YOUR GUIDE TO AN

EPIC WEDDING

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Let's get you wed.

It's an age old saying among the married that they'd do things differently if they could redo the day. So what would your future self say to you?

As a photographer, I see and experience the day like no other. I see all the moments from start to finish - big and small. And this insight over the last 15 years has given me a wealth of knowledge on this very question.

So consider this guide your little window into the future. A guide full of insider secrets, tips and tricks.

But please keep in mind that this is just a guide - it is not a manual. Listen to yourself and what feels right. Because my biggest takeaway for you is to do what's you and ignore the rest.

After all this is YOUR day. So make it yours.

I see so many norms and traditions being broken and reimagined every day.

There really is only one guarantee to ensure your wedding day is epic and unique from all others: YOU!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 // Inspiration for your wedding
4-5 // Choosing suppliers and setting priorities
6 // Crafting your timeline
7-8 // Tips for getting ready
9-11 // Suggestions for your ceremony & confetti toss
12-14 // Stress free group & couple portraits
15-16 // Reasons for an engagement session
17-18 // Advice for your wedding breakfast and evening festivities

Hello there,

My name is Kelsie – and this is me and my family. Now that you know what I look like, here's a bit about me: I create fun and memorable wedding photography that is modern, yet timeless.

My speciality? Aside from knowing how to work great angles and an editing style that oozes creamy tones and true to life colours, I bring out the authentic, the rad and the totally you.

I get to know you and your people so I can capture real memories that will last you a lifetime. I learn the nuances and names of your nearest and dearest so that what I create is not just a photograph of them. It is them.

This guide is a natural extension of my desire for couples (like yourselves!) to have epic memories and a truly unforgettable wedding day.

But before you dive into this guide, you need to click that music link below. It will load up a YouTube list of some sweet and cheesy jams to listen to. Who knows, you might find your first dance song your band can do an epic rendition of (they can even tweak a lyric or two)!

Music Playlist

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Some Pinteresting Wedding Tips

Before diving too deep into wedding planning, deciding on a theme - be it colours or a mutual hobby or obsession - is a good place to start.

In a world full of noise, you can find yourself pulled in a million directions. So this gives you focus and helps tie elements together.

If you've no clue where to start, I'd suggest looking at your wedding venue and home decor (you'll want photographs to feature on your walls afterall!). What do you like about these spaces and what colours stand out?

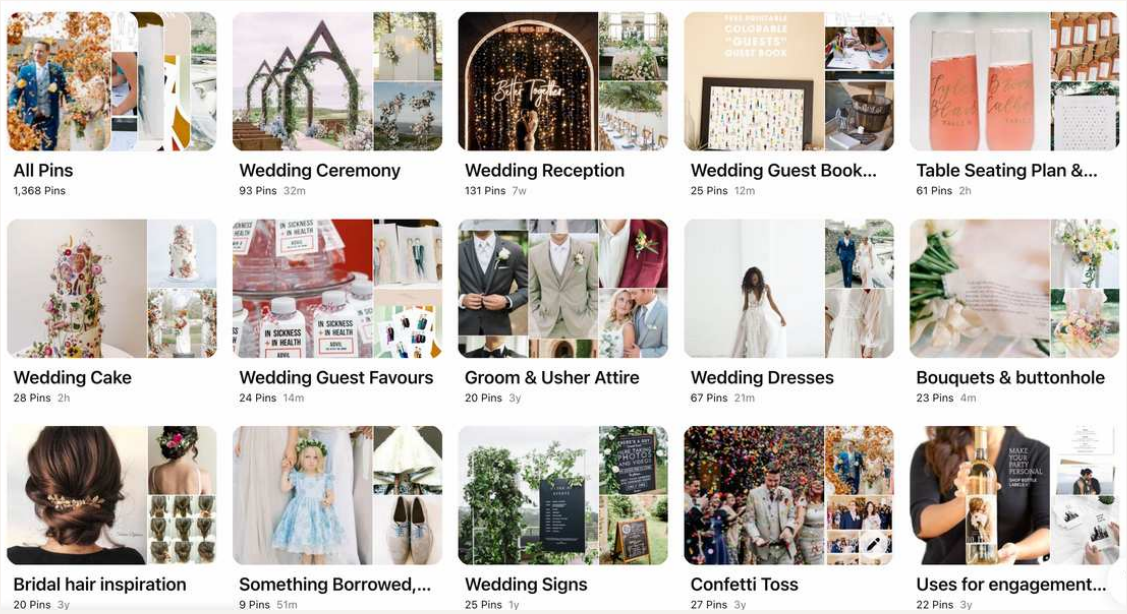
If you have a wedding planner, they can create magic out of the wildest ideas - but if not, a florist or decoration hire company is your next best bet for providing direction. These professionals know how to transform and complement a venue. Florists might seem an unusual recommendation, but they know colours better than anyone - and most importantly - what's in season.

