

Ultra Pro Cutter

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I think Rick's article on cutters was much needed, and a very good job. Personally, I went with an UltraPro T 24" Plotter/Cutter from signwarehouse.com. I chose it for several reasons. I'll go ahead and list them in case it helps someone with choosing cutters:



These are the features that came standard on my cutter:

- * It is a 24" cutter, accepting a maximum material width of 29" (this was perfect for me, although it comes sizes up to 52" wide)
- * It includes the stand, (some don't come with stands) as well as a fully digital control, and is made very, very well.
- * It accepts material up to 50 mil thick (I do rock, and although I don't need anything that heavy, it gave me confidence that cutting the heavier mil material would be easy)
- * The downforce goes from 10 to 500 grams (many don't start that light or go that heavy - you never know what you need - it will cut reflective film too, which is hard to cut from what I understand)
- * The cutting speed is 60 ips max...(many don't cut over 42 - not that you need it, but if it's standard, why not)
- * It has tangential cutting (smooth turns and corners for crispness - it lifts the blade up when turning corners so that it doesn't tear them - important to me since I do a lot of type).
- * It has a highly programmable control - you can customize your settings the way you want them. You can also control the cutter specifications from your computer or the display on the cutter.

- * It has a 4mb buffer (most cutters normally come with 2mb - this means that you can send it several jobs at one time and it stores them in memory until it's thru cutting the first - then works on the rest)
- * It stops the cutter if you should accidentally run out of material, which saves your blades and saves the cutter from damage.
- * Guaranteed 50' tracking (so far I've only had to cut about 12 feet, but it stayed right on track)
- * It connects using either a serial port or a parallel port. Also, the 'key' can be USB
- * Comes with a 3 year warranty...and so far, great customer service.
- * It works with a Mac or a PC
- * It also plots - obviously - but I have not used that feature yet
- * It uses most of the same accessories as fit on Roland cutters; i.e., blades, plotting pens, etc.
- * The cutter comes with a very extensive master signmaking software program that would be very expensive to purchase separately, as you have to do with most other cutters. It's very similar to the software that Tom Eddleman uses with his Roland, because I've called him for advice on using certain features on mine, and our respective windows are nearly identical. You can import from just about anything...it accepts Illustrator, Corel, Signwizard, CASmate, Inspire and a few others that I haven't heard of before. It works with any scanner, as well.

I know there are hundreds of things this cutter (the software, I should say) will do that I just haven't learned yet. I spent months looking at the most popular cutters before buying this one. I went from website to website; poured over features and bugged salespeople to death asking question after question - and in the beginning I didn't even know what I was comparing with what. I had no clue what buffers did, or what downforce meant, etc. I compared the features from Roland, Mutoh, ANAgraph, Graphtec and Summa Cutters - and probably some others. Many things affected my decision - price obviously being one. All of my looking told me that getting what I got on the Ultra Pro T for the price was an incredible deal. And they package this cutter so well - I've never received anything so strongly supported and well packed before.

Anyway - I don't know if any of this will help anyone, but I figured it was time to share since you've started such a great page on cutters....I'm still learning how to use it. I'm a little graphically challenged with some of the features - but I'm plugging along. It seems like every time I use it I learn something else. Here are some of the features of the VE LXi Master Software that comes with it. This is right off the website.

Flexi-SIGN Compatible
Cut and Paste Options
Vinyl Color Library
32-bit Code for Faster Operations
Animated Previews
Editable Guidelines and Grids
Easy to Use Measuring Tool
Unlimited Undos and Redos
Unlimited Scaling
Complete Object Layering Control
Node Edit / Duplicate
Mirror Imaging / Basic Borders
Multiple Documents Interface
Online Help / Case Conversion

Pen Fills for Solid Lettering
Automatic Color Separations for Cutting
Interactive Cutter Control
Simultaneous Cutting and Designing
Power Weed
Automatic Registration Marks for Cutting
Automatic Horizontal and Vertical Tiling
Complete Text and Graphic Layout
Uses TrueType or Type 1 Fonts
Basic Library of 200 High-Quality Fonts
Auto Font Import
51+ Import/Export filters (EPS, DXF, etc.)
Rotate Objects
Drawing Tools / Shapes: Circles & Rectangles

Design Central

Basic Library of 400 High-Quality Fonts
Autotracing (B &W / Greyscale)
Scanning (Direct B & W / Greyscale)
Weld: Single Color Welding
Fit Text on a Path or Arc
Drawing Tools
Color Mixer
Automatic Text Kerning
Inline / Outline / Contour
Print to Printer for Proofs

Step and Repeat Functions
Shadow / Drop with Relief
Step and Repeat
Change Profile - Corel - Adobe
Alignment Tools
Stroke Editor
Import B&W / Greyscale / TIFF, PICT, PCX
Edit Templates
Object Spacing

Hope that this helps someone. Pam