

Frequently Asked Questions

✚ What makes you different or unique from most other photographers and why should I be hiring you to capture my special day?

I am an award winning photographer. I also have testimonials from most of my bridal couples vouching for my services, quality of images and creativity.

I have studied every technique and discipline available in photography including wild life, travel, studio, fashion, portraiture, weddings, fine arts, landscape, product, still life and macro photography. I believe that having all these attributes, abilities and being “multi faceted” rather than “one dimensional” definitely allows me to “see” much more on your day than say a photographer who has only ever captured portraiture and weddings. I understand geographic situations, lighting, people, human behaviour, the arts and creativeness, cultures and religions and thrive on meeting new Brides, Groom’s and their families. I have travelled around the world all my life and have photographed in many countries. I am an “out the box” photographer.

I also value each wedding and treat it as though it were my own.

I am mature, very reliable, technically advanced, creative, passionate, enthusiastic and have spent over 25 years in sales and marketing in the corporate world therefore value people and their uniqueness, needs and wants.

The father of a Bride mentioned to me a short while ago, “so I guess this is just another wedding for you then?”, to which I replied that if that were the case I wouldn’t be shooting his daughter’s wedding. Every wedding is treated as passionately as the last one and if I felt that this was not happening I wouldn’t be taking the risk of shooting the current wedding because it was “just another wedding” and for fear that I wouldn’t be doing it any justice at all!

✚ How do you go about designing the Albums and do the Clients have any input?

Yes I believe in full input and participation from the Bride and Groom on the album design, image selections and back ground choices. I also allow you to choose certain designs. Once you get the low res disc straight after the wedding/honeymoon, you need to start choosing the images. Once this is done I design the album to the best creative ability that I can. I then email you the spreads and you make changes from there. It is your album, so why do photographers choose the images and design the album with no input from the clients whatsoever? With *Ian Cooper Photography* you have full say and input to the design, layout and final touches.

✚ I want the best images from my wedding photographer. What should I be keeping in mind and looking for when I start finding a Professional Photographer?

What you really need is a professional photographer who has a wide experience of weddings, different styles, ethnicity and religions, someone completely reliable and mature who you can really trust to take the best possible photographs of your day. It's impossible to re-take your wedding photographs if you're not happy with them so ***don't be tempted to cut costs and entrust your photography to an amateur or a less experienced photographer and amateur family member, 9 out of 10 times it does not work.*** They are your lasting reminder of your once-in-a-life-time wedding day and if you intend on showing them to the future generations of your family in years to come then you better find an expert photographer who will capture your day just how it is. It is true what they say in the classics...“*you get what you pay for*”.

Other tips: - 1. Look for someone who is not scared to show you many full weddings exactly how they were shot **unedited and in RAW.**

2. Ask the photographer how he/she shoots? In RAW or jpeg? **RAW shooters** are a step ahead of jpeg shooters! Jpeg shooters tend to photo shop the living daylight out of each image for many months after your wedding and leave you with a very compressed file at the end.
3. Then ask to see RAW images, because you will then see the quality and level of the photographer. A very good photographer doesn't need to do "photo shopping" and with RAW you can still see the unedited image!
4. In your first meeting and consultations with the photographer look for a connection. If you feel a connection instantly you will know what type of person he/she is.
5. Make sure their portfolios are elaborate and "different". No templates used etc.
6. Is the photographer adequately prepared throughout the meetings? Do they shoot with full Professional equipment or just some "point and shoot". There is a vast difference!
7. Ask what back up systems they use. This is vital in times of stress and criminality such as hi jackings on the way home from your wedding. I do a full back up of every image before I leave the wedding venue, it is critical to the safety of your images and memories.
8. Did you find it easy to relate to the photographer throughout the consultation? If so and you experienced all of the above or most of it then that person is most likely to be your photographer.

