

A GUIDE TO *Wedding Photography*



BOW & ARROW STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

By Maria Johns

WHY YOU NEED AN ENAGEMENT SESSION

01

NO RESTRICTIONS

During a wedding or a sneaky elopement, you're racing against the clock for portraits. With an engagement session we have all the time in the world. Plus you can chose a laid-back location and comfy attire, its a treasure trove of possibilities.

02

YOU ARE IN CONTROL

When it comes to tying the knot, rain or shine, you've just got to roll with it! But for your engagement session, we've got the power to hit pause and wait for those perfect sun-kissed moments. Your engagement photos can capture a whole different vibe, season, and weather from your wedding day!

03

WE GET TO MEET

The more we hang out, the more amazing the photos will be! Our engagement session is like a dress rehearsal where we get to bond and break the ice. This way, when your big day arrives, we'll feel like besties instead of awkward acquaintances!

04

MORE VARIETY

We can mix it up with a wardrobe switch, a champagne explosion, or even a location hop—giving us full freedom unlike the constraints of a wedding day schedule!

HOW I SHOOT WEDDINGS



As the wedding day approaches, my mind spins with thoughts like, "How do I keep the bride and groom as comfy as a pair of cozy slippers while zeroing in on what truly matters to them?" For some, it's all about basking in the love of their guests; for others, it's the magical bubble of just the two of them. Meanwhile, I'm on a mission to squeeze every chance to photograph unforgettable, artsy shots that capture the essence of the day!

ELOPEMENTS

Looking to pinch pennies, dodge crowds, and embrace your inner introvert? Elopements are your ticket to bliss! To make your runaway romance legendary, focus on these three gems: choose a photographer who captures magic, pick a location that takes your breath away, and find an officiant who brings the love!

ONE

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photos are your golden tickets back to this magical moment! I suggest a fun portrait session (before or after the intimate ceremony), maybe at a new spot or in a fresh outfit—because, why not? Embrace the elopement superpower: TIME! Switch up your outfits, hop to new locations, or even capture a different season! And hey, why not add some video magic, too? Nothing beats the power of seeing and hearing your special day in motion.

TWO

OFFICIANT

Ah, the unsung hero of weddings—the officiant! Seriously, this person is the master of ceremonies and the vibe maestro. They'll set the mood, emotion, and soundtrack for your big day, plus they'll photobomb every snapshot! They should look sharp and sound even sharper. If you've got a crowd, make sure they're mic'd up and ready to roll. They can make your ceremony a dream or a meme, so choose wisely. P.S. My hubby's an ordained officiant and former Marine pilot who flew the president, so he's basically wedding royalty!

THREE

LOCATION

Your elopement spot is the VIP guest at your wedding! Timing your "I dos" for that dreamy golden hour is non-negotiable for those swoon-worthy photos. And don't forget, your backdrop dictates your wedding ensemble—whether it's a park, beach, or majestic mountain, each demands its own style statement. For fashion wisdom, check out my wedding edition "what to wear" guide!

WEDDING * TIMELINES

{ My hot take }

Your wedding day timeline should be like your favorite playlist—full of your top hits! Start by asking yourself, "What's the must-have track for my day?" {AKA what matters most} Is it quality time with family, capturing epic photos, or sneaking in some solo moments to soak it all in? If you're a mix-and-match girly, I got you! You can have your cake and eat it too! We'll create a timeline that harmonizes photos and family time. Remember, this is your DAY, and you can steer it your way, spotlighting you and your fiancé first! Check out my priority-driven timelines here!



GETTING READY

Getting ready pics of the bride are sacred to me ! There's something truly special about witnessing a woman transform into a bride. Here are some fun tips: pictures packed with peeps are way more meaningful. Imagine you with your dress, versus it just hanging out solo. Plus, any shenanigans with your bridal crew, like bubbly toasts, make for fun and candid shots! Keep in mind, movement is the secret sauce for capturing those natural, lively photos.

FIRST LOOK

I'm totally waving the "team no first look" flag, and here's why! Firstly, those early peeks often happen when the sun's blazing like a spotlight—hello, squinting! Plus, finding a secret nook can be like a game of hide-and-seek. There's the risk of the dress taking a dirt nap, and let's face it, not every groom will nail that Oscar-worthy reaction. Plus, you might be stealing your own showstopper moment: the grand aisle debut! Now, if you've got a small army of bridesmaids, first looks are perfect for snapping those group pics. But I adore first looks with your bridal squad or family like mom, dad, or grandma and grandpa. If your heart's set on it, let's make it happen—just remember all the above!

