

Frequently Asked Questions - Wedding Photography

A List Of Things To Consider When Selecting A Photographer For Your Wedding

Your wedding is meant to last a lifetime. Your wedding day photos and video should as well. So selecting the right professional is key to helping ensure that your wedding day photos will last.

Following is a list of important things that will help you think through some of the decisions you will need to make in order to select the right professional photographer. Above all, are references. Be sure you get enough quality references to be very comfortable with your decision of the photofgrapher for your wedding day photography. Also, make sure the photographer has done a wedding in your church before, so they are experienced with the surroundings, effects of lighting if the church has a lot of natural light, etc. Find out if the church has a list of recommended photographers, and if the ones you are considering are on that list. If they are, then that is certainly a good starting point in selecting your wedding photographer.

Here are some of the key things to discuss with photographer candidates:

What type of equipment is going to be used to shoot your wedding photography?

There are only 2 brands of 35mm digital SLR's on the market: Nikon and Canon. Ask which one that the photographer uses and the models of the camera.

How many cameras do they bring to the wedding?

It should be 2 of everything. Back up's do not have to be 2 of same model, just so it is a good quality back up - especially camera and flash.

Ask how many lenses will they use and what type and size?

Good coverage here is very important. If they can't tell you or only indicate that they are bringing one or two different lenses, then keep doing your research.

How many years has the photographer been in the photography business?

No less than 10-15 years with at least 5 years in wedding photography as a good initial cut off. References are very important here.

How long they have been doing digital photography?

Again, 5 years should be the cut off.

Can the prospective photographer provide a sample of their work?

It goes without saying that you must be pleased with the work they show you, both in form and style. Make sure you see several albums, one of a complete wedding ready to deliver to client.

How many photographers should I interview?

Always talk to more than one photographer. Decide if you want a traditional or a photo-journalistic style approach to the photography. They each have their own issues to consider.

I don't want to rush this decision. How do I get samples to view on my own time and not under pressure?

If at all possible, see if they has a sample CD or DVD to bring home to look at on your own computer.

Are there any hidden costs?

Make sure you get everything you want in the package up front, if your parents want to buy more after the wedding that is good too, just make sure you get a printed price list.

What is expected in regard to payment for services?

See what kind of payment plans they will accept; normal deposit is 25-50% of the plan chosen, with balance due by wedding. If you are not 100% comfortable with the person, you should not pay it all up front. Usually they will take the last payment the day of the wedding, some will take it after they have delivered the proof book.

How do I select the photographs for my Wedding Album and friends?

Wedding photographs are selected by viewing proofs. There are several ways to deliver the proofs these days. Proof books are normally 4 x 5's, and online proofing is good. You can go to a special website to look at the proof online, and can order prints there. The downside to this is you need a computer to look at the proofs; the upside is you can send a link to all the relatives. They may also hand out a business card at the wedding with the link to the family and guests to go look at the photos.

Can I see my photographs the day of my Wedding?

Some digital Wedding photographers have the equipment to show the wedding photos at the reception. This usually costs a bit more but does not necessarily mean you get a better job, it is nice to see them and your guests will like that as well. Plus, you are able to determine the quality of their work. But do not make this a make or break decision point. You can get by without it and the photographers who normally have this capability generally cost a bit more since it requires more equipment and people to make this happen – but the increased cost should not be significant.

What kind of back-up storage of the photo files they do at the wedding?

Most use not only the flash cards in the camera, but they download them to a separate hard drive at the wedding, for safety reasons; and still keep the cards from the wedding till they get home and down load them to the computer.

How does the photographer work with the files on the computer, and what file type and size they shoot in?

Raw is best but takes a lot of file space, .jpg's and other computer generated formats take less disc space, but don't allow for manipulation of the photographs to ensure satisfactory quality.

How many copies of my photograph files are made and stored at the office?

There should be no less than 2 copies on separate hard drives. It's best not to have them on the same hard drive in case of a crash. An additional copy on DVD should also be made.

When will my photography package be complete?

The time frame for delivery varies by photographer and package selection. Select what you feel most comfortable with.

Do I get a copy of the photography files on CD or DVD, and if so what is the file type, size and resolution?

