

# TRADITIONAL PHOTOS AND DIGITAL INKJETS GAIN SUPPORT FROM MOUNTING/LAMINATING COMPANIES

Jack & Sue Drafahl

Mounting and laminating manufacturers were out in full force at this year's PMA show. Each had solutions to the challenges affecting our complex industry. As digital gains acceptance by the industry, laminating manufacturers are being forced to re-evaluate their machinery to accept both traditional photos and digital inkjets.



Advanced Greig Laminators, AGL 6400



Coda

**N**EW MATERIALS and products are being designed to meet the changing needs of labs mounting digital images. Even as inkjet papers continue to improve, they are still fragile and in need of protection from scratching and moisture. At this year's PMA show in Las Vegas, we saw different solutions being offered in cold lamination, low temperature lamination and liquid coatings. Let's take a look at some of the options available for use in the photo lab.

## Laminators

*Advanced Greig Laminators, Inc.*  
New to PMA is the single pass vinyl

transfer process machine, the AGL-6450. The AGL 6400 and 4400 feature the only pneumatic controlled tension system on the market today. This feature guarantees repeatable laminating results eliminating the guesswork associated with spring tension devices.

The user can dial in a setting by looking at pressure gauges rather than wasting a few feet of film while adjusting the spring. This saves time and money, since wasted materials are often the highest cost in lamination.

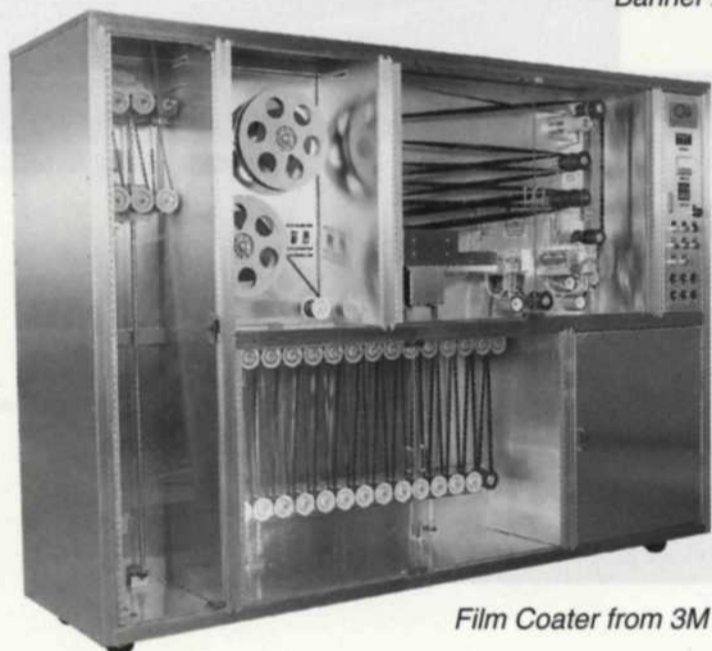
With these pneumatic controls, lab technicians can also maintain written records of the precise tension control for different thicknesses and types of



Banner America, Finisher 6300



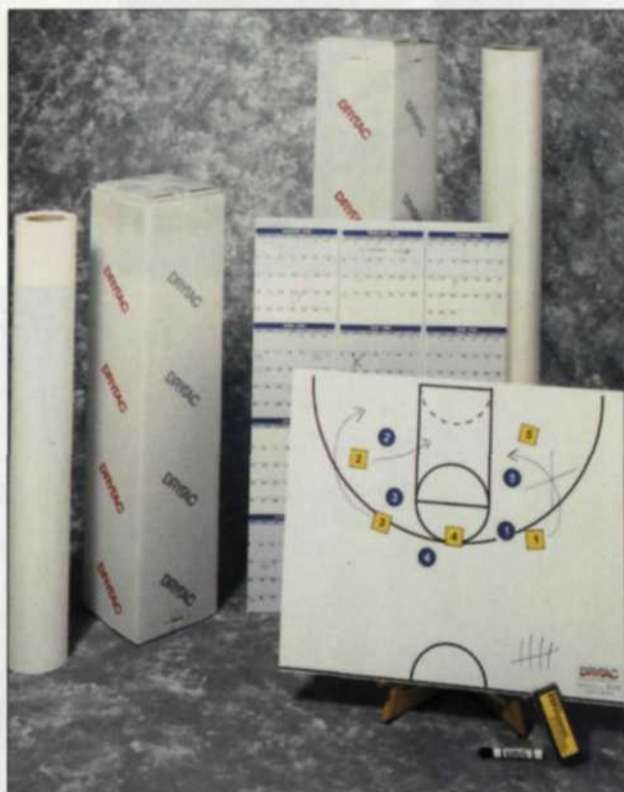
Banner America, Finisher 2700



Film Coater from 3M



Drytac, MHL gloss, white, and black backing



Drytac, Protac and MHL Scribe

laminating films.

