



Choosing a wedding photographer/videographer

On your wedding day, your wedding photographer is the person who will be responsible for documenting the day by capturing the special moments and creating an unforgettable photographic memories of your wedding preparations, ceremony and reception. It is very important to find such a photographer who has a visual style and personality that matches with your requirements. You **MUST** determine your budget before you start talking to professionals. This is a big decision, so do not feel like you need to rush into it. Bear in mind however, that you should reserve your photographer as far in advance as possible to ensure that your first or even second choice is available for your date. This is especially important if your wedding is a "destination wedding" in a location other than the photographer's home base. Keep the following points in mind while conducting your search.

Search for professionals online

The internet is considered, by many, to be the best medium to search for almost anything you want including professional services. Obviously, if you're reading this now then you're already following step one. In your initial search don't dig too deeply into any single website a cursory exam should be enough to tell you whether or not you like the style of a particular photographer. Now, make a list of all the people whose site/style you liked. You should try to make a list of 5-12 different photographers, any fewer and you are probably missing several that you may like and any more can tend to be overwhelming. Remember, finding a photographer for your special should actually be a fun exercise not a grueling chore.

Evaluate the portfolios

After searching for photographers, you should assess their photography portfolio. The photographer's wedding portfolio should be your main area of focus but also take the time to look through their other portfolios dealing with people, if they have them online. Weddings require a versatile bag of tricks from photographers and by looking at their portrait work as well as their wedding work you can get a much better idea of their overarching style as an artist. This will go a long way toward helping you decide whether their style would match your requirements or not.

Meet them in person

This is very important and cannot be overstated. Once you have short-listed a few photographers who match your criteria, you can set appointments to meet with them. Online surfing and bio sheets alone won't serve the intended purpose of documenting your wedding day to your satisfaction. Meeting them and discussing in person will help you to determine whether that person is honest and not just showing off. When you talk to the photographer, try to assess his/her personality. If the photographer has a pleasing personality, chances are that he/she would be able to mingle with the guest at the wedding ceremony and illicit smiles and happiness in the photographs of the big day.

Ask for references

If the photographer has mentioned references on the website then you can contact them to know their experience with him/her. You can also ask the photographer to provide you with references. Do not expect the

photographer to simply hand you a list of all or even most of their past clients. After all, even in this age of sharing so much information via social media some people are still protective of their privacy and will not give permission for a stranger to contact them out of the blue. Ask the references for their honest opinions about the photographer's work and about any issues that might have arisen during the photographers employ and especially how those issues were handled. Verifying credentials is very important. This will ensure that you are not hiring a novice who just wants to earn some money by clicking pictures.

Finalize the deal in black and white

Any photographer you decide to hire should be fully prepared to offer you a signed contract which mentions all the points that both parties agree upon. DO NOT hire a photographer to document one of the most important days of your life without this vital piece of paper. The agreement should mention the photographer's duties before and after the wedding, photography package, payment details etc. Do not forget to include any special requests in the contract before you sign up.

As you go through your search just remember wedding photographs are intended to be cherished for a lifetime and are often passed through generations. Choose your photographer carefully and based on your desires and budget, not a slick sales pitch. Most importantly, enjoy the process and enjoy the big day!

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