

Canon CanoScan 8600F scanner

Can Canon can with its new scanner?

by Doug Harman published on 14 March 2007

Canon's CanoScan 8600F is an attractive A4 scanner with built-in Film Adapter Unit, erm ... film scanning hood. The silver liveried scanner has a black strip across the top plate, a top plate that houses the FAU and seven EX Buttons, providing fast, direct scanning to email, quick "scan to" PDF creation, copying and photo or film scanning.

Adobe Photoshop Elements 4 software is included (a superb image editing package and there's the excellent LaserSoft package SilverFast SE to play with too) a neat and powerful stand-alone scanning package also available via the TWAIN menu in software such as Photoshop. There's also ArcSoft PhotoStudio, ScanSoft OmniPage SE and Presto! PageManager.

Multiple scans can be done quickly and easily, the scanner is supplied with film scanning holders for four mounted, 35mm slides; 12 unmounted negatives or slides and you get a film guide for up to four frames of 120-medium format slides or negs as well.

Interpolated resolution offers a top whack of 19,200 x 19,200ppi scans but the massive file sizes - and the fact you don't actually create that much extra detail - and the dramatically extend scan times make it an option only for those who require very large/high resolution scans or huge enlargements.

Scanning is fast but this depends on the original's size and the scan resolution you're using and whether or not you have applied FARE processing. FARE utilises a second scan pass using infra red light to accurately locate and identify dust, scratches and anything not part of the actual film grain. Special processing algorithms then are applied as the scan is processed to remove defects and help to restore faded colour.



...cont.

One down side is the greater amount of FARE processing used, the longer the scan time extends. In fact, my three minute scans of 35mm framed slides at 2400ppi and 100% using FARE Level 3 at medium extended the total processing time to about 5-minutes. However, FARE worked really well.

Looking at the split screen-style scan provided (yes, it's a very young "me" and a neighbours daughter on my dad's old motorbike) with the test, the left half of the scan has no FARE applied to it and you can see how colour is improved and grain is reduced, dust suppressed and all without reducing fine detail.

Overall, scans are fast (though that depends somewhat on the PC system you're using as well of course) and colour is accurate. The 16bit per colour (48bit total input/output) is slightly misleading because as soon as the images are output to a printer or even brought into your editing software, images will be down sampled to the "normal" 8bit colour. However, as a start point, it does provide more initial colour data to start with and most professional level image editing packages such as Photoshop can handle 16-bit images.

VERDICT

Canon's CanoScan 8600F produces excellent scans at a fair old clip until the application of lots of the FARE processing is applied, when things slow noticeably. But the results more than make up for any wait. This is a good scanner and one I can easily recommend.

At a glance

What is it?

A4 CCD scanner with film scanning hood for 35mm slides and negs

Good

Ease of use, optical resolution, FARE Level 3 processing, great scans, and software package

Bad

Slow on higher resolution scans that include the full FARE processing

Verdict

The CanoScan 8600F is a fast A4 scanner with built-in Film Adapter Unit (FAU) that can provide pro quality scans quickly and easily. An excellent bundled software package makes it an even more attractive proposition

Price £149

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10