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User Statement Barbieri Spectro LFP (by Andrew Rodney)

Being a self described color geek; I'm always looking at new Color Management equipment and consider myself a Spectrophotometer junkie. My first Spectrophotometer dates back in early 1990's: a ColorTron, which measured one patch at a time. That unit literally took hours to measure what today is considered a small test target of patches. It's amazing how the technology has evolved since those early days. Recently I was assigned the task of building an ICC color profile for a new Epson transparent media for Epson's new 7880 and 9880 printers. Because this media is semi-translucent, a special Spectrophotometer is necessary. I've had to build such profiles in the past; it's not an easy task primarily due to the few hardware products that provide the capability to handle this kind of measurement. While I own a GretagMacbeth Spectrolino X/Y table in a version that supports transmissive measurements, one has to measure a color patch one at a time, just like the old ColorTron. Sorry, that's just too much work. Misread just one patch and you'll likely have an inferior quality profile. I also have an X-Rite DTP-41 UV/T, the T standing for a model that can measure transmissive media. Being a semi-automatic device, it is pretty fast and does average multiple measurements per patch but it still requires the user to feed the unit a row of patches, one at a time. Depending on the density of the transmissive media, it can fail to produce a good ICC profile.

I then became aware of a rather new and unique Spectrophotometer by an Italian company named BARBIERI electronic that has a auto Spectrophotometer, called Spectro LFP RT, designed to handle both reflective and transmissive measuring in a fully automate mode. The unit uses an X/Y/Z table that moves the chart under the Spectrophotometer head allowing for unattended measurements. When I contacted the company, I found out that the light source was quite robust and would have no difficulties measuring the rather opaque media I had to measure. In addition, the unit has the ability to measure incredibly thick media, up to 0.79in thick, thanks to the automatic adjustments of the measurement head. Another plus of the design is that I could alter the aperture size from 2mm to 6mm, in addition to adding additional filters such as UV to the head design. The ability to adjust an aperture would be very useful for those building ICC profiles for sign printing or those output devices that produce very large dot structures. The unit measures 22 x 17 x 6in and the build quality is astounding. This isn't like any Spectrophotometer I've ever used in the past, it's constructed almost entirely of metal and there's hardly any plastic to be found. I imagine the Barbieri Spectro LFP could run 24 hours a day, practically forever; it is built like a tank!

In order to measure the patches for my Epson profile, I had to output RGB color targets from the supplied host software that ships with the unit called Barbieri Profile-Xpert Gateway. The

software only runs under Windows and I'm a Mac user but I had no difficulty using the software on my Intel iMac with either Apple's BootCamp or Parallels Desktop for Mac software. In both cases, I used Windows Vista. Parallels was especially useful since I was able to copy and paste the resulting LAB data file from Profile-Xpert Gateway onto the Mac OS and build the profile in both ProfileMaker Pro and PROFILER under Mac OS X Leopard. The Barbieri Spectro LFP was connected via USB although there's the option for connection via serial port. The software could use a bit of work in a number of areas but it got the job done. Profile-Xpert Gateway has options that allowed me to measure multiple samples per patch although naturally this did slow down the entire measuring process. With a single measurement per patch, Barbieri claims a time of 10 minutes to measure 1248 patches. I used a slightly larger number of patches and would have to say these times specified appear accurate. I didn't time how long the unit took to sample three measurements per patch (total 1728) since once I loaded the target onto the Barbieri Spectro LFP using the supplied sheet holder, I could walk away and let the unit do all the work. Profile-Xpert Gateway comes with a number of reference files for RGB and CMYK targets and supports a number of 3rd party RIPs for profiling directly into the host software. I wanted to test RGB profiles for both ProfileMaker Pro and Monaco PROFILER but no reference targets were available for the later. Within a few days of contacting Barbieri about this, I had a new version sent to me which worked perfectly in measuring the 1728 patch target, saving out a LAB reference file that PROFILER was able to read. That's good tech support! Profiles from both products were excellent and when compared to measurements made from the DTP-41UV/T showed superior smoothness and shadow detail. The Barbieri Spectro LFP was an ideal solution for building these transmissive profiles. This build quality and measuring flexibility comes at a certain cost and is obviously a high-end product aimed at production labs, print shops or those that need a device that will see high usage in professional production environments. However, for those users who have a wide variety of materials to measure, especially thick media or different transmissive materials, I would highly recommend this product without hesitation. For those not requiring this wide variety of material support for measurement, such as photo studios and other printing environments, BARBIERI has another Spectrophotometer called Spectro Swing.

Thanks to Mr. Andrew Rodney for his consent to publish this statement.

February 2008

Wolfgang Passler
(Marketing&Sales Manager of BARBIERI electronic)

Andrew is owner of The Digital Dog, a digital imaging training and consulting business located in Santa, Fe New Mexico. Andrew is the author of "Color Management for Photographers, Hands on Techniques for Photoshop Users" published by Focal Press. Andrew is one of the principle partners of Pixel Genius LLC, a company that has created such products as PhotoKit and PhotoKit-Sharpener (www.pixelgenius.com/index.html). Andrew was named a "Top 40 Photoshop Expert" by Wacom Technologies. In 2007, Andrew was inducted into the NAPP Photoshop Hall of Fame. Andrew's web site can be found at www.digitaldog.net.