

Product: C84 Ink Jet Printer
By: Epson USA
MSRP: \$99.00
Street price: \$89.00 - limited time rebate makes it 79.00
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Review by

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DESCRIPTION (What's it do? What's it got?): Well, Epson has done it again. A four-color super fast ink jet printer that offers a stunning (although getting to be standard) 22 ppm black and 12 ppm color output speed at standard print settings. This time, it is quieter, more color accurate and sharper than ever. With a horizontal resolution of 5760 and acceptance of most standard papers, the C84 runs like a champ.

MIN. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: USB 1 or 2 /parallel port interface; Macintosh USB - Macintosh System 8.6 - 9.x, OS X 10.1 or later

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: The output is just what you hope it will be. While this printer is basically the same size as my beloved C82, the C84 is a cleaner look and feel with controls top mounted for easier access. Especially for those, like me, who keep their printer off to their right side. I ignored the CDR that came with it (as always) and went right to Epson's web site to download the latest drivers (although this is new item, I find this method most reliable for all devices).

WHAT I FOUND: For photos, this thing is incredible. The contrast was even and not hard; the colors were extremely accurate and saturated to my taste - right from iPhoto. Using Epson Premium Glossy Paper (which is great for nearly any IJP) makes a big difference and this was the first time I'd tried their sample 4X6 size. The black output is clean, clear, sharp and just fine for both everyday quality and looks excellent on even stationary cotton bonds. What really got me was the speed. For as fast as this printer is, it is not very noisy either.

LIKES : This is one of the first times I didn't find myself fumbling over attachments and accessories. It was very logically designed and, again, it is a whole lot of bang for the buck. I did not find one single media type, Illustrator image, Photoshop file, iPhoto print or anything else that just didn't look great printed on the C84. I love that each color is in its own cartridge and that makes it much less costly to add what you need. This ink works in the C64, C84 and CX6400 as well.

DISLIKES : Still no USB cable provided. It is really something when you can buy a great printer for 99 bucks, but you have to spend another 20 - 30 on a decent USB cable. The ink is fairly pricey, but worth every nickel. Remember that the printer manufacturers are making their money from the inks, not the hardware, but the quality is there. If you go third-party, go at your own risk. You can clog the jets (esp. tiny ones like the 3p output from this one) and have real problems that just aren't worth repairing. I recommend finding a place to buy the Epson brand inks online at a great price and stick with their brand. I recommend ProVantage.com which sells the 4-pack of color inks for under 30.00.

HOW DOES THIS PRODUCT COMPARE? : In this price range, you will be hard pressed to find anything its equal. The HP 5150 is larger and the output is just not as accurate on the color side; Canon's i860 offers slightly sharper black text with a very quiet performance, I expected better photo quality and the price is a nearly 50 dollars more.

RECOMMEND TO A FRIEND?: I would 100% recommend the C84 as the right combination of performance, price and overall value. Epson wins again...

TEST SYSTEM: Apple Titanium PowerBook G4 500 - 1Gb RAM - 10.3.2

FINAL THOUGHTS: Take the time to look around and find what you NEED for your output. If photos are your main focus, there are other options from a lot of companies.

OVERALL RATING: 4.5 out of 5 stars

For more information, visit: <http://www.epson.com/>

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