

the
WEDDING
EXPERIENCE



A GUIDE FOR



Andy Kerr Photography

Couples



WELCOME

Hello soon-to-be-married couples and welcome!

This is such an exciting time for you! I'm sure that 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 your whole life 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 me to provide the BEST experience possible for you both.

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your ENGAGEMENT SESSION

Assuming that you have picked a date, and probably a venue as well, you need to get your photography sorted. Then you can celebrate! Those are some of the toughest decisions in wedding planning and you need to cross them off your list! Now on to the fun stuff... like your engagement session! I include engagement sessions in most of my packages as I 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 me, and to experience how I photograph, handle posing, and lighting. This session will make a HUGE impact on how the wedding day flows. I'll arrive on your wedding day knowing how you both interact, what your best poses are and how to photograph you in a genuine way. What I'll learn about you during your engagement session is invaluable! You will feel like such pro on your big day because of the great practice you had during your engagement session - and that's how it should be! Your engagement session can be scheduled any time before your wedding day.

I normally advise booking at least 3 to 6 months in advance of your wedding to avoid any undue stress - the sooner the better. Because my weekends are busy with weddings I normally photograph engagement sessions in weekday evenings, normally from 6pm to 8pm depending on the light and the time of year. In the winter months, 2pm to 4pm is a normal time for an engagement session. As you start to plan for your engagement session, you will need to start brainstorming about some location ideas. I 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, I can help you decide on a location. As long as the light is great, I can make any location look awesome! I photograph sessions in parks, the countryside, towns and cities, against amazing graffiti artwork on walls, and even alleys! I'm serious! Don't shy away from crazy ideas! The more creative the better! Be sure to keep reading to find out more about outfit ideas and inspiration!

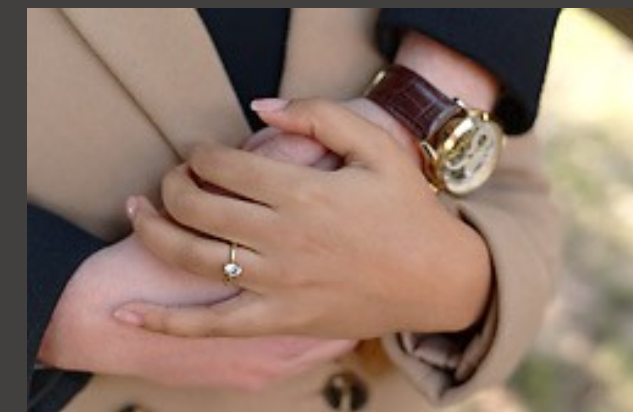




THE OUTFITS

WHAT TO WEAR

It's always a little intimidating to have your picture taken... even if it's just a photo taken on an iPhone that's taken by a friend, we still want to look nice, make sure nothing is in our teeth, and that our hair is behaving! I realise that preparing for your engagement session can be a little overwhelming. Here are some tips for outfits and accessories that will make the engagement session preparation a little more manageable!



- Don't try to MATCH... try to pick outfits that coordinate instead.
- Don't be afraid to be BOLD! Accessorise and make your outfits your own! Scarves, bold necklaces and fun shoes are always welcome!
- MOST PATTERNS are actually OK, however graphics are not favourable for portraits. If you're wearing a pattern make sure it's not overwhelming and distracting.
- Empty your pockets! Literally. You don't want to have keychains or phones showing through your pockets.
- Spray tans can be great... just remember, the lighter the better. Even the prettiest spray tan that looks great in person can look very orange in pictures.
- Sometimes, couples like to have one everyday outfit, and then one outfit that is dressier! This will give your session two totally different 'looks'...

- I recommend beginning with the dressy outfit first. That way you can get rid of those heels and get into something more comfy! If you have only one outfit, wear something nice! I understand the temptation to wear jeans and a T-shirt or jumper, but you'll be looking back at your photos for years to come and will be glad that you made the effort!
- Make sure that you're comfortable in what you're wearing. And ladies, if the top is very low cut, it will limit the amount of angles that I can photograph from.
- BE ON TIME! The sun is only out for so long! The later you arrive, the less time I will have to photograph you! And nobody wants that!
- Clean the ring! I love to photograph a few ring shots. The cleaner the better!
- Relax! You don't have to be a professional at this. I'm going to help you along the way, and it's going to be fun! Enjoy this time together.

