



Heidelberg Color Publishing Solutions' *LinoColor 6*, due to be released in June, will finally include full ColorSync and ICC profile support.

Calibration of devices to manufacturers' specifications is a prerequisite for successful color management, but even more important is the *characterization* of the specific device through custom profiling. Not very long ago, an investment in custom profiling software could run into the thousands of dollars. However ICC profile editing software for the desktop is now available at desktop prices. Color Partnership (www.colorpartnership.com) recently began shipping its *Profile•Editor* software for Macintosh which sells for

only \$245 (US). Other affordable color management packages can be found through companies such as X-Rite (www.xrite.com), Candela (www.candelacolor.com) Monaco Systems (www.monacosys.com) and Color Savvy Systems (www.colorsavvy.com), to name but a few.

In Scandinavia, some paper manufacturers now offer ICC profiles for their papers, a sure signal that ColorSync is beginning to work its way down the graphics food chain.

And very shortly Adobe will release *PressReady*, its new software designed for proofing on low cost desktop color printers using ColorSync.

Clearly there is momentum behind the open color management initiative among vendors. But how quickly will the market adapt to the new standard?

PUSHING THE PRINTABLE COLOR GAMUT TO THE MAX

Creating, preparing and proofing this issue's 8-color front cover was a test of skill and ingenuity for the GRAPHIC EXCHANGE team of digital artist Martin Murphy and prepress consultants Shane Steinman and Lerrick Starr. Here's how the job was produced:

Art. For this rendering, Martin first created a simple figure for his "Ice Queen" in *Poser*. This figure was taken into *Bryce* and used for position only to create the background drapery and parts of the chair detail. Major elements — chair, urns, arches, trunk and crown — were built in *Ray Dream Studio* where Martin also mapped textures created in *Fractal Painter* onto some of the urns. All the pieces were then assembled and rendered with final lighting in *Bryce*, saved as a PICT, and imported into *Painter*. There Martin painted the character's face, hair, makeup, gown and detailing, as well as doing final color adjustments. The final artwork was brought into *Photoshop* where he performed dodge and burn on the dress and added an extra detail layer for the metallic gold plate.

Prepress. Shane created the final six Hexachrome separations from the RGB image using Pantone *HexWrench*, with built-in compensation for Agfa CristalRaster stochastic screening specified. He also created two special stochastic plates: the first for the metallic plate (using a coarse 42 micron spot) and the second a graduated varnish plate (at a coarser 56 microns). The film was output by veteran ripper Lerrick at the Ernest Green & Son Tech Lab in Toronto on an Agfa Avantra 30E. This imagesetter is not normally designed to run CristalRaster but outputting stochastic screening for this project was made possible with the invaluable technical assistance of Agfa Canada's support staff.

PROVING THE POINT

Proofing and Printing. Needless to say, proofing was the most critical step in the process. Since Agfa provides a choice of three different CristalRaster compensation curves (light, medium and heavy), Lerrick generated three sets of film, using each compensation setup. Image Plus Graphics in Toronto produced the Cromalins using a Hexachrome color set of proofing materials and creating the gold and varnish plates manually. We settled on the medium version and went to press. Printing was done at Image Plus on a Heidelberg 8-color press, with many thanks to president David Smith for guiding the job through smoothly.

Summing Up. Although Hexachrome pulled more color out of our RGB image than CMYK would have, we were surprised that it didn't help to the extent we expected; blues which were out of CMYK gamut still didn't print, and we saw green-cyan tones move toward a purer cyan. CristalRaster added an impressive degree of extra detail, but we lost a lot of detail in the shadows and highlights (despite compensation for dot gain both in *HexWrench* and in the CristalRaster setup).