

# Middleton Printing

## Transitions from Flexographic to Digital Printing with Epson<sup>®</sup> SurePress<sup>®</sup> L-4033AW

### Unique and Elegant Labels for BLiS Blast Hot Pepper Sauce Made with Epson SurePress Digital Label Press

Bob Middleton started Middleton Printing in 1960 with the simple goal of serving his customers with honesty, hard work and quality while embracing new technology. When Bob's son, Steve, purchased the company in 2003, he refocused and retooled Middleton Printing to exclusively serve the label, sticker and decal markets. Today the growing, family-owned label printing business is continuing that tradition and has expanded to serve manufacturing, publishing, retail, political and food industries. With this expansion, Steve Middleton saw the need to move towards more modern printing technology — digital inkjet label production.

#### Retooling: The Future of Digital Printing

Sticking to Middleton Printing's roots, Steve Middleton sought digital printing technology from a company that would also offer commitment, value and quality. When he discovered the Epson SurePress L-4033AW at Labelexpo Americas in 2012, he saw a potential match. "The SurePress seemed like the right technology to shift most of our flexographic production to digital," said Middleton.

After doing more research, looking at competitors and comparing print samples, Middleton was convinced that Epson and the SurePress were the right fit for Middleton Printing. "When looking at the history and quality of Epson, I saw that as an international corporation, they were committed to the market and its customers. What set the SurePress apart from competitors was its reasonable price, reliable performance and world-class quality. It truly was a positive experience when the actual use of the digital press exceeded my expectations."

#### Higher Performance

Since installing the SurePress L-4033AW in May 2013, Middleton Printing has printed on a multitude of substrates for its clients, including vinyl, polyester, foil and mylar, all without the need for special pre-treatments. Middleton expressed, "It truly is a hands-off machine. Once you set up a job to run, you can walk away, do other things and be more productive. Additionally, the digital workflow and the quality of the SurePress has definitely saved us time and empowered us to produce our labels with consistent quality and better ink durability than flexographic." Middleton also praised Epson's support after his installation, referring to it as "second to none."



Steve Middleton and his SurePress

## Satisfied Clients — BLiS Blast Hot Pepper Sauce

“Despite being a small company, the SurePress L-4033AW has allowed us to expand our markets while saving labor time,” said Middleton. Among those markets is gourmet food producer, BLiS. Their Blast Hot Pepper Sauce, which boasts a unique aging and flavor infusing process, deserved a unique and elegant label. “The SurePress fits in well here in West Michigan, where quality, entrepreneurship and hard work are valued. The SurePress proved its strength by being able to print on what is traditionally used as a wine label. Textured substrates, such as Estate 9 uncoated stock, are difficult for other digital companies to produce. Overall, BLiS loves the image quality produced by the SurePress.”



Like Middleton Printing, BLiS focuses on the quality of its product, and that can be seen in not only their labels, but the patient process it takes to make its hot pepper sauce. To make its unique blend, BLiS first ages its BLiS Maple Syrup in oak whiskey barrels for a year. Those barrels are then brought to West Michigan microbrewery, Founders Brewing, where a special Kentucky Breakfast Stout gets added, and then the barrels are transferred to gypsum mines to age for a year. After that year, BLiS adds a secret blend of three premium chilies — chipotle, arbol and cayenne — to the barrel and ages it for another year. This three-year labor of love process results in a hot pepper sauce with subtle flavors enhanced by the imperial stout beer.

“The creation of our BLiS Blast Hot Pepper Sauce is a time-intensive process that helps to make a truly unique product,” said Steve Stallard, owner of BLiS. “We looked for a label that would help to illustrate the quality and unparalleled taste of our hot sauce. Middleton Printing has helped us to do just that with the Epson SurePress digital label press.”



Steve Stallard, owner BLiS

## Results

Middleton Printing continues to deliver quantities of one to millions of labels for everyone from small businesses to international corporations. “From my perspective, the future is inkjet, the future is digital. As a small company, we successfully made the transition — probably 70 percent of our flexographic jobs are now run on the Epson SurePress. As we move forward with digital technology, we also want our clients to see that great quality in their labels.” With continued growth of such a diverse clientele, Middleton Printing can continue offering world-class quality on a range of substrates with the SurePress.

“To sum it all up, if you are looking for a digital label press that can print world-class quality labels, with support second to none and at a price that you can actually experience profitability, then I highly recommend you rethink productivity and take a serious look at the Epson SurePress.”