

THE BRIDAL PORTRAIT

Looking Beautiful on the Big Day

By Michelle Loukidis

Looking your most beautiful on your wedding day hasn't been easy; it's been a long and arduous process. You've spent months trying to get down to your goal weight; sighing with regret as you waived the dessert trolley past. Hours have been filled on a sun-bed acquiring a flawless tan which would perfectly offset your white dress. Your hair had to be grown to the perfect length and highlighted and treated so that it would be silky and stunning under your tiara. There have been facials and manicures, massages and pedicures; every possible treatment available has been undergone so that you would be more radiant and breathtaking than you have ever been before. And when you emerge from under the make-up artist's brush, like a butterfly from a chrysalis, you want to have your image captured for posterity so you can show it to your grandchildren one day and hear them say, "Wow Granny! You were so beautiful – just like a princess!"

The bridal portrait is a photograph of you on your own which can be taken during the course of the day as the situation arises. There are a few factors which are important when considering the portrait:

- You must be relaxed – nerves and tension can easily be seen on the photographs so it is important to try to relax. If you have planned your day properly and have allocated enough time for hair, make-up and dressing, you shouldn't be feeling rushed or stressed. When everything goes according to plan and you have time for quiet contemplation on the day, you're more likely to be calm.
- Time must be set aside for photographs – if you and the photographer know how much time is allocated for your photographic session, you won't be hurried and can have fun with the shots. It is often easier to try to take the bridal portraits away from the family and guests. It definitely adds to the stress if everyone watches you having your pictures taken. This is especially true if you're shy in front of the camera. Natural light, using no flash, is often the best light in which to work. The best natural light is found in the early morning and late afternoon, so try and plan your photos around these times and avoid the harsh midday light.
- You must feel comfortable with your Photographer – it isn't easy to let your guard down and bare your soul to a stranger. This is what you're essentially doing when you pose for your photographer. They say that a picture says a thousand words; you're displaying your personality, emotions, expectations and fears to your photographer so that the best and most personable images of you can be captured. If you don't feel comfortable with your photographer, you won't be able to relax in front of the lens. Get to know the person you're working with and trust their lead; allow them to capture your essence.

If you can have fun while having your bridal portraits taken – it will show in the photographs. You're looking amazing and must be feeling wonderful; let this delight come through and don't allow anything to dampen your exuberance. Like the champagne you will be drinking when toasting your happiness, let your happiness bubble to the surface and be effervescent.