



# Getting more than you bargained for

Choosing your photographer with confidence

By Kristie-Marie Petzold - An interview with Birgit Hoffmann of Photo & Video Memories

Birgit Hoffmann of Photo and Video Memories has worked as a wedding photographer both in Germany and South Africa over the last decade. She gives us the low-down on what is involved in planning a wedding with the right photographer. Birgit shoots all over South Africa, and is especially popular in the townships.

Finding the right photographer is difficult when you haven't a clue where to start, especially as you can never repeat your wedding. You will need to choose a professional photographer who you can rely on to capture the precious moments that you will cherish forever. Browsing the web, visiting expo's and paging through magazines, are all part of the fun of planning your dream wedding. Before long, you will have a list of your favoured photographers and will need to make this important decision. Birgit has identified four key pointers to help you:

1. **Budget** – you are going to get what you pay for. It is no good getting excited about a photographic package that you cannot afford. However, you must choose a professional wedding photographer; wedding photography is a unique art that not all photographers will master, and you will need to spend time understanding how the various packages work. Don't be tempted to get your wedding on a disc – most couples require a few beautiful images to frame and put on a wall

in their home; these pictures need to be printed professionally.

2. **Chemistry** – you need to like the photographer. The relationship between the bridal couple and the photographer makes a difference in the quality of the pictures.
3. **Style** – wedding photography is an art, and each has his/her own individual, unmistakable style. Time needs to be spent with each of the photographers on your shortlist to find the photographer that matches your personality and the tone of the wedding.
4. **Professionalism** – almost nobody, if they take enough photos, will have a collection that looks fantastic. Ask to see two or three portfolios of an entire wedding. The photographer's reputation ensures that he will deliver what he promised.

There is nothing worse than making a bride nervous on her wedding day; the bride and groom need to be relaxed and enjoy the day together, completely forgetting that the photographer is watching them. None of this is possible without choosing the ideal photographer. Only then will you come out with the most amazing photographs.

