alone can address.

Routers, opines Complete CNC Solutions' Julian Sage, cut, carve and engrave all sort of rigid materials, including plastics, wood and metals and do so with ease, speed and unfailing accuracy. However, today's production

oriented routing and knife-cutting production systems do much more besides and are able to knife cut and process a huge variety of flexible and semi-flexible substrates, printed or otherwise, for décor related applications.

One obvious application area is the cutting of printed output in tight register with rigid materials. According to Julian Sage, both the Tekcel and Protek systems available from Complete CNC Solutions are able to take printed output, either in the form of direct printed rigid materials, or flexible films, and then cut in register to the imaged areas very accurately. Distortions inherent in the printed output, however small, are automatically compensated within the cutting systems' intelligence, so that the operator has little more to do than position the printed sheet and initiate the cutting cycle.

Printed rigid materials can be used in a wide variety of areas within décor. Cosmetic covering for structural elements, such as space dividers or counters, can be fabricated at low cost and the dimensional element, unachievable with print alone, adds value and enhances the attractiveness of the structure.

Illuminated structures can also benefit. Light admitted into the edge of solid acrylic sheets can be used to amplify engraved



cosmetic detailing with no obvious energy source. Edge Lighting is a notoriously difficult effect to deliver well, but the Protek Unico TT can turn a difficult job into a profitable decorative application, where the depth of engraved features is critical. Too deep and too much light will flood through the design, too shallow and the reverse applies.

Materials used in decorative edge lighting can vary significantly in thickness and are thus challenging to work with. However, the Unico TT is capable of actively mapping the varying thickness of the material so that the tool that's used for the cutting operation effectively remains at a constant depth by following the material's troublesome contours. The result? Beautiful edge-lit decorative panels without a hint of unwanted variation in lighting intensity.

The computerised routing and knife cutting hardware sold and supported by Complete CNC Solutions is as profitably applied to heavy-duty structural work as it is delicate detailing. In terms of complex decorative fabrications, for example, those used in the retail environment, elements achieve a

better standard of fit without on-site reworking or costly manual intervention. Once built, a structure is scalable and repeatable. This ensures that decorative display rollouts can proceed without unit-to-unit variations that compromise installation.

The versatility of Complete CNC Solutions' routing and knife cutting production systems also provide a lot of choice when it comes to return on investment. Given the volume of profitable work the systems readily dispatch, the hourly cost of operating illustrates huge profit potential. In addition Complete CNC Solutions can arrange, through its broker, very accommodating financing options and access to grants that can be processed in surprisingly little time.

Decor is one more production task that can be exploited with the right knife cutting and routing hardware aboard. Complete CNC Solutions will conduct production trials to evaluate the suitability of any materials for processing and application while also demonstrating how to turn the resulting output into profitable business. ■



# The décor revolution



**It is not an exaggeration to say that wide format inkjet technologies are truly revolutionising the décor sector due to inkjet's inherent flexibility, versatility and diverse customisation features, which make it the ideal technology for a market that thrives on originality and creativity.**



From temporary wall murals to customised wallpapers and fine art, the wrapping of fridges, coffee tables, desks and countertops, the production of floor graphics, and the textile printing of fabrics for home furnishings, such as panels, curtains, cushions and lamp shades, there is no other technology that offers such an expansive range of applications from a single source, down to a run length of literally one. And, the application base for these is equally wide, ranging from corporate and domestic

interiors, textured or themed flooring patterns, high value architectural applications and even the customisation of trains, planes and automobiles!

All of these examples are not only transforming what and how applications can be produced, but also, more importantly, the way professionals across the industry think and approach interior design and décor. To provide extra help and inspiration in his regard, Roland DG has produced its *Dye Sublimation Guide with Digital Inkjet*, which details

just a selection of the wealth of possibilities inkjet offers, a majority is yet to understand its full functionality and range of applications.

While Roland's print & cut and print-only technologies have led the way in many respects in this market, providing interior designers, specifiers, architects, commercial interior and shop fitters with the technology they need to create an extensive range of one-off designs tailored to specific requirements, the recent addition of the Texart RT-640 dye sublimation printer and the Texart CS-64 calender to Roland's hardware portfolio provides sign and display companies with a broad gamut of printing solutions to offer the décor sector.

This burgeoning market places a significant emphasis on high quality, high value and creative products. As such, while many operators currently recognise and are excited by the

possibilities inkjet offers, a majority is yet to understand its full functionality and range of applications. This presents entrepreneurial sign and display companies with a huge opportunity to use their current technology and expertise to help them diversify into an exciting new high-margin market and to act as a strategic partner to their customers.

