



Nuptial Nirvana

Christophe Viseux

Christophe Viseux is a French travel photojournalist, who started out in wedding photography in the United States more than five years ago.



Currently based out of France, he travels the world over to shoot destination weddings. This is because destination weddings offer the most idealistic settings and exotic atmosphere which provide the perfect backdrop to enhance fabulous memories. He for one believes that since destination weddings are based out of exotic locations they're always subject to the unusual and the unexpected. This is precisely the reason why instead of actually stopping the action, the photographer should stay in the background and look for real interactions and emotions that tell the story of the wedding in a more eloquent way.

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Describe a day in the life of Christophe Viseux and what is the biggest professional challenge you face on a daily basis since each wedding is unique and different from the other, especially since you shoot across communities and in different geographies?

Currently a photographer tends to spend the majority of his time in front of the computer. This is because with digital photography it provides the photographer the unique opportunity to edit, retouch, keep in touch with potential clients, undertake research for the next assignment, catching up with deadlines and also update the website on a regular basis. In short, it's a never ending process.

Honestly, after producing all the refreshing work, at the end of the day the social media, networking and SEO are some of the biggest challenges that the photographer has to live with working at an international level.

You have a brilliant eye for visualization in wedding photography. However, what is the one thing that you cannot stop thinking about while you're photographing a wedding ceremony and why?

I have a strong background of working as an art director in an advertising agency in the United States and in France. This I probably guess is one of the reasons that I am capable to visualize things quickly.

However, while shooting a wedding, I am constantly thinking about what's coming up next and where I should put myself to document the best angle. But having said that anticipation and observation contributes significantly towards creating stunning pictures.

Each wedding is different from the other in terms of customs and traditions. Nonetheless, how do you balance the different customs on one hand to capturing the ceremonies on the other, especially in the case of Indian weddings, which also includes heavily posed portraits and timings.

Research, research, research. This is the magic mantra that



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I regularly work upon before actually getting into shooting a event or ceremony. In addition, I spend a lot of time browsing the Internet for information and also keep myself updated about photography styles and customs that are prevalent in other countries. Basically, through research, I am able to familiarize myself about the different stages of the wedding ceremonies. Event experience is the best teacher which also helps me to understand when a moment becomes more formal and more emotional, whatever the type of celebrations — including Hindu wedding ceremonies given all its complexities. Nonetheless, wedding photojournalism is a personal bond that you have to feel within your heart to bring

out the best. Its like leaving the couple alone so that they get emotionally involved and you have the wonderful opportunity to capture all the amazing moments. And as in life, timing remains absolutely critical.

In your assessment how has your style evolved over the years, especially given the technological changes that have taken place in your art?

I've always shot weddings digitally and I can't imagine the day doing the same kind of professional reportage with films — even though I would love to do it. This is because D-SLRs ushers in tremendous versatility and experimentation in photography. The high sensibility (ISO) of the new

generation cameras delivers amazing results that really stand apart. Besides, the noise levels is quite low and it also enables us to shoot most of the time without flash. This enables us to portray the natural look and also capture the mood in all its complexities.

Have you ever encountered any interesting, funny episode while shooting weddings and if so please take us through it.

I have always believed that the most craziest story is yet to come. However, a few sweet things down the line would make interesting reading. But some of the incidents would include, the late entry of the groom at the ceremony, guests fighting at the reception, drunk bride at

the party... yes it certainly does happen in the West!

How important is the post production part in wedding photography. Are you a Photoshop extremist?

Post production is a complete part of the wedding reportage and it is very time consuming (up to 25/30 hours per wedding) even though some people tend to not consider it enough. I like to have my pictures well balanced, color corrected, and cropped if necessary but I would certainly not consider myself a Photoshop extremist in any sense. In fact, I refuse to play too much with the

LightRoom presets, sepia tones and unnecessary black and white, which most of the time just tends to compensate for weak composition and timing. Strangely enough, the latest creative tools in post production give all the photograph a similar look. But a good retouch is one you can't simply tell. I find it more challenging to produce natural looking color photographs which have been my forte.

In your assessment what is the biggest misconception in wedding photography and how do you convince the clients about it, and secondly, are they

receptive to innovations in the art per se.

Most of the clients still do not realize how much time and energy it takes to create good pictures. You really have to push yourself a lot to shoot the best. With digital photography, softwares and professional equipments being more and more affordable than ever before, there are a lot many so-called "photographer" in the profession. The point is that I am not saying they can't or should not give it a try. But simply owning professional equipments doesn't mean that you become a professional photographer who can make a living out of it. This in a

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way tends to confuse even the clients about what to expect, what to pay for and why there is a big gap in the pricing structures. But once they do understand it, then they will be very receptive to wedding reportage and shooting candid.

Having traveled and also having photographed at various destinations, the question is what has been your favorite wedding location and why?

Beach wedding in Panama, Sikh wedding in Kenya, Jewish/Hawaiian ceremony in Maui, traditional wedding in Scotland, Hindu wedding in Varanasi (India)... all these

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weddings have been very very special and dear to me. But as a travel photographer, my favorite wedding location will always be the one I haven't yet visited or been!

What is the Photographic gear that you use?

I am currently shooting with Canon 5D mark II body along with the Canon lenses 16-35mm, 24-70mm, 70-200mm and 50mm.

For details visit:

www.christopheweddingphoto.com

As told to Mathew Thottungal



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