Your
Engagement
Session



Your
Wedding
Day



Here's the page that can be somewhat intimidating! The TIMELINE! I know that this isn't the most exciting aspect of the wedding day but *this is the one thing that can make or break your photography!* I'm more than happy to help you to build an ideal timeline the closer we get to your wedding day so get in touch if you would like this. This ideal timeline is also based on a wedding day that includes a "First Look". Most of my couples choose to do a first look and you can read more about that option a few pages over... However, I want to make it absolutely clear that I will in no way ever pressure or force you to do the first look option. If we haven't talked about it yet, feel free to email or call me and I can go over some pros and cons about doing a First Look. REMEMBER... *all wedding days are unique and timings will differ drastically between different celebrations!* Feel free to use these pages as a guide, but don't feel like you're doing it wrong if you want to deviate - *it's your day after all!*

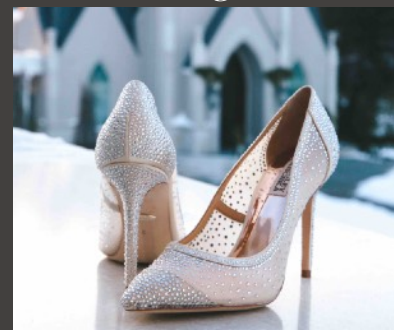
Your TIMELINE

Portraits



After the bride and groom take their time with the First Look, I will begin to take a few romantic portraits of the two of them while the initial excitement is still present! I will find the locations for these shots as well! Remember, the LIGHT determines where we take the photographs so I can't decide on portrait locations until the day. As I take these portraits the bridal party can start making their way to us for Bridal Party portraits! Allow around 30 minutes for the portraits.

Bridal Party Portraits



Now it's time for bridal party photos! I like to buffer in extra time throughout the day just in case of unexpected things that hold us up! One way to ensure that we stay on schedule for the bridal party portraits is to have someone put the boutonnieres on the men BEFORE they arrive for portraits. During bridal party portraits I will make sure to take some great photos of the guys and girls separately AND together! After bridal party portraits are complete it's time to get under way for the ceremony! Allow 30 minutes.

The Ceremony



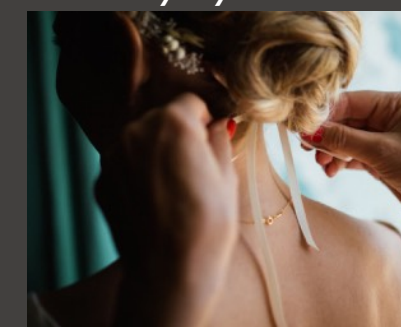
It's time to get married!! Ceremonies typically take from 20 to 45 minutes for a non-religious ceremony, 30 to 45 minutes for a civil wedding/partnership, and 60 to 90 minutes for a religious ceremony. Cherish these moments! Your ceremony will pass by so quickly! I like to arrive in time at the ceremony venue (if different than the bridal prep location) in time to capture you arriving with your father.

The details



Every bride loves having those beautiful shots of their bridal details. It's an important part of the story and I love having the time to photograph the dress, shoes, jewellery, invitations etc. These shots allow me to get warmed up for the rest of the big day. I normally like to allow at least 45 minutes for this part of the day. While I'm photographing details, I'm also capturing shots of the bride and her girls getting ready. Typically, if the groom is getting ready nearby, I or my second photographer will photograph the guys getting ready close to 40 minutes before the first look since it always takes them less time to get dressed!

Bridal prep



It's time for the bride to get into her dress! This is a big moment! I usually ask the mother of the bride and all of the bridesmaids to be dressed by the time the bride is ready to get into her dress. This ensures that everyone will look nice in those images. After the bride is in her dress, she can put on her jewellery, veil, shoes etc and if there is still time I'll photograph some additional bridal portraits. Time-wise, work back from the start of your ceremony factoring in travel, putting on your dress, and timings from your hair & makeup artist. Leave a margin of error of one hour!