For high-volume labs, the 4400 and the 6400 are built to provide constant heat for faster production speeds. They can also maintain higher temperatures and pressures needed for transferring inkjets from transfer papers into textiles.

AGL also sells the Auto-trim II, an inline cutter that can sheet-cut and trim rolls of laminated graphics up to 64" wide at speeds automatically adjusted to match the speed of the laminator. Quality Mounting and Laminating Systems is the Advanced Greig Laminator distributor to the digital imaging marketplace.

Banner America Products has been

manufacturing quality laminators and a full line of ID products for over 20 years. With the ever-expanding demand for photo and inkjet print laminating, they have responded to the needs of the photo finisher.

The Finisher Series machines are designed to thermally laminate both sides of wide format graphics. They can also simultaneously mount and laminate up to 1/2" board. The Finisher 6300 is an industrial quality 63" roll laminator designed to laminate and mount wide format color digital prints. The Finisher 2700 is designed for those using 24" and smaller prints and the Finisher 4300 is designed for 36" - 42" usage.

Banner America is also the distributor for Transilwrap's DIGIKote laminating film. The DIGIKote I has UV inhibitors and LIGHTFast technology to protect printed images from harmful UV rays. The DIGIKote II has no UV inhibitors for jobs that require exceptional clarity. Both use the 185 F laminating temperature and are available in clear or satin finishes. Both are designed for use with inkjet, electrostatic, laser and thermal transfer technologies.

Coda has over 20 years of experience in the mounting and laminating field. This expertise has resulted in a laminator that is rugged, innovative and cost effective. Coda Cold-Mount lami-



Falcon 60



Hunt Graphics Americas, 6100 Ultra



ORCA I-SP



Interlam Model K-1550



Interlam Jet Lam 1600

nators are great for use with pressure sensitive mounting adhesives and overlaminates.

They feature just one main model of their Cold-Mount laminator in either a motorized or hand-operated model. The motorized option allows for volume mounting and greater control over the lamination process, but the hand-operated model is just the ticket for businesses doing a smaller volume.

Coda offers motorized laminators in sizes from 14", 26", 34" and 44" and 14", 26" and 34" in the manual version. Either rubber or silicone-coated rollers are available in all models except the 44" motorized model.

The Cold-Mount System by Coda is a

complete mounting system based on specially formulated pressure sensitive adhesives. In addition to the laminators themselves, they feature mount boards that are pre-cut and pre-coated with pressure sensitive adhesives. These boards are ready to mount on immediately in standard sizes up to 48" x 96" and come in a variety of grades of stiffness. They also feature sturdy display mounts that are an impressive way to display large format output. Coda also features a wide variety of pressure sensitive adhesives and overlaminates films to meet the needs of the demanding photo lab.

Drytac is both a manufacturer and distributor of high quality adhesives

and laminating films. As a result of their 20+ years of experience in the field, the company offers a wide variety of materials for heat-activated, low temperature heat or pressure sensitive films and adhesives.

Drytac also carries a series of dry mounting and laminating presses. They offer two models of vacuum presses: the DVP4050 with 40" x 50" platen and the DVP2638 with a 26" x 38" platen. These vacuum presses are designed to give quick and efficient dry-mounting, laminating, canvas bonding and texturing capabilities. These presses will mount and laminate photographs, posters, e-stats, inkjet prints, silks and pressed flowers to

materials up to 1" thick.

The Drytac 2525 is a heavy-duty manual press with a 25"x25" platen. With this machine, the operator controls the pressure generated by the heavy-duty cast aluminum platens providing the perfect combination of heat and pressure. The Drytac 5198 is a hydraulic dry mounting and laminating press. It has a platen size of 51"x98" which makes it great for high volume work. They also feature the Drytac L-110 Edge Finishing System which is a complete plaque finish machine.

GBC Pro-Tech was one of the earliest manufacturers to develop laminators that applied overlaminating films for the photo marketplace. New products and improved materials are all part of GBC Pro-Tech's dedication to providing digital finishing solutions. The company recently announced the arrival of the Falcon 60+ dual color finishing system. Like its predecessor, the Falcon 60, the Falcon 60+ will laminate, encapsulate and mount up to 62" wide.

However, the Falcon 60+ is a bi-directional machine allowing hot and cold jobs to be run consecutively.

The Falcon 60+ has two sets of nip rollers, so the operator simply gaps the heated rollers after laminating so the board can be mounted through the cold nip rollers without waiting for cool down.

