

Weddings

by Lara Eichhorn Photography

What to Ask a Wedding
Photographer

How to Relax and Enjoy
an Engagement Session

A Practical Approach to
Wedding Budgeting

Real Wedding:
Robyn and Stephen's
Merridale Cider Wedding



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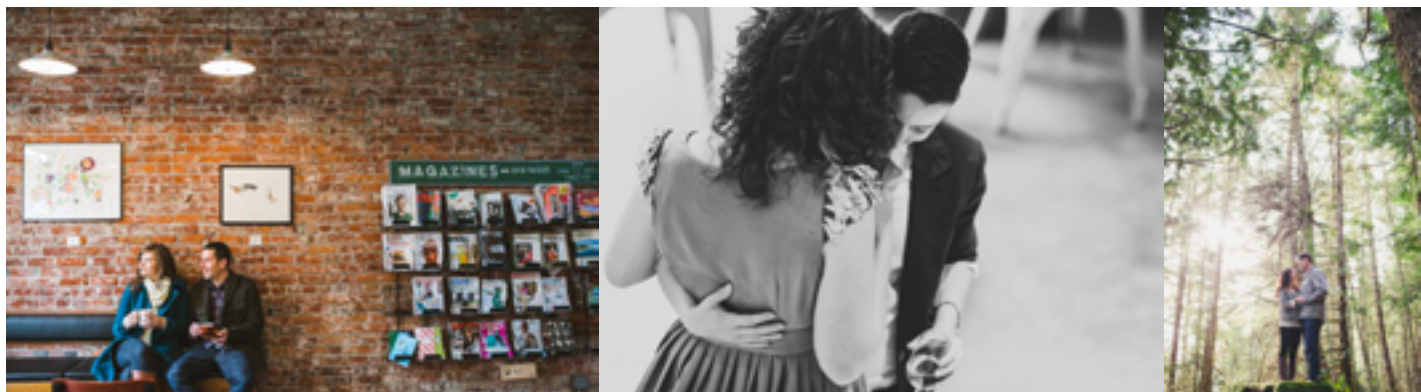
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What Lara's Clients are Saying

YOU are AMAZING. To paraphrase Steve "this [photography package] is the best thing we will EVER spend money on. The absolute best gift ever. Better than a hundred Christmases could ever be!"
 - Robyn & Steve

We are in love with our photos. They brought tears to our eyes — not only were they beautiful, but they were just what we wanted.
 - Wendy & Lisa

The pictures she gave us were beautiful and perfectly captured the day in ways even our memories can't do justice to. She is easy going, professional, and personable, and we now consider her a friend.
 - Dan & Bryn

Congratulations on your engagement!

I made this magazine to share some of the knowledge I've gathered over the years from photographing dozens of wedding in Greater Victoria and beyond.

I know wedding planning isn't easy, especially for those of us who didn't spend our youth planning our dream wedding. Even for those who did, there are so many details and decisions to make along the way - it can be overwhelming!

This magazine is designed to help you figure out some key components of your day and particularly to help you make the entire experience, from planning to engagement photos to the wedding day, easy and stress-free. After all, weddings are supposed to be fun, right?

I've included some tips on how to get wedding and engagement photographs you'll love, and I've illustrated this magazine with images I've taken at real weddings. If you like what you see and find you have a similar viewpoint, I'd be excited for you to consider choosing me to document your wedding day.

Cheers,

Lara Eibham

Simple Steps to Booking Your Wedding Photography

1. Look through this magazine and visit [MY WEBSITE](#) to make sure you love my style of photography and approach to the day. You'll want to make sure that we have similar ideas and the photos will be a perfect fit for you.
2. Send me an [E-MAIL](#) (if you haven't already) to see if I'm available on your wedding date. If photography is very important to you please go ahead and e-mail me—even if you haven't gotten around to choosing your date yet.
3. I'll reply, usually within 24 hours, with answers to any of your questions. Then we can set up an in person or Skype meeting, so we can see how we get along. An in person meeting gives you a chance to see my albums and products. If you prefer not to meet, you can just skip to the next step.
4. If we seem like a perfect match, you can go ahead and sign my contract (it's mostly free of scary legal speak, I promise) and put down your deposit of 1/3 of the total package price. Once that's done, your day is booked.
5. Sit back and relax, knowing you don't have to worry about anything to do with wedding photography ever again!

