Previews of FLAAR Reports
by Nicholas Hellmuth
on
Solvent Inkjet Printers

ColorSpan 72SI solvent ink printer as seen by Nicholas Hellmuth at ISA trade show, 2005

POPULAR NEW PRINTERS

Evaluation of the ColorSpan DisplayMaker 72sTrue-Solvent Ink Printer, with comments on the new Gator 72SI

Sign shops face a tough decision: buy a $14,000 eco-solvent or a $54,000 true solvent printer. But if a $14,000, or wider $30,000 "pseudo-solvent" printer results in your clients rejecting the work after the signs dissolve or fall off the vinyl or chip off from abrasion, your $14K or $30,000 printer becomes a liability. No one printer is perfect, but you can protect yourself by knowledge. No, we can't save you from making the wrong decision, and we absolutely can't guarantee that one ink over another will insure your survival, but you will get more facts, more help, and become a more intelligent sign shop owner or operator if you acquire the FLAAR Reports.

Updated July 2005

FLAAR Reports

ColorSpan DisplayMaker 72s With comments on the Gator, 72SI

ColorSpan 72S and ColorSpan 72SR (Hybrid Flatbed)
Site-Visit Case Study

A sign shop near our university has two ColorSpan Gators: the 72S and the 72SR. We visited them for hours, took notes, took photographs, and document what it is really like to own a ColorSpan printer.

New, July 2005.

FLAAR Reports

ColorSpan 72S and ColorSpan 72SR (Hybrid Flatbed)

Site-Visit Case Study

Seiko ColorPainter 64S, Site-Visit Case Study

This is the first independent in-situ evaluation of how a Seiko solvent ink printer actually functions in a sign shop (banners, POP, general outdoor signage, vehicle wrap, signs as small as page-size up to as large as billboard size).

New, July 2005.

Nicholas Hellmuth Evaluates the Seiko ColorPainter 64S
With comments on the Oce CS6060

FLAAR offers two separate analyses: the site-visit case study of a sign shop, and the present evaluation: an independent scrutiny of the specifications, features (and lack of features?), and general performance characteristics.

Updated July 2005

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MORE SITE-VISIT CASE STUDIES, SOLVENT-INK PRINTERS

Gandinnovations JETi 3300: Site-Visit Case Study Together with Comprehensive Solvent Ink Printer Evaluation

Nicholas Hellmuth first undertook a detailed evaluation of the printer on his own. Then he visited a print shop near the university that has this JETi solvent ink printer.

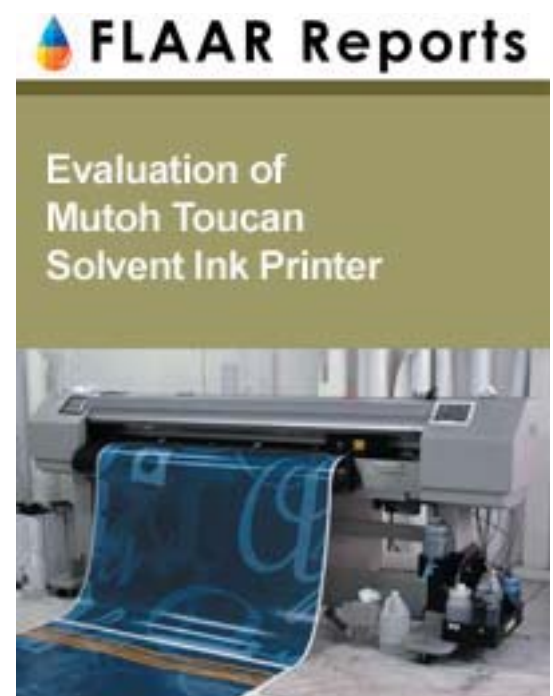Where else can you obtain this class of independent documentation?

New July 2005

FLAAR Reports

Gandinnovations
Jeti 3300
Site-Visit Case Study

Mutoh Toucan: Evaluation of this Solvent Ink Printer at a sign-printing company, Site-Visit Case Study

The sign shop owner that we interviewed has two Mutoh Toucans, but they bought the second one before they found out the quirks of the first one. A very informative look directly at actual use of a Mutoh Toucan solvent ink printer.