To help them take advantage of these opportunities, Roland DG offers educational courses at the Roland Academy, which includes the new Texart Dye-Sublimation Better Business Boot Camp that offers a short, yet comprehensive, overview of the Texart RT-640 and the processes and benefits of dye-sublimation. In addition, the Roland Creative Centre, based at the company's Clevedon headquarters, offers many inspirational applications and décor related examples. ■

## Maximising opportunities



**With a long and successful history in the graphics arts industry as a provider of various imaging technologies, Agfa Graphics is now enabling customers to re-adapt existing hardware and software solutions and to re-use their investment to open up new market opportunities. Home décor is a typical example and one that is also evolving rapidly.**

With the advancement of UV ink and printer technologies, wide-format printing companies are now beginning to take advantage of these new business opportunities



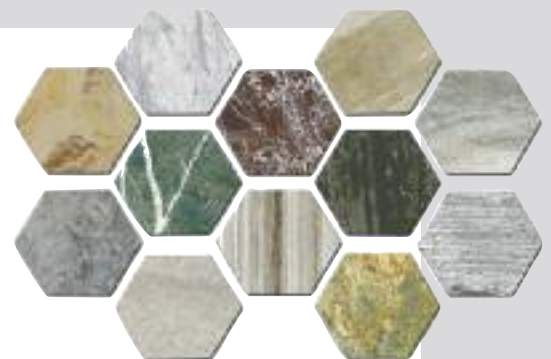
and are starting to offer alternative solutions for décor applications that include wallpaper, flooring, furniture, art reproductions and more.

Certainly personalisation is one of the drivers when searching for non-conventional technologies, but it is not the only one. Conventional systems tend to be very effective



and inexpensive for high volumes and high speed, but as a consequence a great deal of the same material needs to be stored before it is sold. In the world of décor, these markets demand more variety, more flexibility and are very often led by the made-to-order business models. For these reasons, conventional production systems are often too expensive to keep pace with these expectations.

Further, with the advancement of



UV ink and printer technologies, wide-format printing companies are now beginning to take inspiration from substrates such as natural stone and marble for use in decorative applications. For example, by printing on a veneer base using the Agfa Graphics Jeti Titan UV inkjet printer they are able to produce a very convincing marble like effect. In the same way, the printer can also be used in conjunction with PVC foam boards to simulate realistic looking wood effects for both indoor and outdoor applications, such as furniture, cabinets, door panels and trim boards. ■

Hardware

# Transforming the space

**In today's increasingly personalised world, digitally printed interior décor is transforming the spaces in which we live, a view shared by Duncan Ferguson, Director of Pro Graphics, Epson Europe and endorsed by Neil Greenhalgh, Product Manager at Epson UK.**

Research included in the Conceptual Living report, published last year, revealed that the majority of homeowners now tend to use textiles to provide their interiors with individuality. Furthermore, they now also tend to refresh their interiors more frequently than hitherto, in order to reflect current design trends and changing lifestyles.

By using Inkjet printing it is easy and to produce affordable bespoke interiors of a stunning quality and appearance, on demand and to suit individual tastes. And, with the ability to print onto virtually anything, designers can expand their vision exponentially.

It is therefore no surprise that digitally printed bespoke wallpapers are rapidly growing in popularity. There is now a wider choice of both self-adhesive and ready-pasted materials and fuelling these trends is dye-sublimation printing, which is hard to match in terms of versatility and quality. Whether it's a sole entrepreneur starting out on a new venture, an interior design business motivated by the creative potential of digital décor or a restaurant/ hotel owner wishing to create unforgettable spaces for guests, the flexibility of dye-sublimation can offer enormous creative potential.

According to Neil Greenhalgh, what sets dye-sublimation apart from other printing technologies is the



fact that the ink actually penetrates the substrate instead of just coating its surface, thus creating high-resolution permanent images. This is the result of a chemical reaction in which heat turns the ink from a solid into a gas that then permeates polyester or polyester-coated materials. The heat causes the pores to open and accept the gaseous dye and, when it cools, the pores close to permanently fuse the image.