You can also browse wedding magazines and websites, and see what comes up when you do searchs for themes or colours on Google, TikTok, Instagram and Pinterest.

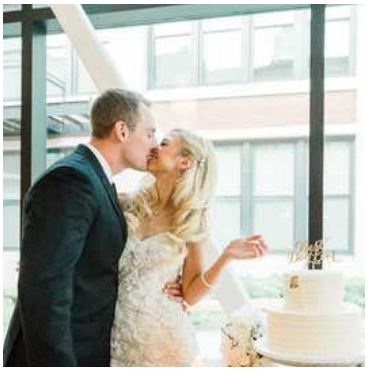
You might be surprised how something like meeting at work or a hobby can be tastefully incorporated into your day. This can be really subtle (like table names for the seating plan) or in your face!

My biggest advice though is to keep things simple and not get lost down the internet rabbit hole. Getting too caught up in the finer details is what often leads to bridezilla and groomzilla moments.

Last thing you want is to be staying up till 4 AM the night before stuffing confetti into cute little cones you found on TikTok and just HAD to have (especially because confetti actually photographs best when tossed by hand).



Click here for Pinterest inspo



Choosing Suppliers & Setting Priorities

Make your list of must haves and reach out to those suppliers first. But do factor in that some suppliers cannot book multiple events: wedding planners, photographers, videographers, bands & DJs can only do one event a day. So don't leave these too last minute as they book up fast. Wedding attire can also take months to create so book in sooner rather than later.

Prioritise what matters most TO YOU and skip what doesn't. Put a creative spin on what you want to - and what you realistically can do.

I've photographed luxury weddings where floral elements came from the family garden - even down to the dried flower confetti. Weddings where the most beautiful formal invites were sent to immediate family and then to cut costs and save on admin, everyone else's invitations were done with the help of websites like Paperless Post or The Knot. And then there have been weddings where someone in the family made the cake and not a word was uttered about the missing favours.

As I've said before, the only way to make your wedding incredible is to keep it authentic to who you two are.

So make the day utterly and completely yours. Walk down the aisle as a couple, have a 90 year old flower girl, or your brother as your man of honour. Have a cake shaped piñata in lieu of a formal one and alcoholic shots for your escort cards. Break the norms on who gives a speech. And on behalf of all your guests, have pizza delivered for your evening nibbles.

Trust me when I say there is no right or wrong way to go about things - I have seen every extreme and in-between. So skip the trends and traditions that don't resonate. You don’t have to do an unplugged ceremony, wear something blue, throw the bouquet or do the first dance - unless you want to.

At the end of the day, remember that your guests are truly simple creatures: plenty of good food and lots of drink guarantees a wedding will be a great time.

Recommended Wedding Suppliers

WEDDING PLANNERS

Weddings by Emma Louise // Weddings by Jenna Hewitt // Tania Russell

FURNITURE, PROP AND MARQUEE HIRE

The W Collection // Decor Noir // AB Hire // Crystal Hire // To Have and To Hire // House of Hud // Cheltenham Yurt Hire // Tents N Events // James Marquee Hire // Great British Tipis // Great British Stretch Tents // English Marquee Company // Lewis Marquees // Sail & Peg //

VIDEOGRAPHERS

Ground Films // Reel Love Films // Just Happy Together // HD Moments // Vogue Wedding Films

BEAUTY AND HMUA

Jenna West // Petal Brush // Sylwia Kunys // The BridalDream Team // Leanna Cobb Makeup

