



d.pierce *Studio*
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Wedding FAQ's

* There are so many wedding photographers out there you can't walk down the street without meeting a dozen. . . So what makes one wedding photographer better than another? Why are some more or less expensive than others?

I know what you mean, it's so confusing. Somewhere down the line a myth was born that all you have to do is have your mom buy you a nice camera and a photographer is born. We have brides that are put on the spot by friends and family members wanting to practice on their wedding. So think about it this way, if your "would be" friend went out and bought a dentists drill and called up saying, "hey I have this wonderful drill, can I practice on your teeth". You wouldn't hesitate to hang up on them, but your wedding? There are even new photographers advertising they take over 3,000 images and you see 300 to 500. Do you realize that's only 10 to 15% of your pictures, that's really bad. I read this like I practiced on the other 2,500 images.

And, the money thing is all over the board, from free to \$20,000 dollars. . . All I know is what our Studio decided to do. We've kept our pricing the same since the economy tanked to help our clients have the beautiful images they want at a reasonable price. We've even introduced the Build Your Own Package that breaks down each item so you can see exactly what you are paying for. We are also one of the only studio's with a "Picture Perfect written Guarantee" that you will love your wedding images or your money back. (How? It's all in D's lighting and his finishing, we'll talk about later in this FAQ's sheet.) Plus out of all the hundreds and hundreds of images we take, you see all but 5% (caused by blinks, people stepping into the frame, etc.). Just think you get a 95% return on your image investment, that is a photography budget well spent.

* **Photo Assistants, do you have one and what do they do?**

Derrick and I work together, I'm his wife Laura. I handle the art direction, setups, go-fer, and anything else he needs. I'm also the backup photographer when Derrick needs a second shooter. All the images you see are his or mine, he is a fully trained "key photographer". We except only one wedding per day, so our clients receive the best we have to offer.

* What makes your Images Look so Different. . . I don't know how to explain it, they look so Good are they Models, do you have a special lens, what?

We do photograph models for different magazines, but we try to always show real weddings, real people. But to answer your question it's all in the Lighting that Derrick uses, the Setups, and the Finishing, and this is one of the biggest reasons we charge more than some. Time is money plain and simple, and amazing finishing takes a lot of time.

Let's first talk about what other photographers are doing so you can compare. From what I can determine, other new photographers are selling an "optimized disk". So what the heck is an "optimized disk"? It's "sales speak" words like Cheer's color crystals, what the heck's a color crystal? What they are doing is taking the 10% to 15% of the good images, or the images your going to scream about if they don't deliver, and they're adding computerized fill flash to try and salvage the face. If images are too blown out, they are putting an acid wash look over the image to cover the blow outs. If it's so dark they can't recover it they're turning those into muddy black and whites. You never see the originals and if you ask they say that's art or that's the way I shoot I'm an artist. And, because they handed you what they promised, an "Optimized Disk" you're done, they're gone, and you get what you get.

We actually finish all your ordered images, that's why they're so beautiful. It doesn't matter if they are photojournalistic images to portraits Derrick hand finishes, hand color corrects, and matches the color on your album order, print orders, etc. He's the one that has dark room experience, and is a pro at how images are supposed to look, even down to Color calibrating his monitors/printers so your wedding images don't look like a bunch of snap shot's your grandmother could take (I have nothing against your poor grandmother, I promise.) We also hand retouch hair, blemishes, scars, we do photo tummy tucks when necessary, double chins, dark circles, etc. If you don't like your nose we do nose jobs, if your gown makes little bulges in the boob area, trust me there are thousands of things we do that you never even know about. No! We don't make you look fake, retouching has been going on in Pro Photography since the beginning, and before. But guess what, it's really hard work, why do you think they want to hand you a disk and never see you again.

* Hey, my photographer told me that he's all natural. . . He uses natural light and natural "optimized disk" that people need to look natural?

Your right, people do need to look natural, unfortunately the wonderful digital cameras are brutally honest. They show blemishes you don't even know you have, pores of the skin, shinny spots, etc. The high resolution makes it even more important that we, as professional photographers invest the time to work on the images, so they look finished. Our studio is fantastic at this, the other thing that Derrick does so well is lighting which we'll talk about next. Here are some examples of what we've been talking about regarding professional finishing.

These are the before and after images, and you can see for yourself how they look natural as well as beautifully finished:



Because this beautiful bride was looking up it caused lines on her forehead, and as you can see even someone who's perfect may need retouching.



After, picture perfect.



Before dad's face was red from the heat as well as dark circles under the bride's eyes.



Mom's beautiful but needs a tiny little tuck. It helped her look her best.



* Why does lighting matter, don't all the new cameras take care of that? You guys go on about lighting, I'm meeting with a photographer that only uses natural light she makes it sound so good?

