

Reviews

Affinity Publisher V2

by L. Davenport

Affinity Publisher is a professional page layout program. With it you can create (digital or print) books, magazines, marketing materials, social media templates, website mock-ups, and more. It gives you the power to combine your images, graphics and text to make beautiful layouts ready for publication. It is also optimized for the latest tech on Mac, Windows, and iPad. Plus it has been chosen by Apple as its Mac App of the Year.

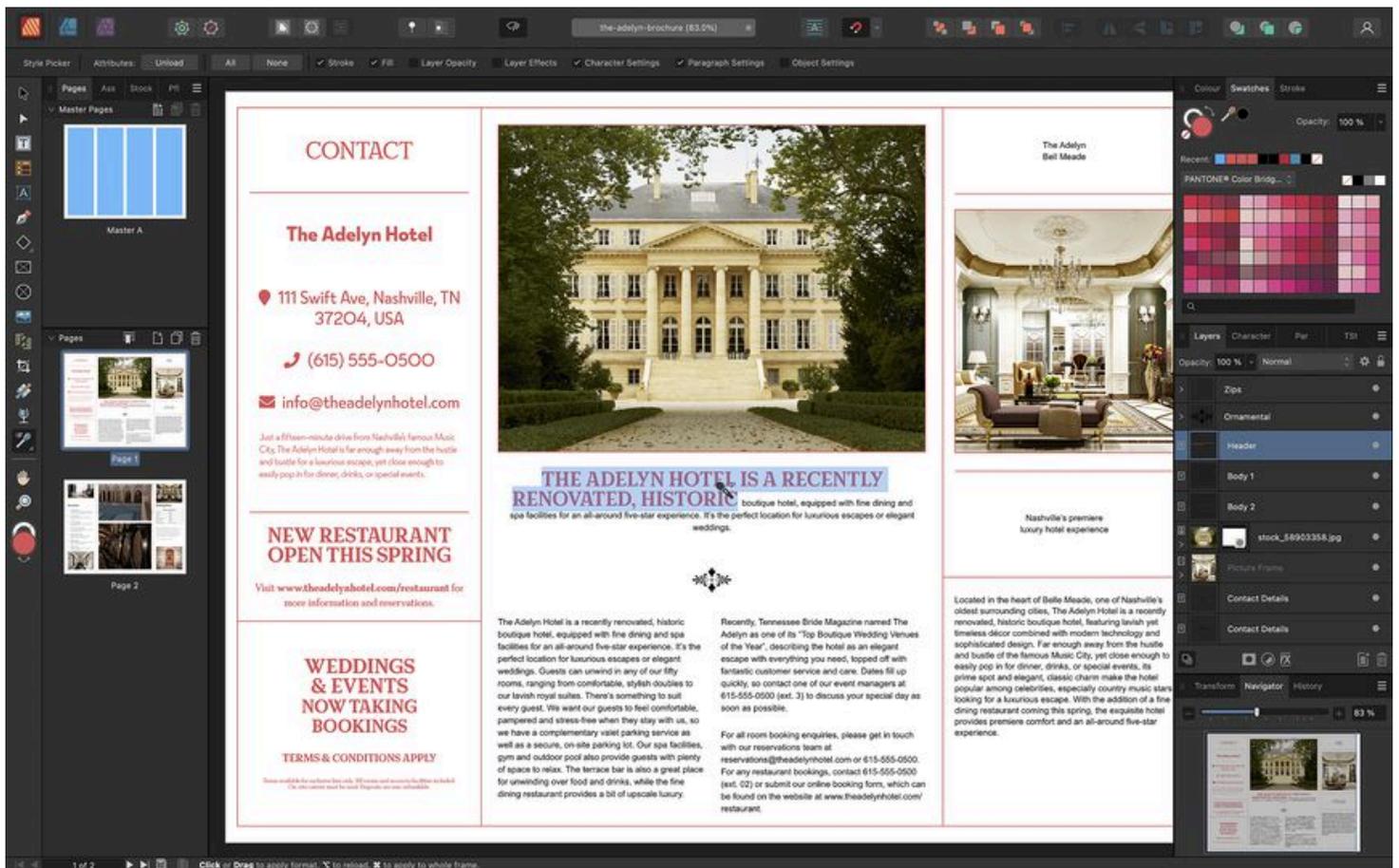


Figure 1. The Style Picker Tool helps you to quickly apply the style of any object or text on your page to another.

