

The new photographers

Candid wedding photography is now the norm for that special day, says **Akshita Nahar**.

The traditional wedding album: a parade of pearly white smiles, uptight family portraits, and the odd, awkward couple shot. Your parents or grandparents may tell you they were bullied into these uncomfortable poses by the “studiowalas”. But, in recent years, wedding photography has taken a turn for the photojournalistic, with increasingly “natural” pictures, action shots and fly-on-the-wall images.

So what is exactly is candid wedding photography? The photographers who practise this genre will tell you that it's a more realistic record of the wedding ceremony than stagey studio shots. Sephi Bergerson, an Israeli photographer living in India, said candid photography “is basically capturing the moment or documenting the wedding as it really was,” without interrupting the ceremony. Bergerson's book, *The Great Indian Wedding* which will be out next year, captures traditions from Sikh, Hindu, Parsi, Buddhist and Christian weddings from regions as diverse as Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Hyderabad and Kashmir.

Bergerson comes from a documentary background, and his transition to wedding photography may not have been a quantum leap. But other candid photographers are bringing a fresh eye to the field from different professions: architect Richa Kashelkar, psychologist Shreya Sen, and computer science engineer Priyanka Sachar for example. Explained Sachar, who left her job of eight years, “[Wedding photography] allows me to

travel to different places, see new cultures and capture the emotions and real scenarios that people experience – of happiness, sadness and relief.”

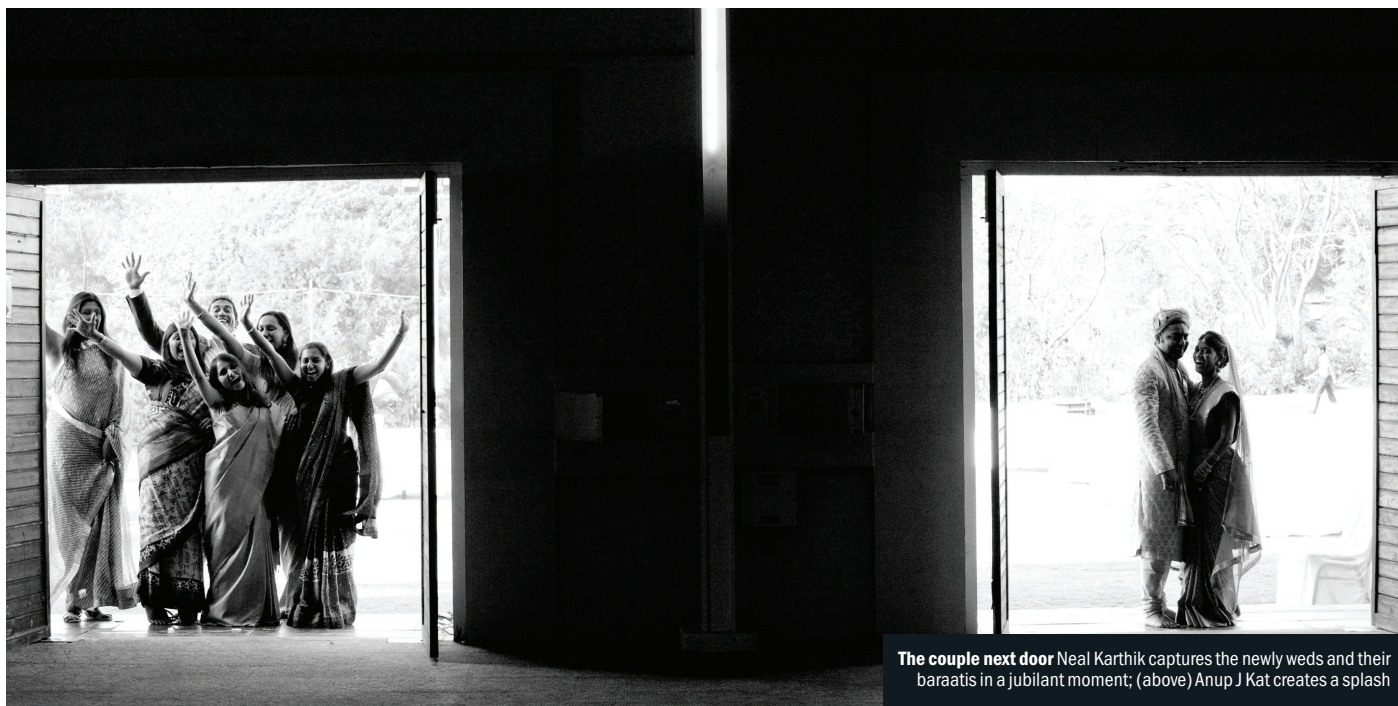
As outsiders, these photographers are able to capture weddings in less formal ways. “The problem with traditional wedding photographers,” said Sen, “is that they make clients pose in a manner which, apart from being outdated, does not feel natural. Clients want images that are true to their own personality and more fun than contrived. The younger generation, growing up in a ‘shoot and share’

world, are leaning more towards images that carry the story of their wedding day... and at the same time look cool, fun and a lot more relaxed.” And while the older generation might still insist on pictures of each and every handshake with the happy couple, most candid photographers recommend they hire a studio photographer for that sort of documentation.

At their engagement, Manita and Tanuj Kapoor had a bad experience with a studio photographer who made them “pose and hold the pose”, as Manita put it. So for their wedding, they hired candid photographer William Chang. “It's a bit difficult to explain to [our parents] that we don't want these [posed] kinds of photographs, because that's what they've known,” said Manita. So as a compromise, the parents roped in a studio photographer as well.

Neal Karthik, a travel and lifestyle photographer who runs a “shadi” side business said “It's all about time travel. When you look back at the photographs, 20 to 30 years later, you don't want fake shots, or realise that someone has not captured an important [memory].” The cost of capturing a memory is fairly steep – from ₹50,000 per day. Kashelkar justified the cost: “You might wear expensive dresses, but no one will see your priceless expressions if the photographer doesn't do his job well.”

The trend of candid wedding photography began in the West and has been around for at least a decade, but has caught on here in the



The couple next door Neal Karthik captures the newly weds and their baraatis in a jubilant moment; (above) Anup J Kat creates a splash