

BIPP

British Institute of
Professional Photography



The BIPP Guide to Choosing Your Wedding Photographer

How do you know the difference between a true professional photographer with training and experience, and a keen amateur who has a camera and a website, but little or no knowledge?

The following guide has been designed to ensure you take the best possible steps towards finding the right photographer to suit your needs.

Contents

Introduction	4
What is the BIPP?	7
First Steps	8
Pro Vs Amateur	9
Copyright Information	10
Products & Services	12
What to Look For	13
How much should I spend?	14
Timescales	16
Contracts	17
Experience & Testimonials	18
Resolving Issues	20
Where can I find a BIPP qualified photographer?	21
Hints & Tips	23

Introduction

Congratulations on your engagement, the planning begins here!

Learning what the differences are between an amateur photographer, and a fully qualified professional, is essential when you begin your search for a photographer who you'd like to shoot your wedding.

This guide has been written to provide you with information so that when you do start your search for a photographer, you know what to look for, what to steer away from and most importantly, what questions to ask.

A wedding can take months if not years to organise but there is only one chance to capture the images which you will treasure forever. Making sure you choose a qualified professional can ensure your images reflect the magic of the day.

A young girl with light brown hair, wearing a pink dress with a white ruffled hem, is lying on a textured, light brown surface. She is holding a bouquet of pink and white flowers. The word "PERFECTION" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image, partially obscuring the girl's face and the bouquet.

PERFECTION



YOUR MOMENT

What is the BIPP?

The BIPP is the leading qualifying and governing photographic body based in the UK. We are a not for profit organisation that delivers education, qualifications and professional development to working photographers.

The photographic industry is unregulated – photographers don't have to be a member of BIPP in order to call themselves a professional, but qualified BIPP photographers have had their work professionally benchmarked and assessed.

Only professional photographers who have successfully qualified via BIPP have the right to use a BIPP logo. They will hold qualification certificates and will be able to talk to you about the BIPP. They'll also have the support of a large network of other professionals around them.

First Steps

Before you begin your search for a photographer, make sure you are clear about what you are looking for and what you want. The clearer your brief, understanding and wishes, the easier your search will be.

Things to Consider

- **Do you have an exact date, time and venue?**

Two of the first questions a photographer will ask is where and when?

- **What is your end goal?**

Have you set your heart on a bespoke wedding album, a CD of the images or both? Would you prefer to pay for the photographer's time (attendance fee) and then pay for the images afterwards?

- **What is a realistic budget?**

You may not want to spend thousands, but you do need to be clear about what you're buying - the work of a true professional photographer goes well beyond taking a few photos on the day! Investing in a qualified photographer will give you lasting images you can treasure forever.

Remember, once the flowers fade and the cake has been eaten, you should be able to look through your images and remember your day.

Pro Vs Amateur

In the last few years the photographic profession has witnessed an explosion of amateur photographers charging for their services in their spare time.

You need to decide if you can trust an amateur to produce your images and what will happen if something goes wrong.

What to look for with amateur photographers:

- Can they work in difficult situations?
- Is their equipment of a professional standard?
- Have they got previous experience at the venue?
- Have you seen any of their past work?
- How are the images presented?

Professional photographers who are qualified through BIPP are:

- Experienced and know how to handle challenging circumstances.
- Bound by a code of professional conduct.
- Qualified at one of three successive levels – Licentiate, Associateship or Fellowship.
- Professionally insured.
- Assessed against strict criteria of professional competency, creativity, composition etc.
- Entitled to have the letters LBIPP, ABIPP or FBIPP after their names.

Copyright Information

Understanding the basics of copyright can help you discuss what you want and need from your photographer.

Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988

Usually the copyright of a photograph belongs to the person who took it. Copyright lasts for 70 years after the author dies and offers protection against unauthorized reproduction of the photographs and entitles the owner to economic benefit from it.

In practice, this means that clients may only use photographs taken by a professional photographer in ways that have been agreed at the time they were commissioned.

Not all photographers will agree to let you have digital files of your wedding images, as it would be difficult for them to retain quality control of the images once you release them to friends/family etc. This would be something that you would have to discuss with your photographer and make sure that both of you are happy with the contractual agreement.

If, after your wedding, you decide you would like to use further images, permission must be sought from the copyright holder and an additional fee agreed.

So, if you decide you would like to have digital files, the photographer may not agree to do this. This is why it's especially important to make sure all of your requirements are made known prior to signing a contract.



YOUR RIGHTS

Products & Services

The services offered by professional photographers will vary enormously. Some will charge by the hour, others by the day. Some will include images on a disc, some won't. This all comes down to what you want. By all means listen to the options, but be clear about what fits with you, your event and your timetable.

Make sure you:

- Meet the photographer before committing.
- Are sure that they're able to provide the professional service you're looking for.
- Ask to see sample images or albums of past or similar work.
- Ask for a pre-event meeting or even a pre-wedding shoot beforehand to get to know how the photographer works.
- Like the style of the photographer's work.
- Never make a decision without speaking to at least 2-3 photographers beforehand.

Insurance

When they qualify, all BIPP Qualified photographers have to be professionally insured. This insurance covers them should something go wrong with their equipment or should the images be lost. Ask your photographer if they hold Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance.

