

**WELCOME.** If you are reading this then that means you are engaged! CONGRATULATIONS! Planning for your wedding can be overwhelming and there are so many important “tips & tricks” that can get lost in the sea of blogs and how-to-guides on Pinterest and Google. We wanted to simplify things for you by creating this master list of helpful information based off of our experience as wedding photographers as well as additional research drawn from many others in the industry.



By keeping this document handy while planning your big day, we believe you will be better equipped to design a fluid timeline, come out with the best images possible, and enjoy your day for all it's worth. Below is a ton of information, please please don't be overwhelmed. We wrote this primarily for our “type A” friends out there. If you are a logistics person you will love this, if you aren't don't stress just skim through. Take all of this with a grain of salt. We understand that each wedding is unique and there is no way to list every possible circumstance here. We hope that this information will serve as a starting point for further conversation where we can expound on any questions you may have or anything you would like to hear more about.

## GETTING READY.



*Getting ready* photos are such a special part of capturing the entire day with excitement and expectancy for what's to come. Know that the photographers are driving together and won't often be at two locations at once. With advance notice we can sometimes make it work to separate, but for the most part we're a unit. We will normally shoot the men getting ready first and the ladies after. It's very important that you leave us enough time to go to both locations.

It's great if we get there after everyone is about 80% of the way through getting ready that way most make-up and hair have already been completed so that you make the most of us being there as we don't need photos of every single moment while getting ready. A thing to remember, *getting ready* photos are often times posed anyways, and we can have the groom re-tie his tie, take his shoes on and off, ect... and be done with him quickly without having to be there for the entire time everyone gets ready. The same is so with the bride if necessary, but we would rather take more time with her and the rest of the ladies.

**The Space.** Getting ready in an uncluttered and/or sparsely furnished room with natural light will not only allow for cleaner, unobstructed images, but will also help foster a more relaxed environment in which you can truly enjoy the process. We would also love to get a few photos of your dress before you put it on, pick out a pretty hanger suitable for your pretty dress.

**COUPLE PORTRAITS.** There are three main times where we can do *couple portraits*: *first look, cocktail hour, and sunset photos*. Some couples choose one, some couples do photos during all three times. We recommend doing photos for at least two of them.

**First Look.** A “*first look*” is an increasingly popular practice where before the ceremony we get to capture the intimate moment of the bride and groom’s reaction to seeing one another for the first time on the wedding day. Then we do additional portraits of you two afterward.

The amazing thing about doing a *first look* is that this can potentially allow you to get more than just *couple portraits* done. Many of our clients additionally choose to do *family photos* and *bridal party photos* before the ceremony as well. This results in the ability to either: do extra *couple portraits* during *cocktail hour*, the freedom to spend *cocktail hour* with your guests, or even the option to spend alone time together for a bit before the craziness of the reception begins. Overall, people choose to do a *first look* for two primary reasons: they end up with considerably more photos, and the day runs at a slower tempo, with less rushing around for you two during *cocktail hour* and the reception.

**Cocktail Hour.** This is the period between the ceremony and the reception. Doing photos during this time is the more traditional route instead of the couple seeing each other before they say “I do.” We love the reaction of a groom seeing his bride-to-be walking down the aisle for the first time. There is something so sacred and beautiful about



that moment. Please don't worry about our *first look* sales pitch – haha. We are completely, 100% supportive of taking your photos during *cocktail hour* or at sunset, instead of before the ceremony.

**Sunset Photos.** This is an additional time where we sneak out during dinner to do a few extra photos of the bride and groom only. We highly recommend prioritizing this to get soft, intimate lighting and increased variety in photos. Lighting gets better and better the closer it gets to sunset. The industry calls the last hour of sunlight "golden hour" due to its uniquely beautiful nature. Good lighting can turn a photo from great to amazing.



**FAMILY PHOTOS.** These photos generally take place either right before or right after the ceremony. If photos are scheduled before the ceremony we suggest having everyone ready and at photo location about 20 minutes before we are scheduled to shoot to account for any unexpected delays. **This part's important.** If the photos are scheduled for after the ceremony, you will need to have either the DJ or the officiant prepared to make an announcement for family members to immediately go to the designated photo location. If this announcement doesn't happen immediately after the ceremony, often times people will quickly scatter and you can lose significant time trying to track down everyone that went back to their car, ran to the bathroom, or got caught up in conversation.



**Typical Family Groupings.** Here is a list of photos that we most commonly see with "B" representing bride and "G" representing groom. Please share with us your own list in the questionnaire we will send you. If

you want, you can copy and paste it and then add or subtract where necessary. Keep in mind; depending on how attentive everyone is, it could easily take two to three minutes per grouping.