Contrary to misplaced opinion, printing exclusively onto polyester substrates does not limit the capabilities of dye-sublimation printing. In fact, quite the opposite is the case. In practice, the image is printed onto a dye-sublimation transfer paper and then a heat press is used to apply the paper to whatever is being printed. This can be anything from aluminium panels, upholstery and associated furnishings and fixings, to textiles and fabrics. As long as the item contains, or is pre-coated with sufficient polyester, it will accept high-quality imagery that is both durable and scratch-resistant. And, in the case of textiles, the ink is so completely absorbed into the material that its original tactile qualities remain unaffected.

There is a wide choice of dye-sublimation printers on the market that are designed to accommodate virtually every printed graphics requirement. Epson, for example, offers one of the widest ranges of dye-sublimation printers currently available. These include the



SureColor SC-F Series and, in particular, the SC-F6000 that represents the perfect entry-level dye-sublimation solution. For companies wishing to expand their current dye-sublimation capabilities, or requiring higher productivity levels, larger formats and medium-to-high-volume print runs, the SureColour SC-F7100 or

the new SureColor SC-F9200, which uses the new HDK Black Ink formulation, offer the ideal solution. HDK Black is the latest addition to the UltraChrome DS ink range and has been designed to help manufacturers produce high-quality, high-volume printed textiles whilst still keeping costs affordably low. ■



# Enhanced creativity

A few years ago, Inca Digital, which pioneered flatbed inkjet printing in 2000 and today manufactures the Inca Onset series of printers that are sold exclusively by Fujifilm, launched the IDEAS (Inca Digital Excellence Awards) to celebrate and showcase the huge variety of creative applications its customers had produced using many different materials.

Several customers won an IDEA with the applications they created for the décor sector using Inca UV printers.

These include the Canadian company **Optima**, which has produced furniture featuring multiple wood grain effects using



MDF. In order to reproduce realistic inlay woodwork, Optima scanned many different types of wood grain in high resolution before creating artwork to provide the final inlay effect. Using its Inca printer, the company was able to print onto pre-cut shapes that were then airbrush-varnished to increase the wood grain effect, achieving a degree of colour and fine detail that made it difficult to distinguish between the real wood and the printed furniture. ■



**America Digitaal Druk**, which is based in Holland, produced wall panels featuring a tropical forest. The biggest challenge was to perfectly match the panels to create a wall that would come to life when pedestrians passed by. The design, which was printed onto 18 two-part lenticular panels using an Inca platform, was created so that the images appeared to move when viewed from slightly different angles. The panels were then laminated

onto DIBOND prior to wall mounting. ■



Finally, **Mills Styrox**, from Australia, was commissioned to produce a rustic graphic to cover a large open wall space in a restaurant. Distressed plywood sheets, which were directly printed, using an Inca printer were then cut to size and wall-mounted to produce a stunning graphic feature. ■

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## Materials

# Majoring on materials

**When it comes to interior décor, new materials are having a positive impact on design decisions and the capacity for bespoke print production and wide format media specialist, Soyang Europe has seen a big uptake of its wallcovering substrates and innovative G-Floor printable flooring product.**

Soyang's Sales Director, Andrew Simmons reported: "The current offering of digitally printable wallpaper lends itself very nicely to the demand for bespoke décor as we see more and more one-off print runs being used for personalising domestic interiors. Our wallcoverings can be printed with solvent, eco-solvent, latex or UV inks enabling almost any print company to provide short-run, custom-designed wallpaper for their existing clients.

"Over recent years substantial use has been made of bespoke wall coverings in fashionable bars and

restaurants that stand out as a real feature with the use of finishes such as gold, silver and pearl metallic. In addition to this, our range of white products is available in a range of textures adding tactility and depth of design to wall surfaces in whichever interior capacity they're used,"

Moving from walls to floors, this previously under used area has made a leap forward with the release of pioneering printable flooring products, such as G-Floor. Originally developed in the United States, G-Floor has changed traditional perceptions of what is possible in the field of customised flooring. A high-tech media that is based on a high density, clear, flexible PVC substrate, it is capable of being custom printed on the underside using UV ink on a grand-format printer.

With numerous finishes and widths available, G-Floor has ensured its popularity in public spaces such as museums, where flooring can be



used as an extension of the public displays, with the added benefit of also being durable and safe.

Andrew Simmons continued: "Our customers have installed printed G-Floor into restaurants and shops where people want to make a decorative statement, rather than just selling products from their display graphics."

In addition, G-Floor's ability to

mimic natural finishes, such as wood or stone, also provides it with a number of advantages over 'the real thing'. It's quicker to install, has sound deadening properties, is easier to clean and maintain and most importantly, is more cost effective too.