✚ **I am about to start planning my wedding and realise that a Professional Wedding Photographer is undoubtedly one of my priorities along with the venue. How much should I realistically be budgeting for an award winning, good, reliable and mature photographer?**
It should be a minimum of 20% of your total budget for your wedding. It is dangerous and risky to "skim" on your photographic expenses. All too often it is heard of Bride's cutting costs on the photographer and being very regretful at a later stage. I believe wholeheartedly in "you get what you pay for"! **Don't take chances!** *Cut else where on your wedding expenses but make sure you hire the best in photography. Your décor will make the wedding look enchanting and beautiful, but when the flowers have wilted and died after 2 or 3 days, will your memories and photographs go with the flowers?*

✚ **Do you offer a pre-wedding consultation? If so, is this included in the packages or is this an extra charge?**

I encourage a pre-wedding consultation, and in fact I prefer it as I do not like screening and consulting over the phone. It is far easier and professional to talk face-to-face. The main reason for the consultation is to talk about your needs, the process, to show my portfolio & my album samples. I am extremely sensitive to each wedding's budget and therefore I prefer you to take a decision on hiring your wedding photographer from consulting rather than merely just comparing photographers from a price list. (If you live more than 50km outside of my office and residence we can still come to an arrangement). These consultations are free of charge.

✚ **How do we go about meeting with you?**

It is possible to meet during normal working hours if I am not shooting, however, I prefer after hours at a mutually agreed upon location. Usually it is at my residence as this allows me the freedom of showing you my work with out having to carry albums and portfolios all over to different places. Weekend appointments are also available however limited to the mornings and if I am not shooting.

✚ **We would like to book you for our wedding, how do we go about doing that?**

The only aspect that secures and confirms your wedding date with me and my services is a deposit. If your date is still available, and you have decided on the package you want, then I need to get a contract to you to sign. Once the deposit is paid, then the date is yours. I will then fill out a legal and binding contract from the information provided by you on the booking form and send that to you for authorisation and agreement.

✚ **What is the amount of the deposit required to secure our date?**

A 50% deposit is required to reserve your date. The final 50% is due after the wedding on acceptance of the electronic proofs of your album pages. I am flexible and open to payment plans to help you. There are certain time lines that need to be adhered to with respect to the design of the album and these are outlined in the terms and conditions of my contract. **Bookings are only confirmed on receipt of the proof of payment of the deposit and a signed contract.**

✚ **If I select a package that includes the Story Book Creative or Designer Album, do I pay 50% deposit upfront and then the balance only when the album is ready for delivery or is that payable before I get the album?**

The deposit confirms your booking. The 50% balance is due once the album and images have been approved and signed off by you. The actual payment plan is as follows:

- 50% deposit.
- 50% after your wedding when the album and images have been approved and signed off by you. I will only submit the album for printing once the proofs are accepted and the final payment made by you. I cannot submit your album to the printers unless I have received the full and final amount due.

✚ **What is your cancellation policy?**

There is a “cooling off” period of two weeks from the booking & deposit being paid for clients making the booking on line or telephonically because they live in another province and cannot meet. The deposit is fully refundable under these conditions. If you have to request a change in the wedding date, your deposit is transferable and the pricing is guaranteed. However this is dependent on whether I am available for the new date or not! There are a few conditions with this: so long as the new date is within the calendar year from the original booking and the request is received 30 days from the original date. If the new date is more than a year from the original booking, then any new pricing in effect will be applicable.

If you have paid a deposit and you decide for whatever reasons that you need to cancel the photographic contract, the following applies:

The deposit is non refundable for a cancellation 90 days or less from the wedding date. However, I do have a heart and if the cancelled date is filled with an equal value package, I will gladly refund your deposit.

✚ **How long do you require to photograph the “official photos” of the Bride and Groom?**

At least 60 minutes and again it depends on you. However, to have ample time and if this part of the day is very important to you both, which it should be, then more than 30 minutes is required. This also depends upon the weather and location that is available to do the shoot. This does not include the Group photos. If an hour isn't provided then I cannot guarantee the same quality and dedication as expected. I prefer to offer you a few different locales to be able to shoot creatively, therefore the minimum should be 60 minutes.

✚ Do you work with an assistant?

I do have an assistant at my services. An assistant usually works with me to help if the Fun Photo Booth has been selected for your wedding and to help with equipment etc. 2nd shooters are professionals and shoot as full professionals. They cannot under any means be contacted for any prints. It puts me in an awkward position. The Assistant works for me under contract and all the images that he/she takes are under my copyright. It is the same as performing “under the counter” dealings!

