

A romantic close-up of a bride and groom. The bride, on the left, has blonde hair styled in a low bun with loose waves and is wearing a strapless, beaded wedding dress and large, ornate earrings. The groom, on the right, has a beard and is wearing a dark tuxedo with a bow tie. They are both looking down at their clasped hands, which are adorned with wedding rings. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an outdoor wedding setting.

THE
WEDDING
EXPERIENCE

A Guide for all Rocker in Love Brides



W E L C O M E

Hello Bride-to-be, and welcome! This is such an exciting time for you! I'm sure your mind is racing with all that needs to be planned. It's all very exciting, but it can also be somewhat overwhelming. You're planning the day that you've been anticipating maybe since you were a little girl? And yet you only get one shot at it! By the time you get the hang of it, the planning is over! My goal as a wedding photographer is to make this one aspect of the planning process simple. Photography is more than just images, it's a real part of your day. Not only do you deserve beautiful images, you also deserve an amazing photographic experience. The goal of this guide is to help you plan your wedding day in a way that will allow us to provide you with the BEST experience possible. Since you're officially in the Rocker in Love Family, the next step is to plan your engagement session- if you haven't done yet - and then start chatting about wedding day details as we get closer to your date! We're beyond excited to be working with you!! Dani, Otto, and I cannot wait for all the details, emotions and fun of your day already! Luiz and Ginger - our mascots - say "Hi" too!! From our family to yours, welcome! It's an honor to be your wedding photographers!



THE ROCKER IN LOVE FAMILY

You may have gotten a hint of this already...but we LOVE what we do!
Documenting a wedding day is such an honor!

Since we'll be spending a lot of time together on the big day, we want to make sure you feel like you really know us and understand why we are in love with our job!

Our aim is to deliver images that matches your vibe and honors what you want. It's that authentic experience that creates genuine photos. those real emotions that we want to keep alive for you.

Our wish is that you look back at this day anytime in the future and feel it all again and again as you say "What an amazing wedding day we had! What an amazing marriage we have!"

3 CORE VALUES



EXPERIENCE

BEYOND BEAUTIFUL IMAGES

Don't get us wrong, beautiful photos are important – we've got that covered – but what really matters is:

- YOU
- YOUR LOVE STORY
- YOUR EXPERIENCE

The point of photography is getting back to that moment – at any time in the future – and it doesn't matter how beautiful the image is on camera if you felt awkward while taking it.

Our focus is, above all, making sure you have an AMAZING experience.

One that actually allows you to relax, be present, and fully enjoy your day.

That in-person experience will reflect in truly amazing images that bring you back to your day over and over again.



HONESTY

LIKE ANY RELATIONSHIP: TRUST IS THE KEY.

That hesitation to open up and be vulnerable is completely natural to the human experience.

You spent a great deal of time and energy dreaming about a day that has so much meaning.

So when it finally arrives, how can you relax, be present, and fully enjoy your day?

The key is to trust your vendors and most importantly – your photographers. We have the responsibility – and honor – to not only document all the details you intentionally planned but also the feelings and emotions of the day. And that documentation is not only for you but for all of those who weren't present – or haven't even been born yet.



FAMILY

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS

Our little human sits in our laps as we flip through the pages of our wedding album, recounting the stories of the start of our family – his family!

Is those little moments you don't expect captured the ones that, years later, mean the most.

It's the family members no longer with us. It's the love in our eyes, forever in those images. It's the celebration, the joy, and those quiet moments... The big but also the unexpected, little in-between moments. That's what we promise you – all the real emotions so that you will always be able to look back and remember the joy and love.

So in ten years, twenty years, fifty years, your littles and maybe grand littles, can sit on your lap as you recount the joy of your beginning. We do it in a way that gives you the trust to sit back, relax, be present, and fully enjoy your day.



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LET'S TALK ABOUT
Our Family and you two



A background image of a bride and groom embracing outdoors. The bride is wearing a white dress and a pearl necklace, and the groom is wearing a dark suit with a bow tie. They are standing in a field with dry grass and a clear sky.

The gift of FRIENDSHIP

This may not be what you were expecting to find in your photographer's client guide, but if you don't read anything else here, please read this. It's so important for us to explain how we view our relationship with our couples. As artists, we were always seeking for more purpose and more impact in our business/ life. We loved the images we created but we knew there was something missing. We started realizing that what we desired in our business, more than anything, was a personal connection to our couples. Everyone wants to be known, seen, loved and befriended. Human nature appreciate someone caring about who they are, what they're passionate about and why.

In the early years of our business, we committed to forming friendships with our clients and intentionally caring to get to know them. It changed everything. Having a heart for genuine friendships in our business has made our business so much more than how we pay our bills; it's a huge part of our purpose in life. Not only is our friendship with our clients a gift to us, but it positively impacts our clients' wedding day experience. When you are getting ready on the morning of your wedding day, it will be a relief to feel like a friend walks through those doors with a camera and not a random hired vendor. Friendship breeds comfortability and comfortability leads to trust...and trust is something that EVERY bride needs to have in their relationship with their wedding photographer! We're so excited to get to know and that's why we say "welcome to the family"



YOUR ENGAGEMENT

Now that you have picked a date, a photographer and probably a venue/location as well, you can celebrate! Those are some of the toughest decisions in wedding planning and you can cross them off your list! Hooray!! Now on to the fun stuff...like your engagement session!

We include engagement sessions in The Wedding Experience because we truly believe that they are a VITAL part of the entire process. During your engagement session, you'll have the chance to get to know us, experience how we shoot and how we handle posing and lighting. This session will make a HUGE impact on how the wedding day flows. We'll arrive on your wedding day already knowing how you two interact, what your best poses are and how to photograph you in a genuine way! What we will learn about you during your engagement session is invaluable! You will feel like such a pro on your big day because of the great practice you had during your engagement session!

Your engagement session can be scheduled anytime before your wedding day. We normally suggest booking it at least 3-6 months in advance to avoid stress. Because our weekends are filled with weddings, we shoot engagement sessions on weekday evenings, normally from 5-7pm depending on the light and the time of the year. In the winter months, 3-5pm is a normal time frame for an engagement shoot!

As you start to plan for your engagement shoot, you will need to start brainstorming about location ideas. We LOVE it when couples pick a location that is special or sentimental to them in some way! If you can't think of anywhere specific that you would like to shoot, we can help you decide on a location. As long as the light is great, we can make ANY location look awesome! We had shoot at all 50 US States and all kinds of different locations indoors, outdoors, urban, National Parks, downtown big cities, little towns, farms, campuses, Dairy Queen, and even laundromats! Do not shy away from unique ideas and be sure to keep reading for outfit ideas and inspiration!

ENGAGEMENT PREP

It's always a little intimidating to have your picture taken...even if it's just a photo on an iPhone that is taken by a friend. We still want to look nice, make sure nothing is in our teeth and that our hair is behaving - even if we want it messy! I realize that preparing for your engagement session can be a little overwhelming. Over the next few pages, I'll be providing tips for outfits, handling nerves and recommendations that will make your shoot the best it can possibly be!



the basics + what to bring

POCKETS | Empty your pockets! You don't want to have key chains or phones showing through your pockets. This is easy to overlook but very hard to edit out.

TIMING | The sun sets quickly especially if your shoot is not in the summer months. The later you arrive, the less time we have to shoot! Once the sun is set, the shoot will be over.

NAILS AND RING CLEANING | It's ideal to clean your ring before your shoot. We love to shoot a few close ups or macro shots of it.

CHANGING CLOTHES | As much as we would like to say that we always have restrooms for outfit changes, more often than not, our clients do quick outfit changes in their car if there are no other options.

DEEP BREATHS | We are going to help you along the way and it's going to be a blast! We will instruct you on everything you need to know. Enjoy this time together, and make a date out of it! Plan dinner afterwards and celebrate!!

PARKING FEE | This may not apply to your shoot, but you always want to plan in advance for a cash-only parking fee that we may encounter or any tolls. We've had instances where this has caused some stress, and stress is what we want to avoid.

CLOTHING | We'll explain this more in-depth in the next few pages but generally, our couples like to bring one casual outfit and one dressier outfit. If you're unsure about a few pieces, feel free to bring all options, and we can help you decide or we can email about it beforehand!

LIP COLOR & HAIRSPRAY | You may need to apply more lip color after one outfit change and a few kisses. (If you have a bold lip color, try to have a matte finish so it won't transfer to your groom as intensely!). Hairspray and a brush will be helpful if your hair struggles in the humidity!

FLIP FLOPS | If you're wearing shoes that are difficult to walk in but look awesome, bring some comfy shoes to change into while we walk to each shooting location!



OUTFITS & STYLING

Believe it or not, you have so much control over the outcome of your shoot and what it looks and feels like! What you choose to wear is a big decision that often causes some stress for the bride beforehand. However, our hope is that with a little education, you will be able to determine the style and feel you desire for your shoot which will make your outfit selection so much easier and less complicated! Let's start by debunking some very common outfit myths that a lot of people believe about what they should wear to their session!

outfit myths:

1. MYTH ONE: *Avoid neutrals, they wash you out!*

Whoever started this myth couldn't have been further from the truth. There are some colors that don't work for some people, but for the majority of people, they look amazing in neutrals and those colors shouldn't be avoided. The truth is, neutrals are the most photogenic color for portraits.

2. MYTH TWO: *Always wear black or you won't look thin!*

Sure, black is slimming, but it also photographs very heavy in portraits. There is nothing wrong with black, but if you're only wearing it to look thinner and deep down you're hoping for light and airy portraits, it may not be the best choice.