Robyn & Stephen got married at Merridale Estate Cidery in Cobble Hill in September 2012. Their wedding was full of personal details, happy moments, and love. Here are some of their photos, plus tips I picked up from their day.



Photo by Gwen Ewart for Lara Eichhorn Photography



DO SOMETHING FUN BEFORE THE WEDDING. Steve is a triathlete, so he and his triathlete friends threw around a football and ran into the ocean (in September, brr). Robyn and the girls had fun getting ready together at a cozy salon, where the mothers joined in later.



Photo by Gwen Ewart for Lara Eichhorn Photography



MAKE THE WEDDING YOUR OWN. Robyn spent some serious time crafting to make her vision come to life. Above L: seating charts made of painted frames with stamped tags Above R: program table and card wagon. Below L: honey wedding favours and DIY floral arrangements.



Photo by Gwen Ewart for Lara Eichhorn Photography



LET YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY HELP. The wedding party helped the couple set up the reception space while the rest of the guests enjoyed cocktail hour. After the wedding, many of the guests were happy to pitch in to take everything down.

Robyn and Stephen at Merridale Cidery



Photo by Gwen Ewart for Lara Eichhorn Photography



TRY MIXING UP YOUR STYLE. The wedding party was given the colour scheme and allowed to choose their own dresses, suits, and ties. I love the unique mix of styles and colours that resulted. It definitely worked with the casual, fun vibe of this wedding.



Photo by Gwen Ewart for Lara Eichhorn Photography



DON'T FORGET THE LITTLE DETAILS. Robyn chose different coloured bouquets & distributed them on the morning of the wedding. The girls were given gorgeous bracelets as a gift from the bride. The guys had funky socks in mixed colours and patterns.



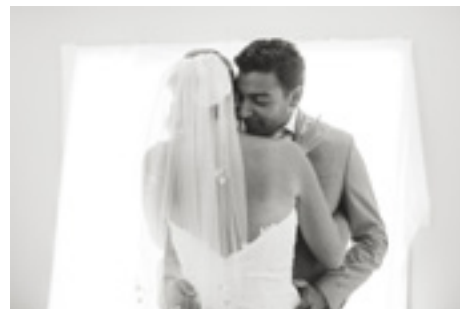
REMEMBER WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT. Weddings are all about the people and moments. Invite only the people you really want there and approach the day with a relaxed attitude. It's the perfect day to enjoy with everyone you love!

First Look and Giving the Bride Away

One key decision when planning your day is whether to do a first look or not. A first look is the first time the couple sees each other in their wedding clothes. This also ties into the processional down the aisle.

The First Look

Many photographers try to convince their clients to do a first look before the wedding. Their main reasons are to have more time to spend on portraits and to get a clear & intimate shot of the couple seeing each other for the first time that day. It can also reduce the nervousness many people feel about walking down the aisle. I personally love it because it allows the day to flow more naturally from the ceremony to the reception, eliminating the gap where the guests await the couple returning from the portrait session. However, I don't try to convince my clients to do things one way; I want them to schedule their day in a way that suits them.



The Anti-First Look

Some couples choose to forgo the first look altogether and get ready together. I think it's a great option for any couple who wants to feel a bit more relaxed before the ceremony and also get some sweet candid photos of the two of them while they prep for the big day.



First Look and Giving the Bride Away

Giving the Bride Away

The traditional wedding ceremony includes the bride being walked down the aisle by her father and given away to the groom at the altar. Some couples have stepped away from this tradition for various reasons: because they believe the bride's father giving her to her husband is old fashioned, because they want to include different family members in this ritual, or they just don't feel like it suits them.

One of my brides chose to have her divorced mother and father walk her down the aisle, which is a great way to include both sides of a divided family. Another bride had both her birth father and adoptive father give her away. For weddings where the bride's father wasn't able to attend, they've had their mother or an uncle walk them down the aisle, or just walked on their own.



Walking Together

Some couples choose to walk down the aisle together, which I think is a lovely way of showing that the day is about them as a couple and not placing such a focus on the big white dress.

At right are some photos of my favourite processional. The couple had done a first look prior to the ceremony. The bride walked down the stairs at Sea Cider to meet the groom at the bottom and then they walked down the aisle together. When they got to the front row, they hugged their immediate family members. It was the sweetest moment between the couple and their families.