StudioLink / Personas

If you also own Affinity Photo 1.7 (or later) and/or Affinity Design 1.7 (or later), Affinity Publisher's StudioLink option lets you seamlessly move between these program's "Personas". This means that while you are working in Affinity Publisher, you can click a button and then have Affinity Designer's vector drawing features and tools at your disposal. Likewise with a single click you can have access to Affinity's Photo's photo editing features and tools. FYI: this isn't an app switcher, this brings up the other applications' tools right inside Affinity Publisher. Very convenient.

Symbolized logo designs or picture frames

Symbols let you simultaneously update all instances of a 'copied' design in your publication by editing any single instance. You also have the option to exclude any object from automatically updating by desynchronizing it.

Example: A logo created in the Designer Persona can be symbolized with the main logo kept on the first page and a untitled variant used on other pages. As the logo design changes, all symbol instances update automatically across all pages.

Applying live filters to images

For correcting or creatively enhancing images you can access Photo Persona's live filters; as they're non-destructive you can adjust filter settings at any later date.

Examples: You can add an extra level of image sharpening to your image by applying an Unsharp Mask live filter or you can make an image stand out from the page by applying a Gaussian Blur live filter selectively to the image's background.

Layer Effects

Layer effects can be applied to either selected objects or the entire layer to add more creativity to your design. Some of the effects consist of: Bevel/Emboss, Outline, 3D effect, Inner and Outer glow, Inner and Outer Shadow, Gradient and Color overlays, and Gaussian Blur.

Master pages

Any desktop publishing program worth its salt gives you the option to have Master Pages. Affinity Publisher's Master Pages can be a single page or two-page spread. They are handy if you have logos, backgrounds, picture or text frames, etc. that you want to appear on more than one page (Figure 6). If you edit any master page element, all associated pages will update to incorporate the new master page design.

For a Master Page example, look at the top of this page. You will see a blue rectangle that contains the the page number and the name of the newsletter that this review was added to (BTW: the page number won't be there if you are reading the standalone Affinity Publisher review). Those are from a Master Page that I created. Any time I want to add a new page to this newsletter, I simply add this Master Page to the newsletter. In fact this is only one of the Master pages that I use in this newsletter.