3. MYTH THREE: *You two need to match!*

Please don't try to match your significant other. Instead, try to coordinate! Coordinating is a completely different concept than "matching." Coordination means you are usually choosing different colors that look good together but are not close to being the same. We have some more tips about this concept in the following pages.

4. MYTH FOUR: *Your location determines your style more than your outfit!*

False! Your outfit has way more impact than your location. Your location is just a setting in the background but you two will still be the main focus of the images. If you want light, airy and an overall romantic look to your photos, you will need to wear lighter, more neutral colors in your photos to achieve this look!

5. MYTH FIVE : *You have to buy something new!*

False! If you know you look awesome in an outfit that you already have and it fits the style you want for your engagement session, that would be a great choice!



DECIDING ON YOUR
STYLE



What style do you prefer?

BOLD or NEUTRAL

DRESSY or CASUAL

CLASSIC or TRENDY

These choices represent the three main decisions you will have to make in regards to your outfit choices. There are no right or wrong answers! Maybe you want one outfit to be dressy and the other to be casual. Maybe you want one outfit to be very light and neutral but you want to wear more color in the next outfit. These categories will hopefully help you determine what you're hoping for in your engagement session. If you're feeling stuck and can't seem to determine what you prefer, that's very normal!

Here are some general “rules of thumb” when it comes to styling during an engagement session. Once you read through these, you may have a better understanding of what you prefer, and you can start planning your outfits. These “rules of thumb” are based on our experience and aren't concrete rules that can't be broken. However, if you have questions about one of them in regards to what you want to wear, just email us and we can talk about what would be best!

Things to Avoid:

1. Colors to avoid: bright reds, neons, bright oranges (they reflect color onto skin and can be difficult to edit!).
2. Avoid patterns smaller than a quarter: Tiny patterns cause something called “Chromatic Aberration” in digital images. Men's checkered shirts are fine if the “checks” are on the larger side.
3. Alternate Heaviness: If one of you is wearing very dark jeans, the other may want to wear lighter pants. If one of you is wearing a navy top, the other shouldn't wear a dark/heavy-colored top. To a certain degree, alternating the “heaviness” of your outfits can make your images look more balanced.
4. Avoid one of you being casual while the other is more dressy: This can look a bit awkward in your photos.
5. Other things to avoid: Tennis shoes, Graphic tees, Bold logos on shirts, Sunglasses & Baseball Hats.

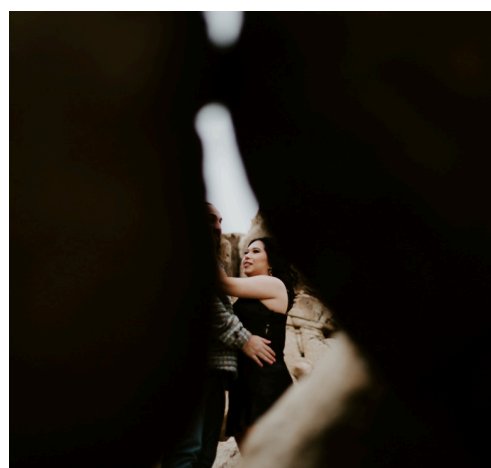
ROMANTIC STYLE RECIPE

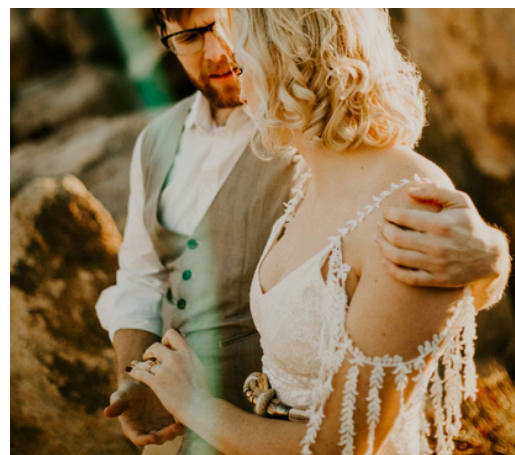
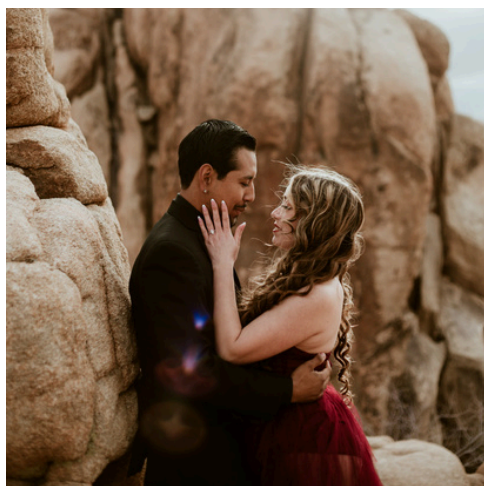
If you're hoping for a more romantic style of shoot that includes "light" and "airy" colors, you can actually make outfit choices that will allow your images to turn out brighter, softer, and extra photogenic! Here are some ingredients that go into creating a romantic-styled shoot. It's important to note that you do not need to choose all of these ingredients in order to have a light and airy style to your images but the more ingredients you include, the more romantic and bright your images will be:

- *Neutral Colors*: Blushes, tans, light pinks, faint blues and light minty teals, creams, grays and whites will always result in more of a light and airy look in your images. These colors photograph softer and more romantically!

- *Long, Flowy Skirts/Dresses*: Dresses and skirts with feminine ruffles, multiple layers of fabric and the ability to blow and move in the wind will always photograph beautifully! You would be amazed at how impactful moving fabric softens an image.

- *Khakis vs. Jeans*: If you really want your images to be as bright as possible, consider having your groom wear lighter pants instead of dark dress pants or dark jeans.





BRIGHT & BOLD RECIPE

Just like the “Romantic” recipe, you don’t have to apply all of these “ingredients” to get a perfectly BRIGHT & BOLD look to your engagement session. These ingredients include:

- *Only One Wears a Pattern:* If one of you has a bold pattern, it’s very important that the other doesn’t. The bolder the pattern, the more important this rule becomes!

- *Bold Backgrounds:* A lot of time, if our couples are going for a bold and bright look, we will look for solid colored backgrounds to use for part of their engagement session! It’s a double win if the background coordinates with their outfits!

- *Only One Bold Color:* If you really want a bold and bright look but you want to do it well and tastefully, we would suggest that only one of you have a bright and bold colored outfit and the other stay in a solid neutral to avoid overdoing it!

- *Large Patterns are Preferred:* If you really want to wear a pattern, our recommendation is that your pattern is on the larger side. Patterns that are smaller than a quarter can be difficult to photograph. This isn’t true of all patterns but it’s a good general rule to go by!

- *Consider Muting your Favorite Color:* If you love a certain bold color and you want to include it in your outfit selection, we would recommend selecting a muted tone of this favorite color. For example, if you love purple, instead of selecting a deep, dark and bold purple shirt, you can get the purple vibes through a lavender or even a periwinkle color!



ENGAGEMENT SESSION

Approximate Start Times

WINTER

Dec-Mar 3:00-5:00pm

During December through Mid-March you can plan on your engagement session taking place around 3-5pm. However, the time changes in Mid-March so that will make the start time one hour later.

SUMMER

Jun-Aug 6:30-8:30pm

Summer engagements, just like all engagements, take place two hours before sunset. This will hopefully mean that the shoot will be during the cooler part of the day.

SPRING

Apr/May - Varies

The sunset time drastically changes throughout the course of these two months and so our shooting times change as well. You can plan on approximately 5:30-7:30pm in April and 6:00-8:00pm in May.

FALL

Sept/Nov - Varies

The sunset time changes drastically during these three months. In Sept, you can plan on 5:30-7:30pm until the third week, and then you can plan on 5:00-7:00pm until Mid-Oct. After the first week of Nov, plan on 3:00-5:00pm.

