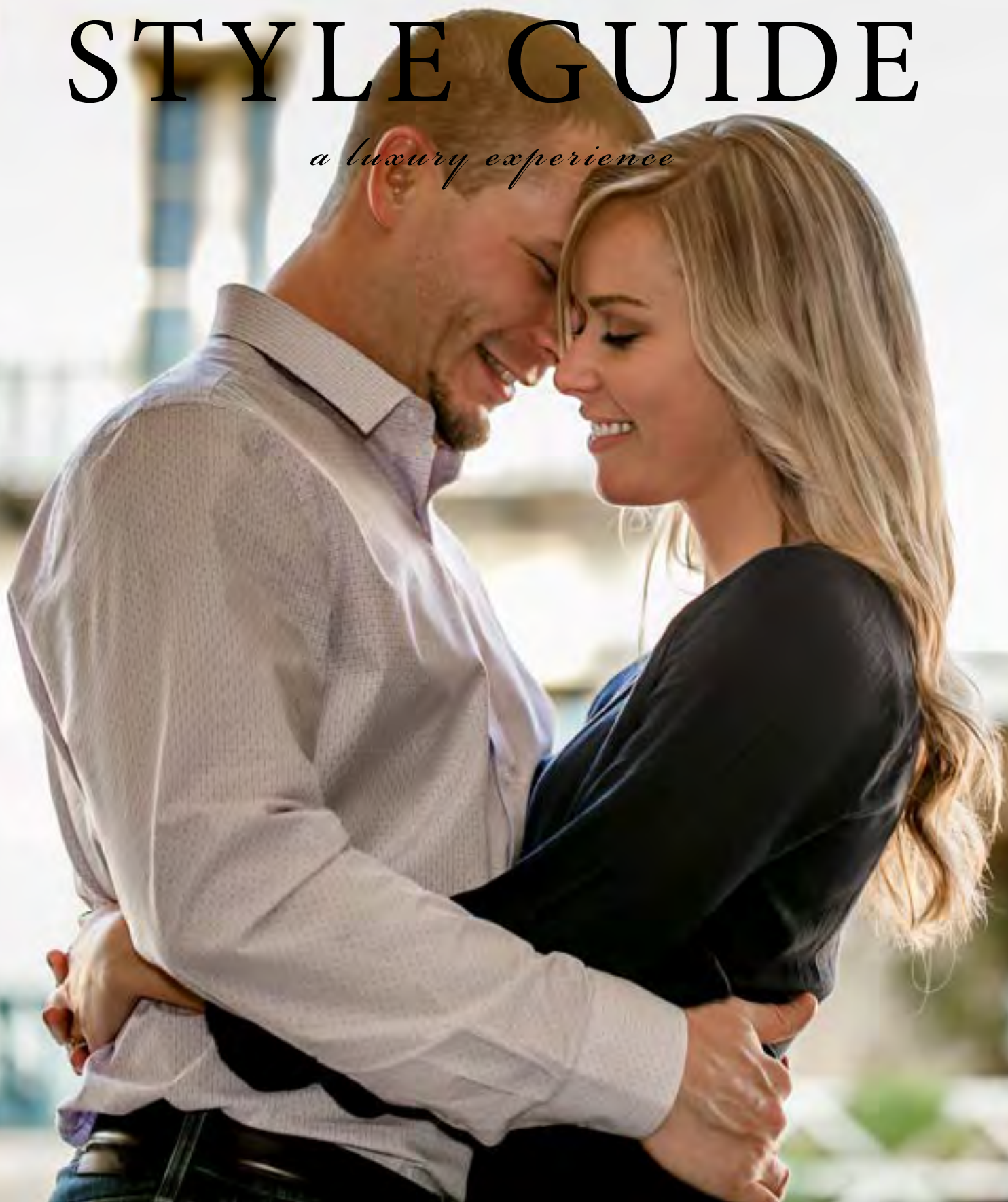


THE ENGAGEMENT SESSION

# STYLE GUIDE

*a luxury experience*







THE ENGAGEMENT SESSION

# STYLE GUIDE

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# WHAT EVERY BRIDE *needs to* KNOW

THE ENGAGEMENT SESSION IS ONE OF MY favorite parts of our time together because it gives you both a chance to be in front of the cameras before you get married, which is going to make your wedding day experience feel so smooth, seamless and comfortable. Not only that, but we get to create something so special together. You're going to be married for decades, but you only get to be engaged for this short period of time. I am so excited to capture the only time in your life when you get to be each other's fiances. I created this guide for you, and packed it with all our best secrets for getting the best out of your engagement experience, so let's dive right in!



