

Canon imagePROGRAF iPF6450

Outstanding Small Workgroup Color Inkjet Graphics Wide-Format Printer



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The Canon imagePROGRAF iPF6450 excelled in every category tested, receiving an Excellent or Very Good rating in each, thereby earning this season's BLI "Pick" award for "Outstanding Small Workgroup Color Inkjet Graphics Wide-Format Printer." Targeted to small workgroups and suitable for photographic, fine art and proofing print applications, the 24-inch model features Canon's 12-color LUCIA EX ink set and delivered exceptional prints across a collection of high-quality image files on Canon satin and premium semi-gloss photo papers. Notably, the unit produced natural-appearing skin tones on photographs, while also producing a vibrant spectrum of colors on poster output. Monochrome prints were equally impressive, exhibiting neutral gray tones and dense blacks, while still producing exceptional highlight and shadow details, with no bronzing observed.

Ease of use is also a major strength of the Canon iPF6450, which enabled straightforward roll and cut-sheet loading and simple replacement of supplies such as ink tanks and printheads. BLI technicians commended the unit's control panel display for offering a great deal more information than most competitive units, including an accurate time for print completion, which will prove helpful in busy print shops. Conveniently, selections for roll feed and cut are found directly on the panel rather than concealed several layers deep, as is the case for some competitive devices.

Especially noteworthy are the multitude of functions found within the Canon iPF6450's Status Monitor. Here, BLI technicians were able to monitor job status, ink levels and media, as well as cancel and promote jobs in the queue. For file reprinting, 30 mailboxes can be readily accessed from within the Hard Disk tab or at the control panel. Most importantly, however, the monitor's comprehensive accounting tools enabled technicians to track ink and paper usage and their associated costs not only for each job separately, but for any number of selected jobs collectively—no doubt a useful capability for business owners.

In addition to the standard 130-ml ink tank capacity, the company now offers a 300-ml capacity that will prove more economical for users, and both sizes can be used in the printer simultaneously. Enhancing productivity for this model over its predecessor, the iPF6450 now features a sub-ink tank system, which gives users the ability to change tanks without stopping the print process. When printing BLI's job stream, technicians also recorded a productivity increase for this device over its predecessor of 4.4 and 17.9 percent, using the standard and high print driver settings, respectively, for satin photo paper.

Undoubtedly, the most significant new feature of the imagePROGRAF iPF6450, which exceeded BLI's expectations, is found in Canon's SU-21 optional spectrophotometer, working in conjunction with the system's innovative new color management capabilities. During BLI's evaluation, this formidable combination, which BLI honored with an "Outstanding Achievement" award for innovation, provided excellent color consistency not just for that one device over the course of the test, but also across multiple 12-color Canon devices. Indeed, in BLI's testing, the color difference between the output of the iPF6450 and a second model, the iPF8400, in an offsite location, was a surprisingly low Delta E value of 1.39. The ability of this system to achieve such tight color consistency is a critical need for the proofing industry, and BLI's testing proved the system's success.

The Canon imagePROGRAF iPF6450, competitively priced among 24-inch printers at \$3,695 and configured with the optional SU-21 spectrophotometer (\$1,795) delivers excellent color and monochrome image quality, as well as exceptional color management tools that enable straightforward calibration and inimitable color consistency across Canon's fleet of imagePROGRAF iPFX400 printers. BLI highly recommends the iPF6450 for high-quality print and proofing applications for small workgroups.

About BLI Pick Awards

With its "Pick" awards, BLI gives special recognition in each category twice a year to those products that provided the most outstanding performances in BLI's exhaustive lab tests. Its "Outstanding Achievement" awards acknowledge products or capabilities that stand out for attributes such as innovation, usefulness, energy efficiency or value.

BLI's awards stand alone in that they are based on a rigorous battery of lab tests that takes approximately two months to complete. The evaluation includes an extensive durability test, during a portion of which each unit is run at the manufacturer's maximum duty cycle. BLI's durability test is unique among office product evaluations and uniquely qualifies BLI to assess reliability, a critical factor for buyers and IT directors.

Other performance attributes evaluated include ease of use, media handling, productivity and value, among others. Each product that successfully passes BLI's lab test earns BLI's "Recommended" or "Highly Recommended" seal and a BLI "Certificate of Reliability" and qualifies as a "Pick" award contender. Consequently, BLI "Pick" awards are hard-earned awards that buyers and IT directors can trust to better guide them in their acquisition decisions.

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