I'd love people to consider putting their own spin on these traditions more often. Make your wedding completely your own, because it's all about the two of you.

A Wedding Photography Timeline

There are many ways to organize your wedding day. A well organized timeline is the key to a smoothly run day. Here's a sample timeline based on full day wedding coverage and a somewhat traditional schedule of events.

GETTING READY PHOTOS: 60+ MINUTES

I usually photograph the girls getting ready and my assistant photographs the guys at the same time. I recommend starting these photos an hour or two before the ceremony (or portraits if there's a first look). This time is mostly candid photos of the wedding party getting ready and having fun. Detail photos of the bride's dress, bouquet, etc. are also taken at this time.

FIRST LOOK & PORTRAITS: 60-90 MINUTES

Once the couple is ready, we meet at a location of their choosing and do the first look (pg. 5). After, we can move on to wedding party and couple portraits. I usually like to keep these to one location, or two at most, to keep the stress levels low for everyone.

CEREMONY: 10-30 MINUTES

A typical civil ceremony lasts 10-30 minutes, though some religious ceremonies last up to 90 minutes.

RECEIVING LINE: 30 MINUTES

A receiving line for up to 150 guests takes about 30 minutes (add 15 minutes for each additional 100 guests). This can be a good chance to get candid photos of most of the guests. If you prefer not to do a receiving line, schedule in some time for mingling or hide somewhere out of sight.

FAMILY PORTRAITS: 10-30 MINUTES

Plan 1-2 minutes for each combination of people. I typically have my assistant read off names from a list provided by the couple, which makes things flow quickly. I typically try to keep these portraits to 15 minutes and take them somewhere near the ceremony site.

TRAVEL TIME: 1.5-2X EXPECTED TIME

Try to give 1.5-2 times the amount of time to travel as Google Maps claims it will take to allow for traffic, loading a big dress into the car, travelling with children (or rowdy groomsmen), finding parking, etc.

RECEPTION: WHATEVER YOU'D LIKE

I cover the reception events candidly. This can include toasts, cake cutting, bouquet/garter tosses, games, etc.

DANCE COVERAGE: 90-120+ MINUTES

The first and parents' dances generally take about 10-15 minutes. After these dances, I like to stay for about an hour and a half at minimum to capture some fun on the dance floor and candid photos of people mingling. When I feel like we have enough coverage of everyone dancing, I check in with the couple to see if they want anything else photographed, and then leave the guests to have fun without a camera on them. I will stay later if a big exit or other event is planned.

A Practical Approach to Wedding Budgeting

Can't figure out where to start with planning? Or how to budget? Here's a personal approach based on what matters most to you.

Divide a list of wedding details/vendors into four categories. Here's an example of how I would divide some of them.

Very Important	Also Matters
• venue	• officiant
• food	• decor
• photography	
	Optional
Important	• flowers
• band/dj	• wedding party
• dress/shoes	• favours

These are my personal opinions on these details for my (imaginary) wedding. I love seeing beautiful flowers at weddings, but personally they're not that important to me. Every bride and groom will have different priorities.

Things in the Very Important category should be researched before making your budget and before setting your date in stone. Most people book their venue first in order to set a date, but this might cause you to lose out on other really important things, like your dream photographer.

I've had a few couples meet with me before choosing their date and booking their venue. They then found their venue and made sure that I had that date open before signing the venue contract. This is what you should do if you have your heart set on a certain photographer. Same goes for a band, caterer, or any vendor that can only do a limited number of weddings per day.

Make sure that the Very Important vendors are available on the day you're thinking of and that you can afford them. Go check them out and ask them how quickly they might book up. Start making your budget right away with these costs in mind. You should be researching the average costs of the things in your Important and Also Matters columns as you do this to make sure you can afford all three categories, while prioritizing the Very Important things. Once the budget looks viable, book your Very Important vendors as soon as you can.

Now, depending on how far out the wedding is, you can start on the Important column. The Important things are things that you want to be awesome, but could come from a number of vendors (i.e. you won't be too upset if you don't get your first choice).

