

How to Find a Good Photographer:

The date has been set, the wedding party has been chosen, the dress is being made.....it's now time to hire a photographer. This is where some wedding couples falter. Though they are spending thousands of dollars on the meal and alcohol they try to save money on the wedding photographs.

After the meal has been eaten, the music has stopped and the tuxes returned - all you have left are your memories. A true Professional Photographer will create images of your wedding that will reflect your personalities, and will give you the same feelings when you look through your album on your Golden Wedding Anniversary that you felt on the day of your wedding. Here are a few helpful hints on finding someone who you can trust with your memories:

- Hire a photographer who is a member of the Professional Photographers of Canada (PPOC). This association governs its members and continually offers them educational opportunities to improve their skills. A photographer has to apply for acceptance into membership with the criteria being (among others) skill, professionalism and ethics.
- Titles such as *Master of Photographic Arts (MPA)*, as well as *Craftsman of Photographic Arts (CPA)* are bestowed upon photographers who have continually demonstrated superior skill and knowledge. These are people who truly know what it takes to create outstanding images.
- National Accreditations demonstrate above average professional skill in a specified field of the photographic industry. Consider them proof of a photographer's speciality.
- Research a studio's reputation before booking. A quick call to the *Better Business Bureau* as well as talking to friends *before* signing a contract can prevent unfortunate situations from ever occurring.
- Look for a photographer who compliments his/her work with a quality album. Art Leather Albums are generally considered the best available on the market today, and are guaranteed for life.
- If money is extremely tight, consider cutting back on what you wish to purchase (*consider quality, not quantity*), or cut back elsewhere in your wedding budget. Any way you slice it, you pay for quality. If it's cheap, there is a reason.
- In this climate, weather is a factor. Make sure you and your photographer devise a back-up plan in case of bad weather if you are planning outdoor photographs. In the

case of a winter wedding remember the sun goes down early so besides selecting a location that is suitable for photographs, consider having your photographs before the ceremony to take advantage of the sunlight while you have it.

- The difference between a great French Chef and the person who burns toast is not the ingredients, it's the knowledge, skill, and creative flair that has been developed and perfected over a lifetime. The same applies with photography. Creating outstanding images is a skilled art form. Trusting your memories to your sister's friend's cousin's boyfriend who "shoots" weddings on weekends is not a wise decision.
- Rely on your gut instincts. If you do not feel comfortable with someone, under no circumstance should you hire him or her - you will always regret it. As well, when you walk into a studio, you should get a feeling for the quality of work they produce, and how dedicated they are to their profession. As well, when you find someone you trust, listen to their advice on the time schedule of events on the day, they've been there before and know what works and what doesn't. You want to enjoy your wedding, and not be running from place to place punching a clock all day.
- Remember that hindsight is always twenty-twenty. In the long run, it's far better to have spent a little more than you expected to, than to have spent a little less than you should have. There are no second chances with your wedding.



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