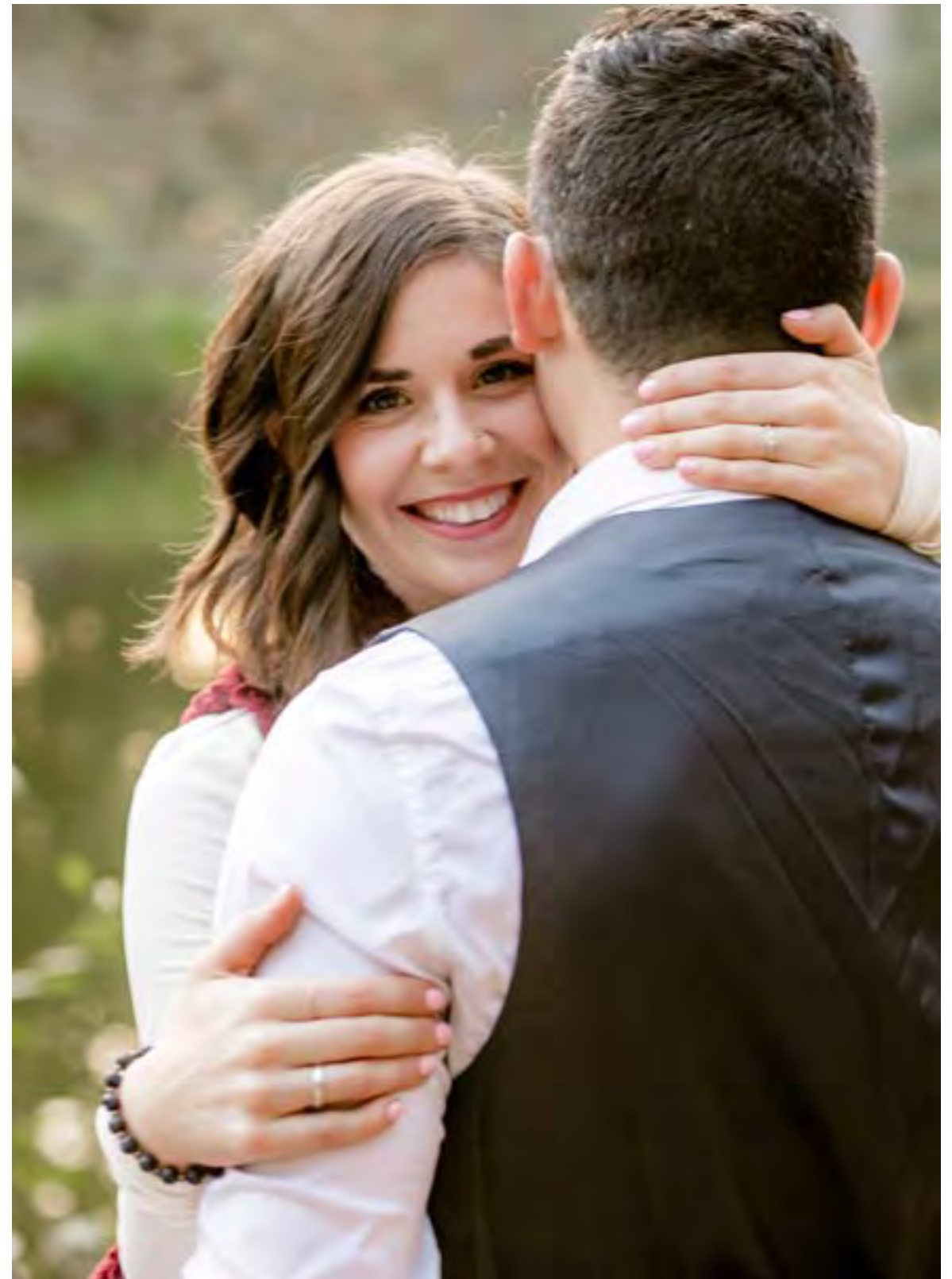




## *choosing time & date*

I LOVE NATURAL LIGHT and only use a flash as a filler. Light from the sun and its reflections, creates photographs that feel fresh, timeless and true to you as a couple. I can work in most lighting situations, but love the beautiful golden light whenever possible. In the winter months the time of day is less important as the sun is lower and softer in the sky. If golden light is important to you please plan to take a couple hours off work in the evening for weekday shoots, as I only have 2 weekend golden hour slots open per week.

