

## Top Ten Things to Know When Hiring a Wedding Photographer

By [Robert London Photography](#)

**Intro:** You are reading this for you are getting married and are overwhelmed with the 100's perhaps 1000's of decisions you need to make in order for your wedding day to not only run smoothly but be both memorable and enjoyable for yourself and your guests. When that day comes it will be so overwhelming that your memory of the day may be a bit unfocused, the beautiful flowers you chose, the gorgeous dress (that you agonized over), the venue and table settings, all your friends dancing, even your hairstyle is a moment that you created and wish to cherish, unfortunately it is just one day and it goes by so fast. This is why the photographer will be the one hire you make that is so important, not only will they be with you a good deal of time on this most important day but they are the ones who shall capture all those details that you have been thinking about for the past six months or more. Not just the static moments; flowers on the table, the dress hanging up for the last time before you place it on, but more important a great photographer will not only capture an image of a moment – he will capture the moment itself: the emotion, the feeling, its timelessness, and the love.

So, to make sure you achieve more than just pretty pictures, I have created this short list to help you weed through all the marketing garbage and mediocre photographers that may miss those memories – follow this guide so that all your memories will last forever.

1) First thing, do a little research, and become familiar with the different styles of wedding photography. No two photographers would come out with the same images, but wedding photography broadly breaks down to three types, *traditional* or classic (everyone was traditional 25 years ago). This is someone who is very involved in the day, producing mostly posed shots and will spend time arranging both people and details to look a certain way. Another is *photo journalistic*, think of them as reality TV photographers they will document what happens, seldom or never asking you to pose. The third is *balanced* this is one who combines aspects of both. Keep this all in mind as you are looking through friend's albums or wedding resources, decide which you prefer and start looking for photographers who can fulfill that need, also if you hire someone with a balanced approach you could tell them which style you prefer.

2) Have at least a general idea of your budget, I discuss ways to save money here: [Saving Money on Wedding Photography](#) Pricing can vary considerable and you do not want to waste your time with someone who is not within your reach. On the other side if the price is too good to be true, it is most likely someone who is not a real professional and you would be taking a big chance. I have a golden rule about this “cost is something that can usually be negotiated, quality cannot.”

3) Now you have lots of knowledge but how do you find the right person? The first place to start is friends, they have already gone down this road and they might recommend their photographer or give you the name of the person they should have hired. If you do a search on the internet PLEASE go past the first page and more, the first page will be filled with larger firms with big marketing dollars behind them. Vendors can also be a good resource but be warned; the venue's preferred list is a source of advertising revenue for them and usually nothing more.

4) Narrow your choices down from the different websites but remember you are not hiring a web designer so do not go with someone just because you love their website. Quality is sometimes hard to define in qualitative terms, but look for the story behind each image, one

photo should make you want to see another. Finally make sure the essence of each wedding is coming through, that the photographer's style is not over whelming.

5) References are important and it is not a bad idea to call them but be warned the photographer is only providing the good ones. Be ready with specific questions to ask, not just do you recommend them, one effective question I like is "did your guests like him and did he handle your family's request well?" But, references are only one piece of the puzzle in the web 2.0 world we have today. Now we have reviews on wedding websites and local vendor sites such as Yelp or Google maps. Also just search for the name, you will surprised what will come up good and bad.

6) Make sure they are not just a "weekend warrior" you want a professional photographer, someone who is doing this as their sole living. Photography in this digital world is constantly changing, and you need someone who is dedicated to keeping themselves informed of the latest technologies and capabilities, this will ensure that you not only receive the best quality but also the most choices of products and services.

7) This is very important, ask the photographer do you shoot jpeg or raw (if they say film move on) To make sure they shoot in the raw format ask that you receive a copy of all the final raw files (put it in the contract). On the topic of files, are the jpegs and proofs watermarked or do you receive full size files ready to print, many studios charge significantly extra for the raw files and/or non-watermarked jpegs.

8) Ask to view samples of complete weddings and ask questions about that wedding, many studios substitute wedding images for staffs who are beginning, also this way you will get a feel for how they handle the stress of a complete day. I have also seen photographers who can create a wonderful "glamor" shot of the bride, one that is ready for a magazine but the rest of the wedding is very poor – just because you are a good photographer does not make one a good wedding photographer.

9) What is in the package? You want no surprises, and you want to confirm that the packages are equal when comparing from one photographer to another. I mentioned the files earlier, but other concerns are how many hours of coverage, if you are having a large wedding you may need two photographers, how many proofs do you receive, will **all** the images be given to me and how, on a DVD, flashcard, downloadable, how long until I receive the images? Do not forget the album! A subject on its own which I discuss here: [How to Create a Wedding Album](#) but make sure they have the knowledge and availability of what you want, there are so many options these days and quality varies GREATLY.

10) And finally, we have talked about the packages, quality, and price; but what is as equally important is the relationship you feel with the photographer. Remember, a photographer who frames everything perfectly, makes sure everyone is in focus, and gets every shot on your list may seem like a great photographer; however, if no one likes him that will show in the pictures. Even the most unobtrusive photographer still has a significant presence at your wedding; make sure that person is a guest you would invite.

**Conclusion:** I hope this list has been informative and will give you confidence in your choice of wedding photography, I discuss this subject in greater depth along with other related wedding articles on my website: [Wedding Guidance](#)