

A photograph of a woman with dark hair styled in an updo, wearing a black strapless dress, a pearl necklace, and a gold bracelet. She is holding a large bouquet of pink flowers and looking off to the side. The background shows a doorway with a mannequin wearing a black dress and a floral headpiece.

Christian Oth's elegant image of a bridesmaid, captured moments before the ceremony, demonstrates that wedding photographers do not have to resort to posing subjects and setting up cumbersome lighting equipment to achieve a classic look. All that's needed are quick reflexes, fast lenses, and a sharp eye.

STATE OF THE ART



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER FLORES

Oth's shot of Martha Stewart surprised by a live cupid.

Christian Oth

Location: New York; San Francisco **Website:** christianothweddings.com • For Oth, wedding photography offers all an artist could ask for. "It fuses together the grandeur of tradition, the poignancy of emotion, and the simplicity of realism," he says. Manhattanites hire Oth to capture that confluence in an "honest" way, he says. "I have a natural shooting style that doesn't leave anything out. I watch the story unfold—not just the main event but the quiet times, the telling details, and the unique personalities."

Having been a New York-based commercial photographer for ten years, Oth also understands how to market himself—presenting properly, and to the right people. But even that success hinges on an identifiable style. In such a competitive environment you can't afford to be a generalist, says Oth, who prefers to shoot by existing light with fast lenses and a single camera. Nor can you afford to be jaded. Oth still looks forward to every opportunity to help a bride and groom make the big day uniquely theirs.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. CHALIBER / ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFREY M. CHALIBER

The Bebbs capture Mr. and Mrs. Melville emerging from the church.

Stephen and Jennifer Bebb

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada **Website:** tyingtheknot.net • Stephen and Jennifer Bebb started their business as a part-time venture in 1999, and by the end of that year they'd both quit their jobs to pursue wedding photography full-time. Their lack of formal training hasn't been an obstacle to success. "I think people are drawn to our work not just because it's good, solid photography but because we bring enthusiasm and honest emotion to it," says Jennifer. "We see each wedding with a fresh eye." The Bebbs also credit the demand for their services to "breaking the rules"

of wedding photography itself. One of their stylistic signatures is a quirky, dramatic selective focus, always done just right. They know how to make negative space work for them. And they avoid auxiliary light, shooting almost entirely wide-open with prime lenses.

That said, the Bebbs pride themselves on taking their visual cues from the wedding couple. The result is that clients trust them completely on the day of the wedding—and stop paying attention to the photographer. That, in turn, is a good recipe for better pictures.