

WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE

TIPS, TRICKS & EXPERIENCE
TO CREATE YOUR IDEAL
WEDDING DAY



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LIAM COLLARD PHOTOGRAPHY



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TIPS & TRICKS

Chances are if you're reading this, you have just got engaged and are planning your perfect wedding day. Congratulations.

If you are already working with us - thank you so much for trusting us with your photographs! We can't wait to get started.

If you have just downloaded this guide to help you plan your wedding - welcome. Thank you for taking the time to check out our work. We truly hope this guide will help you have the best wedding day.

We have worked all over the world photographing weddings for our clients. That experience is what this guide is all about. We are going to share with you the best tips and tricks for planning your wedding day. This will include a suggested timeline, ideas on when to schedule taking photos, and our experience on

how to handle a destination wedding, a wedding in a big city like London, and other considerations you might not have thought about.

We are Stam and Liam and together we are Liam Collard Photography. We are life partners, photography partners, and proud owners of a mad French Bulldog named Bob.

We are obsessed with creating artistic storytelling that makes you and your photographs stand out from the crowd.

We have been trusted to photograph couples in Thailand, The UK, Greece, Italy, USA, Hong Kong, Bali, Myanmar, Vietnam, Dubai and Singapore and have used all our knowledge and experience to create this amazing 44-page guide for you.

01

HELLO & CONGRATULATIONS

02

YOUR ENGAGEMENT SESSION

Engagement sessions are the best way for you and your photographer to get to know each other. They help us get a feel for your natural chemistry and figure out how we can tell the absolute best version of your story. It will also make you feel so much more comfortable on the wedding day.

The entire experience from session planning, wardrobe styling, on-location shooting, right through the product selection and design process is exciting and fun. We want to ensure that the photos we create are meaningful and special, so we've created this guide to help you make the most out of your engagement session.

WHAT TO WEAR

You'll get the best results from your engagement session when you style your wardrobe in a way that fits your personality

Embrace your ripped jeans and leather jacket or whatever clothes make you feel your best. Forcing yourself into an outfit that doesn't feel "you" will only make you uncomfortable. Let's create a session that allows you to be yourself.

DO SOMETHING FUN

You can't fake natural chemistry and there's nothing quite like a genuine smile and capturing you both doing what you love together. If you're in an environment and doing something that you really enjoy, those emotions & chemistry will flow naturally and the photos will be more authentic. This could be going to your favourite place or just hanging out at home.

PINTEREST FOR INSPIRATION

We love using Pinterest to help inspire clients to create a vision for their session. It can be a great tool to help you come up with a few ideas that fit your personality. Keep in mind, however, copying the newest quirky way to spell out save the date, will only look tacky and outdated by the time your wedding rolls around.