CAKES AND CATERING

Scrumptious Bakes // Holly Anne Cake Design // Anna Lewis Cake // Savanna Fei // Vine & Dine // Jacaranda Catering // The Secret Restaurant // Earth Catering

CAR TRANSPORT

Arrow Vintage Cars // Brooklands Wedding Cars

Celebrants

Grace the Day // Perfect Words Ceremonies // Proud Fox Ceremonies

STATIONERY

Papertree Studio // The Amy Verse // Lou Paper

BANDS AND DJS

Pandora's Jukebox // The Function Band // BPM Events // JPC Events // groovewrk

WEDDING DRESS AND SUITS

Bridal Indulgence // Bride By Aster // Made with Love Bridal // Fross Wedding Collections // Bespoke Veils // dobell // Well Suited // Gresham Blake

FLORIST

Sage and Co Floral Design // Fig & Flower // Bramble & Belle // Bryony Mae Flowers // Tony Dunn Flowers // The Floral Artisan

Crafting Your Wedding Day Timeline

Wedding timelines are single handedly the best thing you can do for your sanity – and the sanctity of your marriage.

From your bridal party not being ready on time to your mother corralling all her second cousins for yet another group photograph with you two, there are a million opportunities for disarray. You'll likely miss out on photographs you wanted and your day will feel a bit all over place with massive lulls and rushed moments.

But with a timeline? The day will run smoothly and you'll be able to enjoy every part – from spending time with your nearest and dearest to eating those award-winning hors d'oeuvres.

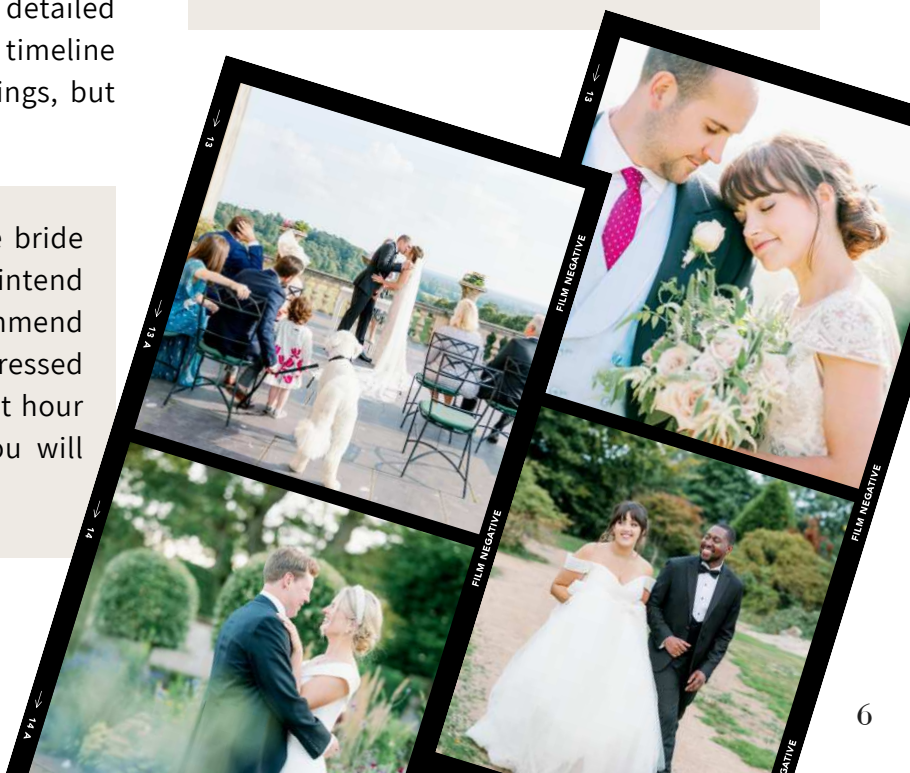
I personally make sure of that for my couples! As myself and other suppliers will know what needs to happen when and hiccups can be kept to a minimum. For example, if it rains and you desperately want an outside ceremony, your suppliers can account for that 40 minute delay by working together to tweak the timeline.

