

photo/video

capturing perfect images



David Salomone/The Studio Photographers

THE ENGAGEMENT PHOTO SHOOT. The traditional posed engagement photo used to have just one purpose: to be submitted to the local paper to announce a couple's engagement. But as the role of the newspaper has diminished in our lives, the engagement photo has taken a different direction, expanding into a full-blown photo session—complete with props, themes and exotic locations. Today's engagement shoots have come of age and are fast becoming a must-do activity on a couple's wedding checklist.

Fun is definitely the name of the game, as photographers aim to capture the unique interaction, chemistry and personality of each couple. Fun, relaxed, candid and spontaneous are four words that define Lauren Brimhall's (303-255-2410; laurenbrimhallphotography) approach to her many New Jersey-based engagement shoots, which she sets up in creative locales that are of sentimental value to the bride and groom.

These sites include Liberty State Park in Jersey City, Central Park in Manhattan, and local gardens and arboretums. Couples are also opting for "destination engagement shoots" to locations as near as Long Beach Island and Cape May and as far away as



David Salomone of *The Studio Photographers* created a vintage country theme for Liz Vinhas and Rodney McCatharn (left and previous page).



Erin Wilrigs and Matt Adamitis at their *Alice in Wonderland* engagement photo session, photographed by Lauren Brimhall.

Las Vegas, Miami and the Caribbean.

Brooke Ismach of Studio Brooke in Manhattan (201-308-9186; studio-brooke.com) has photographed many New Jersey brides, and she says that parks, museums and other interesting urban settings in New Jersey and New York have been a regular part of her engagement shoots. But she does admit that location isn't everything. "While a dynamic setting is great, the fact is that the background almost doesn't matter," she says. "The most important aspect is the chemistry that a couple has with each other and the photographer."

That being said, today's engagement photo shoots are clearly achieving new levels of creativity and style. A recent photo session by David Salomone of The Studio Photographers in Millburn (973-863-2720; thestudiophotographers.com) was built around a Fifties vintage country theme, achieving the timeless effect of a painting (see photo at left

and on previous page). While Brimhall's whimsical *Alice in Wonderland* shoot (left, below) for couple Erin Wilrigs and Matt Adamitis possessed a beautiful, film-like quality in response to the couple's desire for a movie-themed session in advance of their wedding in Reading, Pennsylvania, this October.

For couples with an edgier style, John Arcara Photography in Red Bank (732-299-9537; johnarcaraphotography.com) offers its signature "RockStar :E: Session," a high-fashion, celebrity-style engagement shoot involving lighting, hair and makeup, and music and drinks to help bring out the couple's playfulness and ensure "that they feel like rock stars in front of the camera," Arcara says.

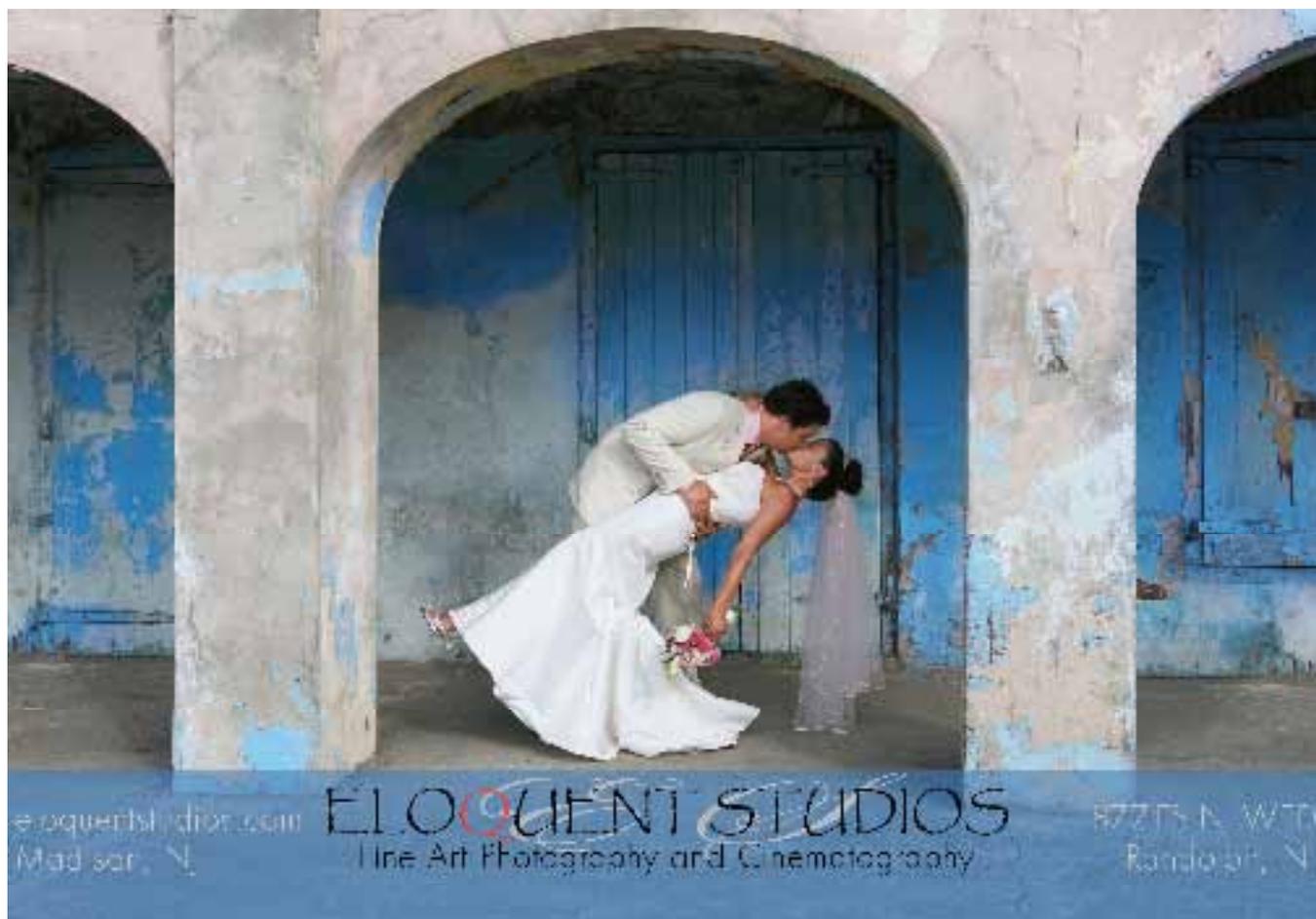
In addition to creating great pictures, these photo sessions also give you the chance to develop a rapport with your photographer before the big day. "Engagement photo sessions take away a huge unknown with your photogra-