To get the most out of your session, please plan a buffer when getting ready so you can arrive a few minutes early. Although I do night engagement shoots these must be requested in advance as special lighting is required.




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*Our weekends fill up first and far in advance.  
You can get a Fast Pass to the front of the line by scheduling mid-week.*

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# SELECTING THE RIGHT LOCATION

THE LOCATION OF YOUR ENGAGEMENT SESSION IS UP TO YOU! The first thing to decide is whether what style of engagement session you'd like and if you'd like multiple locations. Living in the bay area means a plethora of locations to choose, from the Palace of Fine Arts, to the beach, to one of the many regional parks in the area. If a destination shoot is your desire, I am always up for exploration...from Lake Tahoe to one of the many desert settings in the state, California isn't short of beautiful natural and cityscapes for your engagement session.



*think outside the box*

THIS IS THE TIME TO THINK outside the box! I encourage you to brainstorm unique locations that you might have special access to that most people don't. For example, maybe you, or someone in your personal or professional network, can secure permission to a location that would otherwise be off-limits, like a beautiful private estate, country club or resort. Maybe it's a family ranch, upscale hotel or even an airplane hangar. The sky is literally the limit! Spend a few minutes thinking about it and checking around. You'll be

surprised with what you come up with. Plus, if something seems out of reach, just remember: you never know until you ask! Locations that are special to you are always the best way to go. If you are feeling a bit stuck with ideas, no worries, I have some great go-to locations around town that we can always hit, too. Just let us know which session you love, and whether you'd like to feature the desert or not, and we will go from there!



## DESTINATION ENGAGEMENT

YOUR ENGAGEMENT SESSION includes our travel time anywhere within 50 miles of Pleasant Hill. If you'd like to go somewhere outside the area I am up for the adventure! The travel fee for two-three hour drives to places like Lake Tahoe, Monterey, Santa Cruz, Yosemite, and the many other wonderful locations is \$200

I love traveling and are actually on the road quite a bit. I have done engagement sessions all over California, so if we're already going to be in or near an area you've always dreamed of doing your photos, and we can coordinate

our schedules, let's set it up. I'd love to make it work!

If you'd like me to meet you in a destination outside of Northern California for your engagement session where we don't already have plans to visit, just let us know and we can get you a custom travel quote.





# STYLING

*your session*



WANT YOUR ENGAGEMENT IMAGES TO LOOK MORE EDITORIAL? Bring a little extra something with you! A freshly-picked bouquet for you to hold, or fresh flowers to put on something else, like a bicycle basket, tree swing, picnic basket, car bumper or rowboat, is a fun way bring a little extra romance to everyday objects. Whether it's larger items like classic cars, or smaller ones like blankets or hats, even incorporating just one extra styled item could be a fun way to make your session more unique.







*style tips*

# FOR HER

*because you've been waiting your whole life for this*



# Don't Be Afraid to DRESS IT UP

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT rocking a sequined gown, tulle skirt or flower crown but just never had an occasion for it? This is your chance to do it up! Remember: There is no such thing as “too dressed up” when it comes to your engagement session, so don’t be afraid to have some fun! If you don’t want to add a new permanent

piece to your collection, I have a few headpieces and gowns sizes 2-16. Or you can rent, you don’t have to spend a lot to feel like a million bucks. Plus, you can send the outfits back when the session is over. My brides just love having a great excuse to bring a new permanent piece (or two!) into their closet!

There’s no such thing as too dressed







## *say yes* *TO THE* DRESS



LONG, FLOWY DRESSES AND SKIRTS LOOK AMAZING ON CAMERA BECAUSE they bring extra movement to the photos. Especially when juxtaposed with nature, like the desert, forest, plains or beach. Cute, shorter-length dresses photograph beautifully as well. Dresses and skirts tend to look most stunning on camera because they really flatter the female body — which is probably why the red carpet is always full of so many dresses and not very many pantsuits! We recommend avoiding pants and shorts for your session, and saying yes to a dress or two!



*one or two? it's up to you!*

MOST OF MY BRIDES WHO CHOOSE TWO outfits will bring one “wow” dress, and then another shorter sun dress or cocktail dress for a more casual “us on a date” feel. But if you want to bring two “wow” dresses and forgo the more casual dress altogether, give yourself permission to do it! The camera loves runway-esque apparel and so do we!