G-Floor is available exclusively from Soyang Europe, which offers a range of printable substrates, including wallcoverings, textiles and other wide and grand format products. ■

## Create a perfect image

**The family of ImagePerfect adhesive wall graphics material has been expanded with the introduction of a new self-**

**adhesive wall graphics material.**

Called ImagePerfect Self-Adhesive



Wall Textile (IP 2324), the product has been designed specifically for use as printed wallpapers, wall graphics and decals. It is a self-adhesive opaque and water-resistant fabric that offers a high print quality, outstanding text definition and a broad colour gamut to ensure colourful and vibrant images.

This latest addition to the ImagePerfect range that now comprises over 160 products, has been designed for solvent, eco-solvent, UV and Latex printing technologies. It is ideal for full wall coverings and can be kiss-cut or die-cut.. ■





# Open up the possibilities

A wide range of interior and exterior decor applications can be carried out using the latest PVC and polyester films from Avery Dennison.



The company's new short-term MPI 3026 Matt and MPI 3010 Matt films are good examples, with both demonstrating high quality and durability, but at an affordable price. The 95-micron MPI 3026 uses an extra-strong adhesive that makes the film ideal for use on even the most challenging surfaces, while the 80-micron MPI 3010 complements the existing gloss finishes in the same family of films that are better suited to outdoor applications.

concave/convex shapes. It offers outstanding resistance to UV degradation, humidity and chemicals and is ideal for outdoor applications.

A good example of how Avery 900 Super Cast can best be used was demonstrated recently by the German furniture chain Trend, which wanted to create a long-lasting and attractive finish to an 800 square metre aluminium roof at one of its stores. Using the Avery Dennison colour matching facility, some

Avery 900 Super Cast is a high-gloss extremely conformable film that is suitable for surfaces with deep channels and compound



13 standard and colour-matched Super Cast films, offering a 10-year performance warranty were put together to create an impressive and durable rainbow effect feature for the roof.

Avery Dennison SF100 Ultra Clear Removable Film can be used to convert glass panels and windows with eye-catching graphics. The film has a high-gloss finish to enhance its graphics capabilities. ■





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Materials

# A glass act

**As the largest UK stockist and distributor of 3M graphic films, William Smith offers a number of innovative materials that have been designed to accommodate the décor requirements of interior designers and architects, which are supplemented by further options from Arlon and VION.**

For application to glass surfaces, 3M Fasara Glass Decorative Films include a choice of special effects, including acid-etched, sandblasted and rice paper. In application, the films are capable of blocking up to 99 per cent of UV light, thereby enhancing their suitability for use in retail and other commercial environments. The films are complemented with a range of 3M Light Management Films that can be used to create a host of special decorative effects, plus the 3M Scotchcal 5525-300 and 3M Scotchcal 7725SE-300 Series of films. The former is a five-year polymeric window film offering a choice of acid-etched and sandblasted effects, while the latter is a premium cast up to 10-year glass decorative film offering a choice of dusted or frosted crystal effects.

A further alternative is the VION Crystal 5500 Series of polymeric films. These five-year films provide a crystal-etch effect and can be applied to flat and slightly curved glass surfaces. Another glass-decorative option is the Arlon 5400 Etched Glass Series of translucent polymeric films.

A particularly innovative glass



decorative film is 3M Dichroic that faithfully replicates the visual effects of genuine dichroic glass, but at a fraction of the price. It is available in Chill, which shifts colours from the transmitted cool tones of blue, magenta and yellow, to the reflective colours of gold and blue, while the Blaze version shifts colours from the warm tones of cyan, blue and magenta to red and gold. The colours seen by the viewer from either side of the glass surface are influenced by the environment, lighting and angle of viewing.

Another equally innovative 3M product is DI-NOC. Available in over 700 distinctive colours and patterns, the self-adhesive PVC vinyl laminate film can be applied to a wide range of commonly used substrates to replicate the appearance of wood grain, stone, stucco, metal, leather and carbon fibre, but again at a fraction of the cost. The film incorporates 3M's renowned Controltac Adhesive Technology for optimum adhesion and conformability, is also water- and weather-resistant, meets current IMO flammability requirements and offers a 12-year performance warranty for internal applications and a five-year warranty for outdoor applications.

For wall décor applications, the 3M Textured Wall Film IJ8624 can be applied to textured surfaces as diverse as brick, breeze block, stucco and cement and can be used to convert both interior and exterior surfaces with eye-catching graphics or art manifestations.