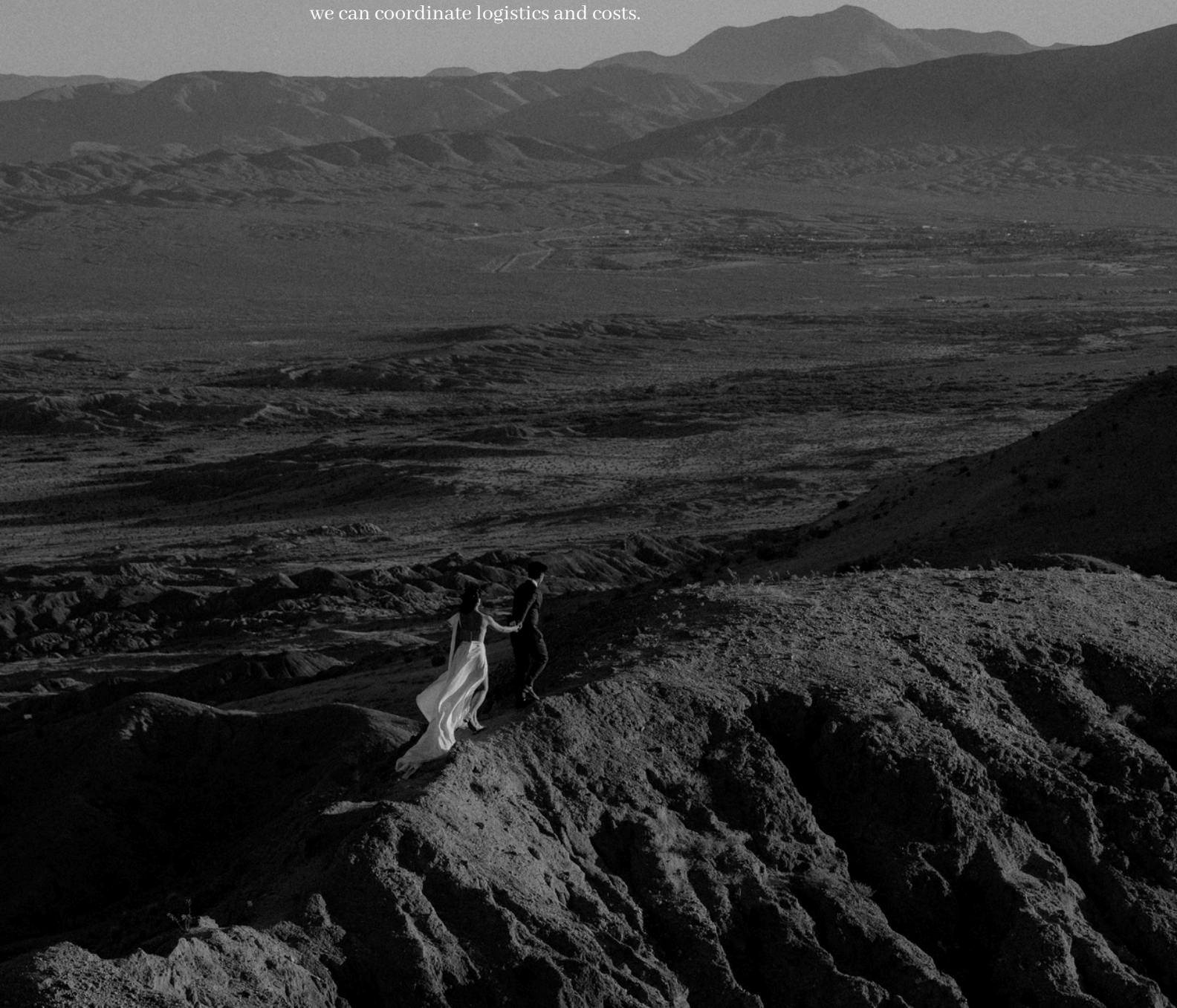
LOGISTICS

- We photograph engagement sessions on weekday evenings because our weekends are dedicated to photographing weddings!

- We love shooting at gorgeous locations. We recommend two locations max for engagements. A general rule of thumb is the more locations and outfits, the less images, but the more variety you'll have!

- We can do sunrise sessions if necessary! We require sunrise shoots for those who want to take portraits in a very crowded location like El Matador beach.

- We love to travel to our shoots! Just let us know in advance so we can coordinate logistics and costs.



PREPARING YOUR GROOM



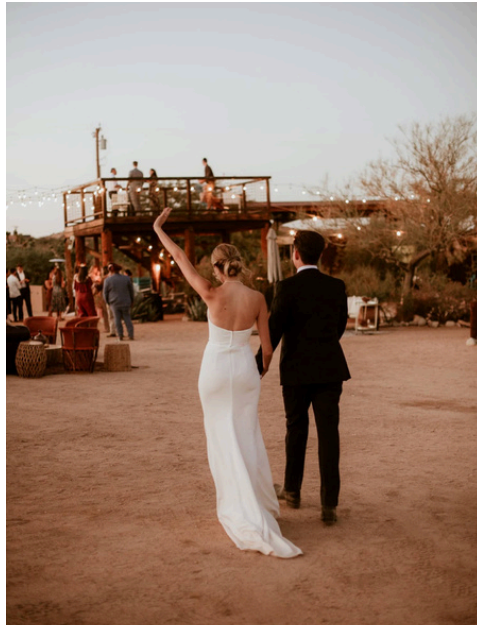


PREPARING YOUR GROOM

If you're a bride that is a little anxious about how your groom is going to react to this whole "picture" thing, you're not alone. We receive so many emails from brides who are worried that their groom won't be into it, but we have great news for you...you both are more photogenic than you think. We are constantly surprising couples by discovering their hidden modeling skills and this is our most common response from our Rocker in Love Grooms: "That wasn't as bad as I thought! It was actually fun!" Boom! Mission accomplished! When the groom says taking pictures was FUN, we have done our job well! Your engagement session is supposed to be fun and relaxed, not forced or awkward. As you prepare for your shoot, there are a few things

that you can do to help your groom know what to expect. First of all, we highly recommend sitting down together and showing him 2-3 of your favorite engagement sessions that we have photographed. Spend some time together scrolling through a few blog posts. This will allow him to gauge what his expectations should be. We also recommend that you allow plenty of time to get to your shoot! There is nothing worse than showing up late and arguing in the car before the session! Last but not least, remember to have patience with him and don't assume that he's not going to have a good time...You'll be surprised how much you will both enjoy your session!





PLANNING YOUR WEDDING DAY

More often than not, our couples are planning a wedding for the very first time, and it can seem incredibly overwhelming! There are a lot of unknowns:

How do you get what you ultimately desire? What are the best practices for the timeline of the day? How do you get the most out of your photography investment? What are common mistakes to avoid? There is so much to consider and we are here to help you make the best decisions for your day!

Overall, the most impactful decisions have to do with your wedding day timeline. We have seen poorly planned timelines wreck wedding days, and we have seen strategic timelines save wedding days when emergencies arise. If you want to focus your energy on really being intentional about one main thing in your planning process, direct that intention towards the timeline for the greatest impact! Let's get started!

SAMPLE TIMELINE

Let's talk about the Timeline | These next pages will outline a starting point of a wedding day working off of a 6pm ceremony time frame. This timeline is also based on a wedding day that includes a first look. Ninety-percent of our couples choose to do a First Look, and you can read more about that option a few pages over! Remember that all wedding days are different, and your timeline may differ due to travel times and unique situations.

Bridal Details 2:30-3:15



Every bride loves having those beautiful shots of her bridal details. It's an important part of the story, and we love having some time to shoot the dress, shoes, jewelry, invitations, etc. These shots allow us to get warmed up for the rest of the big day. We normally like to allow at least 45 minutes for this part of the day. While we are shooting details, we are also capturing some shots of the bride and who she chose to get ready with! If the groom is getting ready nearby we would also begin photographing him and his close to 40 minutes before the First Look (if you choose to have)

After the details have been photographed, it's time for the bride to get into her dress! This is a big moment! We usually ask everyone that is getting ready together to be dressed by the time the bride is ready to get into her dress. This ensures that everyone will look photo-ready in those images. After the bride is in her gown, she can put on her jewelry, veil, shoes, etc., and we would shoot some additional bridal portraits!



3:15-3:45 Bridal Prep

First Look 4:00



If you decide to have a First Look before the ceremony, we would find the perfect location prior to the getting ready portion of the day! Don't stress about your portrait locations, we will make sure the location is private, has great natural light and is as secluded as possible. The best thing about the First Look is that we can do most portraits before ceremony so you can enjoy the Cocktail Hour or have a private moment after the Ceremony.

Portraits 4:15-4:45



After the bride and groom take their time with the First Look, we will begin taking a few romantic portraits of the two of them with all the excitement of the moment. We will find the locations for these shots as well! Remember, the LIGHT determines where we shoot so we might need to adjust the location. As we shoot these portraits, the bridal party can start making their way to us for bridal party portraits!

Bridal Party Portraits 4:50-5:20



Now it's time for Bridal Party shots! One way to make sure we stay on schedule for bridal party portraits is to have someone designated to put the boutonnieres on the groomsmen before they arrive for portraits. During Bridal Party portraits, we will make sure to take...

... some great shots of the guys and girls both separately AND together. After bridal party portraits are complete, the bride will go into hiding so that early guests don't sneak a peek, and the ushers will begin their duties.



5:30-6:00 Bride in Hiding

THE TIMELINE CONTINUED...

Reception Details 5:30-5:50



If the reception is at the same location as the ceremony, we will use this time to shoot the reception decor UNTOUCHED. If the ceremony and reception are in different locations, we recommend having a cocktail hour outside of the main reception area if possible so that we can grab some great shots of your reception before the night begins and guests start laying down purses and coats on their seats.

It's time to get married!! Most ceremonies are 30-minutes long. If your ceremony is longer than 30 minutes, we'll be sure to make adjustments to the timeline. Cherish these moments! Your ceremony will pass by so quickly!



Ceremony 6:00-6:30

Family Portraits 6:40-7:10

Family formals normally take place immediately following the ceremony. It's best to save all of the family formals until after the ceremony because ALL family members will be present at that time.



We'll need about 30 minutes for family formals, and we will send a questionnaire before the wedding where you can list out the shots that you want. We recommend shooting portraits outdoors if possible so that they resemble more of a natural family portrait style, especially if the ceremony location is dark!

Just-Married Portraits

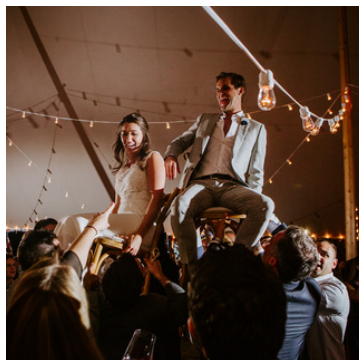
7:15-7:30



7:00pm is the BEST time of day for portraits in the late spring, summer and early fall! This is when the sun is glowy and golden. We love having a few extra minutes with the bride and groom to take a few "Just Married" portraits right after family formals!

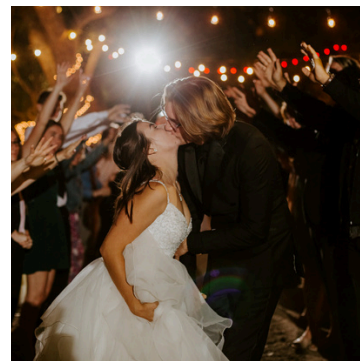
Reception Begins

7:30



This is when the bridal party lines up for introductions and the party begins!! This part of the day, we go with the flow. After dinner is served, no need to be so strict with the timeline and as long as you have someone making sure that - eventually - you are doing what you planned like speeches, first dances, cake cutting, bouquet toss... Its fun time! Also, we work off of natural light AND flash lights so after the sun is set we are still getting beautiful images!