Updated July 2005

FLAAR Reports

Evaluation of
Mutoh Toucan
Solvent Ink Printer

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO SOLVENT INK PRINTERS

Solvent ink printers for outdoor signs without lamination

Grand format printers, billboard printers and other appropriate printers (these printers cost about $30,000 up to $450,000). Plus, how you can use a normal $15,000 inkjet printer also to do outdoor jobs, albeit with lamination (2 year outdoor warranty).
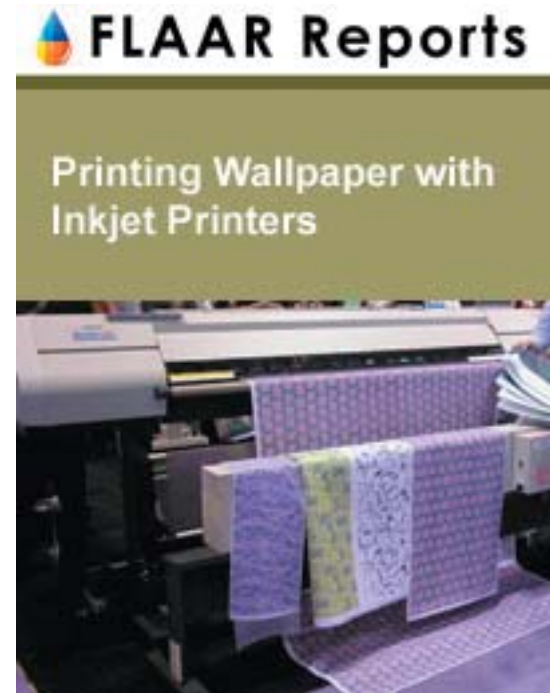

Bus Wrap, Fleet Graphics, & Building Wrap

Shows examples of these applications for solvent ink printers.
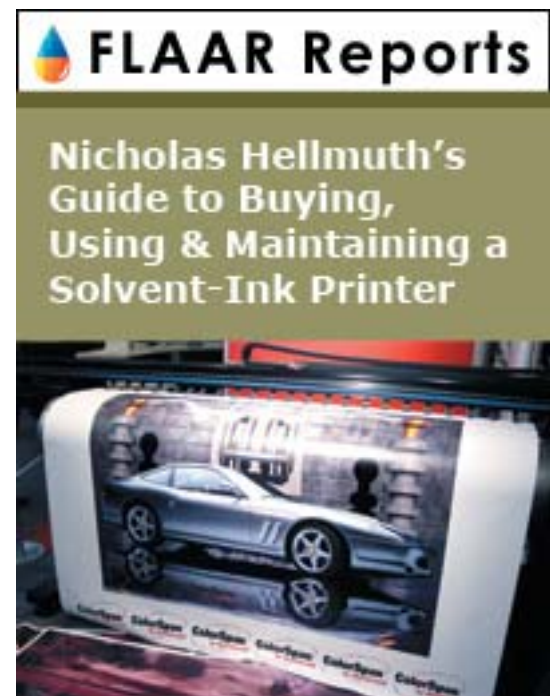
FLAAR Fast Facts

Printing Wallpaper

large format printers for doing custom wallpaper.
FLAAR Fast Facts.

Nicholas Hellmuth's Helpful Guide to Buying, Using & Maintaining a Solvent-Ink Printer: FAQs & Secrets:
Questions to ask about Solvent Ink Printers before you buy one.