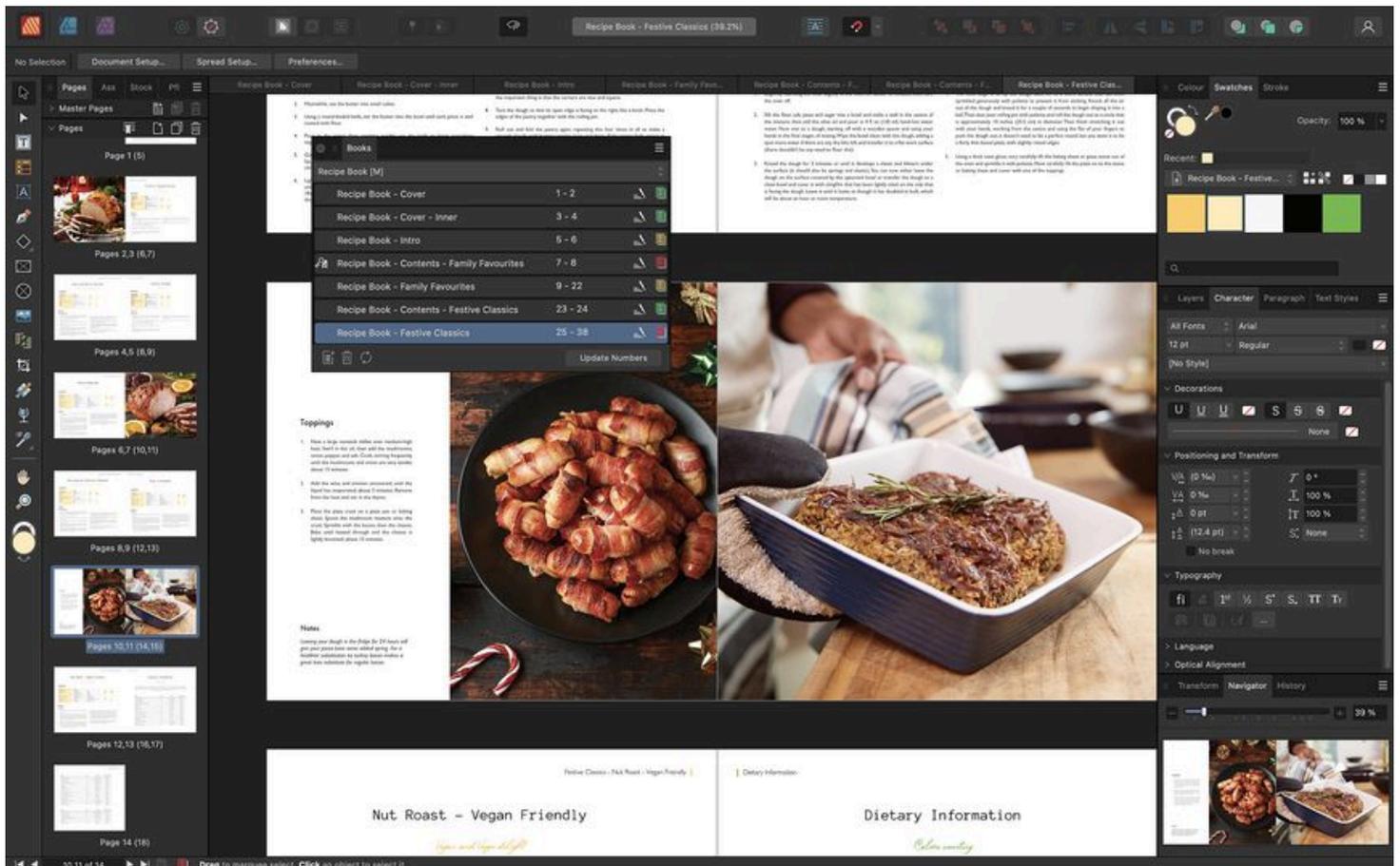


Figure 2. The Books Tool gives you the ability Combine separate Publisher documents as chapters to create one long publication, automatically synching page numbers, table of contents, indexes and styles throughout.

Baseline grids

There is a Baseline Grid option that provides you with a series of equally-spaced horizontal guides that make it easy to perfectly cross-align content between frames and columns across your whole document.

A baseline grid can be applied to the entire document or individual text frames within it, and will it align baselines across linked or completely separate text frames.

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Text wrapping

There will be times when you want to add images to your document. When you do, they will most-likely overlap your text - making it very difficult to read the text underneath it. But with Text Wrapping, you can have the text wrap around your image in various ways, e.g. have it tightly wrap around the inside or outside of the image, have the text wrap around a rectangle which surrounds the image, have text only appear above and below the image, etc.

Text on a path

Path text (Figure 5) can be created from any line, curve or shape drawn using any of the line or shape tools. These include, but are not limited to, the Pen Tool and Ellipse Tool. The only criterion is that a line, curve or shape must exist on the page before path text can be implemented

Adjustments

There are 23 different “Adjustments” that can be applied to your design as a new layer for creative or corrective purposes. Adjustment layers only effect objects in the layers which are below them. You can also make an adjustment a “child” of an object, so it would only effect that object.