Most weddings we photograph has a 9hours of coverage so that we can be present for the main events of the reception and about two hours of dancing! If you're interested in having your exit photographed, there are several options for this! You can either add additional coverage or plan a "Controlled Exit" with just your bridal party! We have had GREAT success with this and the party never stops! Keep reading to learn more about the advantages of a Controlled Exit!



The Exit
10:30

APPROXIMATE TIMES:

DETAILS & PREP : 2 HOURS

FIRST LOOK & PORTRAITS : 30-40 MINS

BRIDAL PARTY : 30-40 MINS

FAMILY FORMALS : 20-30 MINS

EXTRA PORTRAIT TIME : As much time as you'll give us!

WEDDINGS &
SEASONS





Seasonal Portrait + Timing Tips

WINTER

Winter weddings are gorgeous! However, they do take some additional planning simply because of the sunset time. The hard part about a winter timeline is the fact that the sun sets around 4pm. This means that all of your portraits have to be done before then! This isn't a problem if you're having a late afternoon wedding. However, if you're planning on having a late evening wedding, you may have a bit of down time from 4pm until the start of the ceremony. You will also need more coverage time as well.

SPRING

Spring weddings are wonderful because they are the perfect temperature! However, we recommend having plenty of Claritin and Zyrtec on hand just in case allergies start to flare up during portrait time. Spring weddings normally mean the potential for some blooms! If we happen to find any type of blooming tree or plant, it will be worth it to give us a few minutes for portraits with it! You'll LOVE the result!

SUMMER

Summer weddings are amazing! We love that there is so much daylight! In some months, the light will last until 8:30pm! So, if you're having a summer wedding, you'll need to plan on having a few minutes to slip out of the reception for your glowy, sunset portraits. You will NOT regret this! This is the absolute best light of the day and you're going to want to have portraits taken during this time period. Usually these portraits happen during dinner or open dancing so that no one even notices that you're gone for a few minutes!

FALL

Fall weddings are a favorite for many! The temperature is amazing and we love the fall colors! Most of our fall brides worry about color, and we just want to encourage you that all we need is one tree with some color in order to make it look like fall! A little bit of color can go a long way!! Your portrait time (and fall colors) will vary depending on your wedding date. We'll be sure to discuss this when we go through your pre wedding meeting!

A full-page photograph of a wedding couple in a lush garden. The bride is wearing a white dress and veil, and the groom is in a dark suit. They are standing in front of a dense green hedge, with a flowering bush on the left. The text 'PRE-CEREMONY' is centered in a white box.

PRE-CEREMONY



Let the day begin!

This portion of The Wedding Experience really sets the stage for the entire wedding day. The next few pages we will share tips and tricks that will ensure a seamless morning of bridal preparation and beautiful portraits!



GETTING READY

It's the morning of your wedding! Hopefully all of the little details are taken care of and you're relaxing while your hair is being done. If certain items haven't been checked off of the to-do list, it's time to hand them over to someone else. Delegation is a key part of a stress-free wedding day. We know it's hard to hand over the decorating duties and all of the last minute things that need to be done, but it really is important to relax the morning of your wedding. The rest of the day is going to be fast paced and filled with a lot of emotions! Take advantage of this down time! There are a few things to consider about the "getting ready" portion of the day. Do you want to share a "first look" with your dad or any other person who plays a huge role in your life?

Will you and your groom be exchanging gifts during this time? If so, who would you like to deliver them? Are there certain women in your life who would appreciate seeing you get into your gown? Some brides want very few people around for this moment. Other brides love having aunts and grandmas present! It's totally up to you - of course! A few other things to consider...as you get ready to put your dress on, refrain from putting any jewelry on. We love shooting all of those final steps once you're in your gown! Speaking of the gown, if your gown is on a plastic hanger, try to make a note to bring a wooden hanger along for picture sake. If you forget, no big deal! We will try to find one or adapt. Keep reading along for more "getting ready" tips to help you prepare!







WINDOW

EFFECT

This is something that will make a dramatic impact on your pre-ceremony photos. By having just a simple window in the bridal prep area, we are able to create beautiful portraits with soft light. If there are no windows or natural light in the getting-ready area, we will more than likely have you do some faux "getting dressed" shots somewhere on the property where we can access natural light. This may be another room or just a simple doorway.



RINGS, SHOES, JEWELS ...

The whole day begins with the DETAILS! This is one of our favorite parts of the wedding day, because it allows us to prepare and get our creative side warmed up for the rest of the day! We photograph a bride's details in a way that matches and showcases the style of the entire wedding day. So, in some ways, the details set the stage for the look of the whole wedding, and we love having ample time to stylize and shoot everything from the dress, to the jewelry, to grandma's handkerchief! To the right, you'll find a list of the most common details that we photograph. We ask brides to gather any details they have before we arrive so that we can walk in, say hello, give you a big hug and then begin with all the goodies! (Please assure your mom that we will take GREAT care of the dress, we promise!)



WHAT TO BRING



dress
 veil/hairpieces
 rings (all three)
 shoes
 bouquet & boutonniere
 jewelry
 perfume
 invitation suite
 borrowed & blue

DAY-OF REMINDERS





GATHER the goods.

If possible, collect all of your details before we arrive so that we can begin quickly and have more time for some “getting ready” shots of you.

EXTRA elements.

Sometimes, depending on the theme and “look” of the wedding day, there may be some extra elements that you could include when you gather your details. This could be a linen from one of your tablescapes or some ribbon that you used on bridesmaids gifts. Anything that has great texture and flows with the theme of the day would be wonderful to have as options for detail shots!

KEEP all three rings.

The most common detail missing when we arrive are the rings! Moms, officiants and planners will tell you to hand over your wedding band to the best man before the day begins. However, it's actually better to hand it over during the bridal party portraits so that we can shoot some great ring shots at the beginning of the day! If you forget, no worries, we can always work around and photograph them after.

BRING the bouquet.

Don't forget the bouquet! Have the bouquets and boutonniere delivered to the bride before the first look so that she can have her bouquet in her portraits. No worries, if it's hot, we'll be sure to keep it in water as much as possible before the ceremony!

When you're planning a wedding day timeline, the best advice we could give is to ADD CUSHION TIME! Sometimes the most simple things can take an extra 20 minutes and then all of a sudden, the whole morning is thrown off. We have seen "getting the bride in her dress" take almost 40 minutes because of a button malfunction. It's a smart idea to add in an extra ten minutes here and there so that we have some wiggle room to work with! This way, if one part of the day gets thrown off by 20 minutes, we can help you compensate for that time in other areas. There are so many different things to think about when you're planning a wedding day, so here are some tips for the pre-ceremony timeline! We realize that every single wedding day is different and so not all of these tips will apply to every wedding day schedule. Something else to consider is that not EVERYTHING will go as planned, and we promise you, that is completely normal!!



BOUQUETS AND BOUTONNIERE

Specially if you are doing a First Look, you will need your bouquet & boutonniere! Have them delivered to the room where the bride is getting ready.

TRAVEL TIME

Be sure to think about the travel time and TRAFFIC to and from your getting ready location and your venue!

HAIR & MAKEUP

We encourage brides to have at least their makeup done before we start because who wants a ton of shots without their makeup on?!

GROOMSMEN PREP

we will photograph the guys getting ready if they are in the same location as the bride. If they are not in the same location, we'll need to plan for this travel time in the timeline.

TIMING TIPS



GETTING IN THE DRESS

We'll instruct you to get into your dress close to a window and it would be fabulous to have your bridesmaids dressed when you're getting in your gown!

CREATE A CUSHION

A 10-minute cushion every now and then is a GREAT idea! It's amazing how fast time slips away the day of! This will relieve so much stress!



WHAT MAKES A VEIL *fly*?

As your wedding photographer, we feel that it's our duty to let you know that not all veils have equal flying power! It's true! Some veils do not fly! It's actually very disappointing for a bride to realize on her wedding day that it's impossible to capture the "flying veil" shot she always dreamed of because she selected a veil that has too much detail and is too heavy to fly! So, if a flying veil shot is very important to you, here are some tips for selecting a veil that can easily go airborne and is extra photogenic! :

1. Avoid heavy beading and detail that weighs down your veil.

2. One layer is best! Multiple layers of tulle can be hard to toss.

4. Fine tulle flies more freely. Stiff tulle is a little more rigid.

YOUR FIRST LOOK

Your first look is an amazing part of your wedding day! If you aren't sure about this tradition, the next few pages will explain why it would be a romantic addition to your wedding day celebration that not only adds to the experience but also reduces stress. Please know that we would never want any of our couples to feel pressured to go with this option. However, we do want to make sure that we share all of the benefits of a first look, because there is a reason 90% of our couples do this and LOVE it!



THE FIRST LOOK explained



I have confessed my deep love for “First Looks” numerous times on my blog, and I tend to point them out in every blog post. There is a reason for this. They’re awesome! However, not everyone is aware of how wonderful they truly are, because they get caught up in how “non-traditional” it is and they immediately write it off. I can speak to that mindset because I had the same mindset about my own wedding! I wanted a REACTION. I wanted Michael to be so surprised and overcome with joy when I walked down the aisle that he bawled at the first sight of me! Isn’t that EVERY girl’s dream? Who doesn’t want that reaction? Luckily, I was able to have the best of both worlds. Michael and I decided to share an intimate “First Look” moment on our wedding day, AND he still bawled when I came down the aisle. He was in tears and so was everyone who was watching him!! Walking down the aisle on my wedding day was a moment that I will treasure for a lifetime! Our first look didn’t take anything away, if anything, it added to it!

