

SANDY WEIR PHOTOGRAPHY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1/ Why is wedding photography so expensive?

Photography prices can come as a bit of a shock before one appreciates its value and what goes on in the background, so it may be worth taking a few minutes to read these independent articles:

<http://photocritic.org/why-is-wedding-photography-so-expensive/> also

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Why-Are-Wedding-Photographers-So-Expensive?&id=2315021>

2/ How should I choose my wedding photographer?

Booking a photographer for your wedding is not like buying a product off a production line, where you can go to the web and find the same item at the lowest possible price. A cheaper photographer knows he cannot charge more, perhaps because of his lack of experience; poorer quality equipment or using cheaper presentation for your wedding memories. So don't play roulette on the biggest day of your life!

Choose a photographer you can trust; someone with integrity; someone who will be there for you on your big day and who will not embarrass you or your guests. You should arrange face to face meetings with several photographers to see their work and to make sure you can strike up that all important rapport. When viewing wedding pictures, look especially at the facial expressions in the group shots; are their eyes open? Are they having fun? Emotions are an indication of the ambience created by the photographer! Look at least two complete weddings from start to finish, then ask yourself:

Do you feel that you were there?

Were you emotionally moved by the pictures?

Was the presentation and print quality of a high standard?

Is the style of photography as shown, what you would want for your own album?

If you answer "no" to the above, you should choose another photographer!

3/ What questions should I ask my potential wedding photographer?

Here are ten questions you should ask your photographer:

Are you a full time or part time photographer?

How long have you been in business?

Have the images shown been taken by the person who will be photograph my wedding?

Are you a member of a professional photography association and at what level?

How many weddings have you photographed?

Do you have professional indemnity insurance?

Do you have public liability insurance?

Do you have a professional back-up camera, lenses and lighting?

Do you spend time correcting the image files after a wedding, or are they straight from the camera? (All files need work to bring out the best image. Be on your guard against the "flash & burn" type of photographer; they don't care what the image looks like and certainly won't spend time cleaning up your wedding files)

Can you show me a winter wedding? (This may be important if you are having a late autumn, winter or early spring wedding, where available light levels may be very low)

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4/ Please tell us a little about your background and how you got into professional photography.

I came into the profession as a second career following twenty-two years in banking. For many years prior to leaving the bank I had enjoyed people and landscape photography at a high standard. Working for myself since 1993 to my own ethics and standards has been like a breath of fresh air! Early on I joined what was then known as the *Guild of Wedding Photographers* and am proud to say, gained a Craftsman's qualification in 1999. For 8 years I operated from a high street studio but as the number of wedding commissions increased, I felt that there was more benefit to be had in working from a home-based studio. The business has been operated from the present location since 2002.

5/ What is it you enjoy about taking photos and about being a wedding photographer?

As someone who cannot draw a straight line, photography is the medium I employ not just to take but to create images of the landscape or in the case of a wedding, one of the most important days of a person's life. For me job satisfaction comes to fruition when I hand over a set of carefully crafted and presented images to the satisfaction of my client; created often in the face of challenging weather and time constraints.

6/ What qualities do you have that make you a good photographer?

I would say tenacity so get the job done to a high standard and the ability to build rapport with virtually all my clients. Without rapport it would be difficult if not impossible to create great photography.

7/ How would you describe your style?

I am not a "reportage" photographer! Why? because a wedding day is too important an occasion to leave things to chance. For most brides this is a one-off event to look elegant, to look her very best and I feel that requires a great deal more effort than "machine gunning" images of people standing around in tight groups. Yes, it would be fantastic to take a back seat and let things happen – but what if things don't happen? What if the bride and the groom are not extroverts like Posh and Becks, always playing to the camera? The word posing seems to have become a dirty word these days but that doesn't have to mean couples standing rigidly to attention; instead it should be about helping my clients to look their best and at ease! I would refer to my style as "directed candid"; basically keeping control of things but giving as informal a look to the images as possible.

8/ Can you work with couples who feel uneasy about having photos taken?

You must be talking about the 95% of couples who (in their own words) "hate being photographed" Yes, I can work with these couples but only by chatting to them from the very first meeting about any concerns they may have. I offer a pre-wedding shoot some months ahead of the big day. Couples genuinely appreciate this opportunity to be in front of the camera in a stress-free environment, stating that the experience calms most of their anxieties.

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9/ What level of contact do you have with a couple before the day itself?

Pre-wedding contact is extremely important and by the arrival of the big day I would expect to have had the initial enquiry meeting, followed by the pre-wedding photo shoot then a final consultation to discuss the photo requirements and timings, the latter being around two months before the wedding. I find that things go far more smoothly where I have contact with both the bride and the groom-to-be. In situations where I haven't met the groom, for example, I take this as a bad sign. Perhaps he cannot be bothered; perhaps he doesn't feel involved, all of which can affect the outcome of the photography.

