

"First Glance" or "First Look" Breaking Cultural Taboos

by Feuza Reis

I first learned of the First Glance through Jasmine Star Blog where she posted that she loved when couples opted for a First Glance look which meant they would see each other before the Wedding Ceremony in an intimate place where only the two of them would have a First Glance of how each other looked on that special day. For the photographer it is a dream, he or she gets to stand on the sidelines and experience this unique moment of the Bride and Groom calmly seeing each other first as well as capture some amazing on location shots. Now hold on, isn't that moment suppose to be when the Bride comes in that church door and the famous bridal hymn plays and everyone stands to see her and to see his reaction as he sees her for the first time? Isn't a First Glance going to take away from that moment and make it less special? If they have already seen each other then that famous entrance will be less special? I mean where I come from that is a big NO NO. It is bad luck to see the Bride before the wedding ceremony and many cultures have and would have a hard time accepting this especially in the Americas. I thought the idea was brilliant but thought since I deal mostly with Brazilian Community, they would never go for such a thing. Now First Glance is not for everyone but here are the reasons why I believe once should really consider doing this if they can.

I was so excited when I booked my very first wedding, after doing a year of Lifestyle Portraits and Events I finally got my shot, my chance, my time to do my very own wedding without piggy backing any one else's. But then I find out it was an outside wedding, but at night. Oh no, what about the time after the ceremony that one gets to take Bridal Party Shots, where shall we go at night? What is the lighting situation for the wedding? What was she thinking in booking an evening wedding? All these thoughts nervously did a marathon inside my head and a light bulb finally went on, do a "First Glance" Session with them before the ceremony. So I courageously picked up the phone and called the Bride and said "since the wedding is at night and is outside, I am concerned about the photos that I think we should get, especially giving the unstable lighting situation". I then proceeded well there is this option which might sound weird but here me out. She listened attentively. I continued on to say almost scrunching my eyes not to look because I am thinking, she will think I am crazy, Brazilians never see each other before the wedding but I took a deep breath and went on. " A First Glance is where the Bride and Groom see each other for the first time at an intimate location and it is ideal in your situation due to the lighting so here are my reasons for a First Glance option.

- It is a moment where only the two of you experience which makes it even extra special
- The emotions of this moment will be scene in the photos and Videography if you wish later to share with friends and family and view it again and again
- The shots of the First Glance are one of a kind- you really see emotion come to live in the pictures

- You take away that pressure of that entrance because it can be a scary thing, everyone is watching you, watching your reaction, you are trying to smile and entertain the crowd, and see if the decoration is how you imagined, if all is in place but at the same time trying to see your groom for the first time and as a former bride that entrance is an out of body experience which later I was like I don't even know how I felt and where I should look.
- If you see each other beforehand, you feel a lot more comfortable in entering the church or ceremony place
- You will actually smile more because there will be less things to focus on, that big pressure is really off
- And it is a myth that if you see each other before hand you will take away that emotion of seeing your groom. The emotions will all be there because after all you are getting married to the man you love, to the woman you love and it might be even more special because your focus is on how amazing that moment is for your new life together and you are seeing them in that church scene which is a different scene than before.
- You are creating extra time for picture taking and not running late to go to that park or spot with the whole Bridal Party picture family shots being squeezed into a timeslot before your limo has to go or you miss your cocktail hour. This way you guarantee your shots with Bride and Groom and even get to play a bit with the kind of shots you want to get.
- One not crossing out the element of surprise but just adding a new element of surprise for there will be two moments of surprise, the seeing each other and then seeing each other again in a church setting, and the friends and family members as well as decor, so two very very cool moments.

When I finished telling her these things, she said, that is fine, whatever you think is needed and that is every service provider dream, when the client trusts your expertise and trusts you will do better for them and that you know better so when presenting the First Glance Option to your clients, if you mention some of the points mentioned above, especially the pressure part, it will be hard for them to disagree with you. When I present these points, I hear yes and I have done my third First Glance now and if I did not take an effort to explain to the Bride and Groom, the benefits of the First Glance, I would be in trouble because of the night shots are not as good as the day ones, I mean we need LIGHT, we work with light and if you are bride reading this, thinking it is a crazy idea, that you would never opt for a First Look, I would reconsider and weigh out the pros and cons because seeing each other before hand does not take away from the religious aspect nor the traditional aspect of the wedding ceremony, in my opinion it just makes it even better. They might be the more spiritual crowd and hesitate saying that the wedding ceremony is a Godly moment that must be traditional and for me it is a very spiritual moment and this maybe true for some but again, you are not taking out the special or emotional aspect of this moment nor the spiritual. That Bride still cried when she heard that hymn and walked down the isle and made that commitment before God and man, it is not like you are getting married before just because you see each other before, you are just appreciating each other and the new life you will be starting in an intimate unique moment in time. And the First Glances are very spiritual, I get goose bumps and I feel God's presence when they see each other, maybe because I am a crybaby for weddings but it is so beautiful. Again it is not for everyone, but we must weigh both sides and I highly recommend it.

And if you are a photographer reading this, when the Bride of the 1st First Glance that I did was getting her makeup and hair done at a Brazilian Salon, the hair dresser in a typical Latino mentality of the myth, said oh no, you are not seeing each other before hand, ARE YOU? and I just cited some points above and she was like wow I have never heard that, or thought of that, sounds amazing and you know what First Glances are amazing and I hope to do more and more because one plans and plans a wedding, but that day goes by so fast and what is the Bride and Groom left with forever? the images which will bring back those images and as a photographer when that Bride sees those shots, remembers every nook and cranny of how she felt during that incredible day, then my friend, you have done a great job. And pictures are better than words. Here are some First Glance Shots.







