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October 6, 2021



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Epson SureLab Printer  
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## Photoland making lemonade from Covid lemons

SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

Covid 19 has been the catalyst for **Victor Jacobs** to 're-invent' **Photoland**, his 30-year-old retail business, in the heart of the Sydney CBD.

The change involved moving to new premises closer to Martin Place, which (when it isn't in lockdown) is teeming with foot traffic. He is taking advantage of Covid-19 restrictions by embarking on a complete new fit-out of the premises.

He has also tweaked the Photoland printing equipment combination to better meet the needs of a specialist photo print service provider in 2021. This included acquiring an Epson Surelab D3000 inkjet minilab from specialist supplier, Independent Photo (iPhoto) in Sydney.

The store move came about in order to 'future-proof' the business, according to Victor.



Victor Jacobs with his new Epson Surelab D3000 – the rest of the store is in the midst of a fit-out.

'Conditions in the city have changed – probably forever,' Victor explained. 'Revenue is down in most businesses around 20 to 25 percent, and rents need to reflect that.'

This is particularly the case for specialist retailers, because that last 20 percent of revenue is generally where the profitability of the business comes from.

Victor was able to negotiate a new 5 + 5- year lease 60 metres down the road with a bigger shop in a slightly better location – very close to Martin Place; and at a dramatically more competitive rent.

'So I have a new 5+5 lease, I'm healthy and I'm excited about the future,' he said. Warming to the theme he continued: 'I'm confident things will get better. Right now it feels like the end of the world – but we will come back.'

Joining an irreversible trend, he switched from the last of a line of Fujifilm Frontier silver halide 'wetlabs' to an Epson Surelab D3000 as his photo printing 'engine room'.

With modern print volumes way down on what a beast like the Fuji Frontier range was built for, 'chemistry was going off because throughput was down from millions, to tens of thousands, of prints,' he explained, adding that he wasn't unhappy with that, as his margins were good.

As well as the difficulty in keeping chemistry fresh with lower throughput, the Frontier was also a hungry beast when it came to power consumption, using up to 80 percent more power and taking time each morning to warm up.

'So I needed to find an alternative which would future-proof the business. My research brought me to the Epson Surelab D3000 from Independent Photo (IPS). It's flexibility and ability to print high quality photos filled the bill exactly.'

While Fujifilm does offer a (re-badged Epson) drylab of its own, 'Epson is the leading supplier of inkjet minilabs and (independent photo specialist supplier) Independent Photo (IPS) impressed me with levels of photo specialty knowledge, quality control and technical support they provided,' explained Victor.

'I was very comfortable with the guys from IPS & I felt I was in good hands – they are knowledgeable and very supportive. This is really important to me as my business philosophy is that my supplier is my partner.' As a 30-year veteran of the industry, Victor knew many of the IPS people from previous "lives in the photo industry" when they worked for the likes of Hanimex, Fujifilm and Kodak back in the day.

There were also added branding synergies – Photoland is now an all-Epson printer business. Victor already ran an Epson Surelab D700 (little brother to the D3000) for handling passport photos ('marvellous') and a venerable Epson 7800 48-inch wide format printer. ('I've had it for 12 years and it still runs beautifully.')

He has kept his Fujifilm SP300 film scanner and an FP150 single channel film processor.

He hasn't, however, kept any kiosks, and he's more than happy to see the back of them, rather favouring personalised customer service at the front counter, supported by his Dakis Online eCommerce print orders system, also sold and supported by IPS.

'I've felt strongly for many years that kiosks were killing photo stores. They all look the same so customers expect the same prices as in Harvey Norman.'

He said kiosks had forced the price of photo prints down to self-services levels 'but its not really self-service because of the amount of time taken assisting customers.'

(Pre-Covid, he had his old kiosks spray-painted a custom colour to break the nexus with 'Hardly Normal'.)

'When we finally moved away from kiosks I was delighted because we had a much clearer, premium offer to the customer,' Victor explained. The new Epson Surelab complements that premium offer, along with the convenience of the Dakis Online Photo Ordering software system.

'With Dakis eCommerce online photo ordering your smartphone or Tablet is your kiosk,' said Stuart Holmes, managing director of Independent Photographic Supplies (IPS). 'So there is really no need for the traditional instore photo kiosk. As Victor points out, kiosks take away from the personalised instore service model that successful operators like Photoland offer their customers.

'Online also gives the benefit of an anywhere/anytime "ubiquitous" online ordering system.'

Victor said the in-store personalised premium service includes colour correction, contrast correction, brightness correction and cropping. A look at [Photoland's price list](#) reflects confidence in his customers' willingness to 'pay for what they are getting', to twist the old cliché.

'So far it's been absolutely effortless. The D3000 produces excellent quality prints in standard mode and also has a HD high quality mode (which is about 50 percent slower) for very large enlargement files and for poster enlargement up to 48in wide. There's no question that it has a broader colour gamut and the customers are delighted.'

As Stuart Holmes (IPS) also noted, the other real benefits of high quality inkjet printing for retail based photo specialty lab owners are OH & S-based, with no more DG (Dangerous Goods) chemistry needed, no more trade waste

agreements with councils and no more messy and expensive silver recovery services required, making Photo a cleaner, greener and more sustainable business going forward.



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## 6 Comments



Stan Kessanis  
OCTOBER 5, 2021

Great to see Victor carrying the flag for photo processing in the CBD and with such enthusiasm. Sad to see so few players left in the market compared to the hey-days. I remember the Paxtons, Fletchers, G&V, Foto Reisel days with plenty of action in the city.

[Reply](#)



Phil G  
OCTOBER 5, 2021

Great to hear that Photoland is thriving in these difficult times especially in NSW, we too relied on photo kiosks, at one time we had 16, now none!

We have had our Epson D3000 for five years, some issues in that time but better than we ever experienced with wet labs. It's a pity that they are discontinuing the D3000 but we intend running multiple Epson D860's when our D3000 becomes unviable.

Our Canon wide format, fingers crossed, hasn't seen a tech in three? years and could be used for larger than 8x12". Our 65" HP Latex will be changed at some time for the newer model, it has much better output on photo paper than our current which is great for canvas and vinyl.

We are waiting for the new double sided Epson printer when that is available and proven.

[Reply.](#)



Alistair Turnbull

OCTOBER 5, 2021

Wow!

What a blatant advertorial for IPS.

[Reply.](#)



Keith Shipton

POST AUTHOR | OCTOBER 6, 2021

Hi Alistair. The other readers who have commented here seem more pleased to read that Victor and Photoland are thriving. They get to read things like that, along with our occasional world exclusives and our unique and sometimes daring editorial lineup because of the long-term support of a few extremely loyal advertisers. We make no apology for providing a platform when one of those supporters or one of their customers has something positive to share. Would you like me to send you a copy of the rate card?

[Reply.](#)



[Kerwin Ross](#)

OCTOBER 6, 2021

Glad things are looking up for you Victor,

Great advertorial IPS. We have had the D3000 and D700 for many years and now have a new Epson 44" also. So yea, were a Epson Express Digital Solutions store now...

IPS have been awesome with support over the years. Always quick and diligent with help.

We have an older population and still run Dakis Kiosks. We have the space and customers seem to enjoy coming in to use them and the experience in store is totally different(better) to other labs. We are not competing with the Consumer Electronics loss leaders for printing. We set the benchmark for printing and our prices reflect that.

[Reply.](#)



[Stuart Holmes](#)

OCTOBER 6, 2021

Thanks for your valued support Kerwin, at IPS we're here to support all of our customers & friends in business

[Reply.](#)

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