The Arlon range of decorative-effect films includes two further wall coverings, DPF 206 (a removable fabric wall film) and DPF 207 (a removable interior wall film). For indoor and outdoor graphics applied to 'hard to stick' low-energy

surfaces, Arlon DPF 8000 has proved an ideal solution. Available in a white satin or clear format, the high-tensile film features a strong permanent adhesive and conforms brilliantly to both flat and slightly curved surfaces. ■

# Brilliant solutions

As a leading UK stockist and distributor of signage and graphics materials from MACTac, Amari Digital Supplies (ADS) can supply a wide choice of décor solutions. These include a series of wall coverings from MACTac in the IMAGin and decart ranges of media.

Key wall covering products from the MACTac IMAGin range include the WW100, WW200 and WW300 Series, which offer both individual and common design characteristics and applications and can be printed using a choice of the most widely used ink technologies, including solvent, eco-solvent, mild solvent and Latex. They also have Class 0 FR ratings.

WW100 outdoor/indoor wall graphics film is a highly conformable 55-micron gloss white 130gsm laminated PVC film incorporating a high-tack permanent opaque adhesive. The film can be applied without edge lifting direct to brick walls and comes with a three-year performance warranty. As



required, the film can also be laminated with a choice of LAG100, CastLAM MATT or Horizon Gloss overlaminates. The WW101 clear version of the film enables the natural colours of the substrate to be seen.

The 150-micron semi-rigid WW200 indoor wall graphics film, which is especially suited to home décor and retail display applications features an ultra-removable adhesive, can be applied to and easily removed from flat smooth surfaces. It comes with a one-year performance warranty.



Designed for application to difficult substrates (including Latex-painted walls), the white matte 100-micron WW300 film is ideal for medium-term internal/external décor installations. It incorporates a high-tack aggressive permanent adhesive and comes with a four-year performance warranty. When used in conjunction with the PF6000 slip-resistant over-laminate film, WW300 can be effectively used for commercial grade floor/carpet graphics.

The MACTac decart Series of interior wall covering films includes the 300gsm MACTac DecoMural (vinyl) and the 370gsm DecoCanvas (canvas) options. DecoMural is a self-adhesive and heavily textured and paper-backed non-woven vinyl wall covering that is ideal for use in commercial

premises, typically hotels, retail outlets, conference suites and reception areas, while DecoCanvas is a 370gsm white matte 100 per cent cotton fabric offering similar application capabilities. The product is ideal for the reproduction of art prints as well as professional décor applications.

ADS, in conjunction with Amari Plastics, recently added AMedia print and finishing products that will now complement the MACTac IMAGin and decart wall graphics ranges. The products have been sourced from many of the leading European manufacturers and have initially comprised a variety of self-adhesive vinyl materials. These will be supplemented over the coming months to extend the range of possible applications. ■

## Free Prize Draw

**Wrights Plastics is adding a touch of interior décor style to its range of acrylic furniture for office and home and is offering one lucky Sign Directions reader the chance to win a stunning Union Jack printed acrylic laptop stand.**

Established in 1969, Wrights Plastics is a leading plastic product manufacturer, which works across a number of sectors to deliver effective plastic solutions, ranging from industrial components to retail displays. Its 42,000 square foot production unit is located in West Bromwich and it also has a further 9,000 sq.ft warehouse facility where it maintains an extensive stock of off-the-shelf items point of sale and

retail display materials. Clients include Marks and Spencer, Selfridges and The John Lewis Partnership. The move into acrylic furniture for the home and office was a natural extension for the company, combining its design and manufacturing skills with its in house print facilities.

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This month, **Mark Godden** urges signmakers to explore

## New horizons

I was reading an HP whitepaper on the subject of inks a few evenings ago – I don't get out much.

One little factoid immortalised in the midst of all the other teachings was that, in total, since Latex printers were introduced, together with the matching ink, over thirty-five million square meters of output have been printed amongst its installed base.

You have to admire HP's dedication to the cause, and its resources, getting out and counting that lot.

It's a number worth thinking about, particularly if you then consider HP's footprint, in terms of both the share of the print hardware market it commands - it's by no means exclusive - and the time it's been selling large format hardware - it's a newcomer in relative terms. I won't attempt to answer the question but I'll ask it anyway, just to provoke further thought. How many square metres have been produced in total, when you consider the other heavy-hitting members of the printer establishment? Roland DG, Mimaki, Epson, Agfa, Durst... and so on.

It's a lot.