Remember, though, you don't have to bring two looks if it's too stressful or you'd rather just stick to one fabulous look. Just one outfit that you love will be so much better than one outfit you *love* paired with another you're not very excited about. So, one or two? It's really up to you!







## *choosing colors*

WHEN CHOOSING COLORS FOR YOUR OUTFITS I recommend selecting lighter tones and more muted shades. By avoiding ultra-bright, bold colors, it will help bring all the attention to your faces and let the eye focus on the way you feel about each other. The camera loves shades of soft pink and muted blues, mixed with sophisticated light neutrals like heather gray, creams, leather brown and white. That softer color palette fits beautifully into almost all natural outdoor environments, and especially complements the desert.

The key is to think about the colors you would like on your walls. These beautiful images will be displayed in your home for years to come:)





# Coordinating Colors

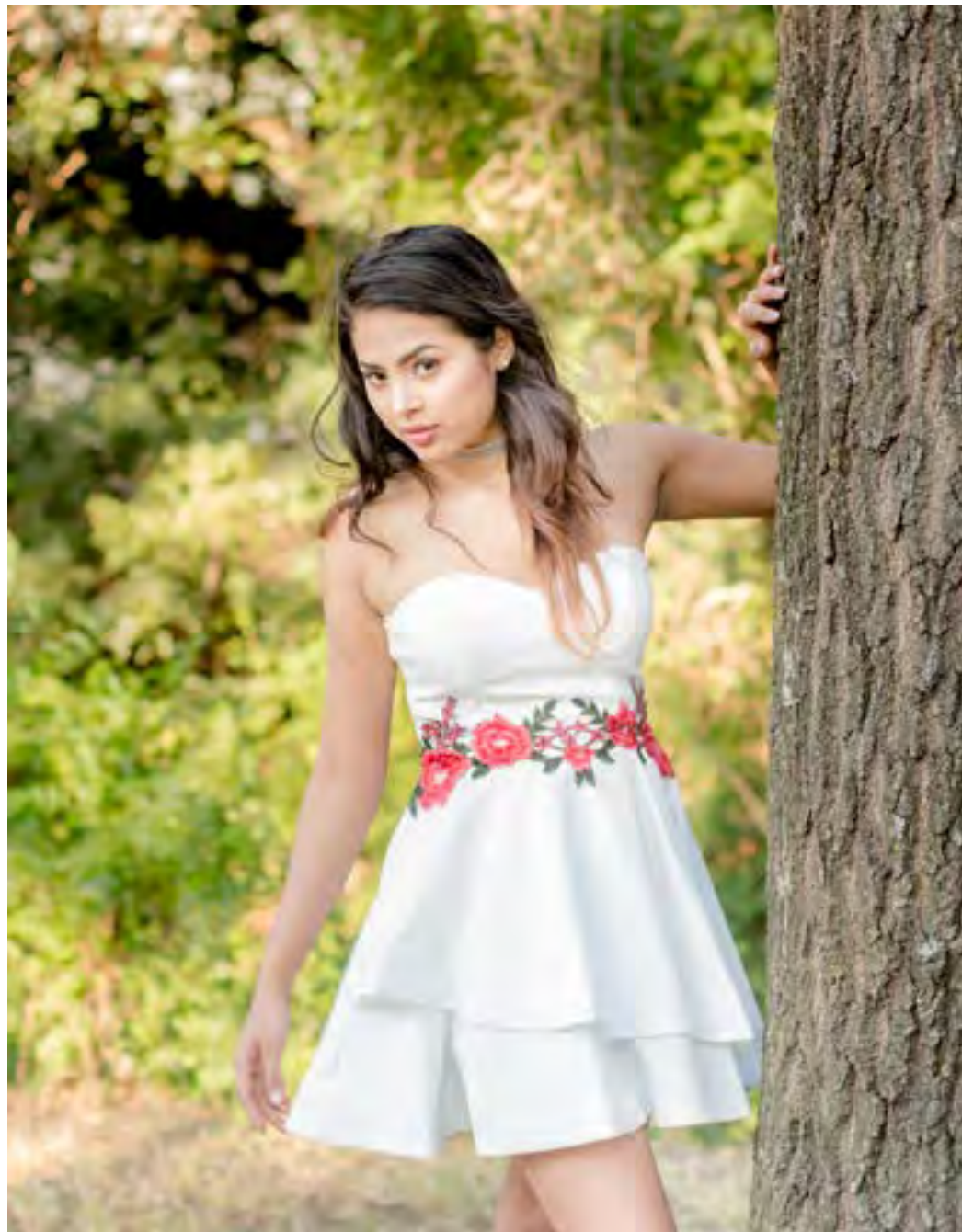
AS YOU'RE COORDINATING your outfit with your fiancé's, keep in mind that your outfits will look the most cohesive on camera when the color palettes coordinate, but don't necessarily "match." You should each aim to wear a different dominant color, but stay within a similar color palette family. So if you're wearing a blush dress, soft blue earrings and nude heels (blush being *your* dominant color), then he could wear a navy coat with gray pants, paired with brown leather shoes and maybe even a blush pocket square. Now he has his *own* dominant color (navy) while still incorporating a few touches of your color palette. Most of my brides choose their dress first, and then put together their fiancé's outfit based on that. That's why we have a section for each of you.