Armed with these FAQs you have a better chance of not getting screwed by false and misleading ads, hype, and all the utter nonsense. Actually honest printer manufacturers do exist. But sure helps to have a guidebook of advertising claims so you can become a savvy buyer.
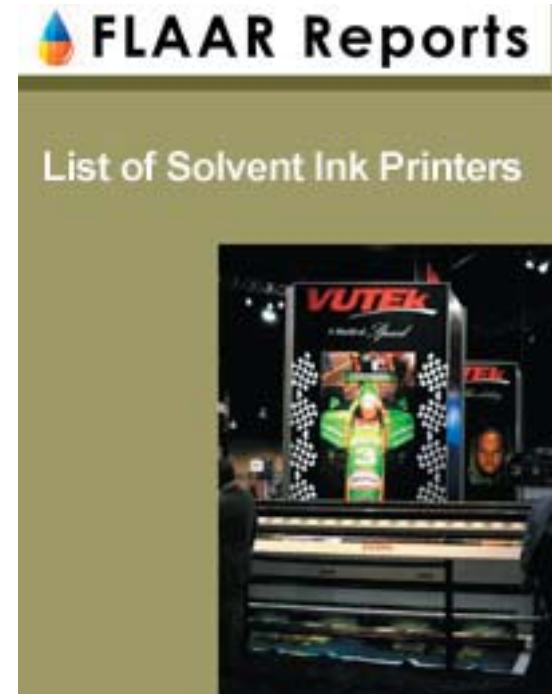
FLAAR is the only consumer advocate available for wide format printers. We are university based professors and print shop managers who utilize our research to assist the general public, which is, after all, part of the mission of an educational institution.

Updated July 2005.

Comprehensive Annotated List of Solvent Ink Printers.

Includes all the solvent ink printers from the USA and Europe, in addition to Vutek, Mimaki, Mutoh, Arizona, etc. Annotated. Includes warnings about those solvent ink printers about which people complain the most. So if you are even thinking of buying a solvent ink printer, it is surely worth investing to obtain all these FLAAR Fast Facts
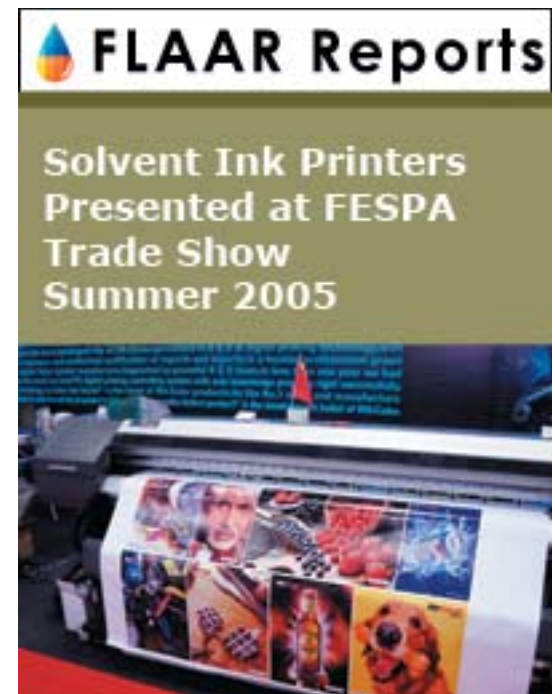
Updated July 2005.

Solvent Ink Printers Presented at FESPA Trade Show Summer 2005

Our other annotated descriptions of solvent ink printers list as many models as we can find from every year that we know about. But this new list features only solvent ink printers that are new or current.

New, August 2005

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SOLVENT PRINTERS FROM CHINA, KOREA AND TAIWAN

Solvent Ink Printers from Korea

What are the differences between solvent Ink printers from Korea and solvent ink printers from China or Taiwan?

And how do Korean printers differ from those of Japan (Mimaki, Mutoh, and Roland?)

Is it recommended to even consider a Chinese Solvent Ink Printer?

There is a difference between a low-cost printer and a cheap printer. Which one do you prefer? One industry expert said to Nicholas, "you really tell it like it is with Chinese printers." (actually some of them are now, in 2005, quite good).

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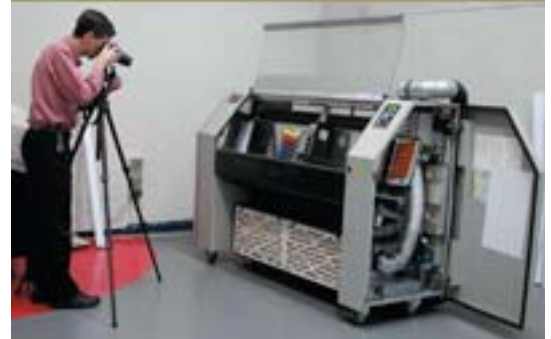
SITE VISIT, OLDER PRINTERS

Evaluation of RasterGraphics-Oce Arizona 90 and Arizona 180 Solvent Ink Printers, Site-Visit Case Study

In their day, Arizona solvent ink printers were sought after worldwide. Today, the competing solvent ink printers from Taiwan, Korea, and Mainland China (not to mention excellent solvent ink printers from Japan such as Mimaki JV3), make the choice of an Arizona a challenge. If you are thinking of any Oce (or Arizona) model, new or used, might want to read tips from a sign shop which actually already owns one.

