

PRIMERA

Bravo SE Disc Publisher

By Gino Robair

Whether destined for demo use or concert sales, printed CD-Rs and DVD-Rs are far more impressive than off-the-shelf media with a paper label. However, color disc duplicator/printers are typically beyond the budget of individual artists. With the release of the Bravo SE Disc Publisher (\$1,495), Primera now offers a CD/DVD duplicator/printer that is priced for musicians yet retains many of the pro-level features of the company's more expensive Bravo Disc Publisher (see the review in the February 2004 issue, available at www.emusician.com).

The Bravo SE includes a 4,800 dpi ink-jet color printer and a Pioneer DVR-111 drive, which burns CD-Rs at up to 40x speed and DVD±Rs at 16x speed (or 8x for dual-layer media). Like the Bravo, the Bravo SE uses a robotic arm to completely automate the process of duplicating and printing. One of the biggest differences between the two units is that the Bravo SE has a lower capacity—20 discs—which I doubt will be a problem for most artists. (The Bravo can do 50 discs at a time.) I don't mind reloading the disc tray more often if it saves me \$1,200.

The other important differences are that the Bravo SE uses a single 3-color

ink cartridge rather than dedicated color and black cartridges, and it doesn't have a networking option, which would probably be of little interest to the personal-studio owner. In addition, the Bravo SE lacks a design application for Mac users, although it does give you EPS disc templates. Windows users get SureThing CD Labeler Primera Edition for editing graphics. The unit comes with PTPublisher SE (Win) and CharisMac Discribe 5.3.19 (Mac) for burning the discs.

The Bravo SE is a USB 2.0 peripheral that requires at least a Mac G4 or Pentium III with a 700 MHz processor. I tested the device with my 1.33 GHz Mac G4 laptop running Mac OS X 10.4.8.

Burn, Bravo, Burn

The steps for getting the Bravo SE up and running are like those for any other printer and are outlined in the Quick Start guide: install the driver from the CD-ROM, plug in the power supply, load the blank media, connect the printer to your computer and select it onscreen, install the ink cartridge, and perform a cartridge-alignment routine (which, in this case, requires you to use up a blank disc, and two blanks are included). Once the printer is set up and your songs and art file are ready, creating discs is a snap.

The Bravo SE can burn data and audio discs from scratch or copy a source CD or DVD. Novices will appreciate the included software's simple drag-and-drop interface for creating data and audio discs. For example, if you drag an MP3 file into the window when using Discribe, the program will create an AIFF version of the file so your disc is Red Book compatible. It also lets you set the gaps between songs, from 0 to 9 seconds in length. Experienced CD creators will

appreciate the Bravo SE's well-written manual, which guides you through the tweakier aspects of the unit.

The files are burned to disc before the image is printed, and both processes operate at the same time when you're creating multiple discs. The combined printing and duplicating time for a full-length CD with 4-color graphics was less than six minutes in my tests. The finished discs drop into a tray in the middle of the printer, and the ink dries before the next disc is completed. Out of the dozens of discs duplicated during the review period, I didn't get a single reject.

On the Media

Primera's own line of blank media gave me the best results during the review. I highly recommend the TuffCoat discs with WaterShield, which have a glossy finish and are smear and water resistant. Spools of 50 discs list for \$34.95—a reasonable price.

I was particularly interested to find out if the printing would hold up after being subjected to the CD player in my car, which accepts discs through a felt-covered slot. The discs still look and sound great after several weeks of abuse.

Lookin' Good

One of the things I appreciated most about the Bravo SE was how easy it was to use when creating informal demos, yet how many features were available when I wanted to adjust the quality of an important project. If custom discs are part of your business and high-quality presentation is essential, the Bravo SE is a no-brainer when it comes to price and performance. **EM**

Value (1 through 5): 5

Primera Technology, Inc.
www.primera.com



The Bravo SE from Primera is a high-quality duplicator and 4-color printer with a 20-disc capacity. It supports CD and DVD media.

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