10/ What sort of couples would you say suit your particular style and approach?

The people who choose me as their wedding photographer are usually easy going, personable and fun; who are happy to put in their 50% worth of effort to help me achieve the other 50%. After all, wedding photography is a team effort to bring about the desired outcome. As the saying goes, "it takes two to tango!"

11/ Is our wedding package price fixed?

Our wedding offerings may vary from time to time but whatever price you book at, this is guaranteed for up to three months following your wedding. Album orders placed after this period may be subject to a price revision in the event of supplier price increases.

12/ What is the Pre-Wedding shoot that is offered?

It's a really important part of the booking! It is a very informal, fun shoot either in our studio or at a nearby location. By the end of which you will have relaxed in front of the camera and we will have learned how best to photograph you in advance of your wedding day.

13/ How long will you stay with us on our wedding day?

Most clients have their photo coverage beginning with the bride's preparations at home (or hotel suite) and finish when they sit down for their Wedding Breakfast but coverage may include the speeches if staged before the meal. Evening coverage, say to the first dance, can also be accommodated, if agreed in advance.

14/ If you have a long way to travel and require overnight accommodation, who will pay the cost?

We would ask that you cover the cost of the accommodation in such cases.

15/ What cameras do you use?

We use professional digital cameras with a selection of top quality lenses from the Nikon range together with other professional lighting equipment. Remember it is the skill of the person taking your photographs that determines the end result.

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16/ How many photographs do you take?

There is no fixed number but we often take 400 – 500 at larger weddings. The quantity is dependant upon many factors, for example, the weather, the number of locations throughout the day and the available time between the ceremony and the wedding breakfast, to name but a few. Remember, however, that quality beats quantity every time!

17/ How much post-production editing goes into our pictures?

Initially every image you view will have been assessed and edited for colour balance, exposure, contrast and cropping. Surprisingly, not all photographers do this! Images selected for your album may be further enhanced in Photoshop by applying effects and art-work together with retouching work, where necessary.

18/ How many photographs will we see and how do we view them?

Most weddings produce between 150 and 220 fantastic images for viewing. We will invite you to our studio and spend some time going through your pictures, projecting them to music to give you a truly memorable experience. Over the course of the session, you can select the pictures for your album. It's great fun and not as difficult as you might think. There will be no pressure but if required we will be pleased to assist you with the selection process.

19/ How many photographs make a great album?

Hopefully you should love virtually all of your images but we would suggest that if your album is to be truly representative of your big day then you should be looking to select, as a rough guide, around half of the viewed images. The old days of "choose 24 pictures from the 30 taken" are thankfully, long since gone!

20/ How will our parents be able to choose their pictures?

Parents may attend their own viewing. In addition, the pictures will be available for viewing online from within the Client Area of our web site, offering a secure facility for family and friends to order prints.

21/ When will our pictures go on to your web site?

We want you to be the first to see your wedding pictures! The online gallery will normally go live within a few working days of the studio viewing.

22/ Why do you use seemingly expensive wedding albums?

We offer albums from different manufacturers together with a variety of format sizes. Yes, there are many cheaper albums on the market but we make no apology for using some of the best manufacturers around. We also believe that presentation and quality do count. There is truth in the saying "you get what you pay for!"

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23/ Why don't you offer a "files only" package?

Sorry but I strongly believe that any professional photographer who is just shooting weddings and burning images to disc ("flash & burn") for clients to tinker with, is missing the point. I take a particular pride in my work and this extends to how my images are printed together with the quality of their end presentation, in this case a wedding album. This is what my clients receive and prospective clients expect to receive when making their wedding booking.

24/ How long will our album take to arrive?

Shortly after the viewing, we will design a layout for your album and e-mail you with a proof. Once you are happy and have agreed the design, it can take around 4 to 6 weeks before you receive the finished album. In that time we will have made any final enhancements to the images, as mentioned above. Your album will be hand made to your specification then finished off with the prints either at our lab or in-studio, depending on the album type. You will then be free to collect your finished album from the studio, or we can arrange to have it couriered to you "at cost", inclusive of insurance.

25/ If a flood or fire damages our album, can it be replaced?

As far as possible, we keep records of orders and album layouts and can arrange for a replacement but would recommend that you have your wedding album covered under your home contents policy.

26/ How do we book you?

First, we arrange a date for you to visit. It's essential that we like each other and know that we'll get on well on your big day! Please give us a `phone or email to organise a meeting. Completion of the normal booking documentation as approved by the *Master Photographers Association* [MPA] and payment of a non-refundable booking fee of £200 secures your wedding date in our records. The balance of your wedding coverage falls due for payment 30 days prior to the wedding day.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.