June 2003

Evaluation of a Solvent Ink Printer; Site-Visit Case Study of DGI Rex 62″

Exactly what you would expect from Nicholas Hellmuth. He tracked down a DGI Rex in its natural habitat, took a team from the university to inspect it, interrogated the shop owner and printer operator, and came back with probably the world's first totally independent report of what the Rex is actually like in operation in a sign shop.

June 2003.

Evaluation of two DGI Rex Solvent Ink Printers. Site-Visit Case Study

Actually we learned there were 46 DGI Rex solvent ink printers within a one hour drive of our university. So we found a second company with this brand, indeed they had two of them, side by side. So Hellmuth and his lab manager from the university went to visit this print shop. They also had a ColorSpan and a Roland, so was an informative visit to compare all these (we have other publications in other FLAAR Series on those printers).

August 2003.

Arizona (a brand of printer):

A report kindly sent by an energetic end user. This print shop uses their printer daily and were kind enough to send notes on what it was like to have an Arizona solvent ink printer. For example, how do you handle backlit with a solvent ink printer.

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NEW FLATBED SOLVENT INK PRINTERS

Annotated List of Flatbed Inkjet Printers Using Solvent Inks:
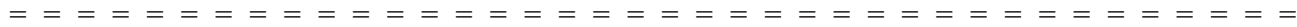*Printing Directly on Thick and/or Rigid Materials (up to several inches thick)*

New, July 2005

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FLAAR Reports

Flatbed Inkjet Printers That are small enough to be Portable

= =

If you are trying to decide between a
- Seiko ColorPainter
- ColorSpan Gator, 72S or 72SI
- Mutoh Toucan,
- Mutoh Falcon Outdoor (Rockhopper in Europe),
- RasterGraphics (Oce) Arizona Digital Screen Press,
- Roland SolJet,
- Roland SolventJet,
- Lyson Tiara Opal,
- Tiara Sapphire,
- Mimaki JV3, Infiniti,
- DGI VistaJet,
- DGI Rex
- Infiniti

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these report Series are a good investment.

If you initially were looking at a
- Nur,
- Vutek,
- or Scitex-Vision,

and are now trying to make a decision about the lower priced Arizona, Mutoh, Mimaki, or Rex, then also these reports are ideal for background information. FLAAR offers independent reports which you will not find in any trade magazine.

If you seek either a grand format or 54″ through 90″ solvent ink printer, and are tempted by the low priced printers from Mainland China, Taiwan, or Korea, you had better read Nicholas's reviews.

If you order any complete Series you get one Bonus Report free. A series is here defined as any 8 reports within the same subject (so, any 8 reports on solvent-ink).

If you buy any two Series you get two bonus reports free. Two series is here defined as any 8 reports in one subject and another 8 reports minimum in another thematic series (say UV or Eco-solvent).

Simply send an e-mail to FLAARtest@aol.com stating that we owe you such-and-such Bonus Reports because you already purchased such-and-such Series. If you are eligible, we will immediately send you whichever 1 or 2 free Bonus Reports that you ask for.

Combo photo-giclee Set counts as two series. Enterprise Set counts as three series.

If you ordered three series you get three bonus reports free.

If you order four series you get four bonus reports free.

If you order five FLAAR Report Series you get all bonus reports

If you order four or more Series, you can consult directly with Dr Hellmuth by telephone. See the information on consulting on any FLAAR web site.

FLAAR will provide you with Nicholas's telephone number and suggested times he is available. You can fax or e-mail your questions in advance if you wish. You then get 30 minutes consultation via telephone. Or you can visit in person in Ohio or when Dr Hellmuth is at the other university in Guatemala. If easier for you, you can meet with Nicholas at a trade show; we can provide his cell phone so you know how to contact him at ISA, PMA, SGIA, Graphics of the Americas, Print '05, GraphExpo, PhotoPlus, Art / Décor Expo (New York), Photokina, IPEX, etc.

