

video's new wave



Whether you've already decided on a videographer or are still unsure about the topic, here are some advances in video that will help convince you that it's a wedding essential. Are you ready to get reel?

BY MILES STIVERSON



PHOTO © JENNIFER DOMENICK PHOTOGRAPHY; VIDEOGRAPHY BY ELAN ARTISTS

Video tip: Try to capture candid moments like Jen and Rex did.

Imagine your dad, decked out in a tux and with his glass raised, delivering a toast that leaves you and most of your guests reaching for the hankies. Your photographer will snap the pics to preserve the moment, but after the champagne glasses clink together, Dad's words are only a memory—unless you have them on film. Wedding videography captures the sights and the sounds of your day, evoking a feeling and portraying the day's emotion. Your videographer is bound to catch something you missed. The bonus: With digital video—often called DV—becoming the norm, your DVD promises to have a much longer shelf life than a grainy VHS tape. That means future generations will be able to see how Grandma and Grandpa married—even if at that point they have to ask what a “DVD” is. Here are some of our favorite video innovations. >>

VIDEO'S NEW WAVE CONT.

THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION

DV is pretty much the highest quality format that currently exists. One of its many benefits is that you get super-high resolution on your wedding DVD, and the quality will stay no matter how many copies you burn. You can send discs to people who couldn't attend as well as to close family and friends along with your thank-you notes, and their versions will be just as good as the original copy.

Hot on DV's tail is shooting in high definition—the same crystal-clear picture that's driving many to buy flat-screen televisions. The high-def wedding video fits on a DVD just like a regular video, and—if your TV is HD-compatible—you'll see that the quality is incredibly sharp and amazingly clear.

As is the case with most new technology, the drawback to high-def wedding videography is the cost—since videographers need all new cameras and editing equipment when they make the jump to high definition, their investment is reflected in a higher price. But you can't beat high def for the supersharp, feels-like-you're-there quality—you might even find yourself reaching out for another slice of cake!

DVDs are great because they have a longer shelf life than VHS tapes.

THE SUBTLE FACTOR

In the past, many brides bristled at the thought of an intrusive, gear-laden cameraman following them around all day. But new technology means a wedding videographer today is much more of a fly-on-the-wall presence than in the past. "My two videographers worked so stealthily, I didn't even see them during the ceremony," says Rosie, 32. "I looked for understated personalities when interviewing, and it paid off in their quiet work style." >>

VIDEO'S NEW WAVE CONT.

New cameras are built specifically for filming these events, so they're well suited for shooting in low light and don't require bright spotlights. The specialty cameras require so little light (they might need an extra on-camera bulb, but it only has to be about 50 watts), in fact, that your videographer can portray the atmosphere of your wedding as it really happened, rather than how it would look lit up and reenacted on the History Channel.

Knot Note: If you're having a very dimly lit ceremony and the site won't allow extra lighting, consider asking an assistant to raise the lights slightly to film the processional and recessional. The lights on the congregation can then be dimmed when you're at the altar, which is generally adequately lit anyway.

THE SOUND CHECK

And don't worry about guests stumbling over microphone wires. Many wedding videographers use wireless mics during the ceremony, hidden discreetly just under the groom's boutonniere (the mic's tiny and black, so you'll never see it on his tux) with a small pack that acts as the transmitter and clips onto the back of his waistband under his jacket.

If placing the microphone on a boutonniere, it should be at least halfway down the lapel since if placed too high it could easily pick up the sound of the groom breathing. At a Jewish wedding, your videographer can even try hiding the microphone in the huppah, an ultradiscreet alternative.

THE NEW ANGLES

Part of the reason it's become so much easier to get creative with editing is because it's also simpler to shoot from unexpected angles. No more plunking a camera on a tripod and letting it roll. Innovations such as attaching a camera to a pole (it's flexible, sort of like a pole vaulter's pole, so the shot isn't shaky) that can extend from 5 to 23 feet and rotate 360 degrees means you can have a shot start on a close-up of your centerpiece and circle all the way around the table while rising toward the ceiling. >>

VIDEO'S NEW WAVE CONT.

It's like floating, and the camera itself is small—about the size of a fist—so it won't interfere with your photographer's pics while giving you otherwise impossible shots (like being alongside the newlyweds while they're lifted in chairs for the hora, a Jewish dance).

Videographers are now using filmic techniques like wide-screen shots to make videos dynamic.

YOUR OWN INDIE

New approaches to wedding video editing have flourished over the last few years—gone are the days of long interviews with drunk uncles slurring their congratulations set to a background track of Kool & the Gang. The trend: a combination of documentary and cinematic styles. "We wanted a condensed version of what the whole day was like and something our friends and family might actually want to watch," says Felicity, 28, "so we decided on a highly edited style of video."

Knot Note: Even if you don't want a highly edited video, ask your videographer if you can give him or her a CD of preferred songs to use.

Today's videographers often use filmic techniques (think flowing compositions, dramatic music, and wide-screen shots) to make the video even more dynamic. Effects that were once prohibitively expensive are now much more accessible, and the results are wedding videos that feel more like feature films than ordinary home videos. That's just perfect for your extra-ordinary nuptials. 🎬

Thanks to John Zale, director of education, WEVA

click >> To find a videographer, visit TheKnot.com/cities