

Best Wedding Photographer Report

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Purpose and Disclaimer

I have written this report in response to so many requests from today's brides who have asked me what to look for in a wedding photographer. They ask, "How can I get a modern style, someone who knows today's digital technology, and mix in some traditional wedding photographs? I'm on a tight budget." Many brides have heard horror stories from their friends and really want to avoid repeating these.

This is not a marketing brochure for Charles Jablow Photography. Instead, I am sharing with you insider information and observations made during hundreds of weddings and consultations, for you the bride of today - who is asking me for it.

Read the parts you want to read and plan smarter.
Enjoy!



First, Decide What You Want

It's one thing to say you want a good photographer. It's another to define it. Let's see if we can help with that.

It's not enough to be a nice person. Not enough. A photographer has to produce excellent images under difficult conditions with little time. Not everyone can do it and stay calm and collected. Of course, they all say they can. Naturally.

Sometimes conditions are less than ideal. An excellent photographer always brings back great pictures. Ten out of ten times. Not seven out of ten times. What if your wedding isn't one of the seven?

Training and apprenticeship are the keys. Don't be afraid to ask where the photographer apprenticed and for how long. You'll learn a lot.

Do you need an album? How fancy? Expect to pay \$500 for an inexpensive album, \$1000 - \$1500 for a fairly fancy leather album. Remember, an album involves design. Who does the design? Is it outsourced to the low bidder? (It usually is.) Can you see some albums? Are these really typical? Are they exact copies of what the bride received, or specials just for display?

Do you really need two photographers? Most of the time, the second photographer is an apprentice and really doesn't add much of anything except cost. Almost never are the two photographers both equally good.



Second, Decide on Your Budget

You really can't just pick a price and go with it. Wouldn't it be better to have some idea of what the fair market prices are? How much of your dreams are tied up in this? How much of your budget comes from money you have set aside or not saved yet? What is the right compromise? Do you need an album? Does it have to be leather?

In major urban areas like Washington, DC; the going rates are under \$2000 for a budget photographer, \$2000 - \$5000 for a mid-priced photographer, and \$6000 up for a well-established photographer. But – and here's the catch – price alone is not a perfect indicator of quality. Yes, most of the problems do happen with the budget photographers, but I have also heard of very difficult situations occurring with photographers who charged \$5500+.

Bottom line – try to avoid budget photographers and you'll avoid problems. Because being a nice person isn't enough, ask how they deal with difficult situations. And you might read a few reviews, too.

Prepare for Perfection, Brace for Reality

I know you want your pictures to be perfect, but you have to be careful. Most photographers will bring you back good pictures in their style. Sometimes you may get a few great ones. Budget photographers will bring you back pictures which are fair to good, but at a very affordable price. The best photographers will bring you back great pictures every time, but these are harder to find.



Training and apprenticeship make the difference, and these you can ask about. A photographer's love of his art, the skillful use of the camera, a great sense of timing, and use of lighting separates the great photographic artists. Do check out their work. What do you think of it? Is it beautiful or made more exciting with digital effects? Are the beauty and personality of the bride always captured? How are the formals? Do people look good? Are the emotions captured? What is their style? You can ask for something a bit different if that's what you want. Listen to their answer carefully- do they answer with confidence or even show you examples of that style you like?

Don't hesitate to ask about customer service, guarantees, and service after the wedding day. Ask what things have gone wrong in the past and how they handled it. How do they dress at the wedding? How do they treat the guests? How much do they care about you, or is it primarily about the money? What happens when equipment fails?



Quality is often tied into money. You may have to make some trade-offs in terms of quality if your budget is tight, but don't trade off reliability. There are no do-overs with wedding photography. It must be right the first time around.

Every year, we get brides calling. "We came to see you, we didn't use you, and now we wish we had. Can you fix my pictures?"



Generally speaking, bad pictures can't be fixed later. Pay enough to get it done right the first time, even if you have to put off the expense of an album until later. You'll be happier in the long run. Like when you're in your 80s, having your anniversary, holding hands on the couch and looking at your wedding album. Think about that when you're selecting your photographer.

After the wedding, all you have are the rings, each other and the photographs. Maybe that's the right place for you to spend your money. The food, the flowers, the DJ, all are just window dressing. A week later, people won't even remember those clearly. The rings and the photographs remain for you to enjoy throughout your life.

Do You Have More Questions?

I will be happy to consider writing more articles based on your questions. Please email me at info@charlesjablow.com. My web site is www.charlesjablow.com We hope to provide more informative articles, so check back from time to time.

Best wishes on your happiest of occasions from Charles and Kellie.

To Find Out More, call us at 703-216-8878 or email us at [info @ charlesjablow.com](mailto:info@charlesjablow.com)