With photography, I don't think its putting it to grandiose to say lighting is everything. The reason some photographers want to use natural light is because lighting is hard to learn, and even more expensive to buy. So many photographers only shoot outside, which may work in California, at sunset. But in the South, it can be 100 degrees in the shade, or windy, or sunny one minute and pouring rain the next, back to sun with high humidity. I've even heard that some photographers take "no" images of the inside the church. And, even worse if that's possible their images of the reception have totally black backgrounds.

Lighting can be used to make you look thinner, taller, shorter. . . It can be used to create drama, to show edges. It's used to show your true eye color, have you ever looked at a friends wedding snap shots and everyone's eyes look black, that's a light issue. Also, lighting makes an image look 3D, so you can look "into" the image, not a flat blob of darkness with over bright hands and faces floating through air. We use it to create shadows and show the shine in your hair, for perfect skin tones, and white teeth. Hey, we even use natural or reflected light, when the situation calls for it, for backlighting, or silhouettes, or maybe a beautiful window light. Did you know that one of the most important times to use lighting is outside in full sunlight. . . It prevents your wedding gown from being a blob of white light with ghost edges. Most brides have beautiful details on their gown, but it will not show up in poor lighting.

The following are questions we've been asked over the last 2 years:

* I had a friend that said all her images were dark, how do we fix that?

Sorry, it can't be fixed, dark shadows or black indicates there are little to no color pixels available. There is simply no data there to salvage. . . (Pro lighting is the only way to go.)

* I had a girl friend that said she looked wide in all her pictures. . . She has a round face. . . Her photographer tried to fix it but now it doesn't really look like her, what do we do?

Sorry, anyone with a round face can be helped with good camera lenses and thin lighting techniques. We do very slight thinning of the face by hand, unfortunately some photographers us a program to automatically change the face because it's quicker and cheaper. Many times it simply doesn't work. The only way to fix this is to see if the photographer will give you all the original footage, and you'll have to either do it yourself or hire someone to correct the problem.

* My sister loved the new style of acid wash look on images, but her photographer used it on all but a few pictures, is that normal?

Unfortunately, it's not normal but it happens all the time. Bad lighting, and using only natural bright sunlight blows out wedding dresses and skin. Most new photographers don't know how to correct the problem so they cover it up with the acid wash look. Sorry, if you see solid white or black in an image there are no other color pixels available, so you can't save it.

* I'm meeting with a photographer trying to make up my mind, he told me that Wedding Albums are out of style and a waste of money, but I really want one, what do you think?

I've heard this too, and we get clients in all the time repeating what they've been told, "Albums are old Fashioned", or "he said, I'd never look at it", etc. Recently I even had a mom say the albums not important, and then she told me, "we had the best time at all my daughters bridal showers looking at my old wedding album, we laughed and laughed, and looked at how young my parents were". So I'll answer this question like this, "Don't we all deserve beautiful things? If you had the Mona Lisa hanging in your home that for the first month you would stare at it, touch it love it. Then after a few months you would visit it from time to time. But it's not about how often you see it, in your heart you know it's there. A wedding album to me is "art for art sake".

We've had couples tell us that every anniversary up until they had their first child they would look at their album and make a new toast to their life. I've had mom's say their children never got to meet their grandparents so she shows them their picture from their wedding. It was the last professional images they had of her parents and her own grand parents. We've photographed 50 year anniversaries and their wedding album old and tattered is proudly sitting in the middle of the table, lovely black and white prints as good as the day they were taken. We invest in beautiful objects all the time, for no other reason than "they're beautiful".

Okay, now you know how I feel, but let me tell you why some photographers say Albums are old fashioned. It's because they can't get them made. . . That's right, unless you are a licensed professional photographer most of the best album companies will "not" sell to you. But they can't tell you that, their dirty little secret is they are considered an amateur photographer. You have to have a tax ID, so they say "you don't need that" and apparently brides and mom's are listening, or like the last call I received from a mom trying to get us to create an album from the disk they received, (by the way the resolution wasn't enough to create an album).

Also, we have some of the slickest cool modern albums available from Italy, Australia, New York, California to Florida. I don't think anyone in their right mind would say they are old fashioned. Besides, how is anyone supposed to see your images, on facebook in a 2"x3" size, that's it? Or, how about coming over to visit and you get to show a 300 to 500 image slide show, really? Oh! I know you can let them stand in front of the 5x7 digital frame that holds a few, right. . . Did you know that the numbers are in, and that after receiving a disk of images, that 86.3% of the brides didn't do anything with the disk except pack it away in a drawer or closet, after putting a few on facebook, and avg. two photos in wedding gift frames.

If the average disk only wedding price is \$2,800 that means you just spent \$1500 for facebook and \$300 for two 5x7's.

Wow, that's not good!