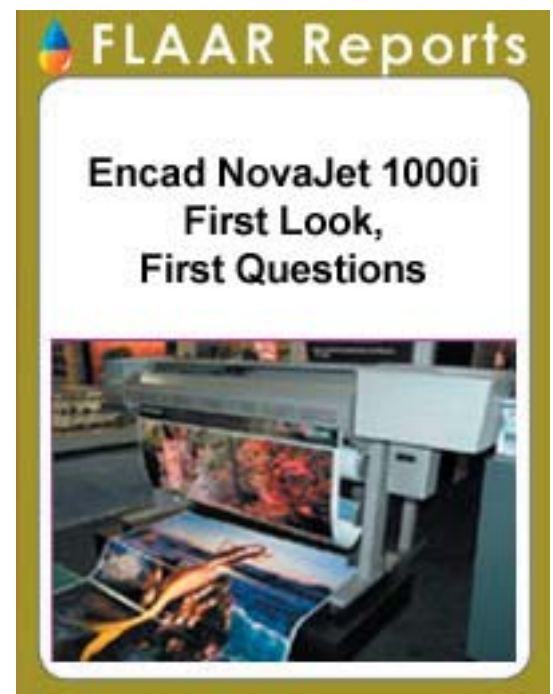If you wish additional hours, you can pre-pay at the rate of $300 per hour for consulting.

Some Bonus Reports are also included in pertinent Series. In that case they do not use up your quota of still more Bonus Reports from the rest of the Bonus list.

Titles of The Bonus Reports

Encad NovaJet 1000i, First Look, First Questions

We first saw the Encad NovaJet 1000i over a several day period at PMA trade show. Two machines were present in the Kodak booth. The purpose of this brief commentary is to ask the key questions to really find out the status of this brand new printer. This FLAAR Report is the only independent outside commentary available. All other stuff on the Internet is PR releases from Kodak Inc or from Encad Inc. If you wish to learn how to evaluate a printer yourself, by evaluating the ad claims, this report may enlighten you.

New March 2004. Updated September 2004.

FLAAR Reports

Encad NovaJet 1000i
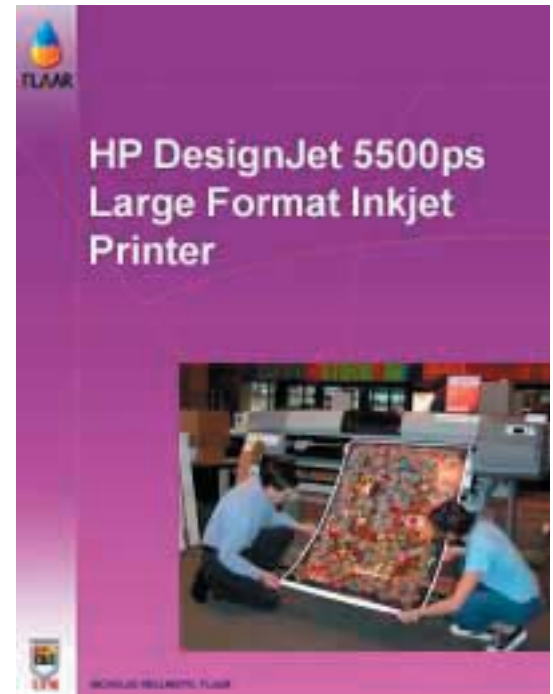First Look,
First Questions

Wide Format Inkjet Printers at ISA Trade Show 2005

Lots of new printers, mild-solvent, lite-solvent, eco-solvent, UV-curable flatbeds, white ink, dye sublimation systems, and a ton of imports from Korea, mainland China. We report which of these are premature, which are worth considering. FLAAR had three editors on the floor of ISA, so we have lots of photos, facts, and commentary.

Evaluation of Setup and Installation of the HP DesignJet 5500ps

Comprehensive report by Tim Brown, BGSU+FLAAR on the recent arrival of the HP 5500ps.

New, Sept. 2003.

