



## Professional photographers choose premium-quality photo albums printed on Bels Albums' digital press bringing 45 percent revenue growth

Bels Albums, of Valencia in Spain, offers photo processing, printing and albums to professional photographers. Established in 2009, originally as a traditional photo laboratory, Bels Albums' 7-color digital press offers innovative designs and professional quality on a vast range of photo and fine art materials to create a portfolio of premium-quality, handmade photo albums that photographers are selling more successfully than products printed using traditional processes.

**Bels**  
**Albums**<sup>®</sup>  
*The best wedding album.*

**Industry sector:** Photo Specialty

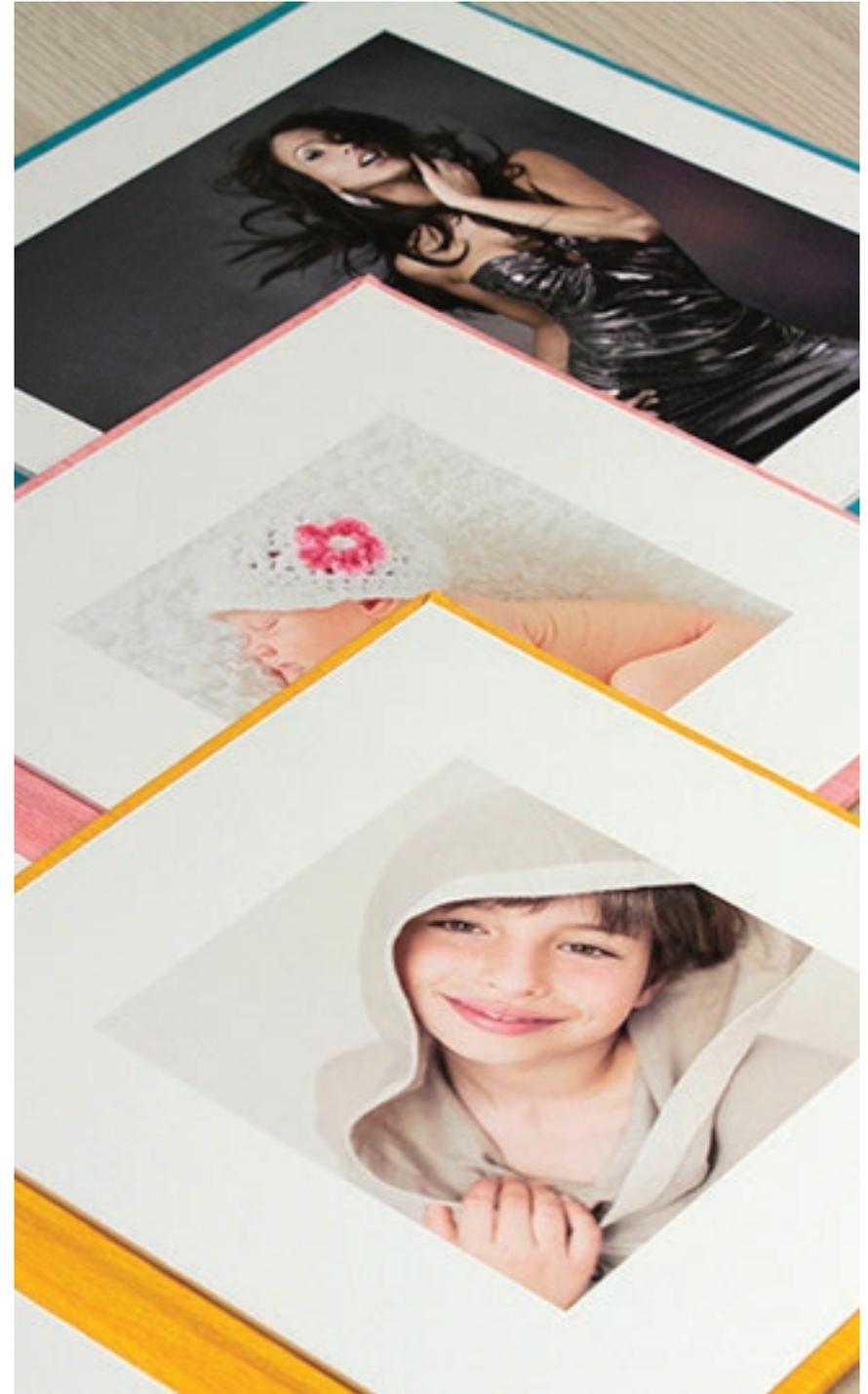
**Business name:** Bels Albums

**Headquarters:** Valencia, Spain

**Testimonial from:** Pablo Lanzáduri, managing director

**HP solution:** HP Indigo 5600 Digital Press

**Website:** [belsalbums.com](http://belsalbums.com)



## Challenge

“Professional photographers come to Bels Albums because they get the photographic quality they demand. Although we could achieve incremental increases in volume using traditional silver halide processes, we believed that a digital press could transform photo album production and our product portfolio.”

Pablo Lanzáduri, managing director, Bels Albums



## A new age in photo album products

“Anticipating market trends and expanding our photo album portfolio brought 20-25 percent annual growth,” says Pablo Lanzáduri, managing director at Bels Albums. “But using silver halide processes, we had reached a ceiling in the range of products we could offer.”