The adjustments are:

Black and White	HSL	Posterize	Vibrance
Brightness and Contrast	Invert	Recolor	White Balance
Channel Mixer	Lens Filter	Selective Color	
Color Balance	Levels	Shadows/Highlights	
Curves	LUT	Soft Proof	
Exposure	Normals	Split Toning	
Gradient Map	OCIO (OpenColorIO)	Threshold	

Pinned (anchored) objects

Shapes, images, tables or other text frames can either float alongside in relation to a pinned position in your text (or other page element) or be placed inline in your text. In either instance, objects can then move with the text as you add further text content or move the text frame itself.

Text can wrap around floating pinned objects that overlap the text frame. Whereas the inline anchored objects do not allow text wrapping.



Figure 3. You can “Package” your document along with all of the used image and font resources before transferring to a colleague, or before sending it to be professionally published.

Color Chords

Color Chords are really handy to help you take the guesswork out of choosing Colors for your design. Instead of trying to select a group of complementary colors, you can have Affinity Publisher create a color chord (which are built on professional color theory). You simply select a base swatch/color in the Swatches panel, then right-click and pick from one of the a Chord Types. A group of colors will then appear and will be stored in the current palette in the Swatches panel. You can then select from these colors and then use them in your design.

Chord types are based on the HSL color wheel and includes (compare this with the example in Figure 4:

- A. Complementary: the base swatch and its opposite on the color wheel.
- B. Split Complementary: the base swatch and the colors adjacent to its opposite on the color wheel.
- C. Analogous: the base swatch and the colors adjacent to it on the color wheel.
- D. Accented Analogic: the same as Analogous but as its also Complementary, it includes the base color's opposite.
- E. Triadic: three colors spaced equally around the color wheel starting from the base color.
- F. Tetradic: four colors arranged around the color wheel in two complementary color pairs, starting from the base color. Otherwise known as 'Rectangle'.
- G. Square: four colors spaced equally around the color wheel starting from the base color.
- H. Tints: colors which vary in lightness from the base color to white.
- I. Shades: colors which vary in lightness from the base color to black.
- J. Tones: colors which vary in saturation from the base color to grey.

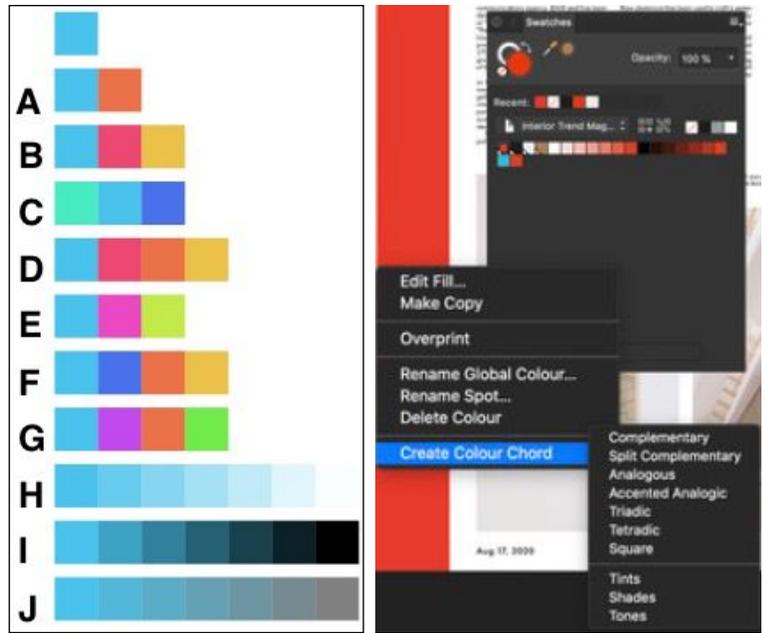


Figure 4. You can make complementary Color Chords (color palette) based on a color that you choose (e.g. blue). The results will be based on one of 10 available "Color Chord" types.