## *flattering your features*

IN MY EXPERIENCE, EVERY WOMAN, REGARDLESS OF HER shape has an area of her body that she's self-conscious about, so recognizing what area that is in advance is key. Choosing flattering silhouettes and colors that complement your natural features is the best way to ensure you'll love the way you look in your photos.



THREE-QUARTER LENGTH SLEEVES create an awesome slimming effect on *all* arms, so be on the lookout for an option with a longer length sleeve. You could also bring a cute jacket, blazer or cardigan along, too. Skinny straps or strapless dresses have the *opposite* effect on arms on camera, so we recommend avoiding those whenever possible if your goal is a set of slimmer-looking arms.

HEELS ELONGATE WOMEN'S LEGS making them look fabulous. Closed-toes heels in particular look great on camera because they carry out the line of your leg all the way down to your toe. If your toes are showing in a peep-toe heel, you might want to schedule a pedicure before your session so you don't regret letting your feet show. These little tricks make all the difference!

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*Bring a pair of flats to wear when moving from place to place. Your feet will thank you later!*

---



*make a*

# STATEMENT



PAIRING AN ACCESSORY OR TWO WITH YOUR OUTFIT CAN REALLY help bring some extra dimension to your images. Big statement necklaces bring a lot of pop to the photos, while the smaller, delicate ones are not as noticeable on camera. Belts, bracelets and earrings bring great visual interest, so choose one or two that don't compete for attention. Fresh florals in a crown or bouquet can be a really romantic touch as well.







## HAIR & MAKEUP

### Go Pro

PROFESSIONAL HAIR & MAKEUP IS ON TOP OF MOST OF my brides' checklists because it looks amazing and removes the stress of getting ready on your own. From lash extensions to blown-out hair, professional hair and makeup will give you an extra boost of confidence in front of the camera, and it always photographs like *a dream*. If you're working with a makeup artist, have her apply your makeup in natural light, if possible, so that it looks fresh and not too heavy. Plus, that's the type of light we'll be shooting in, so it'll give you the best expectation of how it will translate on camera. Most of my brides feel like their makeup is "too much" at first, since it's more than you would wear on a normal day, especially when it comes to false lashes, so if you feel that way at the beginning, don't worry! Good makeup artists know how to get it just right for the camera — and my brides always love the final result.

If you need a recommendation for hair and makeup, I work with some of the best in the business and have a great go-to team! They're sweet as pie, talented as heck, unbelievable professionals and wonderful people. You'll LOVE them! Just let me know and we'll send you their information. I know they'll take good care of you!





# CONFIDENCE.

*It's always the best accessory.*





## A LITTLE EXTRA POLISH

*Don't forget, your ring will be center stage, so give yourself permission to get it cleaned and your nails done, too!*

## *skip the spray tan*

ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT SEEM counter-intuitive, we recommend that you do not get a spray tan before your session, even a few days prior, because it

tends to photograph orange even when it's applied subtly and by a professional. Your actual skin tone will photograph the most beautifully and naturally.





*fashion tips*

# FOR HIM

*because dapper and debonair never go out of style*







FOR HIM

AS LONG AS HE'S GOT THAT SUIT AND TIE

## SUIT & TIE

FROM JAMES BOND TO DON DRAPER, MEN look most striking in a well-tailored suit. If he doesn't have one, now's the perfect time to invest in something he'll wear for the rest of his life! The best part? It's a lot less expensive than you might think! While custom suits can cost thousands of dollars, some of the most well-known brands have off-the-rack suits in their stores for a fraction of the price. Solid shades of gray or navy are a strong complement to most women's outfits, whereas pinstripes or plaid patterns tend to distract the eye.