The Also Matters column are things that you want, but could be budgeted lower and booked late. Take a look at the Also Matters column as you work on the Important column. Think about how much time you have to book them. For me, many of the officiants I've worked with have been good - it's not that important to me that they be amazing, but there are a limited number of them in Victoria. On a summer Saturday, they're going to book up, so don't wait too long.

The Optional column for things that you could take or leave. You'll either want to spend little money on these things or forget them altogether. Eliminating things that you feel you should have, but don't really want, is a great way to save money without impacting your day much.



How to Relax and Enjoy Your Photo Session

People are often nervous about having their portrait taken, especially by a professional photographer which makes the whole thing seem suddenly more important and serious. Here's my best advice for how to relax and enjoy your session.

- Don't be afraid that you're "unphotogenic". A good photographer will be able to pose and light you in ways that will make you look great. She will never show you images that you don't look so great in (everyone has them - just look at a tabloid magazine). Most people think they're unphotogenic because they're used to seeing terrible snapshots of themselves on Facebook.
- Bring something to play with. Props can get you playing and relaxing in front of the camera. It can take your mind off of posing and trying to look perfect, plus it makes for different and creative photos. Some ideas: pets, umbrellas, frames, balloons, accessories, signs, furniture, sporting equipment, instruments, toys.
- Go to a location that's familiar and comfortable to you. I love it when people choose a place that showcases their personality, like a beach that they walk to often or a coffee shop that they're a regular at. It also makes them feel like it's just another day and takes their mind off the shoot.
- Choose a photographer who can make anyone look beautiful. If everyone in her portfolio and blog is an overly made-up size two and that's not you, move on. Find someone who showcases people like you, or at least a variety of different looks, and makes them all look amazing. If retouching (i.e. skin smoothing or Photoshopping the eyes) is important to you, find someone who does that. I rarely retouch because I think people are beautiful the way they are and skin should look like skin, not plastic. Of course, I'll always take out a blemish that will be gone in two weeks anyway.
- Once you've made contact by e-mail or phone, choose a photographer who is friendly and genuine. Choose someone who seems excited to work with you and gives you the attention you deserve. If you're looking for something big like an engagement and wedding photography package, meet with her in person if you can. You'll want to make sure that her personality meshes with yours well and she listens to your ideas.
- Be yourself! In an engagement session, you can play off your significant other and focus on them instead of the camera. I don't pose people too much because I want their personalities to show. I try to get the conversation flowing between all of us.
- Get silly. Make faces, run around, jump, dance, do your best Zoolander impression. Even if those things don't make for great portraits, the expression on your face after you finish will.

- Tell the photographer how you feel. If you're nervous, don't be afraid to share that. I often ask people how comfortable they are in front of the camera and gauge their reactions. If they're nervous, I will sometimes pose them more, show them some photos on the back of the camera to assure them they look awesome, or spend more time getting to know them and warming them up before shooting a lot.



Why Have an Engagement Session?

1. Engagement photos have endless possibilities, unlike the wedding day where the schedule of events is set out for you. This is a set of images to document your unique love story as a part of your daily life or to really get creative and live out your fantasies.
2. If I'm also photographing your wedding, it's a chance for us to get to know each other before the big day. It should help you to feel more comfortable in front of the camera on your wedding day and help me figure out the best ways to pose you and what types of images you like best. Even if I'm not your wedding photographer, it will help you get comfortable with getting your portrait taken.
3. It's fun!

What to Wear for Your Engagement Session

A frequent question I get from my clients is what to wear for their engagement session. I'm not as fussy as some photographers, because I think the people are more important than the clothing or location, but here are some tips on choosing your outfits for the best photos.

Clothing Choices

I love it when people wear bright colours, particularly purple, red, yellow, bright pink, turquoise, and vibrant greens. They work to make the subjects stand out from the background and to me, they just look cheerful, which is how I think engagement photos should look.

The traditional portrait style is to wear matching outfits, but usually only the cheesy family photographers recommend this anymore. I actually think it can be cute, but only if it fits your personal style, like the couple to the right in their hoodies, jeans, and Chucks. Choosing different colours makes matching outfits look more modern.



Many photographers recommend wearing solid colours, but I think patterns can be fun. Then again, you don't want to wear something that draws too much attention away from your face, so use them sparingly. The bride at left worked patterns perfectly, with a checked dress toned down by a solid cardigan. Notice the coordinating cardigans in fun colours. Cardigans and jackets are a great way to mix up your look from shot to shot.