Indexes

You can create an index with main entries and subentries, based on index marks you insert throughout your publication. When an index is generated, it will list all topics containing at least one reference in alphabetical order. For each topic, the index lists the page numbers of every page that references that topic. Affinity Publisher's Indexes also support Cross References.

Table Of Contents

In addition to Indexes, you can also add one or more Table of Contents. A Table of Contents searches your document for text in specified text styles (typically headings) and reproduces that text in a list with page numbers.

Drop Caps

You can spruce up the look of your document by adding a Drop Cap to the first character(s) of a paragraph. The Drop Cap options give you complete control of the Drop Cap:

- Height in lines: Specify the height of the Drop Cap in lines.
- Characters: Specify the number of characters to be dropped.
- Distance to text: You can specify the distance between the Drop Cap and the rest of the text. This value can even be a negative number to allow the text to be closer to the Drop Cap.



Figure 5. Affinity Publisher's "Path Text" option gives you tools to wrap text along a path.

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- **Align left edge:** This ensures that the Drop Cap is aligned to the left-hand edge of the column.
- **Scale for descenders:** This ensures that the size of any Drop Cap containing descenders is automatically adjusted so it matches the alignment of other dropped caps.

Undo History

Affinity Publisher can undo/redo over 8,000 History steps! It can also save the history so you can undo steps later, even on different computers. It can Undo actions performed in other Affinity suite apps and there is also an AutoSave feature that protects against unexpected shutdowns.

Some of the new Affinity Publisher version 2 features:

- **Books:** The Books Tool (Figure 2) gives you the ability to combine multiple Affinity Publisher documents into one file. This is especially useful for collaboration, since contributors can work on their own sections individually before everything is brought together into the Books panel as chapters.

There are various features that help to keep the different files/chapters cohesive. For example, the “Update Numbers” option will automatically update all of the Page, List, and Note numbers throughout all of the chapters (whether they were brought in from other collaborators or new chapters that you create). This causes them to run sequentially throughout the book.

There is also an option to have the table of contents gather information throughout the whole book. Not just from one chapter. Another option will synchronize the styles from a designated 'style source' chapter to other chapters.

Before exporting, you can check the preflight status of all chapters to quickly identify which need attention, without having to open all chapters to perform checks. When the book is complete, it can be printed or exported, in whole or in part in file formats such as: PDF, JPEG, EPS, PNG, PNG, and SVG. If you plan to share a document with a collaborator or printing service, you can use the Packaging option (Figure 3). This outputs a copy of your document along with any fonts and linked images used in it. This ensures that all the items needed to edit and print it will be available.

- **Footnotes, Sidenotes & Endnotes:** Affinity Publisher can now create and manage academic-style notes. These are helpful if you are creating documents such as academic journals, business reports, newspapers, or magazines.
- **Place Auto-flow:** This allows you to flow content into a series of automatically generated pages. This is useful for placing PDF content and large amounts of text and imagery into your documents. For example, instead of having to create a new text frame for each page, you can have Affinity Publisher automatically flow the overflow text onto new pages. At the same time it will replicate the size and style of the first text frame. Plus, with the ability to choose a repeat count for images, you can set up advanced templates so in the future. You can instantly produce multiple variants in only a few clicks.
- **Linked File Layer Visibility Override:** If you place a file containing layer information such as a PSD, PDE, DWG, DXF or another Affinity document, you now have the ability to turn layers on or off as long as the resource is linked. Your layer visibility settings will still be maintained even if the source file is changed.

- **Word & Character Count:** Affinity Publisher has a word counter so you can get a word, character, line or paragraph count of your document or current selection.

- **DWG/DXF Place:** This feature is for users who need to include technical and architectural drawings in their publications. Affinity Publisher 2 lets you import DWG/DXF files while maintaining the layer structure and scale of the original file. You can also place them as embedded (which allows editing) or linked files, so if they get updated, the link will automatically update in your publication.