Your venue or day-of coordinator will be of huge help recommending times for much of the day. And for my couples, I work with a detailed template to help craft the perfect timeline closer to the day based off those timings, but for now here is what to keep in mind.

HMUA should aim to finish with the bride about an hour and half before you intend to leave for the ceremony. I recommend grooms and brides to both get dressed about an hour before. Trust me, that hour goes too quickly. Any later and you will stress about something.

The time for your ceremony depends on location and priorities. If outside in full sun, high noon isn't the best for photographs. I'd recommend a time when the light is softer or finding shade. For ceremonies where full sun isn't a factor, I typically recommend between 12:00-2:30 PM. But for winter weddings, keep in mind how early sunset is. This might limit your portrait options if too late in the day.

Have two hours for the drinks reception. This is usually ample time to do any requested portraits and allow for you to enjoy moments with guests. It also provides a buffer if the ceremony overruns, there is traffic between ceremony and venue location, the confetti tunnel or group portraits were delayed because Nan disappeared to the bar. Before you take this time at my word though, make your list of requested group photographs. I estimate each group request takes about 4 minutes to organise if done well - and about 8 for an all group photograph.



7 Tips for Getting Ready

01

Most brides who don't book a HMUA trial, find fault on the day. Or things didn't hold up and they didn't have spare lipstick or bobby pins. So do a trial and pack makeup and hair essentials for touchups. Having an emergency kit with other essentials like plasters, sewing kit, baby wipes and lint rollers is a sanity-saving must.

And if you do a trial, have a fitting the same day so you can see the full look. You can also check if your hair catches on your dress. And if your veil doesn't feel secure enough to withstand winds and hugs, you can see how best to bobby pin it in place.

02

If logistics allow, you both should get ready at the same location - ideally at the venue. This has several perks: your photographs will look more cohesive, and you'll typically cut down on your photographer costs (either in terms of needing a second photographer or hours of coverage).

If you two are at a different locations, your other half can have photographs taken prior to the ceremony. All I typically need is 10-15 minutes to take a few of just them, and some with their bridal party and family.

03

If you want any details photographed, put everything together the night before. This is things like your invitations, perfume, shoes, rings, cufflinks, etc. That way these items can be photographed on arrival and the focus can then shift to candids - and you aren't stressed trying to locate them.

04

Be towards the middle or first for hair and makeup so you are not late! The added benefit is you'll have time for touch ups and minor tweaks.

Also decide if you want to photographed without makeup. This will help you decide when you should start getting hair and makeup done (and that of your entourage).

05

Have your bridal party make a playlist and crank those tunes whilst getting ready. And no, they don't have to be wedding songs – play what you like!

06

Plan to get ready an hour before you intend to leave. There is always some sort of delay and the panic finding items is real. Best case scenario: this gives time to soak in moments, take portraits and do touch ups.

And to avoid stress, it's best when getting into your attire to have a max of 3 people in the room with you. They should already be dressed to give you their full attention.

With that in mind, keep clutter and the panic of lost items at bay by having your bridal party's things in a different space - preferably where they will be getting changed or a large, nearby closet.

07

If you find you have loads of downtime with a late ceremony start, take advantage of the morning. Head to a local pub for a pint and nibble, have an early morning massage, yoga session, or even head to the driving range.

Suggestions for Your Ceremony

01

Involve your partner in the processional song choice, and play the music for a bit before you enter. If there is a specific part that fits perfect, use that as your queue to head down the aisle.

Your partner is often at the front talking to loved ones up until the moment guests are asked to stand for the grand entrance, so give them the breathing space to recentre their focus.

02

In lieu of Nan crying, her head is a bright pink iPad. Nothing pulls us out of the moment and dates photographs quicker than technology. Guests can also get in the aisle blocking the photographer – or worse, your view of each other.

Find out if an unplugged wedding is for you and how to go about it.

03

When it comes to the grand entrance, do you! I've had partners rush halfway down the aisle to their other half, couples walk in together, and also had entrances where the groom never turns around. But that one is usually down to nerves and taking the officiant literally when they say 'stand here and face forward'. So hear it from me first: unless it's deeply rooted in your culture, watch them come down the aisle!