First Look



This is an ideal time for a First Look between the bride and groom and is one of my favourite parts of the wedding day. Unless you have specifically scheduled time later in the day for bride and groom portraits, this may be the only chance that you'll get to spend some 'private' time with each other, and it gives you the opportunity to get some amazing photos of each other together at this emotional time. I'll find the perfect location for my couples First Look! Don't stress about that one bit! I'll make sure that the location is as private and secluded as possible. Allow 15 minutes for this special time.

continued...

Your TIMELINE Continued

Confetti throwing



Confetti throwing often happens at the ceremony venue, however some churches have restrictions so make sure to check beforehand. Alternatively, confetti throwing can take place during your drinks reception, often with more options available to capture those creative photos that couples love! Allow 15 minutes for this time-honoured tradition - it will take longer than you think to get everyone organised!

Family portraits



'Family & guest formals' normally take place immediately following the ceremony but may take place at your reception venue if located elsewhere. Allow around 5 minutes per group photo for family formals. I send my couples a wedding questionnaire before the wedding where you can list out the shots that you would like. I recommend photographing portraits outdoors if possible so that they resemble more natural family portraits (weather dependant of course).

Reception details



While you are enjoying your drinks reception/cocktail hour I'll head into the reception space in a spare 15 minutes to capture all of the details that you spent so much time and care planning. Photographing reception details during this time is ideal because the room has been untouched by family and guests and is still as beautiful as ever. Allow 90 minutes to two hours for your drinks reception to allow you time to mingle with your guests and for me to take capture moments.

Seating guests



Allow guests up to 30 minutes to move from the drinks reception to the location of your Wedding Breakfast and for them to find their seats. If you are planning a receiving line then allow up to 40 minutes. Designate at least a couple of your bridesmaids or ushers to direct guests, assist with the receiving line, and to gather up any loitering guests!

Wedding breakfast



As a general rule allow up to two hours for a three course meal. Your caterers will be able to give you a guide on how long they think their service will take. ...

...Allow no more than 30 to 40 minutes for speeches with each speaker allocated up to 10 minutes. Any longer normally results in fidgety guests and your evening my lose momentum! I use this time to capture candid moments of you and your guests enjoying yourselves, emotional moments during the speeches and much more!

Top Tip! When you ask your speakers how long they think they will take - double it! From experience I have never known a speech run to time!

Evening reception



Once the evening reception has begun timings can often go out of the window! However, there are some key things that need to be factored into your schedule otherwise they can be easily forgotten in the excitement of the evenings festivities...

...I therefore normally advise my couples to factor in their first dance, cutting the cake, and throwing the bouquet no later than 45 minutes after the end of their wedding breakfast (this will ensure that I manage to capture everything before my allotted leave time). As well as capturing these key wedding day moments for you I also utilise this time to really concentrate on capturing all of the crazy moments of the party.

Top Tip! If you have invited evening guests, ask them to arrive at least 30 minutes after your wedding breakfast end time - if for any reason your wedding breakfast overruns the last thing you want is for evening guests turning up whilst people are still eating!

Exit!

If you are interested in having your exit photographed there are several options! Either make sure that I am scheduled until the end of the night, add additional coverage, or if your timeline allows for it, plan a **faux exit** with just your bridal party!



Let the day begin!