---

FOR HIM



THERE'S NO  
SUBSTITUTE  
*for a*  
WELL-TAILORED  
SUIT







FOR HIM



# MIX IT UP

MANY OF MY GROOMS LOVE TO MIX A SUIT COAT, BLAZER, sport coat, collared vest, or sweater vest with a different pant color. It adds some extra visual interest, and can be more fun than wearing two full suits in a row. We're big fans of this fresh take on a timeless classic.







## *layered looks*

NEXT TIME YOU WALK BY a store like J. Crew, you'll notice the male mannequins and models are always wearing several layers at once. Layers on men look great on camera, so even when it's hot outside, trust me when I say that it's worth an hour or two of discomfort for photos that will last you both a lifetime. Adding another layer will bring extra dimension and visual interest to your photos. Blazers, vests and coats up the level of any look. If the temperature permits, he could even consider adding a v-neck sweater with a pop of color from a long-sleeved collared shirt and tie underneath. Don't be afraid to get a little creative with layers!







## IT'S ALL IN

LONG PANTS AND CLOSED-TOED SHOES ARE THE MOST SOPHISTICATED and masculine looks for men. They draw attention away from his legs and feet and place it where you want it: on the face you fell in love with. So, for your session, it's best to leave the shorts, and jeans at home, too, however it is Suit pants, dress pants or colored pants work best, especially when paired with closed-toe shoes. Brown leather dress shoes complement almost every look, whether he's wearing a full suit or a blazer and colored pants.



## THE DETAILS

TIES, BOWTIES, POCKET SQUARES, COLORED SOCKS, BELTS, TIE CLIPS, suspenders, vests and watches are sharp complements to any suit. If you bring two suits to the session, you can start with a traditional necktie and belt, then switch to suspenders and a bow tie for your second look. If two suits are too stressful, no problem! One look will do the trick! You can still mix and match accessories to complement both of her dresses without doing a full change during the session. So, either way, you win.





# PREP YOUR MAN

MOST MEN AREN'T OVERLY EXCITED TO TAKE PHOTOS FOR ONE to TWO hours, because they don't have an expectation of what's to come and why it's so important to you. Take fifteen minutes to educate and empower your guy. Tell him why you chose me and my style of photography. Show him your three favorite sessions that we've done, explain why you love them and express to him how much it means to you. Trust me, once he knows it's important, he'll light up the camera for you! The most common thing I hear from guys before engagement sessions is this: because of a bad experience in the past, they don't like taking photos or don't think they'll be good at it. By the time I'mz done, though, they can't believe how fast it went and just how much fun they had!







## *after the session*

DON'T FORGET TO PLAN  
A dinner date! You're already  
going to be all dressed up! Why  
not take advantage of it? I know  
the wedding planning process  
can feel all-consuming, so take  
some time after the session just  
for the two of you to relax and  
have some fun together. You  
deserve it!



## *one final note*

I KNOW I JUST GAVE YOU A LOT TO THINK ABOUT. I created this guide to help make your engagement session experience something you'll look back fondly on for years and years to come. At the end of the day, though, the location you choose and the outfits you select won't matter nearly as much as the memories you make together. Your future marriage is the most important thing to me, and I want your engagement session to be a time for you to just be yourselves and enjoy it. Have fun together. Laugh a lot. And I will take care of the rest!

## PHOTO DELIVERY TIMELINE

3 DAYS

*sneak peek with  
three of our  
favorite photos*

14 DAYS

*online gallery with  
all of your final,  
retouched, high-  
resolution images*

21 DAYS

*Social Media blog  
post with some  
highlights of our  
time together*





## ENGAGEMENT SESSION CHECKLIST

- ☐ SET DATE, TIME AND LOCATION WITH CRYSTAL SUMMER BEAR
- ☐ REVIEW GUIDE FOR STYLE TIPS
- ☐ SCHEDULE HAIR AND MAKEUP APPOINTMENTS
- ☐ CHOOSE YOUR OUTFITS
- ☐ GET YOUR NAILS DONE
- ☐ CLEAN YOUR RING
- ☐ PACK A BAG WITH:
  - ☐ Flats or flip-flops for walking between photo spots
  - ☐ Outfit two (including shoes and accessories)
  - ☐ Touch-up makeup
  - ☐ Water bottle (for warmer sessions)
  - ☐ Coat or cover-up (for colder sessions)
- ☐ PICK A FUN POST-SESSION DATE NIGHT SPOT



*I can't wait to*  
**SEE YOU SOON**