03

HOW TO PLAN YOUR WEDDING DAY TIMELINE

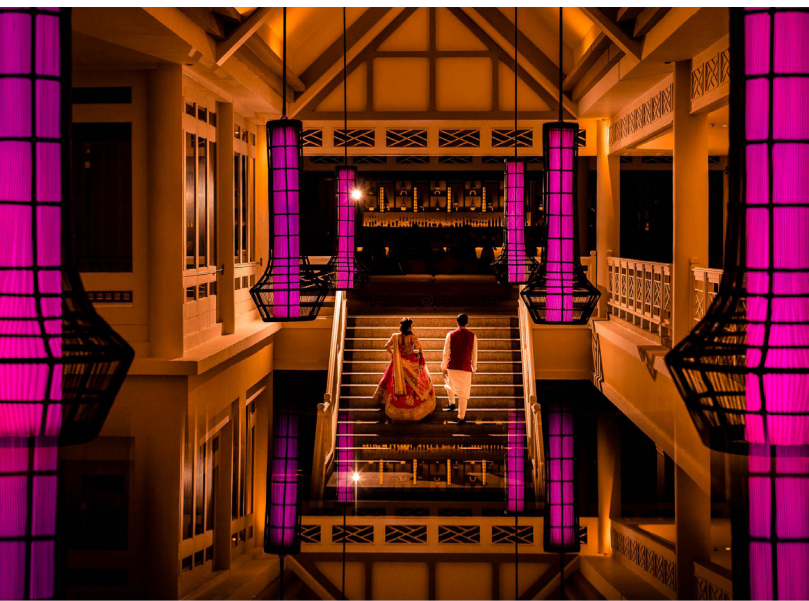
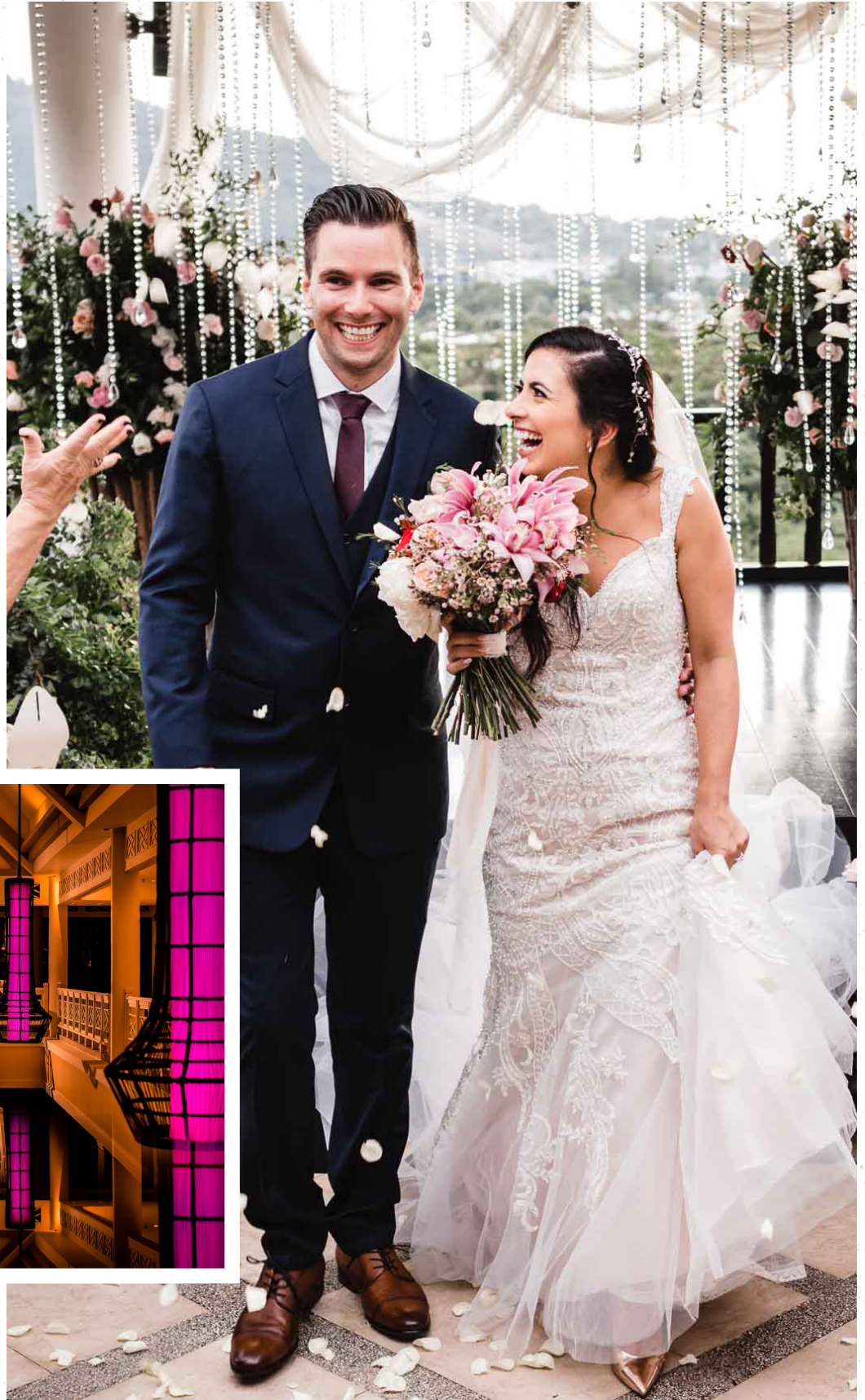
The schedule of your day is the single most important piece to make sure things run smoothly. If you are not working with a coordinator or planner, it's important that you work together with your suppliers and photographers to create a schedule that will allow the day to be stress-free.