B&G with B's immediate family  
B with immediate family  
B with all siblings  
B&G with B's parents  
B with parents  
B with father  
B with mother

B&G with G's immediate family  
G with immediate family  
G with all siblings  
B&G with G's parents  
G with parents  
G with father  
G with mother

Please make sure and ask your parents to have a quick look over your photo list prior to the big day, just in case you've accidentally overlooked an important family member or combination that might be really necessary to them or that you may regret not having later.

## BRIDAL PARTY.

These photos are always a blast! *Bridal party photos* are broken into two segments: *Guys and Girls Separated* and *The Whole Bridal Party*. We can do both the two categories back to back. However, if possible, it is better to break this session up. Let us explain:



**Guys and Girls Separated.** These are photos of the groomsman apart from the bridesmaids and vice-versa. Our tip for this is that immediately after *getting ready photos* take place, if your party is ready early enough, we would take group photos with just the guys at the *guy's* location and then photos with just the girls at the *girl's* location. This is another area where we **can help make the day run at a slower pace** by knocking out half the bridal party photos earlier in the day instead of having to do double later on.

**The Whole Bridal Party.** We typically do the majority of these either after the *first look* or during *cocktail hour* at some point. These are, as you have assumed, photos with all the groomsman and all the bridesmaids at the same time.

## FEW REMINDERS.

**Ceremony.** For the best photos when you walk down the aisle, hold your bouquet lower than you think you need to, walk slowly, look up, and of course, smile! During the ceremony if you face your officiant for the majority of the time, you're missing some awesome opportunities for emotive and unguarded shots. **If you face each other** we will be better able to capture the raw, real, and beautiful expressions that will show on your face throughout the ceremony.



**Kissing.** Ignore the fear of PDA and get some really beautiful photos. Hold your first kiss for a moment. If it's a split second **peck** it is going to be tough to photograph it. For an additional sweet and unique **moment stop** on your way out and share a kiss in the middle of the isle while your family and friends celebrate around you.

**Lunch/Dinner.** (This does not apply to weddings under 6 hours) Please let us know how you would like us to go about getting our lunch or dinner. We recommend that you ask your caterer to serve us at the same time as **you-especially if you would like to do sunset photos, that way we are finished when you are finished** and we don't miss out on valuable photo opportunities. Most couples don't really want us taking photos with their mouths full anyway – haha.

**Photoshop.** Keep in mind that we are here to document the day. We edit and retouch each image. However, **We** don't know any wedding photographers that do extensive Photoshop for any of their weddings. We don't Photoshop people in or out of photos, take weight off of a subject, change the color of the flowers, or the like. Trying to do any one of those tasks could take multiple hours for a single photo and most likely wouldn't turn out looking natural.



**Photo Locations.** Do you already have photo locations in mind for *couple portraits, bridal party, or family photos*? If so mention them in our questionnaire. We love when our couples come with locations in mind. Often times these locations work out perfect. However, know that sometimes at first glance a spot will seem awesome for photos, but it might not translate as well through the eye of a camera. If we let you know that a certain spot doesn't look as good because of the lighting or space trust us, you will be thankful in the long run. Also to clarify, if you don't already have locations in mind, don't fret, finding a good place to take photos is a key part of our job.



