

WEDDING TIPS FOR BRIDES - #3

Selecting a Photographer

Make sure, when interviewing a photographer, that you see his or her portfolio to determine if the style suits yours. Other things to look for are:

- Do the pictures have good color and clarity?
- Did he pay attention to detail?
- Does he capture the emotions and expressions of the day?
- Is he creative with various poses?
- Does he use soft lenses and lighting?
- Can he do multiple exposures and split framing, which make interesting pictures?

Ask these important questions:

- Will he personally be taking the photographs of your wedding? If not, ask to meet the person who will be.
- Does he work with an assistant and will he have back-up equipment in the event of a problem?
- Is he familiar with your ceremony and reception location?
- Can you give him a list of special people with whom you want pictures?
- How many hours does his price include?
- What's the charge, if any, if the reception should last longer than planned?
- Will he stay through the cake cutting and garter toss?
- How much time will you need to allow for the formal wedding photos taken either before or after the ceremony?
- What are the photo package prices?
- What are the individual picture prices?
- What about parents' albums?
- When will the proof pictures be ready?
- How long will the prints take, once they have been ordered?
- Will he sell the album or negatives?
- How many years does he keep the negatives?
- What does he normally wear when photographing a wedding?
- Will he wear a tuxedo or other specified attire?

Ask if he is a member of Wedding Photographers International. Membership usually reflects a high level of professional competence and ethics.

Look at other wedding albums he has done. They may give you ideas for your own. If you are considering taking formal portraits a few weeks before the ceremony, discuss this at the same time. These are generally taken in the photographer's studio where he has necessary lighting,

backdrops and equipment. Wear your hair and accessories the same way you will on your wedding day.

Ask if he keeps the negatives and for how long. See if they can be purchased now or in the future. They should be kept in a fireproof safe, in the event your pictures are ever destroyed.

Some additional tips:

- Start looking for a photographer six to nine months before your wedding, since many are booked months in advance.
- Look through the wedding albums of friends and relatives who live in your area. Personal recommendations are always good.
- Bridal fairs are a great place to see the work of various photographers; get the names of those whose style you like.
- Ask for recommendations from caterers, florists, or reception site coordinators.
- Interview several photographers by making appointments to review their work.
- Ask to see sample wedding albums or a set of proofs from a recent wedding.
- Be sure the photographers you contact specialize in weddings. Don't hire a commercial or part-time photographer who occasionally handles weddings.
- Don't forget: If you're planning to send an announcement of your wedding to the newspaper, be sure your photographer knows, and takes a black and white portrait of the two of you as husband and wife. Order an 8 x 10 inch black and white glossy print to send to the paper.