

# WEDDINGS AS WELL

An increasing number of professionals are offering wedding coverage alongside other specialities, and for many this area has become a rewarding and enjoyable sideline **Words:** Terry Hope

**D**IVERSITY IS the name of the game in the world of professional photography these days and, as the challenge to make a living becomes increasingly intense, more and more businesses out there are looking to diversity and to widen the scope of what they are offering to ensure that enough work continues to come through the door.

Not surprisingly weddings is an area that many working in non related photographic genres have taken a serious look at, and many are now finding that their skills behind the camera, coupled with an ability to work well with people and to handle the cut and thrust of a typical wedding event, is standing them in good stead as they move into a new sector of the business.

Those who are making a success of tackling weddings alongside other areas are undoubtedly the ones who have entered this field with the right attitude. They have done so wholeheartedly and with enthusiasm, and they are in this area to offer something different, to enjoy the challenge and to widen their catchment area. Often the results they produce will be radically different to conventional wedding coverage, and they appeal to a clientele which might be reticent about hiring someone who was more of a conventional wedding specialist.

The photographers featured over the following pages are typical of the people who are now looking at weddings as another strand to their business. None of them have arrived at this point through desperation and all clearly feel they are tackling weddings on their own terms and in their own

style. Their backgrounds are diverse – everything from sports photography through to fine art, architecture and rock music – but all of them clearly enjoys the different discipline that weddings demand. Obviously the approach is working since every photographer here reports that the wedding work is going well, usually fuelled by word of mouth rather than conventional advertising.

The truth is that there are still many professionals out there who would rather starve than move into the wedding market at any level. Others have realised that the solid business is one that never turns away work and that weddings, being one of the most dependable and well paid areas of all, is worth looking at seriously and can also be a lot of fun at the same time. With many of the photographers interviewed here taking on around 15 weddings

a year, the involvement in this area is serious but a long way short of full time, and it permits a steady stream of income to be generated while allowing the business to continue to be focused elsewhere. As such it's a happy mix and a way of staying afloat that can still be creatively rewarding and enjoyable at the same time. ☉



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## CASE STUDY Sarahphotogirl

Quickly becoming well-known for her music photography, Sarahphotogirl has also taken on a number of weddings which she's shot in her distinctive style, bringing a quirky freshness to this most traditional of genres

Steadily making a name for herself as a rock photographer, Sarahphotogirl, based in Scarborough, has also taken on a number of weddings that she has shot in her distinctive style, and she is looking at developing a dedicated area of her website that will promote the fact that this is part of her repertoire.

"I started off mainly doing weddings for friends and people who know me and like my style," she says. "I have never advertised the fact that I offer this service: people come to me through word of mouth and, to date, I've done around 15 and have really enjoyed the experience and would like to do more.

"I approach weddings in the same way I approach a shoot with a rock band: I'm like a fly on the wall, looking for unusual angles and different ways of doing things, and I try to produce something that will be quirky and different. Unlike with most of the bands, however, I try to meet up beforehand to discuss what the couple wants and we go through a 'getting to know you' process.

"I do find the day itself quite stressful because I'm very aware how important it is for all those who are involved to get the set of pictures that they want, but on a personal level it's nice to do weddings on occasions because I find that I'm working with people who respect what I do. This can be quite different to the experience you get with some bands who can be very egotistical."

The fees that Sarah charges start from £800 and can rise to £2000 depending on where the wedding might be taking place and whether extensive travel is involved. "I'll go pretty much anywhere within reason," she says, "and the charge includes a photo book that I have produced by Photobox, the company that makes all my prints.

"Although the books are not bespoke, I design my own templates and lay out the book myself and so the



**IMAGES** Sarahphotogirl's shot many rock stars, and is now expanding her business to wedding photography in her unique style

couple does receive something that has an original feel."

While Sarah certainly has no plans to give up her rock photography she is keen to develop other strands to her business and is actively developing her 'dark art' illustration skills while waiting to hear whether her first book has been taken up by a major publisher. "I have lots of projects on the go," she says, "and it's important for me to show that I can take on a whole range of different things."

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