- **Frame/Art Text conversion:** You can

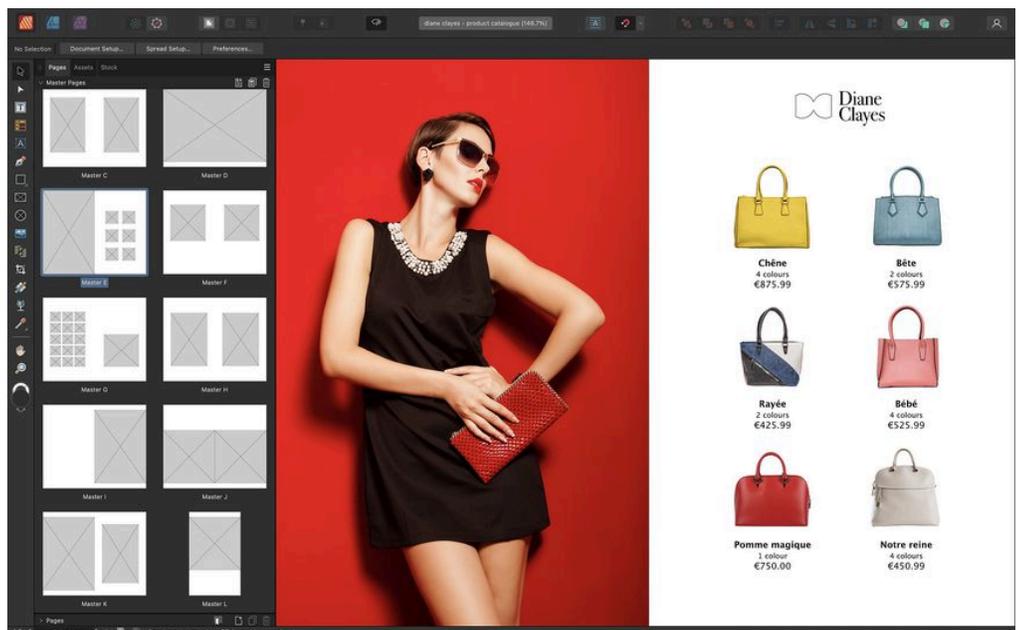


Figure 6. You can add live Master Pages, including nested and smart master pages.

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ing those with Force Touch pressure-sensitive capability (Magic Trackpad 2 and built into recent MacBooks).

Sidecar

Apple's Sidecar option can be used to extend or mirror your Mac desktop onto your iPad's display. With this functionality, you can draw on your iPad using an Apple Pencil to edit documents in your Affinity Publisher Mac app.

When using Sidecar, the Affinity Publisher program supports pressure-sensitive input from an Apple Pencil on your iPad's screen. Sidecar works with one iPad at a time, but it can be used alongside additional external displays.

Your iPad can also become a secondary display, allowing you to arrange windows however you want between the Mac and iPad.

