

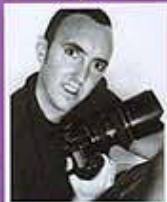
Q&A

Are you having wedding worries?
Our experts are here to help

Our panel of experts



Ruth Hunter is certified as a qualified wedding planner with more than eight years' experience, based in South Wales. Contact: www.finesseplanning.co.uk



Nic Cleave is an award-winning photographer based in South Wales, providing a much sought-after documentary style of photography. Contact: www.niccleave.com



Sarah Holland advises people on all aspects of flowers and plants at the Flowers & Plants Association. Contact: www.flowers.org.uk



The language of flowers

Q Are there any special meanings of flowers that I should look out for when I get married in the summer?

A Sarah says: The Victorians had their very own language of flowers to show loved ones how they felt. They used to convey entire messages through a bouquet, being a time when it was inappropriate for people to express their feelings openly, especially those of desire. The meanings are therefore quite subtle, so why not go for our summer trend, "Talking Flowers", instead?

It's all about expressing yourself in any way you want to with flowers. You can use them to make your own meaning – which makes it personal to you, and even more appropriate for your wedding.

Try using roses – they are the most romantic flower, with molecules in the petals that encourage the feeling of falling in love! A nice way of expressing yourself through flowers is through floral jewellery – if you don't want to wear this in the day, why not make a rose lei for your evening reception?



www.niccleave.com

Candid Camera

Q I love all those "getting ready" photographs that you see, but I'll be at my house with the bridesmaids the next morning and it's pretty small and certainly not glamorous. Would a photographer be able to take pictures that look nice or should I just wait for the church?

A Nic says: Getting ready photos are a very popular part of today's contemporary style of wedding photography. These photographers, like ourselves, who offer this type of coverage are aware that preparation locations are often small, busy and full of people. It's this "hustle and bustle" that we try to capture in our images as a sign of the natural build-up and excitement of this early part of the wedding day. Part of the job of a professional wedding photographer in this situation is to ensure that locations and shooting angles are chosen carefully in order to minimise the background clutter, while still obtaining natural-looking photographs that tell the story of this important part of the day.

Professional photographers also use this time to concentrate on photographing the all-important details of the day – for example, the dress hanging up, the expensive shoes, special jewellery and flowers. If the bride is completely ready before the photographer has to leave to get to the ceremony location, some "Ready" photos of the bride and anyone else who's ready can look fabulous in the final album. Again, if you have any concerns about photography of the bridal preparations, speak to your photographer about them and ask to see some previous examples of photographs taken during this part of the day.

Got a question? Write to us at 'Q&A', Your South Wales Wedding, Broseley House, Newlands Drive, Witham, Essex CM8 2UL. Alternatively email your question to editor@countdownweddingmagazines.com



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Order of Services

Q I'm getting married in winter 2009. I've found the venue and now I'm looking for my photographer. I'm not sure what the next step is and when I need to start thinking about everything else. Can you help?

A Ruth says: You are right in looking your venue now as some venues can be booked up to 18 months in advance, as can many photographers. One thing that gets forgotten, but is often booked up, is entertainment – especially good bands. If this is the route you want to go down then start looking now. You could start looking at wedding dresses but you have plenty of time and could wait until the sales take place in August/September to save money. A great way to find out when and in what order you need to do things is to join a wedding forum. Here you can talk to other brides and professionals who will be able to help you throughout your planning.

Fathers' Day

Q Although I want my dad to walk me down the aisle, I want to include my stepdad in a special way at my wedding. Do you have any suggestions?

A Ruth says: It's lovely that you would like to acknowledge your stepfather and there are a few ways you can do this. If at your ceremony venue you have a distance to walk, e.g. a church path or driveway, your stepfather could meet you at the beginning of the route and walk you to the venue. He would then hand you to your dad to walk you down the aisle. You could ask him to do a reading that means something to you both or he could be one of your witnesses. Another lovely thing to do would be for you to have your second dance with your stepfather.



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Caught on Film

Q I'd like a DVD of my wedding photos rather than a wedding album. Is this possible with a professional photographer?

A Nic says: This is a question professional photographers are increasingly being asked. However, before answering, it may be helpful to explain the difference between a DVD slide-show and a CD of image files, as there is often a lot of confusion surrounding these two very different services. A DVD slide-show of your wedding photos will often include all of the beautiful images from your day set to royalty-free music. It plays on your DVD player at home connected to your TV and is essentially a video of your still images. Most DVDs do not include the actual image files on the disc, so they can't be accessed for printing or creating.

A CD of image files will contain the actual photographs from your day, allowing you to access your favourite photos at any time. Some photographers will only include a set number of images on their disc; however, we include all 250-300 photos. Another thing to be careful about is UK copyright law. When supplying their work on a CD, professional photographers will always clearly explain what the supplied photos can be used for and whether or not printing permission is given with their work. In short, it's important you are aware of exactly what you are buying, and how it can be used. If you're not sure, then don't be afraid to ask your photographer to explain everything to you.

Some professional photographers have started offering Digital Photography Packages. As an example, our own Digital Package includes photography of the ceremony and wedding reception stages of the day, with 250-300 images supplied on a CD with printing permission but without copyright, which means the images can be printed but then only used in other ways for personal use at home. There is no album, prints or online galleries included in this package, and it is proving popular with couples who perhaps aren't interested in having a wedding album to remember their day by, but who wish to have access to their photos digitally whenever they want.