Accessorizing

Shoes and accessories are another way to change the look of your outfit during the shoot and add some personality to your outfit. The bride at left coordinated a big yellow flower pin to flowers on her yellow shoes (and a cute yellow petticoat). Their look could be switched up easily by removing their cardigans and changing shoes.

What to Wear for Your Engagement Session

Situational Styling

Think about matching your outfit to the situation, like wearing a sun dress to a picnic or dressing up for a theatre shoot. The below couple wore super casual, comfy clothes for a beach session that also involved hiking and running in the water. You can take it even further by wearing a "uniform", like yacht-wear on a boat or tennis whites on a tennis court. Wearing the opposite of the expected at a location can also create interesting photos, such as wearing formal wear in an old warehouse or forest.



The Most Important Thing to Remember

The most important thing is to pick something that you look and feel amazing in. Your clothes should allow you to move around without constantly adjusting things or worrying if your bra is showing. If you have a physical feature that you don't want to show-off, wear something that conceals it or draws the eye away. You don't want to be concerned with only standing a certain way the entire time so nobody can see your belly. Conversely, wear things that show off the features you love. Wear what makes you feel good about yourself.

Another key consideration is that, no matter what I or your photographer say, you choose clothes that are your style. Your images, especially those documenting such an important time in your life, should reflect your personality and who you are as a couple.

What to Ask a Wedding Photographer

You may have seen lists in wedding magazines (ahem, The Knot) with questions to ask your potential wedding photographer. Unfortunately many of these lists are extremely out of date and don't even give you a clue as to what sort of answer you should want to hear. Here's a list from a photographer's perspective, including possible answers.

1. Describe your approach to the day.

First, think about what you want your day and photos to be like. Do you want a photographer to be as unintrusive as possible or would you prefer direction throughout the day, or just during the portraits? Do you want your photos to look like something out of a magazine or do you want them to capture the atmosphere and people as they really are?

I, personally, try to stay out of the way during the events of the day, aside from the portraits. The only exception is while the couple is getting ready, when I often chat with the wedding party and family to get them comfortable with me.

During the portrait session, I try to get the couple and wedding party to have fun and interact with each other and me, rather than stiffly posing them the entire time. I will occasionally pose people as needed to get the images looking their best.

2. What are your backup plans?

A professional wedding photographer should be prepared for any emergency, from gear failure to illness to data loss.

I shoot most weddings, aside from elopements, with an assistant photographer, so they double shoot the most important moments (the first kiss!) and can take over for me if something happens. If I'm ill enough to miss the wedding, which is rare as I've shot through illness and injury, I know dozens of local wedding pros who I can call upon to replace me.

I have two cameras and extra lenses/flashes, plus those of my assistant, should any equipment fail. My main camera has two cards recording the

same images, in case one becomes corrupted. I download the images as soon as I get home and back them up to an external hard drive. The images are then uploaded to my online backup, where the high resolution jpegs will remain indefinitely.

3. Can I see a full wedding gallery?

Some photographers only show their best work in their portfolio. It's in your best interest to see more images from a single wedding, or several - enough to assure you of the quality you'll receive.

A blog post with 50-100 images or a sample album with 100+ images may be enough. If you want to be sure of what you'll get, ask to see a full gallery of all the images delivered to the clients. I will happily provide you a link to the full gallery from any of my weddings.

4. What's included in the packages?

What do you want from your wedding? An album? High resolution images you can print yourself? Extra retouching on selected images?

Ask if all of the images they deliver are edited like what you see on their website. Ask if they do additional editing on album images if that's important to you. Ask if there are restrictions on your use of the digital images.

All of my packages include ready-to-print high resolution images edited to the same quality as what's on my website and blog, which clients may use for any non-commercial purpose. Album images may receive more editing to remove distractions, do retouching if requested, or simply to match the colour tones on a single page (or make everything black and white or colour).

A Sample Wedding Photography Timeline

The weeks surrounding your wedding are busy. I want to make them as simple as possible when it comes to photography. Here's a timeline of what to expect from me in the weeks and months before and after your wedding.

4-6 weeks before your wedding: I'll send you my wedding questionnaire so you can note all of the details that may help me take your ideal photos. I'll also remind you of your final payment, due one month prior to the wedding.

