



Photo: Patrick Furter

My passion for weddings over the past 20 years lives in a portfolio of photographs. But I was in for a shock. When we began to produce this magazine, bride's began to send us their full portfolio of the wedding. Suddenly, amongst a few good pictures, I found hundreds of images that were not only of a very poor quality, but also a very poor depiction of the entire wedding. I was amazed to discover that only very few photographers provided images of consistent excellence covering the full spectrum of the wedding day. Also amazing was the discovery our best wedding photographs had a common denominator—excellent lighting with a rather bitter irony. The weddings were all taken on rainy days, which surely was the bride's worst nightmare. Strangely, winter pictures were next in line for most beautiful pictures. Both of these highlight the impact of lighting. It also highlighted the fact only true professionals are going to get it right when nature deals its cards.

Here are some of the less obvious tips to help you separate the men from the boys:

- The photographer's favourites are only useful in identifying a style. These favourites, as gorgeous as they may be, do not prove your photographer has got it. Always ask to see all the pictures (minimum 120 pictures) of at least two weddings.
- Expect to see the full days' memories from dressing and décor to dancing. The little bows on the tree which the bride spent hours making need to be captured. These images require different skills of the photographer which only the experienced and able can achieve.
- Are the informal pictures part of the wedding story—these are the hardest to take. Did the photographer catch that tear of joy falling from Mum's eye? Is there a dreamy picture of friends remembering their special day? The informal pictures are not just a group of people sitting around a table.
- Some of the pictures should be so special that even if you have never met the subject, you feel compelled to

Memories or Miseries

—Special advice about choosing your photographer

When all is said and done, your memories are within the images captured by your photographer.

By Matthew Stubbs

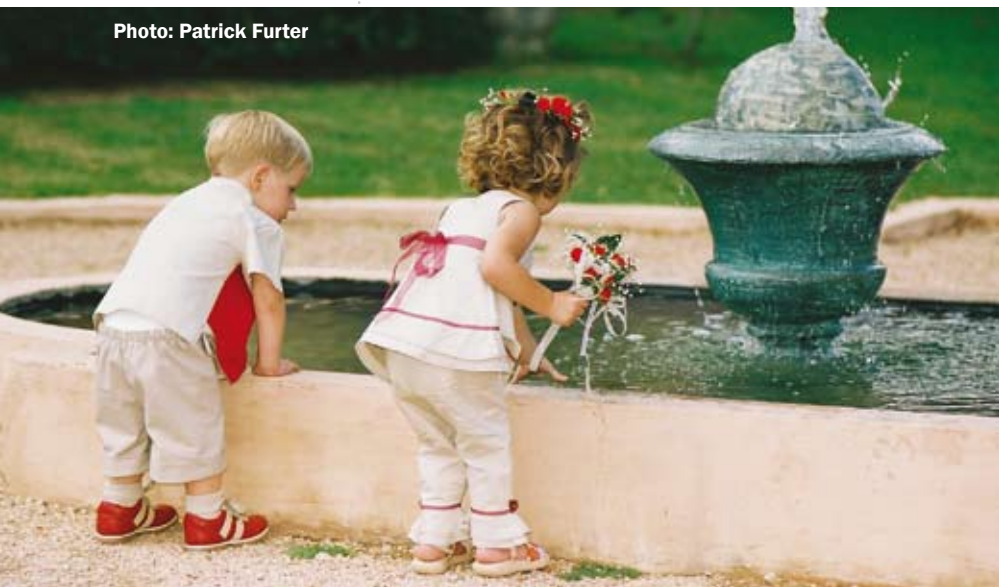


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get to know the picture better—Mona Lisa is a good example!

- Be prudent choosing packages. A cheap package with all the 'goodies' does not mean the pictures will be good. Better to have brilliant images on a disc than poor images in a story book.
- Ask who owns the copyright to the photographs after the wedding. This can be expensive later. You may want to produce your own story book later but do not have the high resolution images. Oops!
- Finally, there are some horror stories of couples who have waited for months for their pictures. You do need to be careful.