You can also say a few words, hug and hold hands – and well, look like a couple in love!

04

I can't say enough the recommendation to hold hands, link arms or wrap an arm around a waist. Giving your arms something to do will help you relax and feel less awkward.

05

Kiss and mean it! If you two hate PDA, give a couple pecks that last more than .00002 seconds to ensure the moment is captured. It can take a camera a few seconds to focus in some lighting situations. So if your kiss is over and done within the blink of an eye, you might not have a photograph of it.

06

When you walk back down the aisle as newlyweds, just keep walking and ignore your lovely photographer. Feel free to stop for a kiss, punch the air, kiss your Nan, or high-five your mates – whatever feels natural, do it.

07

Sneak away right after the I Do's to celebrate for a few minutes. Your guests can wait to shower you in their love and confetti. My couples get their favourite photographs during this time because genuine emotions are at their peak. So pick a place where you two can escape (such as the other side of the building) and walk straight there after the ceremony so you're out of sight and have your bridal party redirect your guests.

08

Give yourself time after the confetti toss to greet guests if after the cremony. They are going to be so excited and full of emotions. Find the ones you love most and hug 'em.

How to Have the Best Confetti Toss

Confetti is usually tossed during the recessional whilst guests remain at their seats or organised right after the ceremony. But if you don't want confetti in your hair for portraits or your ceremony location doesn't permit it, you can also do: during the group photo, before guests are called inside for the wedding breakfast or the first dance (or during the dance!), or when you arrive at the venue if your ceremony was elsewhere.

Some places are strict, so that might dictate when, what, and where you do this, if at all.

As for the best types of confetti? The bigger the better, and the more the merrier. Larger pieces flutter beautifully, and are less likely to cause eye injury. They are also easier to pluck from your hair. Bags and cones are unnecessary as confetti tosses better by hand. The bridal party can pass out confetti during the signing, while guests leave the ceremony, or while organising the tunnel.

FRESH OR DRIED PETALS

To make it special and save costs, source this from family gardens or from the many bouquets you receive over the year in celebration of your engagement, birthdays, and anniversary.

BUBBLES

Combined with a few bubble guns, this is can make for incredible and fun photographs. These are especially great if children are in attendance. Be careful not to create a slip hazard though and note that some brands can stain fabrics.

PAPER CONFETTI

Large, biodegradable paper confetti - combined with a cannon or two - is incredible. Beware though that paper confetti can stain when wet.

SPARKLERS

Perfect for winter weddings, or later in the evening for an outdoor first dance or wedding exit. Though note that lots of alcohol and fire don't mix well and serious injury or damage can happen. So it might be best to do this with a small, trusted group of friends or family.

FAKE SNOW

The perfect choice for a winter wedding but is difficult to remove from your hair so might be best do after portraits.

Stress-free and Fun Group Portraits

By the time you're through a long list of group photos, you're ready for a break and too hungry to want to take pictures with your partner - the ones that you'd think matter most! So have a real think about what you will do with each group portrait. If nothing, why devote time on your day taking it?

Think of it this way, you can either have a list of "NEXT!" portraits where everyone lines up, or authentic and fun with your amazing Nan.

For photographs done well and without stress, dedicate 4 minutes for each group photograph and keep your list to a max of 10 combinations. And to help keep things efficient, make anyone who is needed aware before the day. People often check into rooms or simply wander away to explore.

A bit of buffer time is key to keep you from getting stressed as well as having two designated helpers (someone who knows the people needed and has a really loud voice) to keep things moving.

And also provide your photographer with a list of names, relationships and dynamics. This is useful for the helpers too, and I personally memorise it heart. That way I know everyone by name and can be more efficient. This list is also my guide on who to focus on throughout the day.

Tell your loved ones they can ask for any photographs during the reception but that you've chosen the group photographs you want. Otherwise chaos ensues and pictures you really want get missed and quality is sacrificed. And those fun pictures with uni mates are also perfect to do in the evening when everyone is in that feel-good mood.