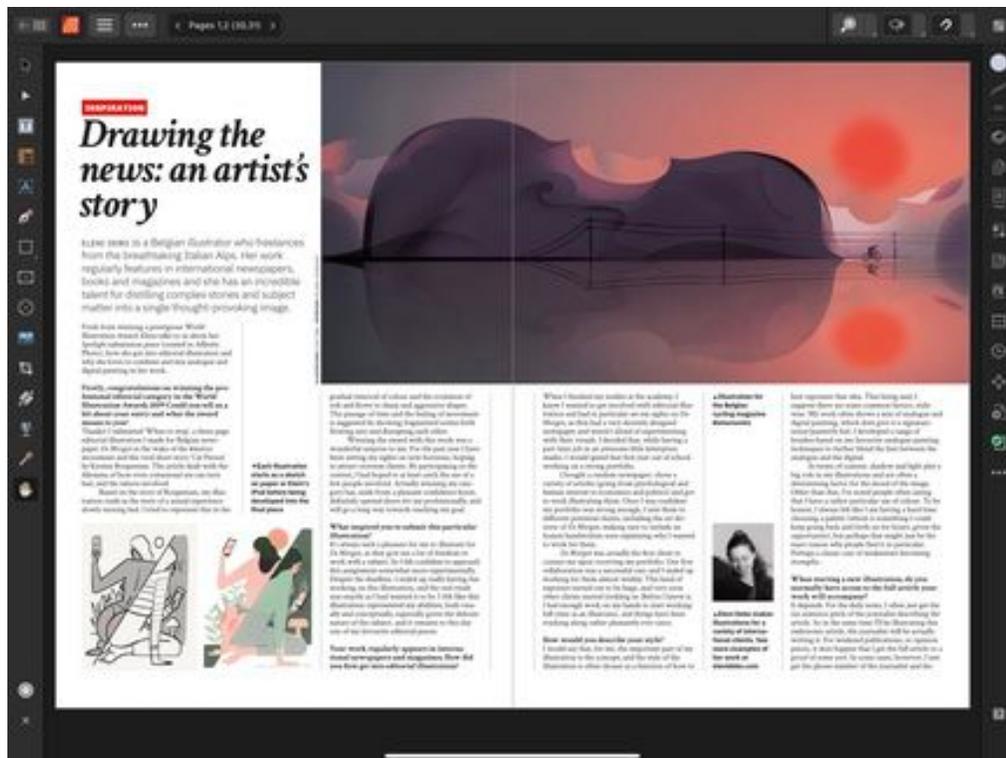


Figure 8. The full featured Affinity Publisher is also available on the iPad.

Hardware acceleration

To improve the performance of some operations, Affinity Publisher can use Apple's Metal technology to talk directly to your system's graphics hardware.

Hardware acceleration is available for many graphics processors (GPUs), whether integrated into your computer's CPU (central processing unit), a discrete graphics card or onboard processor, or external and connected via Thunderbolt 3. Affinity Publisher can make use of multiple GPUs in parallel.

Affinity Publisher v2 for the iPad

There is also an Affinity Publisher for the iPad (Figure 8). It has everything you need to produce stunning brochures, posters, portfolios, magazines and much more, no matter where you are. It is iPad OS 16-ready.

Final words

This review covered only a few of the options that you can find in Affinity Publisher. Space limitations in this newsletter prevent me from delving further into the program. If you are interested, I suggest that you go to the Affinity Publisher web site to see Affinity Publisher's [full feature list](#).

The Skinny

Evaluation: Affinity Publisher is a powerful desktop publishing program. I own its sister programs: Affinity Designer and Affinity Photo, so Affinity Publisher has even more capabilities for me. Affinity Publisher comes with a lot of tools and options that will fill the needs of most people. I suggest that you take it for a test-run to see if it suits your needs.

Requirements: Mac: macOS Catalina 10.15 - Ventura 13; A Mac with the Apple silicon (M1/M2) chip or Intel processor; 8GB RAM, 2.8GB of available hard drive space (more during installation), 1280 x 768 display or larger.

iPad: iPadOS 15 or later; iPad mini (5 & 6) to the iPad Pro (all models) - M1-equipped iPad models are recommended for more memory-intensive design.

Company: [Serif \(Europe\) Limited](#)

Price: Mac: Affinity Publisher v2: \$40.99

Windows: Affinity Publisher v2: \$40.99

iPad: Affinity Publisher v2: \$11.99

Mac, Windows AND iPad: Affinity V2 Universal License (bundle price for ALL three Mac and Windows applications [Photo, Designer, & Publisher] and ALL three iPad Apps): \$99.99 vs. \$169.99 if all the programs and iOS Apps were bought individually with the current sale. Non sale price: \$169.99.

[Available Demo Copy](#) (at the bottom of the web page)