* **Celebrity or High Profile Individuals and Guests. . .**

We have worked with many high profile individuals and celebrities over the years. We are very sensitive to their need for discretion and privacy and will take all necessary measures to protect and insure their privacy and our reputation. We are accustomed to signing an NDA agreement should you feel that's necessary. This will assure you your private images will not be displayed anywhere without your written approval. Rest assured you're in good hands.

* **Retainer Deposits, are they refundable?**

No, because we have reserved this specific date for you in advance and therefore rejected other potential clients for this shoot date. This is standard in the industry and this is why its called a retainer deposit. To help our brides and families we keep our retainer low, at \$800 for most packages. As Derrick and his team book up quickly it is advised to reserve his services as quickly as possible once you've made your decision.

* **Processing time after the wedding?**

Since so much of our time is used for finishing and designing the mockup album workbook it takes 3 to 6 weeks after the wedding to put it all together. I know, "the Optimized Disk" is much faster", it is faster deleting bad files than perfecting professional images. Sorry!

The albums can take anywhere from 8 weeks to 20 weeks or more depending on the maker, some of these Album companies are in Italy, Australia, California, New York. And, for some strange reason we wont get any album mockups back for months and then 4 or 5 brides will send them all at one time. It's like trying to check out at Target, nobodies in line, then boom everyone's in line. It's human nature or the holidays I'm not sure which.

* **What's your attire on the wedding day?** Semi-formal, with comfortable dress shoes because we're on our feet sometimes up to twelve hours or more. We like to blend in with your guests, not be the lone Goth girl with a camera, it's really not about us.

* **When is the Balance Due?** For weddings the balance is due no later than 2 weeks before the wedding date. This is standard in the industry amongst most professional vendors. Why? Most of our work is completed before you return from your honeymoon and before we see you again for your viewing session and to pickup/go over your mockup.

* **Reserving your Services for a Specific Date: How far in advance do we need to book your services for a wedding, event, or photo shoot and what's required?** It depends on the shoot. I have been known to book up for wedding dates sometimes 18 months in advance! If you have a specific date for the shoot in mind and want to reserve a photographers services, (or any other vendor for that matter) it is highly advised to secure that date immediately. Email us at dpphototn@comcast.net for our wedding catalog.

* **Tax Photography Services:** By law all photographers are required to collect tax on any service that INCLUDES goods as part of a package, or service rendered in TN. Many of our packages have the sales tax included in the price.

*** How does getting the negatives or a disk work, can we use the images for anything we want?**

Each time we offer negatives, disks or image files we give you a letter that you can present to printers giving permission for certain things. Each session is different, for example if we are providing a disk for promo shots, we will give you permission to use them in ad campaigns, printed ads, and your website. Wedding, and Portrait disks we allow use for facebook, websites, phones, myspace page etc., and small reprints, but the images may not be used in conjunction with any advertising or promotion of a product or service, nor an album, unless a copyright agreement is signed between you and the photographer granting you those rights. Although you own the negs and/or digital files the copyright for these images remains the sole property of the author or creator, which is the photographer. Bottom line you have a permission letter to covers what you are permitted to do with the images, if you have plans for something ask us.

*** Prepping for the Wedding Images: I need a shooting schedule for the day of the wedding what do I need to do?**

I know planning for the wedding is a lot of work and it's boring for some, we offer a one time planning session for the wedding images. The cool thing is you will use this time line for all your other plans it's that important. After you book us, we go over your style, do you want more photojournalistic image and how to achieve the best looks, we talk about the location, places to photograph, when is sunset, I'll give you a list of posed images to choose from, we'll set the time to start, are you guys going to see each other or not, and we'll talk about how to get you out of the church (or wedding location) to the reception as quickly as possible.

You'll give this schedule to your coordinator for final tweaking, to the location to make sure it doesn't break their time line, to the people preparing the food, to all the groomsmen and bridesmaids, on and on. It's so important, once you have it your good to go. . . Plan now so you can enjoy your wedding day.

*** What if you get sick, or can't make the wedding?** That's a very good question. . . Knock on wood we've never missed a wedding in 14 years of working. But we have been called in by other photographers who have had to have help, one was in a car wreck, the other was sick. We are a member of the PPA and we work with, and are friends with most of the top ranked professional photographers in the South. I have a few photographers whose style I know, and while it is not Derrick's beautiful work, their photos are quite lovely and if I were in a pinch they are who I would call. There is no more money out of your pocket, we pay them ourselves and then take the image, they go through Derrick's special finishing, and complete your contract. It's good to have friends!

*** What's your Preferred Payment Method?** We take checks and cash, but we also accept all major credit cards. Many of our clients like to earn points on their cards and celebrate after the wedding with a vacation of their own.

*** What's makes you different from all the rest?** Cool calm the day of the wedding, brilliant style from modern to romantic, perfect lighting, we work fast and keep you on schedule, from flower girls to your grandmother we are able to make everyone feel relaxed and look beautiful.