

I've had a number of discussions with couples who have seen the photography included in the venues wedding package and thought I would put some observations and questions you should ask if this is what your are thinking of.

Venue packages include a range of services; generally cars, cakes, disco, flowers etc., but a few are now including a photographer. As their package is designed around a budget, the suppliers submit a quote based on the venues 'allocated' cost for that service. This is great for some couples who want an all-inclusive price but as the suppliers work to a budget and the photographic element may be a very basic package, it could be as simple as a traditional 20 page album with 20 prints.

Ask the venue what will be deducted from your package if you choose your own photographer, this is a starting point in knowing your photographic costs.

Most venues do not want to include photography as this is one service which can be very subjective; styles, coverage, approach and the finished albums as each photographers work varies. Most venues have a list of preferred suppliers who they have worked with in the past and know their approach and work, and are happy to recommend, these photographers will most likely have a special rate for that venue, why not compare these cost also.

If you are looking at a photography inclusive package I would suggest asking the following questions.

Your package includes the photography and you are paying the venue, therefore your contract is with the venue; in the event that your are unsatisfied with your photographs is the venue contractually obliged or willing to resolve your issues with the photographer. This is the key reason most venues avoid including photography.

Who is the photographer, if you are looking at a number of venues who include the photographer in their package are they offering the same photographer, if so who will shoot your wedding if they have more than one wedding on your day.

If the photographer employs other people are they part time or full time professionals, check that you are not receiving second best. Part time weekend photographers working for a professional generally receive a flat fee and as it's not their business are they 100% committed to your finished product?

What level of coverage is the package offering, how long will they stay, number of prints, is an album included and what style will you receive. The sample album shown to you is this the actual type and style of album you will receive or will you have to upgrade and at what cost to get that type of album. Use your phone, take a photo of the album types shown for your record and get the details in writing.

If they are using other photographers ask to see actual albums of their work, ideally a full wedding and not just a sample; also will you meet the actual photographer before your wedding to discuss your requirements and any special photographs you want or will they simply turn up on the day?

Post production on a tight budget will you get a proof of your album and what about any photographic retouching, is this extra?

You know the element the venue has allocated, add this to any add-on's from the photographer to calculate what your photographs will actually cost and you may find that its not as economical as you first envisaged. If all these questions are answered to your satisfaction the inclusive package may be the best option, but the old adage 'let the buyer beware' still holds.