A .jpg or .tiff are the preferred formats and should be in no less than either 6 x 10, or 8 x 12 @ 300ppi. Files in .tiff format generally offer the best resultw for your wedding photographs.

If I get a copy of my photographs on CD or DVD, will they be the corrected files or the uncorrected originals .jpg's directly from the camera?

This will vary by photographer, package selected and/ or budget. You should select what you feel most comfortable with, however having the corrected files will provide a better, longer lasting result.

Will I be able to select my photographs online via online proofing and how long the site will be up?

Most online proofing sites are up for a limited time of around 1 – 3 months. After that time you will have to order your photographs from a proof book or CD.

If I get a CD of the proofs even if they are for order only, do I or do I not have copyrights to them?

This will vary by photographer and package purchased. Having the copyrights to information about yourself is always a good idea.

What kind of software should the photographer work with?

The most popular program is Photoshop. Photographers can work with a variety of programs to develop your photographs, just make sure that the digital photography is provided in a format that you can open and view.

What kind of photographs will I have a choice of in my Wedding album?

The choices are color, black & white, sepia or black & white with color in one photo. This will vary by photographer and package purchased.

What kind of photos will be provided to us, the bride and groom?

Whether they come from a custom lab with regular photo paper, or the photographer makes the prints at his studio using his own printer. either dye-sub or photo inkjet printer using high-grade 100+ year ultra chrome high gloss ink is good. This is fade proof, and uses waterproof ink, not the old type of water base ink, where one drop can mess up the photo. If the photographers does their own prints at the studio, they have better quality control over the entire process.

What is the turn around time for delivering proofs be it CD, website or paper proofs?

The standard time is usually 2-3 weeks after the wedding.

Will the photographer be doing all the photography or will some else be doing it be taking my photographs, and Do they bring 2 photographers, or an assistant?

You should have at least 2 people with one shooting and one posing makes things go much faster. This is especially true for the traditional style vs. the photo-journalistic style.

When should I make the decision to hire a photographer?

Do not for any reason make up your mind at the photography studio. Take time to think it over and do your homework. Do not let them pressure you into signing the first time you meet. If for any reason you are not 100 % comfortable with them at the interview, it is better to err on the side of caution. Use your gut feeling. Do not decide to book the wedding photographer based only on the fee. Capturing your special moments is an important part of your wedding day, and if you need to spend a little more to ensure a good result, then you should. If you choose the wrong person, you may be throwing your money away. Most wedding photographers are good, but you must be comfortable around the photographer that you select. If the photographer seems bossy or you feel pressured into going with them, get up and walk away.

Should the photographer provide references?

Yes! Get referrals! Make sure your get several referrals of recent weddings that include the phone numbers. Call the people and check to see if they were pleased with the entire process and if they would use the particular wedding photographer again in the future.

I want the photographer that I choose to blend with my wedding guests. Is it okay to ask them to dress appropriately?

Most photographers dress according to the degree and/or style of the wedding. It is always a good idea and okay to ask what they will wear. They want to blend in with the guests and not stand out from the crowd just as much as you do.

When are most of my wedding photographs going to be taken?

This will depend on the photographer and your preferences. Some wedding photographers prefer to do a little before the ceremony, some half, and some as much as possible so as to not keep guests waiting at the reception too long.

How long should the photographer take after the wedding?

This will vary by photographer, package and your preferences. The choice is to pose any photographs or just shoot as it happens.

I want to have a CD or DVD of my Wedding Album. Do I own the copyrights to the files?

This will vary by photographer but the simple answer is yes. You should own any digital information that pertains to you personally.

Before I purchase a CD or DVD of my Wedding Photographs are there any other questions?

Yes. Ask what size and type of files that will be contained on your digital media and what ppi the files are in.

I would like a DJ at my reception. Will this affect the role of my wedding photographer?

If you are using a DJ at the reception, it helps if the DJ and the photographer/videographer have worked with each other in the past, and that they get along. One can serve as a reference source for the other. They need to be compatible. You don't want a power struggle at the wedding or at the reception. The DJ is the master of ceremonies, and is similar to the producer of a movie. He can make a good reception great, or make what you had hoped for, turn out just awful.

How should I transact business with the wedding photographer?

The photographer that you select should be confirmed ahead of time by contract.