As photographers, we like to let your wedding day flow and always work around the day as it's planned out.

It's always a good idea to schedule more time than you need when getting ready. Hair and Makeup tend to overrun a little and you do not want to feel rushed before the ceremony. This also allows you time to do some bridal portraits.

Definitely try to schedule some time later in the day for some couples photos of the two of you together. We normally suggest around 20 minutes during the best light and then add a few more images at night where we can be creative with the light.





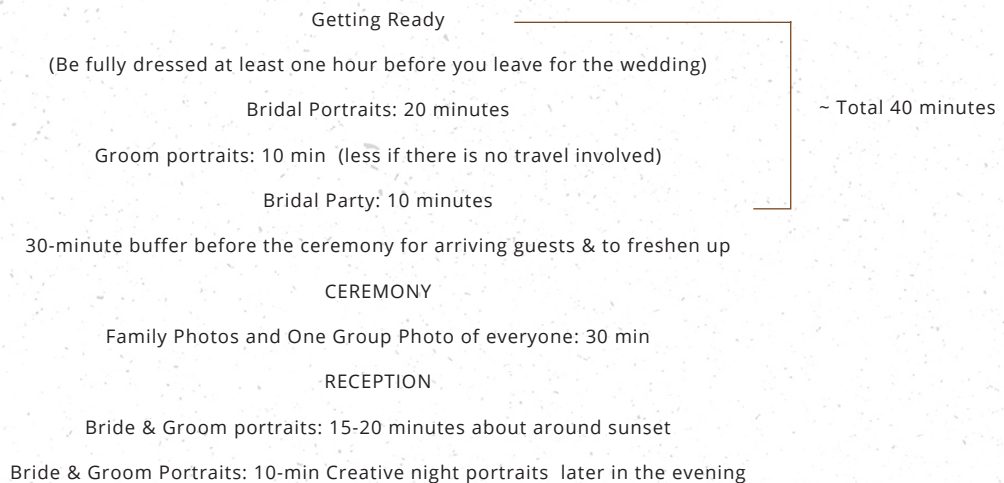
YOUR WEDDING TIMELINE

The first question we generally get before a wedding is “how long should we set aside for portraits”?

If you want to stray away from your parent’s posted wedding portraits, a photo-journalistic (or documentary-style) is the way to go. You really are investing in the skill of capturing incredible images without interfering with your wedding day too much. That being said, it is good to plan some time to do some Bride / Groom photos and some couple’s photos. Everything outside of the below times will be candid photography.

The hands-off approach of photography means that you’ll rarely see people staring straight into the camera and most of your guests will never feel watched...they may not even notice your photographer at all! These images will capture each moment exactly as they happen and weave together an intimate and authentic story.

TIMELINES



We really like to let the day flow. We have a lot of experience working to tight schedules and understand how to keep things relaxed and enjoyable for you. The timelines here are just to give you an idea of what the day will look like from a photography perspective.

SAMPLE PHOTOGRAPHY TIMELINE

There are always opportunities as the day unfolds that present themselves. We will always make suggestions when appropriate and help guide you through the process.

This is based on a 4:30 start time (this was an August wedding in London) who booked a 10-hour package.

- 13:00 Photographer arrives
- 13:30 COVERAGE BEGINS: Getting ready photos (dress, shoes, details)
- 14:00 Bride hair & makeup
- 15:00 Bride gets into a dress
- 15:30 Bride portraits
- 16:00 Leave for ceremony
- 16:30 Ceremony Coverage
- 17:30 Family formal portraits (We normally suggest a small number of these so you don't have to stand there for too long. We can always do more at the reception.)
- Cocktail hour begins
- 17:30 Bride & Groom join cocktail hour when ready
- One Photographer takes photos of reception set-up, One Covers Guests Seated for dinner
- 18:30 Grand entrance
- 18:45 Dinner served (photographer takes break & eats)
- 19:00 Photographer steals away the couple for sunset portraits
- 19:30 Speeches
- 20:00 Photographer takes you away for some nighttime portraits
- 20:30 Cake cutting
- 21:00 First dances
- 21:30 Party begins
- 22:00 Photographer finishes
- 23:00 Bride & Groom official exit

If bridal parties are getting ready near one another, we can shoot both parties. If not, one of us will go to the bride and one to the groom.