After experiencing our own wedding and shooting hundreds of others, we’ve come to this conclusion: Some brides love “traditions”... but what a bride REALLY wants when it comes to her groom seeing her for the first time is a REACTION. Those who are not interested in a First Look usually think that by seeing each other beforehand, they will lose part of that reaction. They also assume that it will not be as emotional as it would be if they were coming down the aisle. What I have found (this is starting to sound like a research paper!) is so ironic. Everyone knows that wedding days are a bit stressful for the bride and groom.

The whole day is focused on them, they want to look their best, they want to be on time, the groom has no idea what side the boutonniere is supposed to go on and little by little... the tension grows.

It’s before the ceremony and the gravity of what is about to happen starts to sink in and the calm, collected groom who was playing golf just a few short hours ago is now starting to feel a little anxious. So what happens next? The groom waits in a little room somewhere for his cue from the coordinator. It seems like it’s taking FOREVER. Finally, the coordinator leans his/her head in and hurries the groom to get ready. With clammy hands, the groom enters the ceremony and what does he find? He finds anywhere from 60 to sometimes 300 people and they’re all looking where? Right at his face because everyone has expectations and anticipation about his first reaction. This is the farthest thing from a private, intimate moment. Sure, it’s powerful and wonderful. It truly is one of the best moments of the entire wedding day! But when I walked down the aisle, Dani wasn’t a nervous wreck because he had spent the morning with me and our best friends, and the pressure was OFF. By the time our ceremony rolled around he was ready to ENJOY our beautiful day!

The nerves were gone and when the nerves are gone, true emotions are free to be expressed in a truly unhindered way. So if I were to condense what I just wrote: Basically, Grooms normally become incredibly nervous on wedding days...even if they seem cool and collected.

For most grooms, the nerves kick in before they see their bride because when they see her, everything becomes VERY real! So when the nerves start creeping in, instead of keeping the groom in a secluded space until his time to enter the ceremony, what if you took him to a private place...no people, no onlookers, no distractions...and you let his beautiful bride, the love of his life, quietly call his name and have him turn around to see her for the first time. He would turn around and finally get his first look at his stunning bride and not only would he get to see her... he could embrace her...cry with her...kiss her...and ENJOY that moment with her for as LONG as they wanted. As she shows him her dress, twirls a few times and then asks him what he thinks...his nerves start to diminish. After all, she's the one who can make him most comfortable anyway.

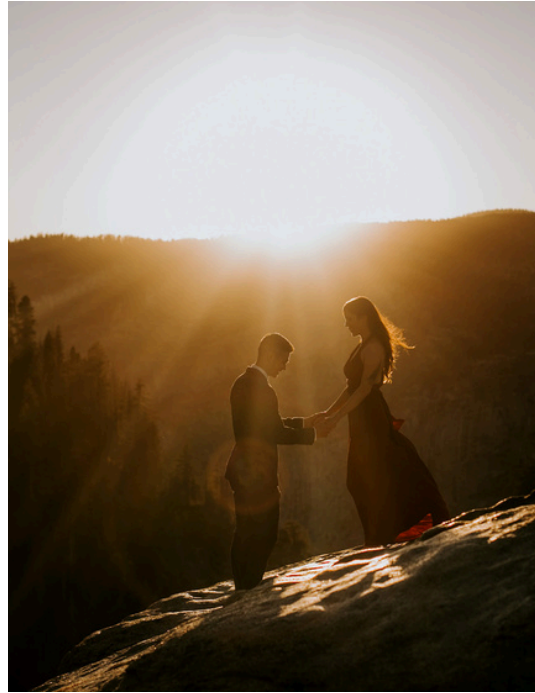
Because they aren't in a time crunch, they casually move into their romantic portraits. No one is around, the coordinator isn't announcing "15 minutes left", and there is no pressure. It's just the two of them and their photographer...capturing the excitement and the joy of their wedding day. This is their time to be TOGETHER...and to be ALONE. When does that happen on a wedding day? Without a First Look, it doesn't happen. After their romantic portraits are done, they meet up with their best friends. Their bridal party joins them and because they still have plenty of time to spare, the bride touches up a little makeup.

After a few minutes, the bridal party portraits begin and they're FUN. They're FUN, because there is time to make them FUN. There aren't any guests waiting impatiently at the cocktail hour and there isn't a DJ coming to find the photographer to get a time check. It's wonderful!

After portraits are done the girls and guys separate and prepare for the ceremony. The guests begin to arrive and the ushers are in place. Pretty soon it's time for the processional music to begin and one by one, the bridesmaids make their way down to the front of the ceremony. As the groom clasps his hands...they aren't clasped out of nervousness but excitement. The music builds, the mother of the bride stands, and all of the guests follow her lead. The groom looks up, and here comes the BRIDE! His best friend, his companion, his sweetheart, and she's absolutely stunning! The closer she gets, the bigger he smiles.

Now let us put a disclaimer on here before we continue... Our clients are not required to do a First Look by any means! We used to feel bad for sharing this option with couples who were against it because we didn't want to push anything on them. However, we've seen the benefits of a First Look over and over again, and so we only share this because we want the BEST for our couples!! It's totally ok if couples choose not to share a First Look! We are here make sure you have an inside perspective and whatever you choose it will be the BEST intentional decision to YOU. Keep reading for more benefits of sharing your First Look privately or, if you are not interested, let's skip to how we can create a special timeline to fit everything in and still keep the day free of chaos and stress!





MORE PORTRAITS & ENJOY THE SURPRISE FREELY

You're investing a lot into your wedding photography. With a First Look, you'll receive 30% MORE portraits of the two of you and those are the images you will decorate your first home with! With a First Look, you make the most out of this large investment and get the most for your money. You actually get to have intimate time on your wedding day with your man. Most brides don't realize that when you come down the aisle and totally SHOCK him with your gorgeousness...he can't even tell you how amazing you look. He can't touch you, embrace you or even SPEAK to you. You have to wait until 30 minutes later when the ceremony is over for him to react and tell you how amazing you look. And after 30 minutes of the ceremony, the reaction isn't the same as the initial first glance.

EXTEND YOUR DAY BY 2 or 3 HOURS

First Looks allow you to extend your wedding day. Normally the wedding day would start when you come down the aisle, then the ceremony would end, you would rush through portraits so that you're not late for the introductions and then it's reception time. With a First Look, your wedding day is extended by about 3 hours! Instead of being rushed for your bridal party portraits, you actually get to enjoy them and have fun hanging out with your BEST friends on your wedding day. The WHOLE first half of my clients' wedding albums are filled with images just from this time together before the ceremony.

YOUR ONLY ALONE TIME

First Looks allow you to be TOGETHER and alone on your wedding day. Sometimes it's the only time to be alone the whole day! Cried and laughed and cried some more... That put couples in the PERFECT mood for romantic portraits. Normally portraits are a little rushed after the family formals, and it can be hard to really get back into that "lovey dovey" mode - especially with family around! When you have just shared your First Look, you're READY to love on each other, and we always capture some super sweet images during those moments!

DIMINISHES NERVES

You get rid of your nerves! Sometimes grooms were not fully on board with a First Look initially. However we have testimonials from so many grooms who initially weren't a fan of the First Look but afterwards they admitted to being SO much more relaxed and ready for the ceremony!



FOR THE BRIDE

FIRST LOOK

EXPECTATIONS

Brides, if you have never seen your man cry or get emotional, you can't expect him to be overly emotional on your wedding day. Some guys just embrace their brides and never cry...and that's okay. Some guys show very little emotion when their bride is coming down the aisle and that's okay too. Just enjoy this amazing day, and try not to put expectations. One thing we have noticed after shooting hundreds of weddings is that the stress and nerves that come with a wedding day can sometimes make it hard for some grooms to truly express their emotions no matter what the timeline looks like. It's just a lot to take in all at once. This is a great reason to share a First Look and also a great reason to give some grace to your guy! Sure, you deserve to feel beautiful, but my encouragement to you is to enjoy this time together, no matter what.

FIRST LOOK | From the Groom



"Coming from a pretty traditional family, it was scary for me to think about straying from years of customs, but when (Ali) and I really thought about the events of our wedding day, the First Look was the only way to go. With all the nerves and excitement of that day looming just hours away, I am reminded, as often as I look back, of how thankful I am for the suggestion to do the First Look. It is a moment in my life that will be forever etched in my memory. That precious time spent together, before all of the day's events, did not detract from the excitement of seeing her walk down the aisle at all. On the contrary, it added to the sweetness of that magnificent day, and I would highly recommend it to anyone!"