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

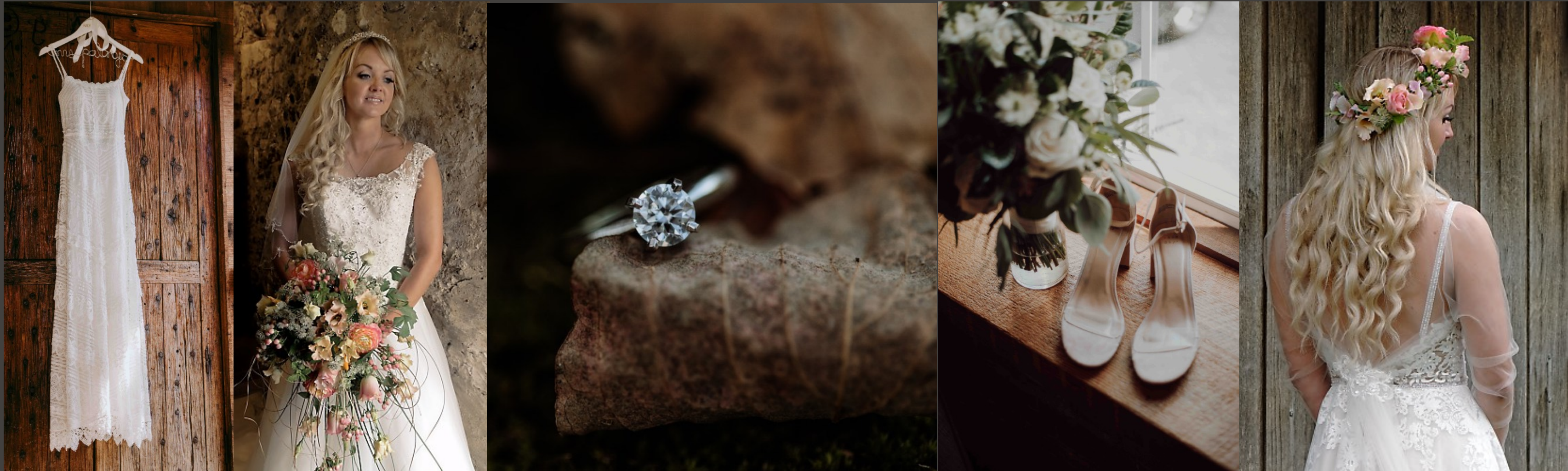
GETTING READY

It's the morning of your wedding! Hopefully all of the little details are taken care of and you're relaxing with your best friends 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 that 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 on the morning of your wedding. The rest of the day is going to be fast paced and filled with lots of emotion! 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 important man that plays a huge part 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 people in your life that would appreciate seeing you get into your gown? Some brides want very few people around for this special moment. Other brides love having aunts and Grandmothers present! It's totally up to you! A few other things to consider... as you get ready to put your dress on, refrain from putting any jewellery on. I love photographing all of those final steps when you're in your dress! If your dress is on a plastic hanger, try to make a note to bring along a wooden hanger for picture sake. If you forget, no big deal! I'm very adept at finding wooden hangers at venues! Keep reading for more getting ready tips to help you...







The whole day begins with the DETAILS! This is one of my favourite parts of the wedding day as it allows me to prepare and get my creative side warmed up for the rest of the day! I photograph a brides details in a way that matches and extenuates the style of the entire wedding day. So in some way, the details set the stage for the look of the whole wedding. I love having ample time to stylise and photograph everything from the dress to the jewellery to Grandmas handkerchief! To the right you'll see a list of the most common details that I photograph... I ask brides to gather any details that they have before I arrive so that I can walk in, say Hello, and get to photographing all of the detail shots! (Please tell your Mum that I will take *great care* of the dress... I promise!)

What to gather

- DRESS
- VEIL/HAIR PIECES
- RINGS
- SHOES
- JEWELLERY
- PERFUME
- INVITATIONS
- YOUR SOMETHING
- BORROWED AND BLUE
- BOUQUET

DETAIL *Tips*



gather the GOODS

If possible, collect all of your details before I arrive so that we can begin quickly and more time for some "getting ready" shots of you and your girls! Also, that way I don't have to bother you every few seconds asking where things are.

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. For example, if you're having a country themed wedding you could include a piece of burlap or lace. If you're having a rustic themed wedding that includes some wooden elements, maybe save a small piece of wood for me to use when I'm photographing your rings and jewellery. This REALLY makes for beautiful consistent album spreads!

keep the RINGS

The most common detail missing when I arrive are the rings! Mums, officiants and planners will tell you to hand over your wedding ring to the best man before the day begins. However, it's actually better to hand it over during the bridal party portraits or right before the ceremony so that we can get some great ring shots in the morning! If you forget, not to worry, I can always photograph the rings at the reception if there is extra time.

bring the BOUQUET

Don't forget the bouquet! Have the bouquets delivered to the bride and the button-holes to the grooms party before the First Look so that she can have her bouquet in her portraits. Don't worry if it's hot.. we'll make sure to keep it in as much water as possible before the ceremony!