Obviously this is dependent on the time of year, please refer to a sunset calendar to better plan for sunset photos. Typically I like doing them ~ hour before sunset. If you're getting married in the winter or somewhere where the sun is setting before dinner, let's chat about splitting your portrait time differently!

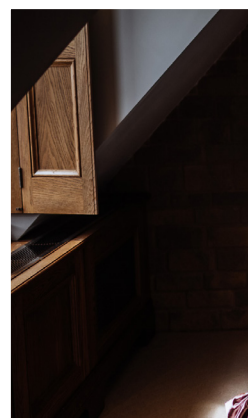
If the night goes on longer than this and there are fireworks or an exit, more time may be needed.

04

GETTING READY

The getting ready portion of the day is such a fun and memorable part of a wedding because that's where all the true nervousness and excitement is so evident.

However, the thing that is often forgotten about this part of the day is how chaotic it can be. How cramming 8 bridesmaids, the make-up artist, the hairstylists, and the photographers into a single room filled with make-up, curling irons, hairspray, duffel bags, garbage cans, water bottles, food, and clothing can start to feel overcrowded and LOOK very cluttered. The goal of classic and elegant getting ready images is space & light.





This is why we often recommend couples consider their getting-ready space instead of leaving it until the last minute - and it doesn't have to be limited to a hotel room. Looking at homes on Airbnb is a great option as well — they tend to have more interesting and lovely backgrounds AND better light. And just more room to spread out and not feel cramped.

IF you are getting ready in a hotel room, consider getting an extra room OR asking friends if their room can be cleaned and used as a clutter-free zone — aka: people's belongings should be hidden away in this space! Are you getting ready at your venue? Perhaps there is a whole separate room where the dress can be photographed free of clutter. In both of these options, light is something to take note of as well. We typically like to be able to shoot in a room with all of the lights off, so this means lots of good natural light. Mixed-light of any kind (natural light + lamps + overhead lights) tends to lead to odd skin tones.

Sometimes we will use studio lighting for your bridal portraits and some of the getting-ready images. This is also easier in a room that has space as the light stands and softboxes we use take up a little bit of extra room.

We will help you plan this part of the day so just ask and we are here to help.



Two of our favourite parts of the wedding day. The dress going on and a fully ready bride before she heads to the ceremony.

05

DESTINATION WEDDINGS

There is nothing more exciting than having your dream wedding somewhere exotic. We have photographed weddings all over the world and have learnt some really important things about these celebrations and how they differ from a wedding at home. It can feel overwhelming trying to organise your wedding from another country so have a read of these important steps to consider during the planning.

1) Find a wedding planner you can trust. This is so important as you will need them to handle a lot of the jobs for you in the lead up to the wedding. We can recommend some great planners all over the world so just ask us.

2) Consider doing an extra shoot two days after the wedding. Unlike a wedding at home, your destination wedding is going to be very focused

on the location you have chosen. You simply won't have time to visit all the best places for photos on your wedding day

3) Consider the weather: Whilst being on a beach in Greece or Thailand feels lovely in swimwear, it can feel overwhelmingly hot with full makeup and dress on. Consider a late ceremony at sunset and make sure where you are getting ready has good air-con,

that can handle 10 plus people in the room.