– (Manny Betancourt)



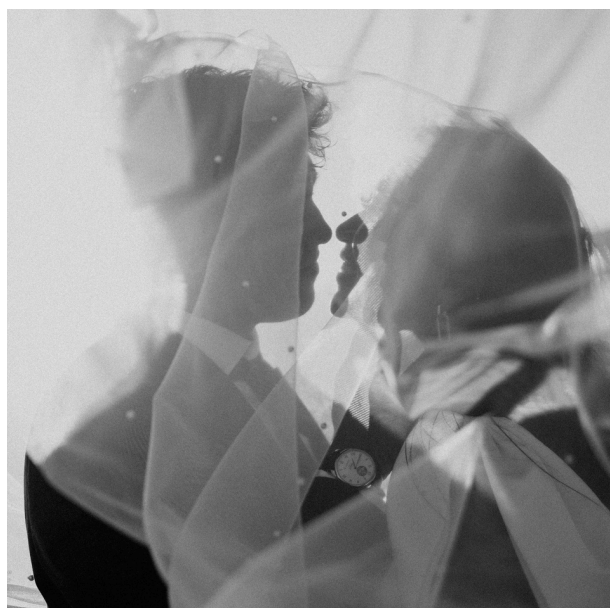
"At first I was very hesitant to agree to a first look at my wedding. I had always envisioned the first time seeing my soon-to-be wife would be as she was escorted down the aisle by her father. I was very closed-minded about the thought of a "first look" initially, but I am SO GLAD that I decided to take part in one. Your first thought may be that a first look takes away from that "special moment" when you see your bride for the first time, but for me the first look ADDED so much more joy to an incredible day. I was able to see Britt in a very intimate environment before the ceremony because of our first look. It was an experience that I will never regret agreeing to or forget. It was very special to be able to see how beautiful Brittany looked, and the experience literally took my breath away. It was a unique and incredible experience that words truly cannot express. The experience was one of the highlights of my wedding day."

– Harry Claridge



"I am so glad Jill and I did a first look. Your wedding is a really busy day–You've got all of your favorite people in one place, for one day, and you want to make the most of every moment. So, it is awesome to have a time where it is just you and your bride. It allows the two of you to have time to soak it all in and really be present with each other. Apart from a first look, our wedding day was a whirlwind, but the first look created a time for us to stop and enjoy it all. Even though it's not deemed "traditional", I highly recommend doing a first look and we jokingly refer to it as the "new tradition."

– Buddy Powers



"We decided to do the first look to take a little bit of the pressure off. We wanted to enjoy every second of our wedding and didn't want there to be this immense nervous build up as I was seeing her for the first time in front of 200 people that were also seeing her for the first time. We wanted to share that moment together and to be able to sit in that feeling for a moment alone. And trust me, it was WORTH IT. It ended up being the one moment that if I go to think about it I feel like I am instantly there. I remember every second of it. And the icing on the cake was that it didn't take anything away from the ceremony. When I saw her I wasn't overwhelmed with emotion, I was overwhelmed with joy. She was gonna be mine!"

-Craig Lilly



The Daddy-Daughter FIRST LOOK

This is for the bride who has a sweet spot in her heart for her dad - and are lucky to have them around. For a lot of Dads, this is when everything feels real and it hits him..."My baby girl is getting MARRIED!" These are precious moments to photograph, and we highly encourage any Daddy's girl to make time in their timeline for this moment. It doesn't take long at all! The hardest part is making sure Dad shows up on time! If Dad doesn't show up on time, the whole timeline can get thrown off. We would recommend building this first look into the timeline and making sure Dad knows exactly where he needs to be and when. Another sweet idea we've seen is having the father of the bride escort the bride to her first look!



THE CEREMONY

Here it is! The moment everyone has been waiting for! The music is playing, and the guests have been seated. Ushers make their way to the back of the church, and the coordinator is lining up the bridesmaids while giving the musicians a 5-minute warning. The bride is about to walk down the aisle to the love of her life...and if she's like most girls, she's dreamed about this moment for a long time! Vows will be shared and promises will be made...this is what it's all about!! In a world full of wedding blogs, Pinterest, and bridal magazines, it's easy to be overwhelmed and consumed by the "prettiness" of the event. While details do matter and planning is necessary, it's important to never lose sight of the real purpose of this amazing celebration! The tips on the next few pages will help you plan, prepare, and stay focused on what matters most!



THE UNPLUGGED CEREMONY

Imagine this with us...you're in our shoes...the most important moment of the day is about to happen. You've checked your camera settings, you've taken test shots and you're ready to capture the bride coming down the aisle to her groom. You want to capture reactions, variety of angles and every moment of joy and emotion in those few seconds. However, just as everyone stands and the music plays, not one, but three different family members and friends get so excited that they take just one step out into the aisle with their iPhones in hand trying to capture the moment. Our couple is trusting us not to miss this!!! But now we are dodging guests who are trying desperately to have a good Insta-story to share and they have no idea that the back of their heads, their arms and their phones are blocking us from capturing the bride and her dad walking down the aisle. It's honestly one of the most terrifying things that can happen to a photographer during a ceremony...and the sad part is, it can almost always be avoided. This issue is a growing one. Every wedding season we experience more and more of these issues. However, there is a solution! We highly recommend having an "Unplugged Ceremony". This is just another way of saying that you want only your photographers to be capturing photos and you would like everyone else to enjoy the ceremony instead of trying to capture it themselves.

Options for notifying guests your ceremony is

UNPLUGGED:

1. *Signage:* Have a simple sign that guests see as they are entering the ceremony
2. *Spoken:* Have your officiant politely mention that you prefer no cell phones
3. *Program:* Include your Unplugged Ceremony request in your program design
4. *All Three:* If you really want to make sure that this request is honored, do all three!





LIGHTING

Ceremony lighting is important. If you get married outdoors at 12pm, the lighting will be extremely harsh and not only will there be harsh lines of light on your faces, but you will also be squinting. We suggest planning an outdoor ceremony around 2 hours before sunset if you are having a First Look. If you are not interested in sharing a First Look, then we would suggest having your ceremony 3 hours before sunset to ensure that you will have plenty of time for all of your portraits afterward. The lower the sun, the more romantic and glowy the lighting. If you are having an indoor ceremony and there is an option to have spotlight-style lights on the bride and groom, We would recommend declining. It is always best to have EVEN lighting at the altar.

ORDER OF SERVICE

We have seen couples do so many AMAZING things during their ceremony. We've photographed couples washing each other's feet, symbolizing that they want to serve each other for the rest of their life. Some couples share in communion while some light a unity candle. I've seen sand ceremonies, rope ceremonies, the signing of the family Bible, whiskey tradition, bride singing to the groom... The options are limitless!! As you plan your ceremony, make sure you design it to be exactly what the two of you envision it to be. Between traditional or unique, choose intentional! If you have the freedom and will to be creative, be you! It's your day.



PROGRAMS & DETAILS

The BEST advice we have for the program-making process is to remember that not EVERY guest needs a program! Printing a program for everyone attending your wedding when most families only take one you will end up with over 2/3 of extra programs! Yikes! Also, before ordering your programs, have several people check it for spelling and grammatical errors. Programs and the ceremony decor are things that the bride can plan in advance but then delegate the actual job of checking the set up to the coordinator. The last thing a bride needs to be doing the morning of her wedding is running around checking the set up floral arrangements! This leads us into our next column!

COORDINATION

Hiring either a full event planner or just a day-of coordinator makes such a huge difference. Brides realize very quickly that if they do not have someone in charge of the coordination of the day, that responsibility will automatically fall on the mother of the bride, the MOH, the photographer, the DJ, or the BRIDE herself! When a photographer is in charge of the timeline and the coordination of the day, the images will suffer. All of my stressful wedding situations were caused by a lack of organization and coordination. It's so important to make this a priority. If you need any recommendations on wedding coordination services we would love to share some of our favorite vendors with you!

DESTINATION Weddings

If you are planning a destination wedding, a lot of the details in this guide will not apply to you! Your details, your timeline and even your preparation for the big day will be much simpler. However, it is a good idea to start thinking about a few key components of the day such as: your ceremony time and your ceremony/portrait locations (some destination weddings require some planning to find portrait locations without tourists in the background). Be sure to check the sunset time at your wedding location before settling on your ceremony time. As your wedding day draws closer, we'll begin to chat about the timeline of the day and the travel arrangements. Get excited!! This is going to be amazing!!





FAMILY FORMALS

A Sample List

We absolutely love meeting our couples' families on the wedding day! Family formals are normally our first interaction with them, so we love to have a game plan for this part of the day! Four weeks before the wedding, you'll receive a questionnaire from us that will ask you to list out the family formals you want us to capture. Here is a sample of a family formal list to help you start preparing what shots you need. We do have to limit the family formal time in order to ensure that we have plenty of daylight for your romantic portraits. However, any large family group shots that we don't accomplish during family formals, we can be sure to capture at the reception!

B&G with Bride's Immediate Family

(Parents, Siblings, Grandparents, Nieces, Nephews)

B&G with Bride's Parents

B&G with Bride's Siblings

Bride with her Parents

Bride with Mom, Bride with Dad

B&G with Bride's Grandparents

B&G with both sets of Parents

B&G with Groom's Immediate Family

(Parents, Siblings, Grandparents, Nieces, Nephews)

B&G with Groom's Parents

B&G with Groom's Siblings

Groom with his Parents

Groom with Mom, Groom with Dad

B&G with Groom's Grandparents

B&G with all family members if time allows

ROMANTIC PORTRAITS

All of the wedding day images are important, but these romantic portraits of just the two of you will be the images that you frame beside your bed or over your mantle, and they will also be the images that will fill your album for generations to enjoy. These images are always our favorite not only because of their beauty but because this is such a sweet portion of the day. For this brief moment in time, you will be alone with your groom on your wedding day. You will have a chance to love on each other and really connect before the craziness begins! Romantic portraits are normally done before the ceremony (if you are having a "First Look") or after the ceremony. Even if you had a first look, we LOVE shooting at least a few "just married" portraits after the ceremony! This is when the light is low and golden! If you're not interested in a First Look, we will make sure to include a enough time after the ceremony for these portraits!