GBC Pro-Tech also features the Orca I and Orca I-SP. Both laminate prints up to 55" wide with heat activated or pressure sensitive films, but the SP machine is approved for the 3M Scotchprint process. The Orca III enables the customer to perform all existing processes with speed and efficiency. The Arctic Eagle 1600 is for cold pressure sensitive lamination and mounting up to 60" wide, the Eagle 105 is for thermal or cold encapsulation up to 40" wide and the DS 60 is a heat transfer laminator for dye-sublimation up to 62" wide. GBC Pro-Tech also provides a full line of heat-activated, pressure sensitive film and thermal and pressure sensitive mounting adhesives. Films are available in 1 to 10

mil thickness in roll widths that range from 12" - 61".

Hunt Graphics Americas manufactures and markets the Seal brand of finishing systems, and recently announced the Image 6100 Ultra, a versatile, all inclusive laminator. It provides high-volume production for inkjet, electrostatic, e-stat transfer and photographic media up to 61" in width.

It combines bi-directional operation, 3M Scotchprint Graphics System compatibility, programmable touchpad controls and a full range of post-print finishing capabilities into one machine. Seal also features the Image 410 laminator that is capable of hot or color operation up to 43 inches wide. This machine is ideal for the digital lab with low to medium volume production.

Seal recently published the *Seal Materials Guide*, a comprehensive manual on post-print finishing systems. This 50-page, full-color, how-to manual, explains the finishing process for eight of the most common finishing

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MACtac's Permacolor and Thermacolor overlaminating films and IMAGin adhesive-backed inkjet vinyl can be used together to create a colorful image.



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Accutech

applications. The manual is to help customers add value to their current work, widen their service offerings and, in turn, increase their profit potential. Hunt Corporation also produces quality materials for the laminating and mounting industry.

InterLam, Inc. just introduced the Jet Lam 1600 at PMA. The Jet Lam 1600 features two 62" wide heated rollers, which can accommodate wide-format E-stat prints, photos and inkjet prints. They also offer a smaller machine, the Jet Lam 1100, which features heated-roller mounting and laminating a 43" wide machine.

At PMA, the company also announced a new line of low-melt thermal lamination to be used with these heated-roller machines. The line fea-

tures extremely clear, scratch-resistant, low-lustre film that is ideal for protecting images.

Various materials include: low lustre in 5 and 10 mil, low-melt glossy in 3,5,7 and 10 mil, white, stiff backing film in 5 and 10 mil and black stiffening film in 10 mil thicknesses.

InterLam, Inc. recently introduced the Model K-1550 wide format cold roller mounting and laminating machine. It features two 63" wide siliconized rollers and will accommodate wide format photos, inkjet prints and can mount boards up to 1 3/4" thick. Also featured are other cold-pressure mounting and laminating machines: the K600 at 25" wide, the K1000 at 42" and the K52 at 53" wide. They also offer a wide variety of adhesives, lami-

nates and mounting accessories to meet all your needs.

Xyron offers three manual laminators: the 850 for materials up to 8.5" wide, the Pro1250 for up to 12" and the 2500 for up to 25 inches. The easy-to-use Xyron system applies adhesive with a peel-away release liner, laminates or does both at the same time without heat or electricity.

Because they need no heat, they can be used on laser and inkjet papers, photos, blueprints or maps. Simply feed in your photo, turn the handle and precision rollers apply the laminate and/or mounting adhesive. Each features a built-in cutter with replaceable blade so you can quickly trim when you are done. The patented drop-in cartridges make it quick and easy to switch be-

tween applications.

Xyron formed an alliance with 3M Corporation that resulted in preferred access to 3M's quality films and adhesives. Xyron offers a variety of mounting adhesives including low tack, high tack, repositionable and acid-free adhesive. The laminates are a high gloss in either one-sided, two-sided or a combination of one-sided laminate and high, low or repositionable adhesive. All members of the Xyron family are born and raised in the USA.

### Adhesive and Lamination Materials

No matter what lamination machine you consider, the materials you use make all the difference in the final product. As you have seen, many of the manufacturers of machinery also offer their own line of adhesive and lamination materials. There are also a few manufacturers who solely dedicate their labors to producing quality materials.

Ilford has long been a name associated with quality photographic products. The Ilfeguard laminating and mounting materials protect images against moisture, UV damage and rough handling. Ilford offers a wide variety of hot and cold lamination surfaces, and Ilfeguard mounting material produces a smooth long-lasting bond between the image and all mounting surfaces.

At the recent PMA, Ilford announced that it will begin displaying the first-ever UV Protection Factor (UVPF) labels on all Ilfeguard Hotlam UV and Coldlam UV laminates. The labels will feature "thermometer-like" scales illustrating the products' numerical UV protection values. These labels are the first of their kind in the industry, and represent Ilford's commitment to provide quality imaging solutions.