Of course, the stuff these printers output doesn't last forever. Some of it is time-limited on a content basis. Images and information are perishable things in terms of advertising campaigns and thus, ninety days or so after posting, they're gone.

In terms of longevity, vehicle liveries do a bit better. They are often part of the branding spectrum and so their course is a longer one. They last until the vehicle is either scrapped or changes hands.

Graphics in other venues may be discarded simply because they have a span of exterior durability that eventually leaves them looking like faded impressions of themselves, but are not as fondly regarded as Ghost Signs that may have survived a war or two.

All this print then is, for the most part, a transient thing. Despite that, with HP having poured its 35M square metres into the pond, and all the others having a dunk too, there is, I think we can conclude, a lot of it out there.

In the midst of all the big numbers about how much print is produced and deployed, there's an even bigger number to consider. I reckon it's an order of magnitude bigger still, maybe even more. It's the number of square metres still available to display digital print.

There's inertia to overcome of course, in trying to fill all the spaces. Imagine what the world might look like if every square metre of space that is available for advertising was, in fact, filled by advertising. Not a pretty sight. Similarly, if every vehicle on the road were plastered in graphics, what would we have to do to distinguish the private individuals in the population?

Where then, is the ten times the volume, or more, of print that's produced today, in workshops just like yours, going to end up? Who will make it? Who will sell it? Who is going to put their hand in their pocket and pay for it?

Here's the crux of the matter in a very broad generalisation that's offered with the greatest respect. You won't produce it and supply it - because you never get asked for it. The buyers who could be coming to you won't, because they don't even know what's possible.

Decor.

One word, one big market. Drill into it. Domestic décor, retail décor, décor in restaurants, décor in hospitals, décor in public buildings. In fact, décor in practically any place with a roof and four walls to hold it up. Décor for the sake of beautification. Décor serving to

refurbish. Décor with a functional intent. Décor simply for the sake of creating an ambience. Décor dedicated to the cause of banishing magnolia emulsion. Décor as a brand continuation. Décor serving as a way-finding scheme. Décor that utterly elevates and transforms the mundane. Décor that inspires and creates a mood of positivity. Décor that promotes a simple homespun philosophy in a few well crafted words. Décor you can print. Permanent decor. Temporary décor. Décor you can supply. Décor you can install - indoors and in a warm, dry place. Décor that can help you to build a thriving business

I expect great things of décor. I don't claim to be the author of the concept. All I can say is, I have the wit to see a lot of unadorned walls out there that can be covered for any or all of the reasons listed above. Once inertia is overcome and we move out of the early pioneering phase and start ramping up the demand with opinion leaders driving it on at a pace - then, décor is going to explode. Is it going to be the new wrapping? Very likely, says I, and then some.

Let me return to the concept of the market not knowing what's possible. Debate that with me if you will, but is there a single solitary person amongst our readership who hasn't heard a customer say something along the lines of "Ooh, I didn't know you could do that?" I really doubt it. The number of times I've heard it probably puts HP's numbers in the shade. I also have crystal clear recollection of someone telling me, "Nice idea, but we never get asked for anything like that." That was when I launched the Gerber Edge in the UK and European market. A printer that, with a clutch of others numbering fewer than you have fingers on one hand, defined the beginning of the digital epoch. That was back in the days when putting an image onto vinyl was a truly

remarkable thing.

Someone has to grow the market and décor is a heaven-sent opportunity to do so. We need to ensure the market understands and that you are asked for the output you could so easily produce.

I remember showing a designer a decorative frieze produced on the Edge. Got a "Didn't know you could do that!" which was understandable at the time, because you couldn't. What happened though, was that single point of contact leveraged many opportunities for customers who bought the printer. If you can get creatives alerted to the possibilities, they really run with the idea.

If you have a machine that's capable of putting images on wide webs of material, and who reading this doesn't, then you have the means to enter a market that's really going to fly. You'll need a few materials you haven't worked with before - they're around. You'll need a creative leaning toward the subject. You'll need to tell the population around you that there is an alternative to slapping emulsion paint over walls and that they don't have to settle for repeating patterns in wall coverings. You'll need to introduce them to the idea that there's a new way to decorate and that it may be a way they simply don't know about yet.

It's not too late by any means, nor is it too early to carve yourself a position in the market for printed and applied decor.

Even if you only do it on a local basis initially, you'll gain experience and make money doing so. At this point, I hope I'm losing you. You're off. You have an opportunity to pursue!

**Mark Godden**  
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