Lanzáduri explains why. “Silver halide chemical processes only work on photo-sensitive papers, greatly limiting our product offering. Production is slow. Our photo lab machines are basically an electromechanical development of a fundamentally labor-intensive darkroom process. They demand regular attention and maintenance that also involves handling chemicals and residues. That’s hundreds of liters of residues and chemicals every month that have to be safely stored and disposed of – it isn’t clean. We were managing Durst lab machines that can produce thirty meters per hour. With the expansion we desired for our product portfolio, we envisaged a more sustainable, automated production environment that would bring costs down,” says Lanzáduri.

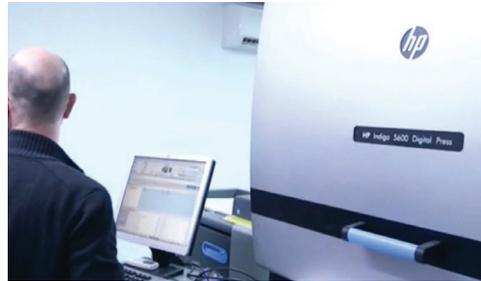
“Professional photographers are extremely demanding and we are judged by our ability to convey their creative intent – color reproduction, contrasts, the highlight and shadow detail, and smooth tonal transitions. It’s already a long list but image permanence is equally important so that they can sell their printed photos,” claims Lanzáduri. “Other digital press manufacturers offered photo production but image quality couldn’t match the HP Indigo. It also offered image permanence ratings of over 200 years<sup>1</sup> for photo albums, much longer than silver halide photos.”

Bels Albums switched production to the HP Indigo 5600 Digital Press in 2014.

## Solution

“The HP Indigo digital press was a big leap forward in photo quality, superior even to photos printed on our silver halide photo lab setup. Our strong reputation for quality, reliability and stability, combined with the 200-year permanence rating, gives professional photographers complete confidence in our new photo album product lines.”

Pablo Lanzáduri, managing director, Bels Albums



## Photo albums on digital press surpass photo lab processes

Bels Albums acquired the 7-color HP Indigo 5600 Digital Press, with specialty ink options HP ElectroInk white, HP ElectroInk light cyan and HP ElectroInk light magenta, HP ElectroInk light black and HP ElectroInk Digital Matte.

“We achieve higher photo quality than with our photo labs. We have compared the prints side-by-side and there is a much wider range of colors,” states Lanzáduri. He explains the process. “Many of our photographers choose 4-color processes. Using light cyan and light magenta, they feel, renders their creative intent more accurately with more faithful skin tones and smoother transitions. They also highlight the dense blacks in black and white (B&W) prints, and the great contrast.”

With over 3,000 substrates certified for HP Indigo ElectroInks, Lanzáduri highlights the enormous potential to expand their product portfolio. “We can offer a range of products that cannot be produced using traditional photo processes. We print photos using white ink on metalized substrates such as E-PHOTO® Metallic Silver, or a B&W photo on black substrate. Uncoated Fedrigoni Tintoretto Gesso and Constellation Snow are very popular for their exclusive look and feel. We only use certified papers to ensure both quality and permanence ratings that surpass silver halide. Photographers are amazed by the results.

“We now offer two-sided prints on Felix Schoeller E-PHOTO® Lustre. Double-sided printing was almost impossible before. Photographers order 30 to 40 copies of 180 to 200-sided albums. Double-sided photo printing offers a manageable album with more photos which means photographers earn more per album too,” claims Lanzáduri.

## Result

“We acquired our digital press to stay at the forefront of photo product innovation. The results have been radically successful. Our ability to innovate has created a new range of photo products that professional photographers successfully sell to their clients, and delivered substantial growth immediately.”

Pablo Lanzáduri, managing director, Bels Albums



## Photo album production and revenue accelerate

“In the first year we introduced the HP Indigo our revenue grew 40 percent, and a further 45 percent last year. We are delivering up to 900 albums per month. Our production volume has increased by 60 percent. Before, 100 percent of our photo print production was on traditional photo lab machines. Now we produce 60-65 percent on our HP Indigo digital press, reducing production costs by 55-58 percent as processes are highly automated.

“We have near line binding machines to finish the albums and doubled our staff producing the albums, rather than spending time a traditional lab demands for setup, production and maintenance. On demand printing optimizes inventory and resources so we can offer a broader range of products. Papers and consumables in silver halide processes require controlled environments and fridges and alterations can impact product quality.

“HP is product quality and production reliability with the HP SmartStream Production Pro Print Server. In training you learn to create your product. HP was here for color calibration and we were producing products within a week. We used HP Financial Services for the investment and we can upgrade our digital press to add features as we grow, or we can expand to offer new services, such as variable data printing. We acquired our digital press to stay at the forefront of photo product innovation and we are already looking at larger formats. We have high expectations of HP,” concludes Lanzáduri.

<sup>1</sup> WIR's Album Permanence Ratings validate the achievability of HP Indigo photobooks. All four of the Indigo printing combinations that underwent album/dark permanence testing earned the maximum WIR dark permanence ratings of > 200 years.\*



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