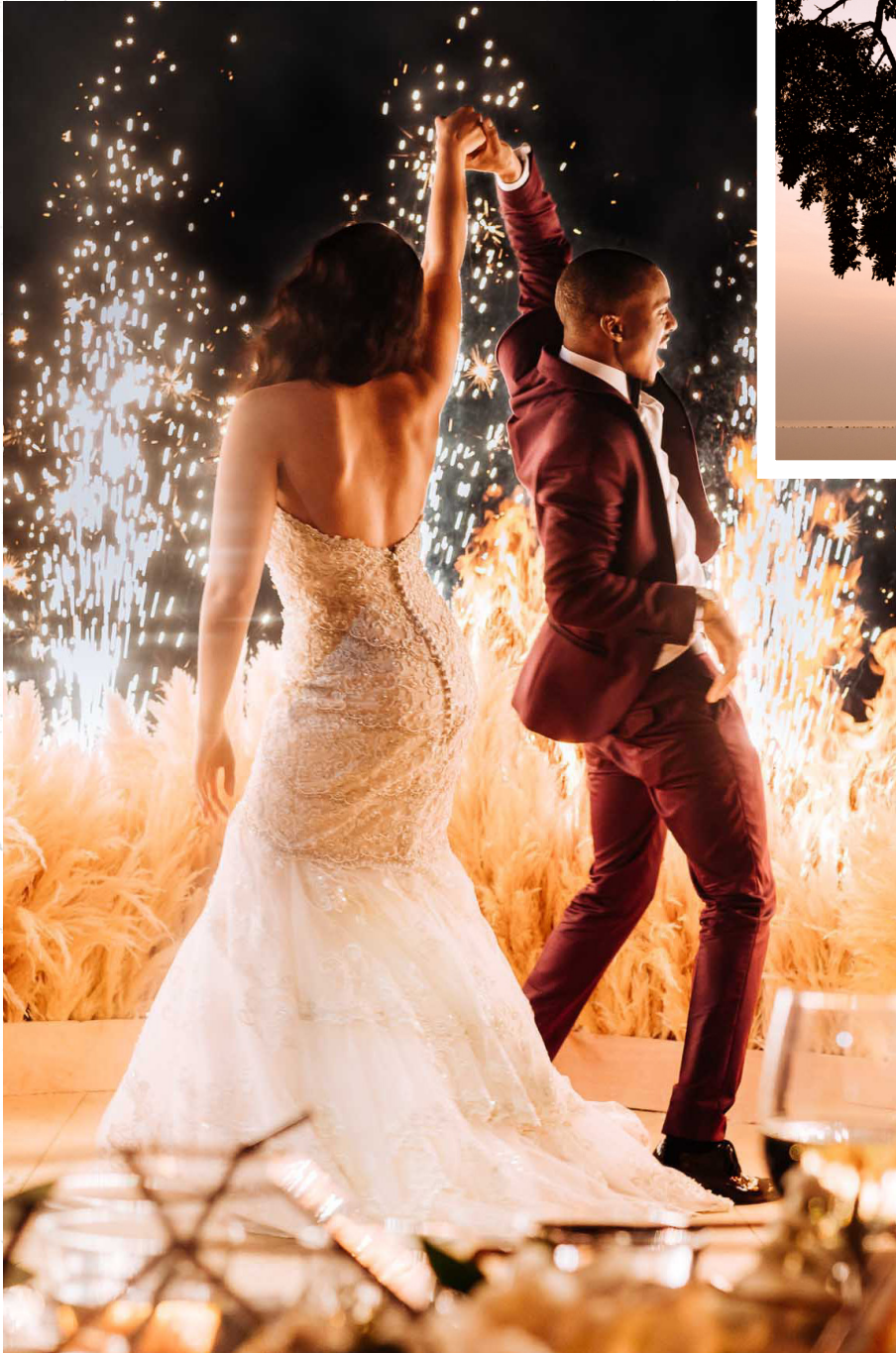
4) Don't try and do too many family portraits after the ceremony. Whilst it may be tempting, many of the non-

essential groups can be done after sunset at the reception. This frees time up for you to have a drink and get some spectacular sunset photos of the two of you.

THIS IMAGE WAS ONE OF OUR FAVOURITES FROM STEFI AND PHILIPP'S SANTORINI ADVENTURE BUT WAS ONLY POSSIBLE

TWO DAYS AFTER THE WEDDING DURING A TRASH THE DRESS SESSION.





It's really worthwhile doing an extra shoot to capture the best locations outside the wedding day



With no wedding to consider you will find some amazing opportunities and get to photograph during the best light.