TIMING *Tips*

When you're planning a wedding day timeline, the best advice I can give you is to **ADD CUSHION TIME!** I can't stress this point enough.

Sometimes the most simple things can take an extra 20 minutes and then all of a sudden, the whole morning is thrown off. I have seen "getting the bride into her dress" take almost 40 minutes because of a button malfunction! It's a smart idea to add in an extra 10 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, I can help you compensate for that time in other areas. There are so many things to think about when you're planning your wedding day, so here are some tips for the **pre ceremony timeline**. I realise that every single wedding day is different and so not all of these tips will apply to every wedding day schedule. Something to remember is that not EVERYTHING will go as planned, and I promise you, that is completely normal!



BOUQUET + BOUTONNIERES

You will need your bouquet and 'buttonholes' for your First Look! Have the bouquet delivered to the room where the bride is getting ready and the buttonholes to the groom.

HAIR + MAKEUP

I encourage brides to have their hair done before we start... who wants lots of photos with curlers in their hair! I will take most of the photographs of the bride as her make up looks more complete.

TRAVEL TIME

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

GROOMSMEN PREP

My second photographer will photograph the groom and their party getting ready in the same location as the bride or at another location as appropriate.

GETTING DRESSED

I'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 into your dress.

CREATING A CUSHION

A 10 minute cushion every now and then is a GREAT idea! It's amazing how fast time slips away on the day.

YOUR *first look*

Your First Look is an amazing part of your wedding day!

If you aren't sure about this new tradition, the next few pages explain why it could be a romantic addition to your wedding day celebration that not only adds to the experience but also reduces stress.

Read on for more details...





THE *first look* EXPLAINED

True emotions are free to be expressed. If I were to condense these two pages... 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 up, instead of keeping the groom waiting anxiously under the gaze of everybody, 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, walk up to him and gently tap his shoulder? He would turn around to finally get his first look at his stunning bride and not only would he get to see her... her 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 asks him what he thinks... his nerves start to diminish. After all, she's the one that can make him most comfortable anyway.

Because they aren't on a time crunch.... they casually move into their romantic portraits. No-one is around, a coordinator isn't announcing "15 minutes left", and there is no pressure. It's just the two of them and their photographer... capturing the joy and excitement 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. 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 makeup while the boys act like boys. 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 bar and there isn't a DJ coming to find the photographer for a time check. It's wonderful!



I'm a big fan of "First Looks"... but at the end of the day, it's not my wedding day. It's yours. So if doing a first look truly doesn't feel right for you, then you shouldn't do it. But as your hired professional I would like to give you some of the pros of doing a First Look on your wedding day so that you can make an informed decision. First Looks have a lot of benefits, however, not everyone is aware of just how many there are because they get caught up in how "untraditional" it is and they immediately write it off. As an example, if you want to enjoy your drinks reception, which we all know has the best food, then you may want to consider a First Look. You spent so much time and money planning this gorgeous wedding, you should be able to enjoy it!

From my experience I've come to the following 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 that 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 or intimate as it would be if they were walking down the aisle. What I have found is this... Everyone knows that wedding days are a bit stressful for the bride and groom. The whole day is focused on them, they need to look their best, they need to be on time, the groom has no idea what side the buttonhole is supposed to go on and little by little the tension grows.

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 her comes the BRIDE!! His best friend, his companion, his sweetheart... she's stunning... ABSOLUTELY stunning. The closer she gets, the bigger he smiles.