TRUSTING PORTRAIT LOCATIONS

One of our favorite parts of our job is taking something so ordinary and making it look absolutely amazing! This happens most often when it comes to picking portrait locations! If there is one thing that we love and appreciate about our couples, it's that they trust us! Sometimes we select portrait locations that most people wouldn't consider attractive. For example, the image on this spread was taken on the side of an abandoned, old garage! We pulled off on the side of the street and then they hopped over a ditch and stood in this spot for a few minutes, because the light was just perfect! There was nothing special about this place. It was grungy and seemingly "ugly" from everyone else's point of view. However, because our couple trusted us and they were willing to pull off the road and run across the street, they now have the most amazing portraits! So our encouragement is to just trust us! You don't have to worry about a thing! Trust our locations, and we promise you, you'll LOVE the results!



THE CASE OF A RAINY WEDDING DAY

One of the most frequently asked questions that we receive during wedding season is, “Soooo, what do you do if it RAINS?!” We want to reassure you that even if it rains, you will still have beautiful portraits and BRIGHT colors in your images! Overcast skies mean vibrant colors! We know that rain isn’t ideal, and no bride would wish for rain on their big day, but if it happens, it happens...and it’s going to be BEAUTIFUL!! Here are a few things to remember:

1. All we need to create natural light portraits on a rainy wedding day is one porch or covering of some kind! Just one! It’s amazing how much variety can be captured in one location when you’re in a pinch.
2. Let us take care of the pictures. You have enough to think about. If there is a chance of rain, we’ll be sure to do some extra scouting to find a covered location or two for us to use for your portraits! Many times on a rainy wedding day, we will adjust the timeline on the fly to make time for portraits when the radar shows a break in the drizzle!
3. Take it one step at a time. Don’t think about your entire day and what will happen if it rains. That will only overwhelm you. Definitely have a rain plan for your venue, but then let your vendors do the work of handling the rest of the day if rain is in the forecast.



This was taken in the rain! It was the last shot of the night, and it is proof that the rain can't keep us from taking beautiful images! Don't let the fear of rain steal your joy. You can't control it, and we promise we will make the best of it!



YOUR BRIDAL PARTY

Let's chat about your bridal party! This is when the fun REALLY begins! We know couples want their closest friends to have an AMAZING time during their big day, and we will make sure that happens during portraits too! Bridal party portraits should be fun and actually enjoyable! If you are having a first look, after your portraits, depending on the locations and the timing of the day, your bridal party would join us for portraits! We would be able to accomplish ALL of your bridal party portraits BEFORE the ceremony. This means that your guys and gals will be free to mingle at cocktail hour if they wish! If there are flower girls and ring bearers involved, they can either join us for the pre-ceremony portraits or we can take one final group photo after the ceremony, before family formals. Also, be sure your groomsmen arrive with boutonnieres on and your bridesmaids arrive with bouquets!

HIGH IMPACT PLANNING

There are so many expenses when it comes to wedding planning. Many brides have to prioritize what they want to invest in. Over the last 17 years of photographing weddings, We have found that there are certain things to avoid investing in and other parts of the day that a little extra investment will go a very long way! Our hope is that this list will help you invest in the parts of your day that will be high-impact and will help you avoid spending money where it doesn't matter.

1. Invest in your bridal bouquet over other florals :

When we are photographing a wedding, if the bride has a gorgeous bouquet, we can make the entire day look like there were beautiful florals everywhere! We can use the bridal bouquet to spruce up bridal details, reception details AND even bride and groom portraits as well! The bridal bouquet is a focal point for us when it comes to your photography so we highly recommend getting your DREAM bouquet and investing less on the bridesmaids' bouquets since they will not be photographed nearly as much!

2. Go with greenery over blooms :

Greenery is beautiful and photographs well, and it can be half the price of ordering blooms. We recommend actual flowers for your bridal bouquet and other bouquets but then decorating other aspects of the day with greenery to save money while still making a huge visual impact!

3. Have one well-done installation instead of a lot of small vignettes of decor :

If you're hoping for a heavily detailed reception but the cost is adding up, focus on one focal point instead of trying to decorate everywhere. For example, invest in a beautiful, large, hanging chandelier or unique lighting elements but do shorter, simpler floral centerpieces on one half of your tables and candles on the other half.

4. Double purposes for decor:

Maybe you choose to have an epic, well-styled entryway decor at your reception that also doubles as an amazing photo booth later on throughout the evening once party dancing has started!

5. Avoid spending money on tiny details:

Customized favors, personalized M&M's, etc...it all adds up and at the end of the day, your hard work in the tiny details can often be overlooked.



RECEPTION DETAILS



The party is here!! Receptions can be a blast! However, it's important to make sure that you have your event well thought out. This is the job of your coordinator and your DJ/Band. Your caterer will also play a big role in the design and set up of your event. Every aspect of your reception affects the overall outline of the evening. For example, if you're not having a plated meal, your reception will need to be set up in a way that allows movement. Guests will need to be able to find the food stations easily, and there will be a mixture of dinner tables and hightop cocktail tables. This will encourage guests to mix and mingle. If you are having a plated dinner, you will more than likely need escort cards, full place settings and space for all of your guests to be seated comfortably. Whatever the style of your event, make sure that you plan out all of the aspects of the evening. Your coordinator and DJ can help you set up the evening so that guests won't leave early or experience long periods of waiting for the next moment to happen.



Much like the ceremony, you have the freedom to make your reception your own! It's your party; it should be exactly how you want it to be! Here is a list of some key events that happen often at receptions:

- Bridal Party Introductions
- First Dance
- Daddy-Daughter Dance
- Mother-Son Dance
- Anniversary Dance
- Money Dance
- Traditional Religious Dances
- Welcome by Father of the Bride
- Blessing
- Cake Cutting
- Toasts
- Bouquet and Garter Toss
- Large group portraits with friends
- The exit of the Bride and Groom

RECEPTION TIPS

It's time to relax, dance and celebrate!! Your reception is supposed to be fun for the couple as well! The last thing you need to be worrying about is your timeline. Your coordinator and DJ should take care of making sure that everything stays on schedule so that you can enjoy your night. Here are some tips that will help your reception flow smoothly.

- **GUEST CONSIDERATION:** Take your guests into consideration when planning your timeline. If you have a lot of elderly guests that will not be staying until the very end, make sure you schedule the cake cutting at a relatively early time so that they can be a part of it. Grandmas love seeing this sweet moment!
- **KEEP IT MOVING:** Chat with your coordinator about how you can plan your reception in a way that will keep guests engaged and moving all night!
- **MAKE IT YOUR OWN:** If you want to have a special dance with your grandparents, do it! Make your reception a reflection of who you are and don't feel tied to traditions. Also, make sure you give your DJ or Band a "Do Not Play" list if there are some songs you really don't want to hear during your reception!
- **DON'T GET CAUGHT UP** in the formalities and the details. Sure, details are pretty and fun to photograph, but they can steal the joy of the day if you get too caught up in them. (Just speaking from experience here!) Plan your centerpieces, welcome table, etc., well before the wedding date, and teach your coordinator or family friend how to set them up so that you aren't even thinking about those things the day of !
- **RECEPTION COVERAGE:** If you haven't purchased enough coverage time for your photography to last until the exit, that's ok! We have several options! (See next page!) We recommend planning your timeline so that you can have at least one hour of dancing photographed. The guests who dance during the first hour will still be dancing in the third hour! One hour of dancing will be enough time to really capture the joy of your reception!





RECEPTION: CONTROLLED EXITS

If your coverage ends before the very end of your reception and you are hoping to have an "Exit" shot captured, you have the option of planning to do a "Controlled Exit" with your bridal party! This is more common than you may think. Instead of saving your exit until the very end, you can plan a controlled exit with just the members of your bridal party and a few family members! This allows us to have more control over these shots, have more than one chance at capturing an epic action shot and the party NEVER has to stop! In most cases, no one even notices that the bride and groom are missing for a few minutes!

Three Reasons to Consider a Controlled Exit:

1. *Multiple chances at an epic shot:* When you do an exit shot at the very end of the wedding day, we only have one chance to capture the two of you as you run through sparklers or whatever type of exit you have planned. When you do a “controlled exit”, we have multiple chances to capture several awesome exit portraits for you!

2. *You haven't partied all night yet:* This means that your makeup and hair are still in-tact for your exit shot! That's a win right there!

3. *Coordinated Colors:* When you are surrounded by your bridal party instead of wedding guests that could be wearing distracting colors, you can expect to have beautiful exits shots surrounded by your wedding colors!