RACHEL & LEON / LONDON

ONE THING A LOT OF COUPLES WORRY ABOUT IS NOT HAVING ENOUGH PHOTOS. WE REALLY BELIEVE HAVING TWO PHOTOGRAPHERS IS THE BEST WAY TO CAPTURE ALL THE EXCITEMENT OF THE DAY. GOOD PHOTOGRAPHERS AND STORYTELLERS WILL BE CAPTURING HUNDREDS OF MOMENTS FOR YOU AND WILL EASILY BE ABLE TO WORK UNDER TIME PRESSURE TO GET YOU THE MEMORIES YOU WANT.



06

CULTURAL WEDDINGS

We often photograph cultural weddings that have both a western ceremony and a cultural ceremony, or weddings that are fully focused on other traditions. We have worked at some amazing Chinese weddings with tea ceremony, Indian weddings with multi-day celebrations as well as Jewish and Muslim traditions.

Below we share our top 4 tips to help you enjoy a stress-free day.

1) Consider the timing if you are having a morning ceremony. Sometimes there is an early morning ceremony that can affect your hair and makeup start times. Make sure you book your stylist with them fully aware of the early start. Can your bridesmaids all get there that early? Or do they need to stay nearby?

2) Plan carefully with your

photographer when the best times will be for your portraits. If you are wearing multiple outfits, it can easily be done, but important to get it organised well in advance.

3) Are there any aspects to the day that need special attention? Do you need lots of family portraits after your tea ceremony? Or perhaps there needs to be a dress change between two different parts of the day? Talk this through with your planner and

photographer to make sure everything you need will be taken care of.

4) Plan to eat something before the reception: If you are doing a full day

of activities from morning to evening it's definitely a good idea to have some catering organised during some downtime. You don't want to feel hungry all day.

THE FANTASTIC ANNIE AND KEVIN DURING THEIR CHINESE WEDDING IN HONG KONG



07

PORTRAITS





Whilst we focus on documentary photography for ninety percent of your wedding day, your portraits are always really special images that you will look back on forever.

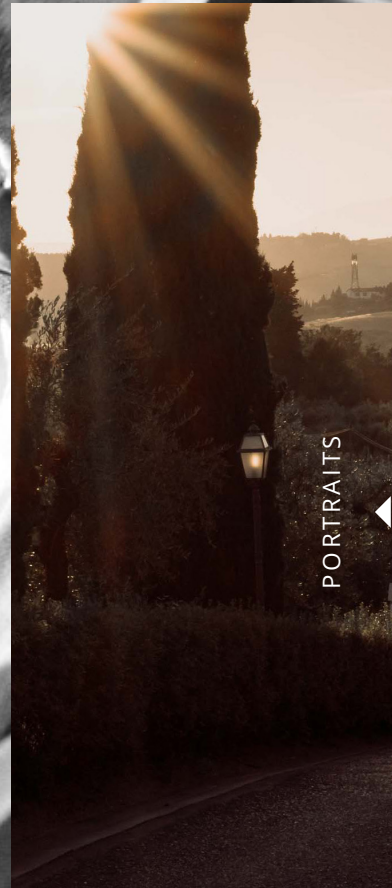
There is absolutely no pressure on you during this part of the day. We have 10 years of experience working with couples that have never been photographed before. That allows us to get really natural interaction between you as we hang out together for twenty minutes or so.

You can see some of our couples' photos on the next few pages, as well as some stunning bridal portraits.

We have developed a really relaxed way of taking these images. The bridal portraits are always fun and it doesn't feel like you're being photographed. It's more a time to enjoy your dress whilst we elegantly capture you and it before the ceremony.

For our couples portraits, we always have you two focusing on each other rather than the camera. That gets different images for different couples but always produces some beautiful moments. We will be there to guide you through it every step of the way.

LIAM COLLARD PHOTOGRAPHY



PORTRAITS

BRIDE & GROOM

The first few questions we always get when couples are looking at our wedding photos are “So...did that just happen? Did they just put themselves like that? Do we have to do that?” (They’re referring to the specific photo, pose, or moment that’s captured). The answer is both yes...and no.

When photographing a wedding we are focused on the moments that happen in real-time. We would not try to set up you putting the dress on or anything like that. Your couple’s portraits and bridal portraits however are more constructed. You will be aware we are photographing you for these short sessions, but the connection and moment between you will be real.