It's before the ceremony... and the gravity of what's about to happen sinks in and the groom, calm and collected a few hours ago, is now staring to feel a little anxious! So what happens next? The groom gets his cue to take his place ready for the arrival of his bride. With clammy hands he takes his place at the front of the room ready for the ceremony to get under way. It seems like it's taking FOREVER! Then he turns and faces the room, filled with up to 300 people, and where are they looking? They're all looking right at the him... because everyone has expectations and anticipation about his first reaction. This is the furthest thing from a private, intimate moment... Of course, it's SO powerful and SO wonderful. I already mentioned that walking down the aisle is one of the BEST PARTS of your WHOLE wedding day!! It's magical!!

Now... let me put a disclaimer on here before we continue... **my couples are NOT required to do a First Look by any means!** I used to feel bad sharing this option with couples who were against it because I didn't want to push anything onto them. However, I've seen the benefits of a First Look, and I only share this because I want the BEST for my couples. It's completely OK if couples choose not to share a First Look. It's just my preference to do one for many reasons... keep reading to find out more of the benefits of sharing your First Look privately! For brides not interested in a First Look, let's start chatting soon to work out how I'll create a special timeline to fit everything in!

first look:

- You're investing a lot into your wedding photography. With a First Look you'll receive 40% more portraits of the two of you... and those are the images that you'll want displayed in your home and in your album. With a First Look you make the most out of your investment and get the most for your money.
- You actually get intimate time on your wedding day with your man. Most brides don't realise that when you come down the aisle and he sees how completely amazing you look, he doesn't even get the chance to tell you. He can't touch you, embrace you, or even speak to you. You have to wait until up to an hour later when the ceremony is over for him to react and tell you how amazing you look. And after an hour of the ceremony, the reaction isn't the same as the initial first glance.
- First Looks allow you to extend your wedding day. Normally the wedding day would start when you walk down the aisle, then the ceremony would end, you would rush through portraits and formals so that you're not late for introductions, and then it's reception time. With a First Look your wedding day is extended by almost 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 client's wedding albums are filled with images from this time before the ceremony.

WHY IT'S WORTH IT

- First Looks allow you to be TOGETHER and alone on your wedding day. When the two of you see each other, not only will it be intimate, it will be your **only time to be alone** the whole day! You may cry and laugh, and cry some more... and that will put you in the PERFECT mood for your romantic portraits. Normally portraits are a little rushed after the family formals and it can be hard to get back into that 'lovey dovey' mode... especially with family around!! When you have just shared your First Look, you're ready to love each other, and I always capture some very sweet images during these moments!
- You get rid of the nerves. I'd say with around half of my couples that *have* done a First Look the grooms were not a fan of the idea at first. However, because they have never experienced their wedding day before they didn't realise how nerve wracking it can be. Trust me... grooms are so much more relaxed after a First Look and are so much more ready for the ceremony.

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 men just embrace their brides and never cry... and that's completely OK. Some men show very little emotion when their bride is walking down the aisle, and that's OK too. Just try to enjoy this amazing day and try not to put any expectations onto him :)



THE *Ceremony*

Here it is!

The moment that everyone has been waiting for! The ushers have done their job

and all of the guests are seated. The music coordinator has been given a five

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 day!

Lighting

Ceremony lighting is very important. Of course, if you are having your ceremony in a church the lighting is usually dark, but don't worry - I can still produce beautiful images for you in this scenario. If you get married outdoors at midday in bright sunshine, bear in mind that the lighting will be extremely harsh and not only will there be sharp lines of light on your faces, you will most likely also be squinting. Therefore, make sure to discuss with your venue and planner exactly where you will be standing e.g. will it be in a pretty archway or under a pergola that offers shade and soft light for flattering photos.

Programs & details

The BEST advice I have for the program making process is to remember that not EVERY guest needs a program! Usually, not every guest takes one, and families often share one between them. Also before ordering your programs have SEVERAL people check it for spelling and grammatical errors. Programs and ceremony decor is something that the bride can plan in advance, but then delegate the actual job of setting it up to a friend or coordinator.

The last thing a bride needs to be doing the morning of her wedding is running around setting up floral arrangements! This leads me to the next point...

Coordination

Hiring a full event planner, or just having a day-of event coordinator is SO important! If you're fortunate for the venue to supply their own wedding day coordinator, that's great! Brides realise 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 photographer, or the BRIDE!