This service is usually for the following occasions:

1. Where the bride is getting ready at a location away from where the Groom is getting ready. If you want images of both the Bride and Groom getting ready then the 2nd Professional will shoot the Groom at the alternate venue. This is an optional extra in some of my packages and standard in my top 2 packages.
2. A 2nd Pro shooter is also appreciated when the Bride prefers a Female Photographer. This has never happened to me however, I am sensitive to the Bride’s feelings as well.
3. Consider the risk in hiring one photographer, much along the lines of insurance and car maintenance. If something should happen to me on the way to your wedding who then do you have to shoot your wedding? That’s why it is always advisable to see a specialist rather than a GP or to buy the Mercedes Benz rather than the cheap VW Beetle. They will both take you to your destination (hopefully) but with the Merc you have all the bells and whistles, luxury items, comforts, insurance and maintenance plans and back up plans should anything go wrong.

Should you specifically request an Assistant for purposes other than the above, then this service will be chargeable.

✚ How long will we have to wait before we can see our images of the wedding?

This depends on what package you have chosen. If there are Story Book Creative/Designer Albums in your choice of package then the photos and album will take up to 4 – 6 weeks from receipt of your choices, however it can by all means be much sooner. The album itself takes 15 - 36 hours to design and to create the layout. I tend to give you 2 or 3 opportunities (depending on where you live) to make changes if necessary and to advise me on what backgrounds and frames you want used in your albums. I am more flexible with this and if you live nearby then I have no problem with more frequent viewings as I progress. You will have proofs of each layout mailed to you for your approval as well and these are included in the packages. Here is a breakdown:

- 1 week after the wedding – Edit Phase 1 of **all** images taken at the wedding.
- The Low res disc with all images is ready for collecting 1 week after the wedding or on your return from honey moon.
- You then take the disc with the supplied album structure (excel spread sheet as guidance for your image choices) and choose the images you wish to have in the album.
- Return your choices within 1 week of receiving it and I start edit phase 2 and 3 on all images that you have chosen. If you take longer than a week, I have the right to ask for the balance of the outstanding money less the costs of the albums.
- I then start designing the album layouts and mailing them back to you for your approval/alterations.
- On acceptance of the electronic proofs the final amount is due if you are within the time lines as stipulated in the contract.

- On receipt of the final amount, I then submit the album for print and binding.
- The album is usually ready 14 working days from submission.

✚ **Who owns the rights to the images taken on the Wedding Day by you and the Assistant?**

Ian Cooper Photography owns the full rights to the images taken on the day by both the Principal or 2nd Photographer. I need to protect my name and brand and therefore I do not enjoy letting clients print images at Print Labs that are not reputable. They tend to use un-calibrated print machines which produce images that do not look close to the original. This has huge negative ramifications on me and my company and to future clients that you may have shown the sub-standard prints to. If I do supply you with a high resolution disc with the original images on then my contract states that I am not liable for sub-standard printing what so ever. The one thing you cannot do with them is use them for commercial purposes (such as advertising etc) and pass them off as your own. If you would like to enter competitions, you need to please notify me so there are no possibilities of duplication. Ian Cooper Photography generally owns the rights to the images and from time to time will use the images to advertise the company, services and web site. I do however, as a matter of courtesy, ask if I plan on using them anywhere except on my site and print media. It should be an honor for you to be seen in high class Bridal magazines etc.

✚ **On average how many images do you take at a wedding?**

Usually I take as many as the day and time allotted allows me. For a typical 8 hour wedding I tend to shoot +- 600 images on my own. With a 2nd shooter we get to +-900 images. This also depends on the amount of "photo-journ" shooting I am allowed to do. The more "posing" shots taken the fewer images will be taken. Whatever amount of images I shoot on the day; normally I edit +-1/2 of these. I.E. 800 images shot = 400 images edited. However, all images shot will go through a basic editing process. I then take 25% of these images and apply edit phase 2 to them. Then you get given a low resolution disc of these images to choose your images that will go into the album. Of those 400, I then apply special effects such as sepia and black and white toning to be used in the album.