This is so we can capture some stunning images of the both of you together that will no doubt be framed and put on your wall at home. It’s really very good fun this part of the day and the only time you will get to yourselves until the party ends much later in the evening, Enjoy it and then get back to your nearest and dearest for the rest of the day’s celebrations.



Italy and Greece were the locations for these two images of Michella and Eddy and Nathalie and Chris.



When you are ready early these sort portrait sessions feel so much more relaxed - which equals better photos.





You do not need long to capture a few stunning images like this. Both of these we took just before the ceremonies.



ARTISTIC PORTRAITS

One thing that really helps your wedding photos stand out from the crowd is the artistic images that look fantastic hanging on your wall at home in the years that follow your wedding day.

We approach this with a flexible attitude as the opportunities to capture images like this come at different times.

Depending on the light and what else is going on we always look for one or two opportunities like this so that you have something special.

Typically these images use off-camera lighting or dramatic sunsets and silhouettes to create vibrant and dramatic images that will immortalise your wedding day.





Two creative portraits were taken at dusk in Thailand.



WEDDING GUIDE

A tropical sunset in Thailand and London's fantastic Gherkin building in the city helped us create these images for Charisma and Tom and Francesca and Steve.





CEREMONY & RECEPTION & LIGHTING

08

CEREMONY & RECEPTION & LIGHTING

Lighting & locations during the wedding: the part of the day we feel like is talked about the least. We know how to create lighting in dark venues that will look fantastic and can make suggestions about the ceremony time and location if it's outside to set you up for success.

Lighting is everything in photography, so there are things that you can do that will make an impact on your final images no matter the venue or location.

Prior to each wedding we shoot, we will take a look around the venue to scout the best locations, and depending on the light at the time of day we do your portraits and family photos will make suggestions to help smooth the process for you.

If you have a special place in mind, let us know before your day so we can take a look to see if it will be a good fit during different types of weather, light, and see if it will work into your time-line.

For DURING the wedding (ceremony & reception) there are a few questions worth asking before you make any final decisions that will vastly improve the quality of your images and how they feel.

IF YOU'RE HOLDING AN OUTDOOR CEREMONY, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER: (WE CAN OFFER HELP WITH THIS WHEN WE SPEAK)

- What will the lighting be like during the time of your ceremony? Will you both be in direct sunlight? Only one of you in the shade? Maybe before the wedding, you can take a look at what the light is like OR research some imagery to see what to expect. Perhaps it means moving you both into the shade or tilting the ceremony set-up slightly so you're not both squinting into the sun.
- Will there be anything above you or behind you? A gazebo, an arch, standing on a stage? Sometimes these things will play a part in what to expect with your images and if they are casting shadows or not.
- Is there enough space for your photographer to walk around the perimeter of the ceremony space? If so, this will allow for a lot more variety in your final images (i.e. images of your parents, bridal party, etc.)

If you're holding an indoor ceremony:

- What will the available lighting be? Is there any natural light or is it all ambient/artificial light? If it's all artificial light, perhaps we can improve this by adding hanging lights, candles, or spotlights.
- If you're getting married in a church, what are the photography restrictions? Some churches don't allow photographers past the last pew and to never "cross the aisle".
- Does your venue/church allow flash photography?



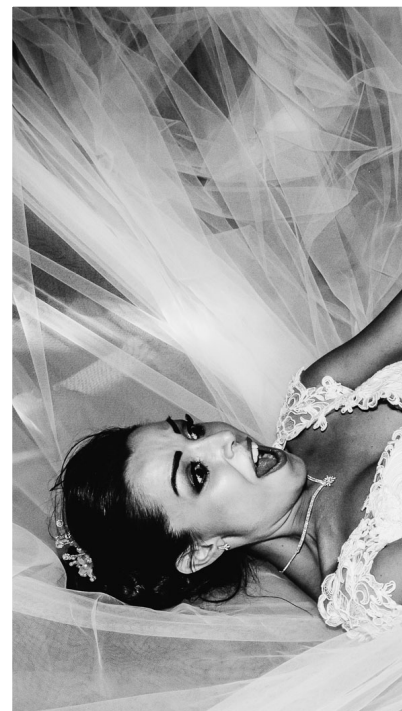
RECEPTION SPACES ARE IMPORTANT TOO:

- What lighting are you providing during dinner? Hanging lights? Candles? All of these impact mood AND photos. We always add in light to help create a beautiful atmosphere but candlelight & hanging lights, and lots of fairy lights definitely help create intimacy and warmth
- Where is the head table and what is behind you? I.e. is it a full set of speakers, a catering table, or is it a nice clean background?
- When people stand for speeches, will they be near you or standing at their seats? Closer is better for the reactions!