LEGACY ALBUMS



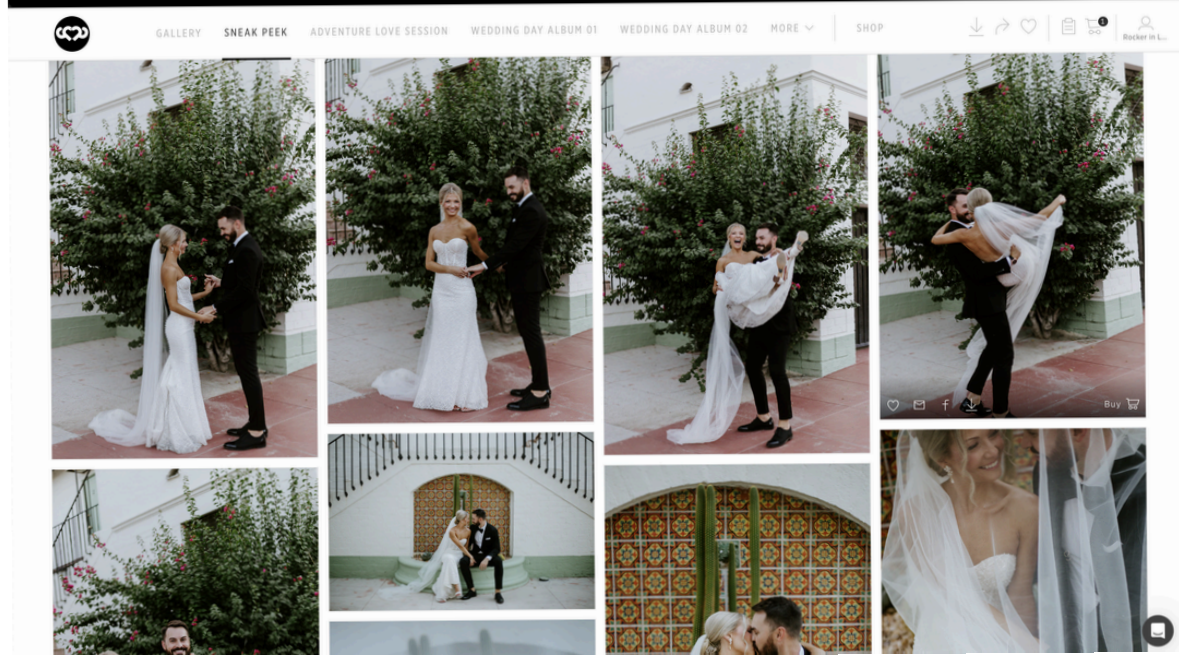
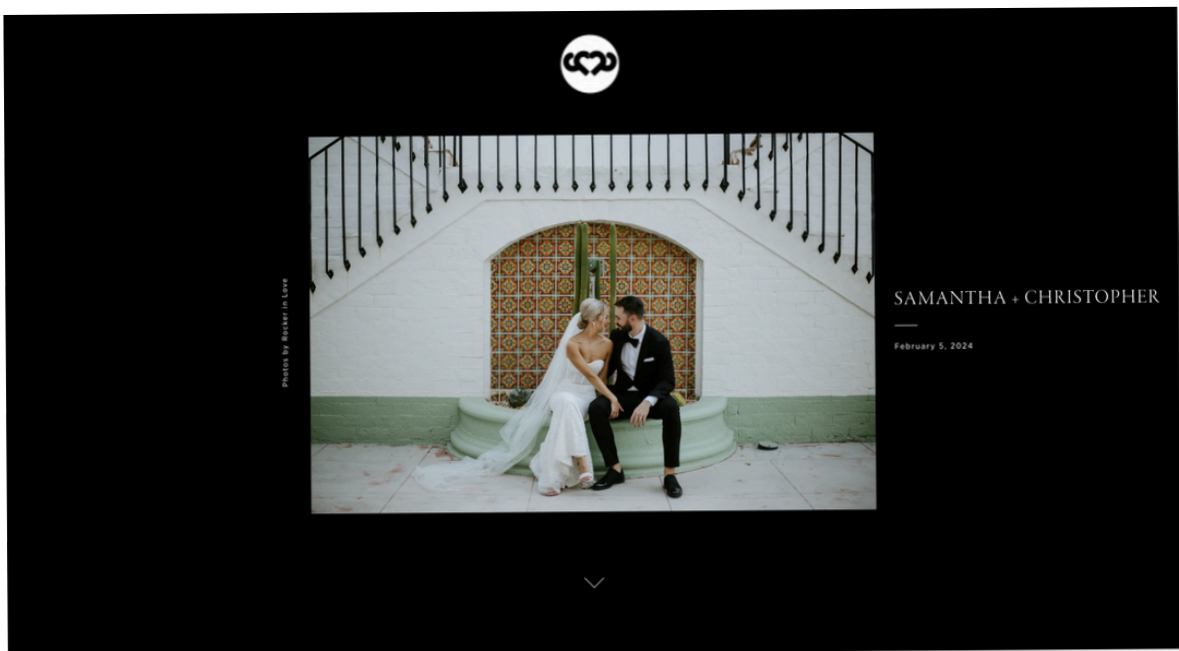
We have always said that we would grab the kids and our wedding album if our house was on fire (like when that happened to my mom)! Could we build another wedding album if something happened to this book? Yes. However, there is something special about creating your first heirloom. We made our wedding album right after we were married and we treasure it! Having digital images is wonderful, but having a printed keepsake that tells a visual story of our wedding day is priceless! If you haven't already invested in a Legacy Album of your own, you can always come back to us at any time and order one.

SIZE OPTIONS: 8 x 8 , 10 x 10 , 12 x 12

SAY THANK YOU WITH A PARENT ALBUM:

We didn't have any trouble picking out our parents' Christmas gifts the year we got married! Our parents did so much to make our wedding a dream come true that we decided to surprise them with their very own albums on Christmas morning! Whether you're wanting to surprise your parents with a parent album for Christmas or want to order one anytime after the wedding day, just let us know and we'll create an heirloom album that they can cherish for a lifetime!





YOUR ONLINE GALLERY

Your online gallery will be a beautiful, accessible way to not only view your images but download them and share them as well. We want you to be able to save and share your images freely and without any hesitation and so there will not be any watermarks on your images and all of your images will be available to download in high resolution. On the next page, I've listed some important information that will help you understand your online gallery and all that it can do!

DOWNLOADING PHOTOS:

You will be able to download your edited images directly from your online gallery and they will be high resolution! This process is very simple: You can click the "Download" option for the full gallery or you can view your images in your gallery and download from there! Once your gallery opens, you will see a "Downwards Arrow Icon" at the top left of your screen. Clicking this button will allow you to see BULK downloading options for your photos! Once you select which folder you would like to download or if you want to download ALL of your images, you will receive an email in your inbox when the download is ready. It can take a few minutes to package hundreds/ thousands of images to be downloaded. You can also download your images individually!

ACCESSING YOUR PHOTOS ON YOUR PHONE:

The online gallery system that we use will work on mobile devices as well! It's simple and easy to download individual photos on your smart phone. We love this feature because it means that you have immediate access to all of your images when you're on the go!

ORDERING PRINTS:

You can actually order professional and affordable prints from within your online gallery and have them shipped directly to your house! Print sizes range from 4x6 to 24x36 and are printed in a professional lab to ensure color and contrast accuracy! You are more than welcome to print images on your own. However, We would warn you to avoid Walmart, Target, Costco, etc. We cannot promise that your colors will print true-to-life if you choose to print from non-professional labs.

GALLERY EXPIRATION:

We have great news! Your gallery will be available for an entire year! We would still recommend downloading them and saving them in multiple places as soon as possible for safe keeping! The internet is amazing but it can also be unreliable. Please don't use your online gallery as a way to permanently store your images. We recommend downloading and saving your images on a solid state, portable hard drive as a permanent backup while also using an online backup system like Backblaze.com for a secondary online backup.

SHARING, WATERMARKING & EDITING:

You have the freedom to share your images in any way that you choose! These are your images and we want you to love them so much that you can't help but share them! We don't believe that it is necessary to watermark our images. All we ask for is some type of credit whenever you use an image on social media! We only have ONE rule when it comes to what you can and cannot do with our work. We always encourage our clients to refrain from re-editing their images. Let us do that hard work! However, if you have an image or two that you want to print at a very large size and you find an imperfection, we will gladly perfect it! Just let us know!

NON-PROFESSIONAL PRINTS

How bad could it really be?



This is the original image that we edited and delivered to our couple. To the right, you'll see the most common print issues that clients experience when they choose to not print through their online gallery that we provide for them. We make sure to offer as many sizes as possible at the most affordable price so that our clients can have access to professional quality prints for the images that they invested so much in. Investing in high-end photography but ordering prints at Target doesn't make sense.

SAMPLE PRINTING ISSUES: High contrast, over-saturation and de-saturation

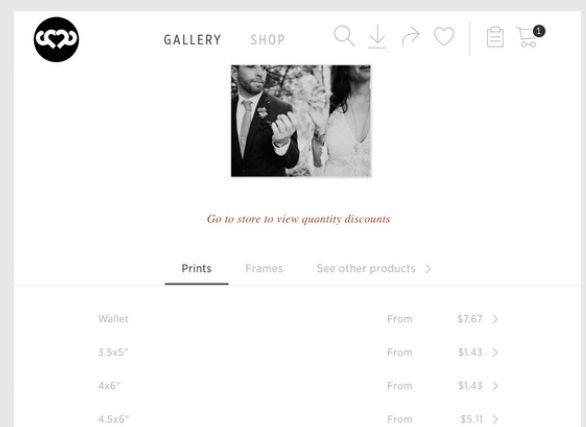


Once your images have been delivered via your online gallery, you can begin ordering professional prints. Your prints will be printed in a professional lab and then shipped directly to you.

USE THE CODE : **"ROCKERINLOVE"** for **\$15 off an order of \$60 or more!**

Special Care for 8x10's and 5x7's

For some reason, our culture has normalized print sizes that are not similar size ratios to the ratios that a camera captures. This means when you are ordering an 8x10 or 5x7 print, you will need to pay attention to the "Crop" option and adjust the crop of your print before ordering! See example to the right!



Wallet	From	\$7.67 >
3.5x5"	From	\$1.43 >
4x6"	From	\$1.43 >
4.5x6"	From	\$5.11 >



THANK YOU

Last, but certainly not least, THANK YOU for trusting us with your special day. We are so honored to be the ones capturing your memories, and we cannot WAIT to celebrate alongside of you! Enjoy this season of planning but also remember that your MARRIAGE is more important than the wedding. Continue to make time for one another even with all that needs to get done. As you continue to plan, please feel free to contact us with ANY questions you may have along the way! Depending on your date, our next step would be to finalize an engagement session! Also, about 4 weeks before the wedding, you'll receive an online questionnaire that will provide us with everything we need to know for your big day!! We hope this guide has been helpful as you continue to plan and prepare for your wedding day!

Love,

Graci, Dani & Otto

We are ready to talk
about your wedding.