There are no rules you absolutely HAVE to follow when it comes to the bridal party. Do what feels authentic to you. Because you happy makes for the best photographs. Matching attire isn't a requirement and neither are equal numbers. You can have whoever you want get ready with you on the day and be in your party - either officially or not. You don't need to give official titles, have just one best man, dictate clothes, or provide bouquets and buttonholes. Bridesmaids don't have to walk down the aisle before you, after you - or at all! Your bridal party can stand beside you during the ceremony or sit in the pews. Do what's you!

The Best Tips for Couple Portraits

Have about 10 minutes set aside for couple portraits once you're done with the group ones. And also find out when golden hour is (the hour prior to sunset) and make sure you set aside 20 minutes in this light. It is the best.

Convinced you two will be awkward? Here's the secret to creating great portraits quickly: Never. Stop. Touching. Hold hands when you're walking and go hip to hip. It's about creating connection and movement. If you sway even just a little like you're dancing, you'll keep your body more relaxed. I'm the kind of photographer who tailors prompts to get you interacting in a way that's authentic to your personalities, but knowing those basics is key to elevating your portraits in any scenario.

And if you've ever kicked off your shoes and gone full Footloose on the dance floor, you know just how black your feet get. Guess what? That's what the bottom of the dress will look like – so let that baby flow free for great portraits.

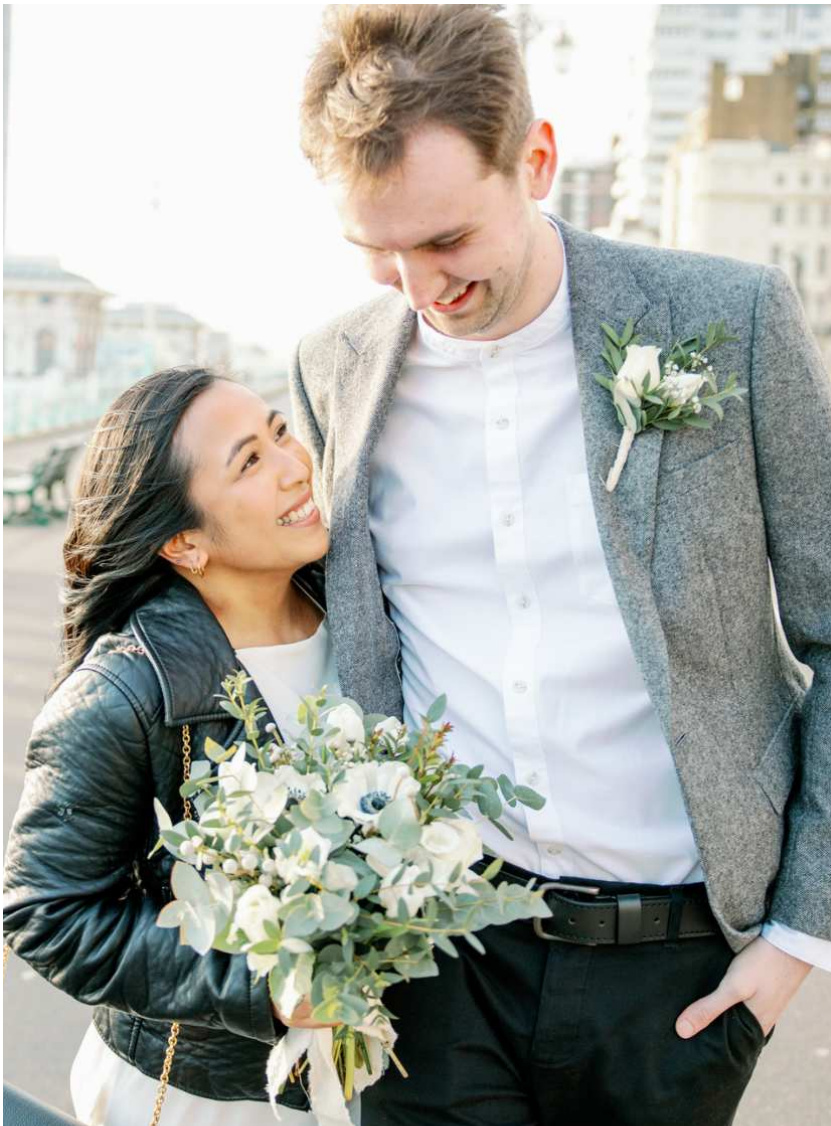
Pro tip: baby wipes work wonders on most wedding dresses at getting dirt and smudges out. Tide-To-Go Pens are great for dress shirts.