2 weeks before your wedding: I'll look through your questionnaire and make my "cheat sheet" for the day, asking you any clarifying questions.

Your wedding day: I'll arrive early and get to work capturing all of the emotions and fun.

Within a week of the wedding: I'll send you a few preview images via e-mail and post some to Facebook for sharing.

3-6 weeks after your wedding: I'll deliver a slideshow set to music of 80-100 images telling the story of your day, along with the online gallery where guests can order prints. A few days later, I'll have your high resolution images available to download.

2-4 weeks after the gallery is delivered: if you ordered an album, you'll choose your favourite images in the gallery and I'll deliver a draft album layout within two weeks. We'll work together to make sure the final design is perfect.

2-4 weeks after album approval: fine art albums take approximately 2-4 weeks to arrive at your doorstep.



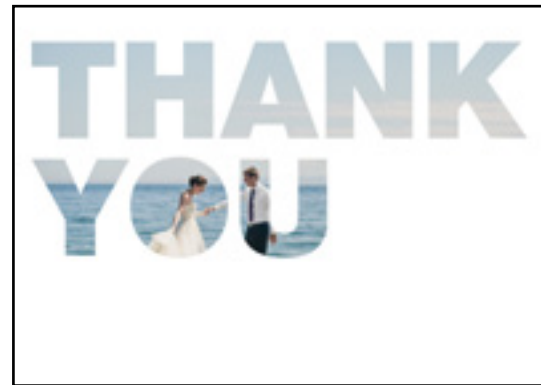
Get the Most out of Your Wedding Photos

Many people just ask for a disc of high resolution images from their wedding because it's what everyone else gets. But what do you really want to do with your images? Why do you want great photos? Here are a few ideas of what to ask for depending on what you really want.

[You want to show off how awesome your wedding was, or share your day with your guests and people who couldn't attend](#)

If your top priority is to share, you might be happy just posting your digital images on Facebook, but here are some other ways to show off your images far and wide:

- my online slideshows are very popular with clients and their friends. It's a great way to share the story of your day. These are included with every wedding package. [SEE AN EXAMPLE HERE.](#)
- an online gallery is a great way to share and also allow guests to order prints for themselves, so they don't have to ask you for the high resolution images. A gallery with affordable prints is included with all of my wedding coverage.
- custom thank you cards are a fun way to share some of your favourite images with all of your guests and get your necessary thank yous done at the same time.



[You want to enjoy your memories often and for many years](#)

If you're the kind of person who likes a constant reminder of the best times of your life, then you'll want something in a more tangible form. There are many great ways to display your images in your home and share with those closest to you:

- wedding albums are the perfect way to preserve the story of your day for many years to come. Albums are designed to be archival, so you can share them with your grandchildren one day, as well as with your family and friends now.
- framed wall prints and canvases can remind you of your love and happy memories every day. I offer framed prints to make sure that you can get those images up right away instead of "one day" when you get around to framing them. Canvases arrive ready to hang.



Additional Planning Resources

Still looking for the perfect venue? I've been working on a few web pages listing some of the great venues near Victoria, BC. These pages include links to the venues, plus links to their wedding information, and photos of weddings I've photographed there, capacity, and additional info.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE VENUES IN GREATER VICTORIA.](#)



Can't find the right venue in Victoria? Consider having your wedding elsewhere on Vancouver Island or one of the Gulf Islands. It could make for a fun weekend away for your local guests or a new adventure for your guests from farther afield.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE VENUES ON VANCOUVER ISLAND.](#)

[CLICK HERE TO SEE VENUES ON THE GULF ISLANDS.](#)



Another option is to have a backyard wedding at a family member or friend's home. If you need some help pulling this off, or just want help planning in general, I highly recommend contacting Tammy at [BLUE LILY EVENT PLANNING](#). I've worked with her on a backyard wedding before and she made sure everything went smoothly, even when there was chaos behind the scenes.

Do you like the photos and ideas you've seen in this magazine? Are you looking for a wedding photographer? Then I might just be a great fit for you and your wedding. [CLICK HERE](#) to check out my wedding photography portfolio.






lara eichhorn
P H O T O G R A P H Y

www.laraeichhorn.com

lara@laraeichhorn.com

250-418-5870