Canvas Wrap Prints vs Framed Prints
How to Choose The Best Option

One of the most common questions I get is what exactly are canvas prints, and what are the differences and/or benefits in relation to more traditional matted and framed prints. The short answer is it all depends on your personal tastes and preferences, budget, interior design, and location where the photograph will be hung. Let’s look at each option, what their strengths and weaknesses are, and why you would select one over the other.

I have been printing and framing my own work from the very beginning of my career as a landscape photographer, and it is very much a part of the creative process for me. The print is the final "performance" of a photograph, and as such is open to interpretation by the print maker. I chose early on to be completely involved with this crucial step and have invested lots of time, energy, and passion in producing prints that offer the best interpretation of my photographs.

Prints on Paper

Printing on paper is the traditional way of displaying a photograph, and it certainly has an aesthetic quality that is unique and well understood. Most of my printing has been onto paper of various finishes and textures, and I currently use a fine art 100% cotton based mat paper. When matted and framed, this creates a very dramatic finish that I like very much.
Advantages of Framed Prints:

• traditional look and appeal
• our beautiful wood molding selections can add a formal and decorative accent to your home or office
• Paper prints exhibit more detail than canvas
• Black and white prints excel on fiber based papers

Now for some important disadvantages:

• glare and reflections from light
• a smaller image size for a specific wall space (accounting for a 4-5" border around the print for mat and frame)
• larger sizes are heavy and expensive
• perception of being separated from the print (becomes much more apparent when you experience the same photograph as a canvas)
• frames need to match the decor of home or office

Prints on Canvas

Looking to combat some of these disadvantages, as well as offering new and great looking options for customers, I began experimenting with alternatives a few years ago. I hesitated printing to canvas because I did not want to compromise important elements to my work, namely detail, texture, and richness of shadows. However, very recently both inkjet printers and new formulations of canvas have allowed me to maintain these important critical details. I now print onto canvas without hesitation. After printing and letting the canvas dry for 24 hours, I double coat the canvas with a protectant against UV and dust, then stretch onto 2" stretcher bars. I create the entire finished product in my studio, guaranteeing consistency and quality control.

Advantages of Canvas Prints:

• do not exhibit any glare or reflections
• largest image size for a given wall space (no mats or borders)
• weigh much less that framed prints
• much easier and economical to create extremely large sizes (up to 40" x 100")
• canvas prints provide a frameless presentation which creates a window into the scene
• creates a painterly effect which is very pleasing
• can be installed in semi-humid environments (bathrooms)
• lack of frame blends well into any style decor in home or office
• can be placed into wood floater frame for a "finished" look
• creative multi-panel options available

Some disadvantages:

• texture of canvas can sometimes be distracting (I choose the images I print onto canvas carefully)
• photograph can not be changed (permanent)

Deciding the Best Option

In the end, it all depends on your tastes, preferences, and needs. I have installed many canvas prints in corporate offices where any other option would have been cost prohibitive and certainly not as large and dramatic. Likewise, many customers love the frameless look and the flexibility of positioning without the need for specific lighting. I really love the non glare feature, flexibility with large and panoramic sizes, and wonderful texture and color that a canvas brings to a room.

Of course, a beautiful frame is a classic, traditional look that will never go out of style and works well in an appropriate setting. For me, some photographs just work better on smooth photographic paper. Matted and framed, the image stands apart and creates a nice accent to a formal dining or living room.

I like both, and certainly can help you decide which might be best for your application. We offer free consultations, and guarantee all of our prints for life, so you can be sure we're not happy until you're completely satisfied with your Robert Rodriguez Jr canvas OR framed print.