

SCANNER



Epson Perfection 4490 Scanner

AN AFFORDABLE SCANNER WITH EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO NEED TO SCAN FILMS AND PRINTS.

Epson's Perfection 4490 Photo scanner has many of the features of the Perfection 4990 Photo model, but a \$300 lower price tag. For photographers, the 4490 has a moving carriage transparency unit (TPU) plus holders for 35mm and medium format films. It also comes with Digital ICE and Digital ICE Lite dust- and scratch-removal technology, the first time these facilities are offered in a mid-priced scanner. (Digital ICE is accessible in the Home and Professional modes, while Digital ICE Lite is Professional mode only.)

Four buttons on the front panel make using the 4490 simple. Pressing Start opens the PC-based Epson Scan driver software, which offers three graded modes: Full Auto, Home and Professional. The PDF, Email and Copy buttons provide quick and easy ways to scan directly to specific applications, and Windows users can re-assign other applications to any button.

Designed for speed, the Perfection 4490's MatrixCCD scanning head is fitted with microlenses to increase light capture and ensure colour consistency. Even light dispersal is provided by the moving TPU, while a dedicated ASIC (Application Specific Integrated Circuit) processes data quickly. A blue-biased lamp is used to reduce the time taken to scan colour negatives and an infra-red LED detects dust and scratch marks so Digital ICE can apply corrections without softening or changing details in images. The 3.4 Dmax optical density provides significant improvements in capturing highlight and shadow detail over earlier scanners, allowing high-quality prints to be produced.

Like other Epson scanners, the Perfection 4490 Photo comes with Epson's versatile Creativity Suite, which includes File-Manager software for viewing thumbnails and categorising and editing images. The driver has been enhanced to support a draft mode for high speed scanning. Users can also scan up to 99 files in a batch and apply Unsharp Masking to scanned images. Other bundled software includes Adobe Photoshop Elements 3.0, Presto BizCard 4 and ABBYY FineReader

Sprint 6 (Windows)/Sprint 5 (Mac). An optional Automatic Document Feeder, with a 30 sheet capacity, is also available.

Epson claims the 4490 Photo can scan an A4 colour print at 300dpi in 18 seconds or a 35mm film frame at 600dpi in 34-35 seconds. Our tests produced the following scan times:

- One A4 colour print at 300 dpi for same size output using Epson Scan in Home mode. Preview – 12 sec; scan – 20 sec. Image size: 20.8MB; JPEG file size 9.3MB
- One 10 x 15cm print at same size at 300dpi using Epson Scan in Full Auto mode – 30 sec. Scanning to A4 size using Professional mode: Preview – 7sec; scan – 31 sec. Image size: 24.9MB; JPEG file size 8.9MB.
- One strip of 4 unmounted 35mm reversal images at 4800dpi in Professional mode. Preview and display of thumbnail images: 1 min, 6 sec; scan – 2 min, 38 sec per image file. Image size: 81MB; JPEG file size 36MB.
- One 35mm colour negative film frame at 300dpi for A4 output with unsharp mask, grain reduction and colour restoration: 1 min, 16 sec. Image size: 24.8MB; JPEG file size 3.9MB.

The film holders were simple to use and it was as easy to load strips of film as it was to insert mounted transparencies. The Professional mode in the driver software provides full control over image colour, contrast and tonal balance, allowing users to fine-tune images to correct deficiencies in original shots. Scans on stippled paper were handled well, although dimpling could be seen with enlargement to 100%. However, the dimples were small and even and provided no more interference in image smoothness than film grain.

In use, we found the Perfection 4490 Photo delivered sharp, colour accurate scans from both print and film images and was capable of reproducing the full tonal range of the originals. Fast scanning speeds make it almost



as efficient for scanning batches of negatives or transparencies as higher-priced scanners, enhancing its value for photographers with archives of images on film. As a general-purpose scanner, the Perfection 4490 Photo is a capable and easy-to-use family and home office scanner and the bundled software provides a full range of applications for accomplishing most scanning tasks. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

SCANNING HEAD:	6-line alternated colour CCD with On-Chip Microlens
OPTICAL RESOLUTION:	4800 x 9600dpi with Micro Step Drive
OPTICAL DENSITY:	3.4 Dmax
OUTPUT RESOLUTION:	50-12,800dpi
MAX. BIT DEPTH:	16-bit greyscale, 48-bit colour
INTERFACE:	USB 2.0
POWER CONSUMPTION:	20W (operating); 13.5W (stand-by mode); 3.8W (sleep mode)
DIMENSIONS (WXDXH):	272 x 475 x 113mm
WEIGHT:	4.0Kg
RRP:	\$599

DISTRIBUTOR:
Epson Australia; 1300 131 928;
www.epson.com.au.