✚ **Will all of my images be edited and photo-shopped?**

It's virtually impossible to edit and to have special effects applied to every image. On average an image takes about 15 minutes to edit therefore 800 images x 15 mins = 200 hours (25 working days), therefore you can imagine how many images can actually be accurately processed? I do put most of the images through a basic work flow that includes clarity, exposure, contrast and sharpening if needs be. The 200 odd images that are edited for the album and that will have special effects applied to them are put through a more accurate and particular work flow that includes the basic steps as above as well as tonal values, vignettes, black and white effects, sepia, antiques, diffused glows, skin tones and different artistic effects.

Most of my shooting style is situational therefore I photograph you as you are..naturally. I do not perform major Photoshop surgery such as removals of double chins, reducing waste lines, adding fake skies and foliage, removing spectacles etc. I do try my best to make you look as stunning as you are on your wedding day, but please take note that I cannot do the extraordinary. Abnormal Photo shopping takes a huge amount of time and therefore is an optional extra charged at an hourly rate.

✚ **Do you charge extra if the wedding and reception are in more than one location? What if we would like to have the official photographs taken at a third location?**

It is your special day and most times I try and fit in as best possible with your plans. I will travel with you to the wedding, reception and the third location so long as they are a reasonable distance apart. I charge a flat fee for petrol in Gauteng as per my standard pricing to cover this and any other travelling in and around Gauteng. If travel is more than 100km outside of Gauteng then a rate per kilometer equal to the AA rate is charged.

✚ **Do you offer traditional wedding photography and what is your normal style of photography?**

My “style” is “eclectic”. **I shoot for the situation.** I tend to provide a style that fits your choice of venue and my style of photography. This also depends on the available ambient light and the location. I also prefer to shoot in a “photo-journalistic” style capturing more un-posed moments than the safe shots. However, I do shoot the “safe” shots as part of the wedding such as the Groom carrying the Bride or moments that are posed. There is nothing at all wrong with the normal posed images however, the more I capture of the “moment” and the “spontaneous” moments the more natural your wedding album will be. I also tend to bring elements of fashion to my shoots, this gives you a different perspective of class in your album. I have studied and completed all the courses including fashion photography so I do tend to use certain poses in the official shoot. If you do not like this I will respect your request.

✚ **How far in advance do you take bookings for weddings?**

Normally, from 1 month to 12 months in advance. Printing and binding costs normally escalate annually therefore bookings longer than 12 months can be done however require the deposit in order for me to hold your pricing. Typically, most Brides plan and book their weddings nothing less than 12 months in advance therefore I can confirm bookings longer than 12 months in advance so long as the deposit has been paid and contract signed. Suppliers tend to escalate their prices on an annual basis especially for inflation, so my prices are adjustable if and when this happens.

✚ **I definitely want to book Ian Cooper Photography to shoot my wedding; can you hold my date without a deposit?**

Wedding dates and bookings are only confirmed when I receive the deposit/retainer and a signed contract. As much as I would love to be able to hold your wedding date without a retainer and contract, it is unpractical. If I turn brides away and you also change your mind for what ever reasons, I then lose everything.

✚ **Do we have to provide you and the Assistant with a meal and refreshments?**

It is not necessary and not a requirement. However, we are working hard and for long hours and therefore it would be appreciated immensely, if a smaller table with food and refreshments are provided for our comfort. *If you cannot provide us with meals and refreshments please let me know so I can make alternative arrangements and we will bring our own pre packed meals and drinks.*

✚ **Your package pricing is more expensive than the other quotes I have! Are you flexible with your pricing?**

This is always a tough one for me to negate! Although I prefer to help out where necessary it is also very difficult to run a successful and feasible business on inconsistencies. I prefer to leave my pricing as is and where necessary, I can drop the costs on overtime hourly rates or offer cheaper travel rates. Remember that the printers & album binders do not drop their prices to me so it becomes a complex situation when I am asked if I can drop my prices on certain packages. Although I acknowledge the fact that you get what you pay for, I also try to

help where and if I can. There are many ways “to skin a cat”, and as I said in the beginning of this document, it’s so much easier to meet and discuss your needs and budgets and therefore easier to customize a package to suit your needs and requirements.

