

11 Questions You Must Ask Your Wedding Photographer

Imagine you are in hospital and a Doctor is about to operate on you! You want to know:

- *Have they done this before?*
- *Are they qualified?*
- *Have they explained all this to me in plain-English?*
- *Are they sober?*
- *Are they friendly so other people will cooperate with them?*
- *Do they have insurance?*
- *Is their equipment clean and modern?*

Is your wedding day photography just as important? You bet it is (and there are no second chances)!

You may have received some quotes, but here are some questions you **must** ask:

1. What is included in the PRICE?

The TRAP – some nice sample pics with a great [STARTING] price! But they are not qualified and use cheap equipment. After the wedding you didn't realise that you only paid for unedited, watermarked, on-line sharing photos. Look at what's included in the package – editing, hi-res, JPGs, travelling – they may be included, or might be extra money. Just make sure you're not expected to pay more later for things you definitely want.

Beware the photographer who offers a 'quality' album [from Big W], key ring, paperweight, bumper sticker, enlargement, puppy and a CD - don't let the 'extras' overshadow the quality of the images.

Church Hill Photography (CHP) offers a fixed fee (and affordable packages). No extras. No travelling within 90km of Adelaide. All images fully-edited, un-watermarked, in high resolution, delivered on the agreed date (within days of the wedding). Yours to print, share and enjoy!

2. Can I see ALL THE SHOTS from your last wedding?

It's easy to have 20 great shots from 20 weddings; but how good all are the shots from one wedding? Ask for ALL the photos, so you can see a true representation of a day's worth of photos. Look for someone whose work you like. Don't pick someone who says they are a particular style - find someone who shows it through their images. You'll know you like it when you see it. Styles have fancy names (so what) - but do you like their portfolio? If photojournalism means they're not going to take a posed picture of your granny, it might not work for you.

CHP - I will show you all the pics from any of our weddings!

3. What is your EXPERIENCE?

How many weddings have they done recently and in a similar environment? A crap photographer is a crap photographer no matter how experienced they are at taking crap photos. There are photographers who claim to have to have 20+ years of experience, but their images just suck (ask to see all their images from a recent wedding).

Wedding photography is very different to other forms of photography. It is fast paced and requires use of available light to make the best of any situation. There are no second chances with wedding photography. Shooting a wedding (all day carrying heavy equipment) requires stamina and concentration (and spare batteries)!

Professional photographers will familiarize themselves with a location ahead of time and will be prepared for any lighting issues or restrictions, and will know how best to incorporate the site's architectural and landscape elements.

**CHP - I have been doing wedding photography for 5 years (and I carry lots of spare batteries)! Have a look at my on-line portfolios: <http://churchhillphotography.com/wedding-photography-adelaide-barossa-gawler/>
I always pre-inspect all venues.**

4. What is your EQUIPMENT and workflow?

Ask for the names and models of the cameras and lenses they use (consumer-grade equipment will not produce the best results). It's a bit technical, but they should use a full-frame camera, shoot in RAW (turn into jpg after editing), and not be stuck in AUTO mode. And have back-up gear! A professional wedding photographer uses a camera that has "dual-write" to guard against flash-card failure. They should carry at least two camera bodies and multiple lenses (in case of equipment failure). They will edit on colour-calibrated screens. Beware the student-grade cameras with plastic lenses - they are unreliable (especially in extremes of weather) and produce crap images.

CHP - I use professional full-frame cameras (always carry two camera bodies; with dual-write, shoot in RAW, and fully manual to control the look of every image); with high quality lenses (with back-up equipment). I edit using Lightroom & Photoshop, using colour-calibrated screens.

5. What is your photography QUALIFICATION?

A professional photographer has formal training. There are many gifted-amateurs, but their skills have not been tested and evaluated. At photo school we were taught composition, use of lighting, to use a light meter, image-resolution, colour-calibration, and proper editing using the features of Lightroom/Photoshop to best enhance images. Some 'old school/no school' have no idea about digital editing (and take forever to return your photos because they don't know modern editing workflow).

CHP - Certificate IV Photoimaging from TTG Tafe; and continuous professional development. I do a lot of work for demanding commercial clients – where top quality and 'on-time' are always a must!

6. Will I receive a written CONTRACT?

Don't book a photographer who won't provide a written contract. Read the terms of their draft contract - does it define what you want to receive (including exactly how many photos and when)? The contract should also detail clauses for no-show, sickness, editing, use of photos and liabilities for both parties. If they don't have a contract, find someone who does.

CHP - I use a short (2 page) and plain-English contract which specifies exactly what you will receive and when. It provides for all potential issues.

7. Are you the photographer WHO WILL SHOOT MY WEDDING?

Ask who is going to be the primary photographer. Will they sub-contract the job, will you meet them beforehand, or will a stranger turn up? The photographer's name should be on your contract.

CHP – My name is on the contract, and I shoot your wedding and edit your photos. I am responsible!

8. Is it okay if other people take photos?

Your guests naturally want to have their own 'memories' of your special day! It is up to you to set the rules of say 'unplugged' during the ceremony. Will the photographer be a "Prima donna" or will they cooperate with your family and friends.

CHP - Happy for everyone to take photos.

9. HOW LONG after the wedding will I get my photos?

After the wedding you're going to want to get your hands on your photos. Get a timeline for how fast or slow a particular photographer turns around your images. Will they be viewable online (say in a passworded 'dropbox' gallery)? Will you get high-resolution JPGs (hint: you want these)? Do they watermark your files?

CHP - A Facebook post and personal web gallery can be online within hours after your wedding (for your family and guests). The full set of your images are fully edited and ready within days (and you can see all of the proof images in a 'dropbox' (with a secure password)), and this is agreed in our contract. I supply high-resolution jpgs on a USB (no watermarks). I also include a duplicate set optimised for your Facebook.

10. Do you have public liability INSURANCE?

What if they injure themselves or a guest? No insurance - no start! Ask to see their policy.

CHP - I have public liability insurance; and can send you a copy of my current policy.

11. Can I MEET with you?

Meet your photographer to find out what he/she is like in person. Do you feel a connection with this photographer as well as their photos? Are you comfortable with their communication? Are they reliable? Will they have the stamina and concentration for your entire wedding day? If you're not comfortable with your photographer, and their personality, then the photos will inevitably suffer on the day.

CHP - I am very happy to meet with you! Neil 0434 902 392. I would love to answer more of your questions! My packages: <http://churchhillphotography.com/gawler-wedding-photographer/wedding-photography-packages/> also include a free engagement portrait session!

Ask about how we can create fantastic, memorable, keepsake (& very low-cost) wedding invitations!!!

Neil Jacobs

Church Hill Photography

Web: <http://churchhillphotography.com>

Email: chill.image@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/churchhillphotography>

Phone: 0434 902 392