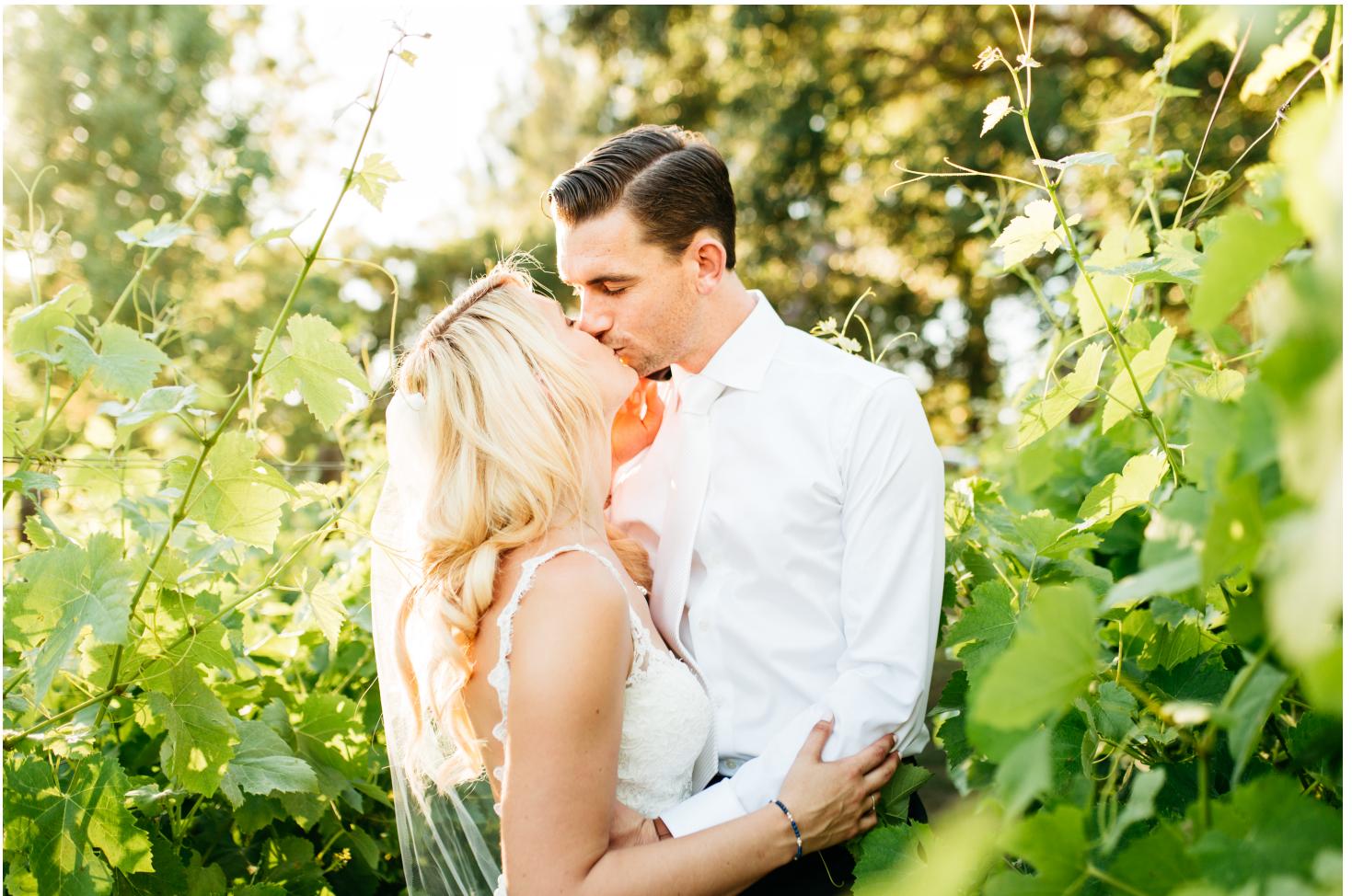
**Camera Shy.** Really, please don't worry, cameras are scary to just about everyone at first, however we place a high priority on making our clients feel comfortable and natural. This to say, you can trust us, we are here to make this easy. We will direct you, and you definitely don't have to come prepared or feel like you have to be an expert model. Thinking you aren't photogenic is total lie, please don't believe that. You are both going to be stunning: your photos will beautifully reflect this.

**Engagement Session:** If we are doing an engagement session we try to remind our brides that this is a fantastic opportunity to test out their hair and make up before their wedding day. Most make up artists try to do a trial run before the wedding. If you want, you can try to schedule us both back to back so that you can see how it looks in photos. If you haven't already scheduled an engagement session let us know. We prioritize our calendar availability for our wedding clients, thus we should be able to get you in even if it is more last minute.

**Restrictions.** Sometimes there are special photography guidelines from the wedding venue. For example, many Catholic churches do not allow the use of a flash or photos of certain practices. It is important to know these

restrictions ahead of time so we can discuss how they might affect your photos. Ask your venue coordinator about this one.

**Lighting.** This is a big part of wedding photography that many people do not account for. It is sometimes difficult to shoot in the middle of the day if it is not in the shade or if it's not cloudy. If you shoot directly in the sun your photos will have a different feel that some people don't prefer. At most venues we are able to find areas in the shade that work perfect for doing group photos, however, if your venue has little shade you might take this into account. Because of this, some couples choose to do *couple portraits, bridal party, and family photos*, all during "golden hour" as mentioned in the *sunset photos* section. Though this takes you away from your guests for a longer period, it is a viable option if well-lit photos are at a high priority to you.



**Group Photo.** Sometimes it's really fun to do a big group photo towards the end of the night with everyone at the wedding on the dance floor. You can rarely see everyone's faces, but it just helps show how many people were there and the love of your community surrounding you. This was something in particular that my wife and I cherished from our wedding and we try to offer it to all of our clients. It normally takes

about five minutes to rally the troupes and organize everyone.



**Final thoughts.** Know that we truly can't wait to shoot your wedding. We would **love love love** to talk to you more and help answer any (probably the many - haha) questions that may have come up while reading this. When you get the chance please take the questionnaire so that we can see some of your thoughts and further details. You are the best!