✚ **One of my family members or relatives is a huge photographic enthusiast and will no doubt have his/her camera at the wedding. Will this be acceptable?**

At every wedding there are enthusiasts and relatives with cameras. I have no problem with this and it is fully understandable and acceptable. However, as long as they understand that I/we are the principal photographers and they should try to stay away from the official photographers at all times. Especially with the ceremony, vows, rings, registry signing, family images and especially the official shoot. You also do not want the principal photographers getting irritable because Uncle Bob is constantly tagging along and getting in the way. It is imperative and it states in the contract that the Principal Photographers are left to do what they have been paid to do best.

✚ **Our parents really want group photos but we are not that keen on them. Do you shoot the standard group and family images even though your style is more unprompted or spontaneous?**

I definitely do the group photos. I try my best to limit the group shots due to time limitations however; there are many ways to shoot family, relative & friend group shots. I tend to prefer doing them at the reception instead of directly after the service/ceremony due to the time constraints. If your family prefers the group photos directly after the ceremony then we need to factor more time into your official shoot. It is best to have a shot list of the various groups that you need photographed and assign one person (usually the best man or maid of honour) to help me locate the members that will be included in the group photos. 30 minutes is time enough for this and it is best to stick to immediate and close families rather than the extended families and your friends. Depending on your service time on the day it is best to do this directly after the service, whilst the other guests go and have refreshments. We can then go off and do the official photography! **The fun booth** is an optional extra and has become a popular feature at many weddings. It takes care of loads of fun photos, table photos and most of your group photos at your wedding. It is a great addition to your reception as the guests get to take their own images with a wireless remote.

✚ **Will it be easier to shoot the group photos along with the table shots at the reception?**

It’s up to you, this can be done, and however, I take as many spontaneous images of people’s reactions to the speeches, dancing etc as possible during the reception. I tend to stay away from the formal table shots however, as mentioned this is totally up to you. I do the “booth style” group and table shots as well, however unique and funny this turns into, it does come with an extra cost to the package if not already included in your package. I also have a few other techniques that I am able to use for your table photography.

✚ **Do you create various styles and sizes of albums?**

Yes I can, however, I have standardised my value proposition and offering on the album with the 80cm x 30cm Landscape leather bound album with 40 pages. I also offer exact replicas of the larger Landscape album for your parents. These are the 27cm x 20cm or 20 x 15cm albums for the parents and are available as part of my packages. In the smaller packages I offer a smaller square 30cm x 30cm album as well with less pages. There are also many other sizes to choose from, please ask for the general range of sizes, pages and covers. There are also 3 types of paper, namely: Fine Art, Metallic and Photo Matt.

✚ **For how long are your quotations valid?**

So long as your date is still open and the suppliers have not increased their prices my quotation to you is valid . I do keep in touch with you once I have quoted you as I believe this to be best service and practice, and not to annoy you. It is however, courteous to also let me know that you are interested in the next step for a consulation but also at the same time if you are not interested please advise so I can close your enquiry.

✚ **What equipment do you shoot with and what are some of your techniques that you employ to get the best images on our day?**

I shoot with top of the range Nikon equipment and all of my lenses are the fastest available. They are all f2.8 and I utalise a standard portrait lens, zoom, macro and a fish eye lens. This allows me to shoot in very low lit areas with no flash, such as at and during your service. I also prefer to not use flash due to the harsh “hot spots” that it leaves on your skin. I then have to photo shop and edit for many more hours which costs me money and I prefer not to. I employ 2nd shooters and an Assistant. My Assistant helps me reflect ambient light onto your faces and this is the best technique available. The results are phenominal and you would prefer soft diffused light rather than harshly lit spots on your faces...wouldn't you? I have also imported a special Model light from the States that is powered by a battery pack, easy to carry and allows me to shoot those stunning sky shots well after the sun has set. The model light does not leave “hot spots” as I bounce the light off diffused materials. The results are sensational as you can see from my work! All in all, I take immense care not to disturb the ceremony and to get the best results as naturally as possible.

If there are any other questions you feel you need answers to, I will gladly answer them and I thank you for taking the time to read this document.

Warm regards,

Ian