Book an engagement session or go bigger!

If you are nervous about couple portraits, there isn't much time on the day to quell this. So best to go into these portraits with confidence in yourself and photographer.

You could book an engagement session, or you can also do a bridal session where you both get dressed up all over again - but without the stress of the day, woes over the weather, or the worry of a dirty hem.

Or you can book coverage of your engagement party, rehearsal, or the entire weekend. Not only would you have epic moments preserved, but you could also sneak away for a few couple portraits. You could also tick off some of those group family portraits you think you'll be pressured to take on your big day. A great way to ensure you actually have time to enjoy your drinks reception!



5 Reasons to do an Engagement Session

01

A CONFIDENCE BOOST FOR YOU AND GUESTS

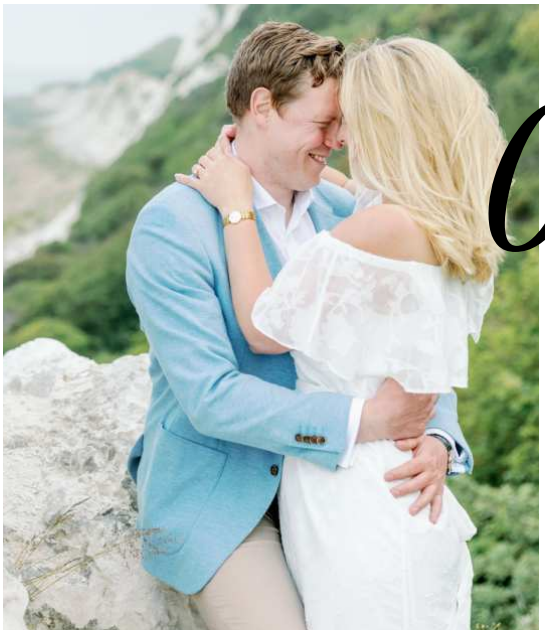
They'll all see the gorgeous images that were created during your engagement session, and trust they'll look good too. When guests feel that way, you can bet more authentic and fun moments are captured.

And the same goes for you. You probably feel like most of my couples: convinced you're awkward. There isn't as much time on a wedding day to overcome this discomfort as an engagement shoot affords. So having one can help you relax.

02

IT IS THE PERFECT TRIAL RUN

If you have insecurities, you can learn how to master body language during the session. This time also helps your photographer get to know you and get a feel for your chemistry, quirks and lifestyle. I actively seek out and help nurture moments of you two being you. The session helps us both understand your aesthetic and what you want for your photographs.



03

PROVIDES WALL ART & AND SAVE-THE-DATES

You'll have wall art to enjoy for years to come but also loads of options for wedding details. You can use the images to create a save-the-date, wedding website, invites or thank you cards for your engagement party. You can use them to decorate your venue, to create a bespoke guestbook, or personalise wine bottles as favours.

04 GIVES YOUR RELATIONSHIP SOME TLC

Wedding planning can get pretty crazy and stressful. On top of everyday life, we can forget to prioritise each other – to date, to woo, and shower each other in compliments.

With prompts designed to create moments and movement over lots of posing, you'll find your session is something very different than you imagined. In truth, with nothing but the enjoyment of each other's company being the focus of your session, you will find this time served as a much needed break from daily life and a chance to just connect.

05 GIVES YOU TANGIBLE MEMORIES

When you're old and grey, battling illness or a rut in your relationship, photographs are powerful reminders of your love. They bring comfort, smiles, and elicit dormant memories that can sustain you through the ups and downs of life.

Having beautiful wedding photographs is so precious and important, but so are beautiful photographs of you two as you are now - wearing the kinds of clothes that reflect your style and all the things your partner loves about you.

Advice for your Wedding Breakfast

01

Decorate how you want and eat what you want. Do what makes you happy, and don’t stress about the details too much. Your guests care a lot more about when food will be served than the colour of the cushion they are sitting on.

