

Written by Kimbra Cutlip
Photos by Stacy Richardson



Photo by Stacy Richardson, www.StacyRichardsonPhotography.com

Insider's Guide to Wedding Photos

Tips for Getting Perfect Shots

Gone are the days of the one-style-fits-all wedding portrait—bride holds bouquet, groom stands beside her with his hand around her waist. Smile. Click. Today's wedding albums are designed to tell stories about the couple, their families, their friends, and especially their special day. *Taste of the Bay* surveyed some of the top local wedding photographers to find out how couples can ensure they capture the best of their wedding day.

The Rule of Threes

Wedding photography has come to be defined by three distinct styles: formal, candid, and photojournalism.

Think of candid shots as little greetings to the happy couple recorded in photos. They typically show people in natural poses or mugging for the camera, such as the bridal party smiling at the photographer from the dance floor, or family members toasting the couple around their dinner table.

Photojournalism is meant to capture events naturally. Pictures shot in this style will reveal snippets of personality and tender moments in time, as when the father of the bride wipes a tear from his cheek.

Formal portraits capture the participants in what is, after all, a formal affair.

"It's important to use all three styles of photography in order to capture the story of the day," says John Dove of KRR Photography. "It's nice to have the combination. You want to get the fun pictures but also to have the formal ones that are important to both the bride and groom and also their families," he says.

PLANNING TIP:

When you review photographers' portfolios, look for experience, an aesthetic you like, and all three styles of photography.

(clockwise) The secret to fabulous wedding photos is your photographer capturing the right candid moments.

In-action, unplanned shots are very memorable.

Set aside alone time with your spouse to capture some private moments.

Traditional shots are great, but ask your photographer to take a few unique shots that'll tell the story of your wedding day and who you are as a couple.

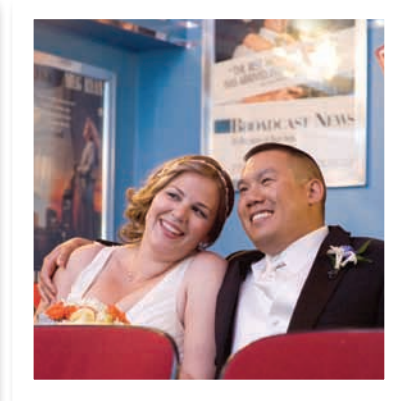
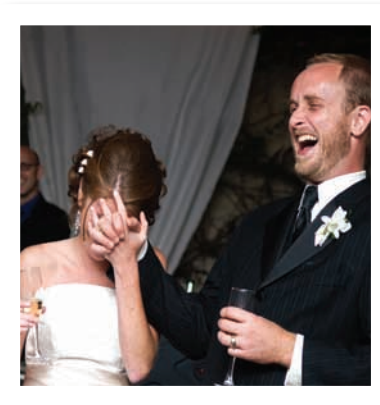
Put Some Time on Your Side

Without fail, every photographer we spoke with said the biggest mistake couples made was not scheduling time alone. "Very often the family doesn't let them take the time to be alone," says Elaine Studley of Hay McKenna Photography. Her studio requires clients to schedule time alone for photographs. "Typically it's a walk," she says, "sometimes a park, or in Annapolis, they may go for a walk along the water."

Annapolis photographer Stacy Richardson agrees, it is a chance for the bride and groom to have an authentic moment without distraction, and for the photographer to capture it. "That portrait time I set aside with just the bride and groom is really a time for them to be able to talk with each other and actually visit."

Our experts also suggest taking small breaks throughout the day to catch your breath and enjoy the moment. Studley says

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



All Photos by Stacy Richardson, www.StacyRichardsonPhotography.com

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

The Do's & Don'ts of Looking Great

For the Groom:

DO pick up your tux a week in advance. An ill-fitting tux is a nightmare in photos.

For the Bride:

DON'T overuse make-up. It is easier to add something when touching up a photo than it is to remove it. Consider a professional make-up artist, but make sure you are on the same page about the look you're going for. Do a test run before the wedding day.

For Both:

DO listen to the photographer. It's their job to make you look good. They may want you to do something that seems odd, but if you can go with it, be relaxed, and have fun, you may find out it looks fabulous through the lens.



It's best to take your formal shots before the reception begins.

scheduling down time is more important than scheduling up time, adding "the more frenetic the day, the more likely we are to see stress through the lens."

■ PLANNING TIP:

- *Deliberately schedule a thirty-minute block of time on your wedding day for photographs alone with your new spouse.*
- *Also schedule two or three 10 to 15 minute segments of down time during the wedding day to regroup and calm down.*

Make A List

Many standard detail shots include the rings, the cake, the dress, the first toast, etc. But, don't assume the photographer will know what elements are most important to you. Richardson suggests planning a list of shots ahead of time with your photographer.

Similarly, you will want to make sure to note the people you want photographed and any important groupings of family members or friends.

■ PLANNING TIP:

Dove recommends designating a family member in advance to help the photographer identify important people or coordinate groupings of people you want photographed.

If you want to use a particular location, let the photographer know before the wedding so they can be prepared. They may also suggest the best time for the shot to take advantage of lighting.

Be Your Self

A good wedding photographer will spend time getting to know you through a survey or an information session before the wedding. The more you can share with your photographer about who you are and what makes you tick, the more relaxed you will be around them on wedding day, and the easier it will be for them to capture your personality in pictures.

■ PLANNING TIP:

Make sure the photographer you meet with is the one who will be shooting on the day of your wedding.

If your budget will allow for engagement photos, Richardson says an engagement session can help you become comfortable with the photographer and with the process of being photographed.

When you choose a photographer who makes you comfortable and schedule your day with room to breathe, your planning will pay off in great photos that do more than just make you look good. Richardson aptly summed it up saying "People want to look back on their wedding and say 'I remember what I felt like that day,' instead of just 'I looked pretty, and he looked handsome.'" **TOTB**

