JET Letterpress Platemaker

Getting Started:

1. Pour cool (68°F) water into the tank until it just breaks the surface tension at the top of the bristles (about 5 gallons).
2. Lock the lid and run wash unit for 5 minutes (all dials require you turn past 5 and back to desired setting).
3. Shut off the agitator and open tank. Leave the heater on, check water temp for 68°F.
4. Use squeegee to scrape all water from green surface making sure surface is left dry. *Never touch green surface with rag or paper towel; only use squeegee.*
5. Remove a polymer plate from package and leave mylar on polymer plate.
6. Trim to size slightly larger than the negative film; be sure there are no bent or curved edges on trimmed plate.
7. Blow dust off the negative film with the air gun.
8. If it is a humid day sprinkle a little talc on the emulsion side of the negative and blow off talc with the air gun.

Burning the plate:

1. Open the exposure drawer and roll back the vinyl plastic.
2. Peel off the mylar from the plate.
3. Place the plate in the center honeycomb; be sure to cover center hole.
4. Place the negative on the plate emulsion side down and roll the plastic forward.
5. *With the drawer open turn the vacuum on and rub the vinyl diagonally to check for slipping (a sign of bad contact) and to work the bubbles out forward and toward the edges. Run your thumb along all rows of type to work out bubbles.*
6. Push exposure drawer in, turn exposure switch on and set the dial to 3.5 minutes.
7. When time is up, pull tray out and turn the vacuum pump off.
8. Roll the vinyl forward and close the drawer.
9. Examine the plate to see that it has been exposed; area around the exposed plate should look swollen.

Washing out the plate:

1. Place the exposed plate on the green surface and push firmly every 2 inches with thumb.
2. Lock the lid and turn on the wash out unit. Set timer for 5 minutes.
3. When time is up, open and check to see if plate is clean and without goop. If goopy close lid and agitate for 1 minute at a time until clearly washed.
4. Remove plate and rinse in cold bucket of water by dipping in and swishing around.
5. Hold plate over bucket and gently blow dry with air gun. Be careful not damage halftones or fine lines of type by blowing too hard or too close. Try to remove at least 90% of the water.
6. Turn baking heater on and set to 60°C for 5 minutes to pre-heat unit.

Baking the plate:

1. Open rack and place plate on top screen (put next plate in bottom screen so as not to drip on first plate).
2. Bake for 10 minutes at 60°C.
3. Remove plate and allow to cool to touch (several minutes).
4. If desired trim off any especially thick plate material at this time.

Post-exposing the plate:

1. Open exposure unit and place cardboard over vinyl plastic.
2. Put plate on cardboard close drawer and burn for 2 minutes.
3. You are done, remove plate and enjoy.

Troubleshooting:

1. Expose longer for *fine lines*, in 30 second intervals up from 3 minutes.
2. Expose shorter for *solids*, in 30 second intervals down from 3 minutes.
3. If details wash out water is too hot.
4. If type is too fat the plate was overexposed.