

Tips on Choosing a Wedding Photographer

Whether you choose John Huegel Photography or another photographer, feel free to print and use this as a guide in selecting your photographer. Best of luck to you on your wedding!

1. **Style.** You will need to be familiar with the photographer's work to see if it matches your expectations. Some shoot in a photojournalistic style, where they do not stage a lot of action and try to capture the day as a series of images. Some are more forward and direct and organize the shots. Some have very traditional framing, while others utilize interesting camera angles and perspectives. Some stick to traditional color editing while others lean toward more effects, black/white or sepia. You can get a certain amount of flexibility from a photographer, but do not expect a photographer whose style does not match your needs to be able to change drastically.
2. **Personality.** You will be spending a lot of time with this person, so you will need to be very comfortable with him or her. Make sure that your family and the photographer will be compatible. Do you develop a rapport with the photographer on the first call or meeting, and feel good when you hang up the phone?
3. **References.** The best references come from people who have used the photographer. If you heard about them through friends, they come highly regarded. If you found them through a search, ask to see sample images and talk to brides or others for whom they have worked in the past.
4. **Coverage.** Be clear about how much time you will need for coverage. Include your morning "getting ready" time, preparation at the ceremony location, formals and other bridal images and reception time. Share your time line so the photographer knows how match their services with your expectations.
5. **Offerings.** Some photographers only offer "shoot and burn", meaning you are left to weed through hundreds of raw images and decide what to do with them. Others offer only printed products, and often produce excellent quality prints and albums. Still others may offer both prints/albums and digital files. Think about what you would like, and be honest about whether you will actually produce a good representation of your wedding with just the digital files. Take caution in thinking that a local digital lab will make images with the same quality as a professional photography lab, which color balances the images and uses high quality non-glossy printing processes. A few dollars saved may cost you a lot of satisfaction in the long run.
6. **Pricing.** It is hard to compare photographers' offerings to each other. In order to do so, you may want to define a couple of scenarios and ask the photographers to price them to the best of their ability. Be cautious here as well: The cheapest photographer may not be the best. You will want to find your mix of value, quality and product offering.
7. **Product Choices.** Look for a range of products from prints to canvas products to a large selection of books and albums. Even if you are interested mostly in digital prints, it is highly recommended to choose a photographer who can produce good large prints and albums, because their experience in making these images indicates they have the skills and resources to produce good products, whether they are electronic or printed. Plus, you may change your mind later and want a professional album.
8. **Digital Files.** Many brides today are looking for access to the images. Many photographers offer this service. Ask whether the images will be edited or raw, and what degree of editing will be performed. What size or resolution will be offered. Will a release be granted to let you print them at a lab? Are there any restrictions on your use of the images? Most photographers will retain the copyright and ownership and grant you a license for private use. That is normal.
9. **Credentials.** Does the photographer belong to any professional associations? Are they insured with liability coverage? Do they have a particular education or certification that you are looking for? Credentials are not everything, but they do indicate whether the photographer is actively growing and experimenting with new techniques.
10. **Lifetime Relationship.** You may not think of this now, but the photographer you choose may be the same one who takes you maternity and baby pictures, family portraits and perhaps even your childrens' senior portraits in 20 years! Choose your photographer carefully!