The ceremony and reception get talked about the least but is important to think about during the planning stage.

REMEMBER YOUR WEDDING DAY IS A CELEBRATION OF THE BIGGEST DAY OF YOUR LIFE. A PHOTOGRAPHER THAT SHARES YOUR VISION AND UNDERSTANDS HOW TO CREATE COMPELLING REAL MOMENTS, WITHOUT TAKING OVER YOUR DAY, WILL HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON HOW MUCH FUN AND ENJOYMENT YOU HAVE.





09

TIPS & TRICKS

So, you can probably see how much thought goes into your wedding day coverage and planning. It's a BIG day. It's also a really long day with a lot of people vying for your attention. Of all the weddings we've shot, there are a few other random tips and tricks throughout your wedding day that not only improve your photographs but allow you to enjoy it that much more. :)



*Lucy walking down the iconic staircase
at London's fantastic St Pancras
Renaissance Hotel.*



1. THE WEDDING PLANNER

If you're having a wedding of more than 50 people, consider hiring a planner or at least a day-of coordinator that is not related to the wedding in any way (not also a guest or friend). He/she will be able to curb all questions and concerns so you can spend time "floating" through your wedding day and not trying to figure out how you ended up six place-settings short, how the DJ needs an extension cord or who should be getting ice for the white wine to start chilling. While friends/guests seem like a great idea, they too like to mingle, have a few drinks, and enjoy themselves. Having a dedicated person whose job it is to help make your day run smoothly not only saves your sanity.

2. UNPLUGGED WEDDING

Consider asking guests to put away their cell phones, iPads, cameras, and electronics during the ceremony. We've had so many moments where we have had to compromise the angles to avoid large iPads or iPhones being held up in the aisle. Without all those distractions, your guests will be able to focus solely on the two of you, which always creates a special atmosphere.



3. STARTING YOUR DAY

Your wedding day can be a hectic one — consider starting your day with a dedicated breakfast/ time with your other half completely alone. It is a peaceful/fun way to calm our nerves and start our day.

4. HAIR & MAKE-UP

Hair and makeup often overrun so getting them to start earlier than you think you need by one hour will make the pre-ceremony fun all the more enjoyable. Ideally, you want to be ready to put the dress on an hour before the ceremony starts (or you have to leave for the ceremony).

5. SNACKS & WATER

It's amazing how many people forget this but it's really important. Make sure you have some nice snacks and drinks available wherever you are

getting ready. It can be a long day with limited time to eat or grab a drink before you sit down for the reception later on.

6. WRITE OUT YOUR VOWS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING DAY

This is so worthwhile and removes any stress about finding the right words or worrying you don't have time to think about them with everything that is going on.

7. RAIN

Having a plan B is essential if you are planning an outside wedding. It can rain. Whilst this provides fantastic opportunities for creative photography, you won't want to be stuck with no alternative if the heavens open on the day you get married.

8. SET ASIDE ALONE TIME

This is your big day and it can pass by without you even seeing each other much. Block in some time to just be together and take it all in. Pop outside between courses at the reception and have a glass of champagne together. You will really be grateful you did this in the days and years afterward.

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY

It's your wedding day. Have fun, enjoy it, go with the flow. You will have the best day of your life if you relax and let others do the organising.





THANK YOU

YOU MADE IT!

Wow. You got through that entire guide.

Congrats!

We absolutely love working with couples from around the world that want special memories created for their wedding day. This guide is a small snippet of our experience, that we really believe will help you have an amazing day. There are of course many ways to do things well. These are just some suggestions to get you started.

Cheers,

Liam and Stam xoxo



THANK YOU

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