

MOVIE *Magic*

Video goes beyond—and before, and during—the big day

BY ELENA DONOVAN MAUER

Long after your wedding day ends, your wedding video will transport you back to those beautiful vows you exchanged, your dad's touching toast and the way your groom embraced you tenderly during your first dance. With cutting-edge technologies, expert techniques and the creative imagination of your chosen videographer, not only can you preserve those precious moments, but you can also get guests excited before the big day, entertain them at the wedding, and document your celebration in true Hollywood style. Here, videographers share the latest and greatest in wedding video.



Art in motion
HD video and Super 8 film

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QUALITY COUNTS

High definition isn't just for movies and sporting events. Many brides are requesting that their wedding videos be shot in HD, too. But what exactly does HD mean? "The quality is three times better than standard definition," says Joey Mathews of 31 Films. He notes that an HD video will have captured more visual details than a standard video, and you'll be able to see them with more clarity on a high definition television.

"It's like night and day compared to standard definition," Sandy Buller of Sweet Sprit Productions says of high definition. "The colors look more brilliant and the resolution of the video is outstanding. High-definition cameras are also exceptional at shooting in low light."



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According to the pros, the advent of high-definition video means that wedding couples can expect a better-quality end product. “The lines of [wedding] video and feature-film movies are being blurred with this technology,” says Matthews. “It is opening up exciting doors for filmmakers to create wedding films that rival high-end movie productions.”

It is important for wedding couples to understand that HD cameras are pricey, so some videographers will charge more if you request their use. Others may add on a small extra fee for the Blu-ray disc that the high-resolution video must be recorded on. Of course, you’ll have to use a Blu-ray player to view it, too.

VIDEO IS VALUED

In the past, wedding videography was often an afterthought, considered as an “extra,” after photography. But today’s wedding couples are much more likely to include videography as a ‘must-have’ budget line item. Perhaps that’s because today’s media-savvy brides and grooms are immersed in video sharing Web sites such as YouTube, and far more familiar with the impact of moving pictures. Maybe they know a little something about cinematography, or they just saw a friend’s ultra-creative video and want something similar. “The bride calls the shots,” says Buller. “Many of them want a highly produced wedding video made. They’re even searching out a videographer first, before a photographer.”

One of the reasons videography may be getting more emphasis is because it’s not as intrusive or obstructive as it was in decades past. Buller says that his video team often uses high-definition DSLR cameras,



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which are essentially digital still-life cameras with video capability. The picture quality is the same as with a professional photographer's camera, and because the cameras are so small, the videographer can be just as inconspicuous as a photographer, and in turn capture just as many candid moments. "Some churches tell videographers that they have to stay in one place during the ceremony," says Buller. "But when I have a smaller camera, I'm given fewer restrictions."

Smaller cameras and less gear let the video team get closer to the bride and groom, as does adding more cameramen who can better capture facial expressions and get more varied camera angles. This can result in a more artistic end product.

The oversized bright lights that videographers were once known for now are also a thing of the past. "I don't take lights to the reception anymore, because they're unnecessary with HD cameras," says Buller.

SENTIMENTAL TOUCHES

Though videography equipment may be ultra-high-tech, when it comes to the video narrative itself, most couples are all about romance. Many are making sure to spend time together away from their guests for their videographer to capture some tender moments. "Even a 10-minute couples shoot can make a big impact on your wedding film," says Matthews. So make a plan to escape with your groom for a bit, whether you stroll hand-in-hand in a garden, cuddle in front of a roaring fire or share a kiss in a hallway.

Another way to add romance to your wedding video is with a retro feel. Consider having part of your day shot with Super 8 film. This is a type

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of film that was popular in the 1960s, and lends a video an old-fashioned, flickery look. "It gives such a unique, timeless feel," says Matthews. "Most couples who see themselves on the film say they feel like they're watching a dream of their wedding." Many couples mix interludes of Super 8 film with regular digital footage for a mix of classic and modern.

And for an added layer of emotional resonance, ask your videographer to use a voice recording of your vows as a soundtrack for visual shots of the wedding day, as Buller likes to do.

Every wedding video is different. They can run anywhere from 20 minutes to two hours—or even more if you want to relive just about each and every moment. Videographers can adjust the length to suit your needs. Couples often request short videos, from three to eight minutes long. These snippets can be uploaded onto an iPod, your wedding Web page, or to sites like YouTube, MySpace, Twitter or Facebook, making it easy and enjoyable for friends and family to watch.

TRIED AND TRUE

No matter what wedding video trends you follow, the most important thing you can do to make your film great is to relax and let your true happiness shine through, throughout the wedding. "Above all other advice, I tell my couples to just enjoy the day and have a blast," says Matthews. "That essentially will help me capture their personalities and the overall feel of the day."

Mitch Daniels of MDI Video seconds the sentiment. He says, "It's the emotion of the people that makes a good video. In the end, brides really just want to remember their wedding day."

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