CEREMONY

For the big "I do", make sure you've got your officiant's script nailed down, know who's guarding the ring, and have the start time on lock! If you're a jittery bride, skip the dawdling and get to the altar pronto—less waiting means fewer butterflies! Politely ask your officiant to side-step for the ring exchange and kiss. Also, don't forget to arm your officiant with crowd commands—when to stand, sit, and where to wander post-ceremony. And most importantly, ensure they've got a mic so everyone can hear the magical words!

PORTRAITS

Portrait time has a couple priorities : first, we nail those VIP family shots, making sure everyone's staring at the camera with eyes wide open and grins in full bloom. Next, we guide the bridal party through a whirlwind of classic and fun poses. But the pièce de résistance? Capturing the newlyweds' debut as a husband+ wife for the first time. It's one of my favorite parts of the day- we get to hit pause on the day's chaos and capture those first sacred photos!

RECEPTION

The reception is a treasure chest of fun, brimming with both time-honored and wild new traditions. Hello, shoe game and the iconic flower toss! But why not throw in some group table photos or a photo dash game to make sure you get to say "hello" to every guest who graced your big day? And though I adore a good dance floor marathon, how about we sneak away for some romantic sunset snapshots, pop some champagne, or even plan a grand exit with sparklers, confetti, or light painting against the night sky? Crafting these little photo-op gems instead of just boogying for three hours will not only spice up the night but also add wonderful variety to your photo gallery!

EXTRA GOODIES

SECRETS YOU'LL THANK ME LATER FOR

- If you get a dream weather day (hello 75 and sunny) have a Plan B to take the ceremony outdoors - embrace that blessing!
- Style your hair on the side you'll be standing at the ceremony for that picture-perfect moment.
- Rings? Snug as a bug in a box from Amazon!
- Florals, never enough, budget accordingly or supplement with faux florals, they make photos sing.
- Pick an assertive family member to help call names during family portrait time, to help move those along efficiently.
- Ceremony time, should line up with the flattering light of the day, 2 hours before sunset, not high noon.
- Say it with me, "OUTFIT CHANGE" Changing into a reception dress makes sense and you will thank me later when you are much more comfortable in a dress that can move., especially for dancing. Don't spend alot, you dont need to, keep it simple, comfy and stylish.
- Delegate, delegate, delegate! More hands on deck means more hearts invested, making the day feel extra special.
- Venue MUST: Good lighting. Keep that in mind while venue shopping.
- Big bridal parties can be like herding cats with cocktails! Beware of Negative Nancies and remember: Every timeline choice is a yes to one thing, maybe a no to another. You will have approximately 100 images of the bridal party, snap those shots quickly, maybe flip the script and prioritize grandma pics!
- First looks with the groom has pros and cons, but ones with family like dad, grandparents, and the bridal party are all joy, no pressure!
- Stick with trends/traditions that serve you and represent you, otherwise skip them.
- "Some things are out of your control, like the weather or your uncle"- so dont sweat the small stuff, ENJOY your day and eat your cake.

WHY VIDEO MATTERS



*"Forever looks better
in slow motion"*

If there's one sprinkle of magic I'd recommend adding to your day, it's video! Photos are cool, but videos? They are your memories in motion! As a hybrid photographer, I double up as a video shooter, capturing your big day with two cameras, both armed with dual cards—safety first! I even mic up the bride, groom, and officiant, so those vows come through in crystal-clear HD sound. Now, I'm not your typical videographer; I whip up a highlight reel of your day, like a trailer to your love blockbuster. If you want every single moment captured, a videographer with multiple cameras might be your best bet, and I've got some great referrals!

Picture this: Your wedding day, immortalized in all its glory. The sights, the sounds, the giggles—it's the ultimate rom-com starring you two! Getting to relive those moments? Absolutely priceless. No room for regrets!



DELIVERABLES

DIGITAL IMAGES

VIDEO

SNEAK PEEK IMAGES WITHIN 24 HOURS