What to look for

Just because you're not a professional photographer, that doesn't stop you from knowing what to look for. Here are some key points that will help reassure you when deciding on which photographer to book:

- Look through the display albums – check that the images in an album are all from the same wedding – this is a good indicator of consistent quality.
- Check the print quality – most brides wear a pale ivory or white dress. Look for detail in the lace or embroidery – close ups and portraits of the bride should show detail. Check that the flowers are the same colour throughout the album.
- Post production – this should be to a professional standard and consistent throughout all of the images. Excessive use can lead to inconsistencies in colour, detail, lighting, sharpness etc.
- Ask how the images are produced – are they done in-house; how long will the colours stay true, and not fade; does the photographer use a professional lab; are they proficient in printing; do they understand quality control?

You need to be confident that you're getting the service you've paid for, so asking these questions will not only reassure you, but they'll ensure you receive the quality and customer service you deserve.

How much should I spend?

This is one of the most common questions couples ask when thinking about booking a wedding photographer. The simple answer is – it's your choice!

It is your decision what value you place on your wedding photography. A professional photographer may charge anywhere from £500, up to £5000 or more.

Speak to the photographer about what they are able to provide for your budget. Think about what you would prefer. A large number of unedited digital files, or a selection of images presented in a professionally designed album. Perhaps you would like a combination of both? If a wedding 'package' doesn't suit you, ask the photographer if they can provide what you want.

Remember when choosing your photographer, wedding photos will last forever, even beyond your lifetime and may well be the only reminder you and your family have in years to come.

The most common regret we hear from brides is that they didn't use a professional photographer and that, after the wedding, they realised just how important the images are.



YOUR CHOICE

Timescales

It can take time for a professional photographer to produce the final images.

In practical terms, there may need to be post production work, followed by printing, album design, layout and ordering of the album (some can take 3-6 months to be made depending on location and delivery).

Some products are a lot easier – digital files could be processed relatively quickly, whereas a bespoke wedding album containing lots of images, may take anywhere between 3 and 12 months to produce.

Speak to your photographer about how they operate, their experience of timescales and most importantly, how and when you get to see your images.

Contracts

Whilst it may seem a bit formal in some instances, we strongly recommend that all professional photographers provide a written contract detailing the services they have agreed to provide.

The contract should include all the details of the event (venue, date etc) as well as the services to be provided.

All fees should be clearly stated on the contract. Booking fees or deposits should be confirmed, along with when the balance should be paid. Normally a photographer will request full payment approximately 30 days before your wedding. Full terms and conditions should be provided by your photographer and should include a cancellation policy.

Always take time to read and understand the terms and conditions before signing. If you have any queries, ask the photographer to explain them to you and always keep copies of your signed contract and any communication you have with your photographer.

Experience

You can learn everything you think you may need to know about being a wedding photographer by reading a book or taking a course, but knowledge of the potential pitfalls will only come with experience.

Ask your photographer if they have worked at your wedding venue before; how many years they have been photographing weddings and how many weddings they have shot. They should be able to cope with whatever happens on the day, like bad weather, late guests, tired children. All this comes with experience.

Testimonials

Pretty much every wedding photographer we know will have testimonials from recent clients. Ask if they have any to hand. Some photographers may make it possible for you to get in contact with their past clients directly for references. Take them up on the offer!



Resolving Issues

Unfortunately, despite the best preparations, sometimes things do go wrong. The important thing is how to remedy a situation quickly, and to the satisfaction of everyone involved. The following points are the steps we recommend you take when working to resolve an issue with your photographer:

- **Speak to the photographer** – where possible, try to meet face to face. Most issues can usually be resolved at this stage.
- **Write down your issues** – if you're still unhappy, explain what you'd like to see as an end result and make sure you give the photographer the opportunity to respond to you within a reasonable timescale.
- **If you wish to make a complaint through BIPP** – BIPP can only be involved if the photographer who took your photographs is a qualified BIPP member. If this is the case, please read through the Complaints Procedure which can be found on our website – www.bipp.com.
- **Other complaints** – if the photographer is not a BIPP member, you can contact your local Trading Standards office or Citizens Advice Bureau who will advise you on the best way forward.

The most important consideration is always to strive for a solution which is fair to both parties as quickly and as amicably as possible.

Where can I find a BIPP Qualified Photographer?

Most of our qualified members are listed on our website, www.bipp.com/bookaphotographer - You may search by location or speciality to find a list of qualified photographers and their contact information. We recommend that for the best results you only fill in 2 or 3 search fields. Such as Region and Genre.

Each photographer has their own profile page including a small selection of their images and all the relevant contact details, along with a link to their website. This is the best place to start your search.

Questions?

Should you have any questions about choosing a professional photographer, don't hesitate to get in touch either by emailing us at info@bipp.com or calling us on **01296 642020**.

BIPP Logos

Look out for one of these three logos after a photographer's name:



A wedding couple is standing in front of a large, ornate stone archway. The bride is wearing a white, strapless, floor-length gown with a full skirt and a veil. The groom is wearing a dark blue suit. They are looking at each other and smiling. The archway is made of dark stone and has a large window with white frames and red curtains. The text "YOUR STORY" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters.

YOUR STORY

5 tips to remember when choosing a professional photographer

- 1 Check their qualifications and ask how long they have been working as a wedding photographer.
- 2 Contact several BIPP photographers and meet with them before you decide.
- 3 Look at their images and albums. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- 4 Discuss how you would like your images presented to you. Think about how you will look at your images in 10-20 years' time.
- 5 Check the photographer provides a written contract detailing everything they will provide and at what cost.

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Find Out More

Go to www.bipp.com/bookaphotographer

Call us on 01296 642020

Email us at info@bipp.com

Follow us on



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www.linkedin.com

Please contact us if you'd like further information on booking a BIPP qualified photographer for your wedding.