When a photographer is in charge of the timeline and the coordination of the day, the images will suffer.

Nearly all stressful wedding situations are caused by a lack of organisation and coordination. It is so important to make this a priority. If you need any recommendations on wedding coordination services I would love to share some of my favourite vendors with

YOUR *Romantic* PORTRAITS

If we're being honest, all of the wedding day images are important but the real favourites are almost always from my time with the bride and groom. These romantic portraits of just the two of you will be the images that you have framed beside your bed, over the mantelpiece, or on a wall. They will also fill a significant portion of your album for generations to enjoy. For this brief moment in time, you will be alone with your groom on your wedding day. You will have the chance to love on each other and really connect before the craziness begins! If you're having a first look, romantic portraits are normally done before the ceremony (after the first look). The timing of these portraits are very important as described a few pages back. Photographing one to two hours before the sun sets is the perfect timing. This is when the light is low and golden! It's such a romantic time for bride and groom portraits! If you're not interested in a first look, be sure to make plenty of time after the ceremony for these portraits.



This is when the fun really begins! I know from experience that all brides want want their closest friends to have an AMAZING time on their big day, and I'll make sure that happens! Bridal party portraits should be lots of FUN! After your share your first look, depending on the timing and locations of the day of course, your bridal party will join me for portraits! If all goes well, I'll be able to accomplish ALL of your bridal party portraits BEFORE the ceremony. This means that your bridal party should be free to mingle at the cocktail hour if they wish! If there are flower bearers or ring-bearers involved, they can either join me for the pre-ceremony portraits or I can take one final group photo after the ceremony (before family formals). Be sure that your groomsmen arrive with boutonnieres and that your bridesmaids arrive with the bouquets!

RECEPTION *Planning*



Receptions can be a blast! However, it's important to make sure that you have your event well thought out. This is the usually the job of your coordinator and your DJ/band. Your caterer may 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, perhaps high top cocktail tables. This will encourage guests to mix and mingle. If you are having a plated dinner, you will need name 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 events 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 thing to happen.

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

- First dance
- Parent dances
- Traditional religious dances
- Cake cutting
- Toasts
- Bouquet and garter toss
- Large group portraits with friends
- The exit of the bride and groom

RECEPTION *tips*

The fun has begun! It's time to relax, dance and celebrate! Your reception should be a blast! The last thing you need to be worrying about is your timeline. Your coordinator and DJ should be making sure that everything stays on schedule so you can enjoy your night. Here are some helpful tips that will help your reception flow smoothly.

- 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 to schedule the cake cutting at a relatively early time so that they can be a part of it. Grandmas love seeing this sweet tradition!
- 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 parents or grandparents, do it! Make your reception a reflection of who you are and don't feel tied to traditions.
- Don't get too 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. Plan your centrepieces, welcome table etc well before your wedding date and teach your coordinator or family friend how to set them up so that you aren't thinking about those things on the day!
- If you haven't purchased enough photography time for your coverage to last until your exit, that's OK! I have an option for you (read below), I recommend planning your timeline so that you can have at least one hour of dancing photographed. The guests that dance during the first hour will still be dancing in the third hour! One hour of dancing will be enough to really capture the joy of your reception!
- Exits! If your coverage ends before your exit, you have the option of planning a faux 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 faux exit with just the members of your bridal party and a few family members instead! This allows me to have more control over these photos 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! Also, it's almost impossible to tell that the whole wedding party isn't there waving sparklers and sending off the happy couple! Make sure to check if your venue allows sparklers.





Thank you

Last but not least, thank you for taking the time to read my guide...

Enjoy this season of planning but also remember that your MARRIAGE is more important than the wedding. The wedding will come and go in a matter of hours but your marriage needs to stand the test of time. Continue to make time for one another even with all that needs to get done.

As you continue to plan, please feel to contact me with any questions that you may have along the way! I hope that this guide has been helpful as you continue to plan and prepare for your wedding day!

Let's chat!

I can't wait to hear all about what you're dreaming up!

Warmest wishes,

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