pher, as they help the couple and photographer get to know each other better before the wedding," Salomone adds.

"An engagement shoot also ensures fun, professional shots of the couple that they probably wouldn't get on their own after they're married," Brimhall adds.

Couples who opt for these types of engagement pictures can rest assured that their investment will not be in vain. Many photographers now offer this feature as a standard part of their wedding package, and Salomone and Ismach see 80 percent of their clients choosing it. These images can then be incorporated into save-the-dates, invitations, guest books, magnets, wedding blogs, websites, life-size posters that can be signed at the wedding and even tiny images that florists can insert into glass vases during the cocktail hour.

"Engagement shoots capture the start of a couple's relationship and can really



be a special and important piece of their history," Ismach says. Whichever style you choose, have fun...and it will show.
—Susan Bloom

For more photography trends, go to newjerseybride.com.

Photographers and Videographers

Avalon Studios

Edison
732-248-8801
avalonphotovideo.com
Avalon Studios has more than 20 years of wedding and video experience. They offer a "make your own package" starting at \$1,595, and before or after the wedding you can add in all the items you feel you need. All design work and video editing is done in-house, and you will get your proofs back 10 days after the wedding.

Blooming Studios

Short Hills
973-975-7439; bloomingstudios.com

Blooming Studios is a full-service photography and videography studio, and they also specialize in destination weddings. They use a photojournalistic approach to capture your special day, and their passion for photography combined with their attention to detail helps them document your memories for a lifetime.

Cliff Mautner Photography

Haddonfield
856-428-4268 or 609-560-0877
cmphotography.com
American Photo magazine named Mautner one of the top-ten wedding photographers in the world. With more than 25 years of experience, he's still creating trend-setting images while documenting the day like the photojournalist that he is.

Dan Epstein Photography

Montclair
973-783-5149
danepstein.com
Dan Epstein is a working photojournalist whose newsmagazine photo credits include: *Time*, *Parade*, *Money*, *TV Guide*, the *New York Times Magazine* and more. One of the earliest proponents of the photojournalistic approach to wedding coverage, he brings the special kind of eye to wedding photography that only a seasoned magazine photojournalist can. His portraits are natural and fun. He offers unstaged, emotional, resonant images that truly reveal stories and the personalities involved.

David Patino Photography

Morristown
973-998-7330
davidpatino.com
Their style leans toward the modern and contemporary, but they are also skilled at adapting and adjusting to each client's vision and needs. They are devoted to creating a spectacular finished photographic product, and creating a superior experience including collaborating on a vision and capturing the most special moments in customers' lives. It's not just about getting your picture taken, it's about leaving with a framed piece of art that will hang on your wall for years to come.

Dean Michaels Studio

2 Elmer Street, Madison
973-377-0761
1320 Route 23 North, Wayne;
973-709-0110; deanmichaelstudio.com
Family owned for more than 20 years,

Dean Michaels Studio is one of New Jersey's premier wedding photography and portrait studios. Known for their thorough yet unobtrusive style, they take great pride in creating beautiful wedding portraiture, candid photojournalistic-style photographs and video. They also offer digital retouching and hand-coloring on black-and-white images. Custom packages are available.

Dian Photography

343 Anderson Avenue
Fairview
201-945-7500
dianphoto.com
A family business since 1939, Dian Photography takes pride in careful planning, individual attention and a fresh yet unconventional approach to weddings. Natural-colored portraits, hand tinting, canvas wraps, cinematic videography and black-and-white photography are among Dian Photography's services.

E.G. Quinn Photography

12 South Haddon Avenue
Haddonfield
856-429-1177
E.G. Quinn employs the finest equipment and materials to ensure your album will become a family heirloom. Their approach on the day is low-key and unobtrusive.

Eloquent Studios

425 Route 10 East
Randolph
973-886-8515
eloquentstudios.com
This family-owned photography business specializes in creative wedding photography. Whether you're looking for a photojournalistic style or a more classic approach, Eloquent Studios will make your big day impossible to forget. Each wedding is approached differently offering an artistic blend of shooting styles.

Faith West Photography

Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia
215-554-3907
faithwest.com
Faith West and her team of talented photographers have been published in *The Knot*, *Modern Bride*, *Elegant Wedding* and *Martha Stewart Weddings*. They have a candid, casual style, shooting in the moment to capture the true emotions of your wedding day. High-resolution images are included in every package.