MACTac's Thermacolor line of heat laminating film is designed for overlaminating and encapsulation of graphic images. Thermacolor was designed for protecting and enhancing graphic images, guarding them against damage from moisture, dirt, oils and other potential contaminants. This line was designed for use on electrostatic, inkjet

and laser printed graphics. MACTac now offers low-temperature activation of 185 F. The comprehensive Thermacolor line is available in a variety of widths and thicknesses to meet every need: High Gloss in 3,5 and 10 mil, Matte in 5 and 10 mil, Satin in 3 mil, White Opaque in 5 and 10 mil and Black Opaque in 10 mil thicknesses.

MACTac has also rounded out its com-

prehensive and versatile Permacolor line of overlaminating and mounting films by adding 61" and 37" materials. They designed these additional sizes to meet the ever growing need for mounting and overlaminating inkjet images.

The entire Permacolor product line is ideal for protecting photographic, inkjet, electrostatic, lithographic or screen printed images.

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*Quality Mounting and Laminating* offers a comprehensive line of laminates, adhesives, E-stat paper, transfer media and inkjet media for creating large format graphic displays, as well as an extensive line of laminators. It has recently added 18 new product lines that are part of 89 new items included in the 1999 catalog.

These products include larger offerings of mounting and laminating products, including liquid laminates, specialty films, image transfer media/E-stat papers and inkjet media.

The Advanced Greig Laminator line of equipment in 80", 64" and 44" widths is available through Quality, and the company is also a regional distributor for both Encad and Hewlett Packard large format inkjet printers. Axiom Graphic liquid laminators and wet transfer separator systems are also available. Quality keeps adding new products and materials with the intent of offering you a single source for most of your large format requirements.

*Savage Universal* offers a full line of mountboard products, and the Nucor foam-centered board with sizes up to 48" to 96" is ideal for murals and large format work.

### Liquid Lamination

One of the problems that occurs in overlaminating is sometimes debris gets trapped between the print and the laminate. Sometimes it can be easily repaired, but other times tragedy occurs and the print must be remade.

One advantage to liquid lamination machines over laminating film is that if debris on the print occurs, it can be gently removed and a new coating re-applied without ruining the print.

The second advantage is the cost savings. You can use a liquid coating system for about one-third the cost of film lamination. Of course coating machines require more clean-up and maintenance, but then the lab owner has options to choose from in print finishing.

Twelve years ago, *Accutech* first manufactured a high-speed system to automatically coat, protect and texturize digital and photographic images with water-based lacquer. *Accutech's* fully automatic,

high speed, dry to dry protective coating system delivers long lasting protection from moisture, scratches and fading.

An infra-red dryer assures high speed curing in coatings of gloss, luster or matte finish. The *Accu-coater* is offered in 5 different sizes to cover all production requirements: two table top models of 16 and 20 inches and three floor models of 24, 40 and 70 inches wide.

*Acculac*, their environmentally safe, waterbased coating formula, provides an economical and profitable alternative to laminating or spraying. It safely works with photographic, digital, inkjet and dye-sub prints in addition to electrostatic, canvas, vinyl and film substrates. *Accutech* recently announced *Accupro UV* liquid coatings. These are designed for outdoor and are resistant to water, industrial cleaners, gasoline, and scratching.

*3M* is the dean in the liquid laminate business, and manufactures *Scotchgard*, a flexible, optically clear coating that protects all film sizes up to 70mm, and is also available for prints. *3M* also offers the coating machines, and recently introduced the *Film Coater 100*, which operates at 100 feet per minute with a capacity of 2,000 feet reels. The curing station is 50% more efficient at curing than conventional systems. All products are available through *3M's* Home Care Products division.

*The Valspar Corporation* announces improved formulations in its protective liquid coating system called *Aquaguard*. Originally designed as a replacement for solvent borne sprays and traditional lamination, the *Aquaguard* systems now include formulations for conventional spray equipment, automated web-coat and roll-coat equipment, air-brush retouching and texture coatings.

*Aquaguard* is specifically designed for high performance areas where abrasion, chemical resistance, hardness and flexibility are required. These coatings contain UV absorbers and HALS ( Hindered Amine Light Stabilizers) providing excellent UV resistance for outdoor durability.

*Jack and Sue Drafa* own and operate a custom lab in Portland, OR. They are also professional photographers, specializing in underwater photography.

For further information regarding any of these products, contact these manufacturers:

*Accutech*  
(888) 490-4232

*Advanced Greig Laminators, Inc.*  
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[www.aglaminators.com](http://www.aglaminators.com)

*Banner America Products*  
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*Hunt Graphics Americas - Seal*  
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*Ilford Imaging*  
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