

It's supposed to be the most memorable day of your life, but, sometimes, the disappointment can start when the wedding photographs arrive. Many people don't realise what a complicated and precise science wedding photography can be and a wedding is certainly something that can't be photographed again.

When it comes to the business of choosing your wedding photographer, firstly, it's important to be realistic with your expectations. The size and location of the ceremony venue whether it be a country or city wedding, a church or town hall, at a hotel or stately home - these are all factors that will influence the tone and balance of your images.

Shots you may be drawn to in magazines may not be possible at your venue. However romantic a shot of a couple walking up a grass slope being followed by bridesmaids trailing ribbons and throwing confetti might be, this may not be possible if the venue opens out on a high street.

When making your decision and navigating the many options available to you, here are a few things to bear in mind:

- Begin your search for a wedding photographer early the best photographers are often booked up well in advance.
- If a well-meaning friend or relative offers to take your photographs, say 'thanks, but no thanks'. A gifted amateur is more than likely to struggle with the social and time pressures wedding photography brings with it.
- Make sure you meet the photographer in person before the day. This will provide peace of mind and help to start establishing some rapport. Commissioning some engagement portraits is also another way of getting to know your photographer and helping you feel more comfortable in front of the lens.
- Ask to see an entire wedding - don't allow a photographer to be selective about what they show you, flicking hurriedly through an album or portfolio. It's best to ask to see an example of an entire day presented rather than occasional highlights.
- Establish what is included within the package offered and just as importantly, what isn't. For example - how will you receive the imagery (on CD or proof book), how many prints will you receive and is a buyout of the rights to the images included.
- Find out how long the coverage runs for - you don't want to find out on the day that photographing your first dance incurs an extra cost.
- Try not to shop only on price - quality coverage of your big day is worth investing in and like many other services, you get what you pay for. Also, don't be fooled by deals which promise proofs back the same night - a proper job requires care and attention
- Find out if an on-line gallery is included. This is a great way for your friends and family to view images from your big day and handles all the many requests you'll receive for photographs. Many on-line galleries are accompanied by password protection.
- Find out if they are covered for unforeseen circumstances - a good photographer should always have extra sets of equipment.
- Ultimately, your choice of photographer will depend on the style of photographs you have in mind, the quality of their work and the personality of the photographer. It's worth spending time now to arrive at a considered decision - this will also give you peace of mind on the day.