02

Visit tables between meals in lieu of a receiving line. You can do this as a united team or divide and conquer.

03

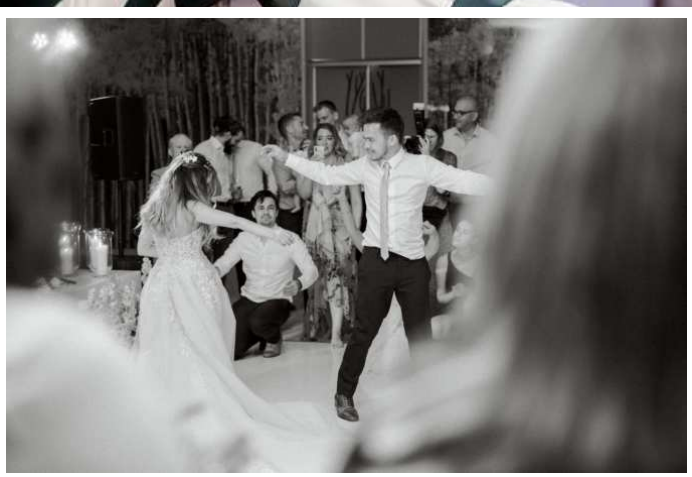
A basket of bread rolls is a lifeline for those at Table 5 and beyond. Three hors d'oeuvres is not a lunch and those hunger pains definitely kick in when the first tables are served.

04

You don’t have to do a father of the bride, best man or groom speech. If your best man has terrible stage fright, have parents give the speech instead. The bride or MOH can do a speech too!

05

Do most - if not all - of the speeches prior to the starter. In between meals can be a logistical nightmare for your caterer and also the videographer - who will need to do multiple sound checks and be given enough time for each speech to set up. If by chance speeches overrun, you can opt to save a speech or two for in between a meal. Trust me when I say it helps keep the timeline of your evening on track.



Make it a Night to Remember

My number one tip is to have a spare outfit, and preferably something a bit more comfortable so you can dance! You don't have to change into it and can save it for the honeymoon instead, but it's nice to have in case of spilled red wine or you just get too hot. You grooms melt in those three piece suits in summer - and nothing feels like luxury quite like changing into a new dress shirt. I've worn my reception dress for several anniversaries, which has also made for a fun tradition! And the recent trend of brides giving their mum's or grandmother's dress a shorter and modern revamp seriously hits all the sentimental feels (you'll be amazed what a good seamstress can do with a bit of old fabric).

If you're having a first dance, it's usually best to do right after cutting the cake. But the question most likely on the tip of your tongue is what song should you dance to. That's a hard one, and I'll admit I immediately knew my husband and I's song choice was the wrong one the second we started dancing. So while it might be cheesy, a practice run in the lounge isn't a bad idea or even a few lessons with a dance instructor.

But what's really going to help you find the right song is talking to your band. They probably have loads of suggestions, and you could even chat to them about tweaking the lyrics of a song. Acoustic versions can also provide a completely different mood to a song.

And then to ensure you get a packed dance floor once the first dance ends, tell your bridal party prior that it's their job to get people onto the floor. And then play the kind of tunes that will keep your guests moving and grooving. Avoid anything that instinctively ushers most people off the dance floor. You've seen it happen, we've all seen it happen. Don't let it happen at your wedding!

Last but not least, have lots of delicious food. Be it food vans or a delicious buffet of crowd-pleasing favourites.

This is about preserving a story, a moment, and the people in the images so that you have tangible memories you can hold on to forever. Ones that you can feel in your hands, share with friends and your future generations. From the way your partner holds you to the way your mum's laugh can light up a room.

You are hiring me to create bespoke images, unique and invaluable to you and those you love. Nothing but today is guaranteed, and your love and that of your family is the most precious thing you can immortalise. I take that responsibility to heart - memorising the names of your nearest and dearest. Fostering and seeking out authentic connections and doing your dream wedding day justice.

LET'S CHAT ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DREAMING UP FOR THE BIG DAY

e: Kelsie@kelsiescullyphotography.com

w: www.kelsiescullyphotography.com

social: /kelsiescullyphotography