HP DesignJet 5500ps Large Format Inkjet Printer

Canon W7250 Large Format Printer Setup Notes

A detailed explanation of what it is like to receive this dye-based ink 24″ Canon printer into your home or company. Shows that you too could unpack and set up this printer on your own.

FLAAR Reports

Canon W7250 Large Format Printer Setup Notes

Evaluation of the CANON imagePROGRAF W7250 24" Large Format Printer

This printer can be used for proofs, comps, graphic design, CAD, GIS, and does outstanding color with any short term photographic display or signage.
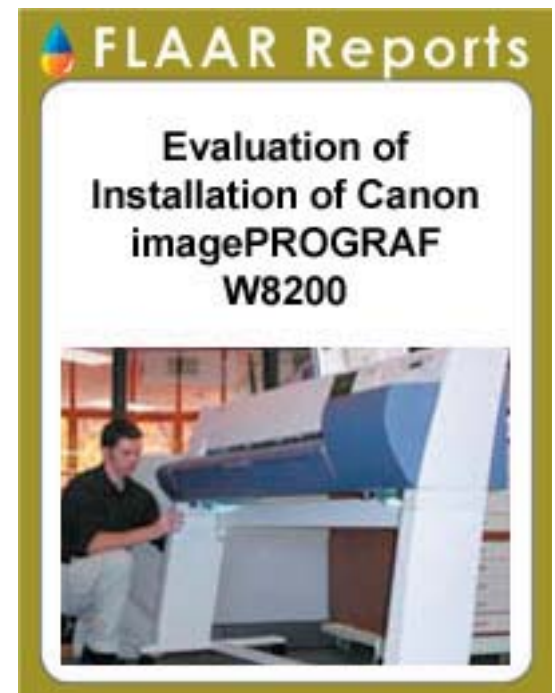
Note that each full-scale evaluation has two parts: part 1 is set-up and installation; part 2 is usage, practicality, suitability, and comparisons with other printers.

Evaluation of Canon W7250 24" Six Color Large Format Printer

Canon W8200 Setup and Installation

Complete discussion of what you can expect if you order a pigmented ink 44" Canon printer, whether for signs, giclee, photography, or in-house corporate use. This FLAAR Report covers the initial reality of what it's like to have these printers actually available.

The evaluation of each printer after installation is a separate report in the appropriate Series or Bonus Reports.

Evaluation of Installation of Canon imagePROGRAF W8200

Canon imagePROGRAF W8200

This is Canon's first pigmented ink wide format printer. It only became available in the USA in October, and FLAAR already has a report available on it. The printhead technology is phenomenal. This printer is appropriate for signage, photos, giclee and fine art: it is multi-talented and fast, as well as easy to use.

New, January 2004.

Determining Input Needs: Large Format Printing

This is a comprehensive discussion of how many pixels and what dpi each class of wide format printer actually needs. This is a PDF version of a published magazine article by Nicholas Hellmuth.

FLAAR Reports

Printing on Fabrics

Direct Digital Printing on Fabrics with Wide Format Inkjets

An easy to read introduction to wide format printing on inkjet textiles such as silk, polyester, nylon, cotton and canvas.

Large Format Printing: Everything your Inkjet Printer can do

This is a PDF version of an article by Nicholas Hellmuth published in a magazine.

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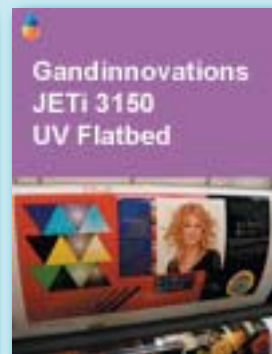
www.wide-format-printers.net

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Inca Columbia 220

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UV 200/600
With comments on
the Vutek PressVu
UV 180/600

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DuPont
ChromaPrint 22UV

Gandinnovations
JETi 3150
UV Flatbed

Zund 250-Combi

Miscellaneous UV Evaluations

ColorSpan 72UVR

Raster Printers Inc,
RP-720 UV

FLAAR Reports
Agfa Anapurna 100
Mutoh Cobra 100

Zünd UVjet
215-Plus

What about Roland,
and Mutoh?
Why no UV-curable
Ink Flatbed Printers?