

5 Photography Tips!

When you're shooting upwards of 20-30 weddings a year, you start to take note of the patterns that emerge in weddings. In the past several years I've learned how to deal with everything from difficult parents, to drunk guests, and all that comes in between. But sometimes as professionals, we forget to loop our clients in on our learned wisdom. So today I'm giving you five of the best tips I've learned since I started this job.



1. Hair and Makeup

If you're getting your hair and makeup done, expect it to run over. It's not that hair and makeup is particularly time consuming (though it can be), it's just that between your sister asking you *several times* which pair of shoes you prefer, and your mom double checking how you like your bouquet, and then you having to ask your makeup artist to tone down the eye shadow a bit, lots of little interruptions can add up to being half an hour or an hour behind schedule. Plan ahead, and build in an hour of buffer time into your schedule. The absolute worst thing that happens is you end up finishing early and get to enjoy some quiet time with your best friends.





2. Family Portraits

Family Portraits are a pain (let's be honest). It's hard to corral a big group of people into a photo, and it's even harder when it's your crazy family. The timing isn't great either. If you do them before the ceremony you are going to want to get it over with as soon as possible, so you can get to your wedding already. If you do them during cocktail hour, you're going to wish you were at cocktail hour. But trust me when I say they matter. Because while you hired your photographer for their rad artistic vision, your parents are probably only going to frame a few photos from your wedding, and my hunch is that it's not going to be the artsy ones of you walking through sunset. So give yourself permission to be a little bit grumpy during family portraits (They suck! And that's okay), and know that they'll be over soon enough, and that they're worth it in the end. If that doesn't cut it, tuck a flask into your purse and sip champagne during the breaks. *(Note: the above photo being the rare exception. I think they were possibly even having fun, and that never hurts either.)*

3. Great Aunt Millie

Your photographer has no idea who your Great Aunt Millie is. Most photographers will try really hard to get to know your family during your wedding, but unless someone is in your family portraits, or did a reading or gave a toast, we don't know your Great Aunt Mille, who helped raised you from your grandmother you never talk to, from your third grade teacher, who your mom made you invite. So if it's really important that someone you love makes it into the final delivery of images, make sure to let your photographer know. Include the person on a shot list if you have one, and have someone at the wedding point the VIPs out to your photographer. And of course, you can always grab your photographer and say, "Hey, can you take photo of Aunt Millie and me?!" In which case, the answer is always yes. Because Aunt Millie seems really cool and I like her sequined jacket.



4. Backdrops

Backdrops over details. If photography is one of your top priorities and



you have to choose, backdrops give you more bang for your buck than details (at least when it comes to photos). The wedding industry (and blogs, particularly) have done a good job of convincing couples that all you'll see at a wedding is the details. And while details definitely can add to the overall feel of the event, big-ticket items get

a lot more play in your photos. So



if you have to choose between really cool details, and say, a killer backdrop, that backdrop will get way more airtime in your wedding photos than napkin rings or programs. This is particularly true when it comes to the ceremony.

Depending on the space, there aren't a whole lot of places your



photographer can go during the ceremony, so a backdrop ends up doing a lot of the work of making your pictures interesting. Barring all the emotional stuff of course.

In short mathematical form: Emotions > Backdrops > Details.



5. Lighting

Cafe lights are magical inventions. If you're getting married in a simple space, or have an outdoor nighttime reception, or if your decor budget just isn't huge, but you *really* care about photography, cafe lights (also known as globe lights or market lights) are one of the best wedding-related investments you can make. (Bonus: they're still pretty, even after the wedding. Garden parties for everyone!) Cafe lights aren't crazy expensive—around \$25 per set. A few strands can go a really long way toward making your pictures look amazing, partly because they add visual interest to your photos, but also because with enough of them, you can create just enough of a warm glow to not need flash.

When you're touring your venues, look for good lighting opportunities; big windows, outdoor locations, stained glass, where will the sun set? Ultimately your photographer will ensure they have enough light for nice crisp images, but natural is always the best light, and try to set them up for success!