



## In the Moment...with Photographer Gordon Nash

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It's been said that photography is personal. Just as no two people approach the world in exactly the same way—no two photographers have the same command of subject, color and contrast. It takes more than expensive equipment and technical know-how to be good. It takes a sense of *seeing*.

Whether you call it intuition or artistry, photographer Gordon Nash has mastered his own sense of seeing. With more than 20 years in the business, Gordon is able to anticipate each moment, each emotion, as it unfolds in his frame. He notices details that others don't, and with an instant *click*, captures a story has yet to be told.

"My sense of storytelling is different from other photographers," said Gordon, chatting over a cup of soup in his Kihei, Maui office. "Every person has their own visual outlook on life."

Take a look at Gordon's work, and you'll see what he means. His photos are elegant and arty—they're clean, flawless. Mixing photojournalism with fine-art photography, he creates images that could easily appear in a high-fashion magazine. Shooting photos, he said, is similar to directing a movie. This makes sense when you discover he has a background in directing.

*The urge to photograph comes in part from the deep desire to live with more integrity...to live more in peace with the world, and to help others to do the same. —Wynn Bullock*

As early as college, Gordon opened his own studio, training in photojournalism and portrait photography. Shortly after, he moved to Japan where he worked as television producer and director—shooting commercials for Japanese TV. When he returned to the states six years later, he opened his own production company in 1991, providing photography, graphic design *and* video. Today, he is internationally recognized for his photos, as well as his directing work in wedding videos.

“I know the right ‘scenes’ to create for my clients,” he said. “A good director guides the actors on what to do, but lets them do it on their own. That’s my job. I’m on location, helping couples create their own ‘movie,’ where they are the stars.”

The land- and waterscape of Maui give Gordon plenty of “set” to play with. He’s known for using big, dramatic skies as his backdrop, placing couples in the most natural, pristine surroundings. “We craft different looks and artistic situations,” said Gordon. “As long as the weather permits, we have the power to create whatever the couple wants.”

Unlike most photographers that stick to sunset-only weddings, Gordon started a new trend on Maui: morning weddings. “While sunset photos show dramatic purples and golds, in morning weddings, you can see a gigantic sky and bright, turquoise water,” he explained. The bride and groom become the focal point among bottomless blues and greens—the ocean, the lava rock, the lush foliage. “This is what people think of when they picture paradise,” said Gordon. “We give them that.”

By “we,” Gordon means his wife and company co-owner, Keiko, who was born and raised in Japan. Keiko cultivated her taste and eye for art while working for a fine art gallery in Tokyo, renowned among museum curators worldwide. She then moved to Seattle to open her own graphic design company, serving as a food stylist and designer for a major Japanese soy sauce company. It was in Seattle that she met Gordon. The two not only married, but also merged companies. The couple brought their wedding services to Maui, where they’ve been operating for nearly ten years.

While she once dreamed to be a curator for a museum, Keiko has taken her place as curator of a different kind of museum—the Gordon Nash photo gallery. With her innate artistic sense, Keiko is a master photo editor, web designer, and photographer for the company. With her food styling and experience creating original menus, she plans to expand the company into a full-service caterer.

Although owned by a husband-and-wife team, A Paradise Dream Wedding is anything but Mom & Pop. It’s one of the only high-end wedding services on Maui with its own in-house photography studio. That says a lot, considering the level of quality control and care that goes into each finished photo. “Photography has always been the core of the business,” said Gordon, who, without argue, shoots more weddings than anyone on Maui. People know and trust his work—and he doesn’t disappoint.

These days, though, Gordon isn’t the only photographer in the company getting all the credit. He has a growing staff of talent—some veteran, some emerging. “Because I want to keep the quality of the photos high, I’m creating an environment of artistic development here, where new photographers can learn and grow. Actually, I’m hoping to create a few clones of me,” he laughed.

For most weddings, Gordon uses an assistant who does the lighting and acts as a second shooter. Keiko explained why. “We give the client the same shot from different angles,” she said. “One person will shoot wide angle, another with a long lens. That way, we don’t

miss any fleeting details. We show that an entirely different world exists all in the same moment.”

It’s true the photo packages may be a little more expensive, but this process brings more value to each shoot. “It’s having someone there to help with the lighting, and help the bride get her dress and hair perfect,” said Gordon. “That attention to detail creates a better experience for the client, and a better opportunity for us to capture their day.”

What helps, too, is that Gordon has the best people working for him in the company—a top-notch team of coordinators, videographers, ministers, musicians, stylists...you name it. It’s a culturally diverse, intelligent group—and they eat, sleep and breathe integrity into the service they provide.

“The Japanese say the client is god, and we agree,” said Gordon. “We try to live that service mindset. When I’m working with a couple, I put their needs ahead of my own. If I can make them have the ultimate experience, *that* makes me happy. It’s what keeps me in this business.”

Those who have seen him in action agree. “Gordon treats all couples like they are the most important thing to him that day—and they are. He has a way of being calm and relaxed, and helps them be the same,” said photographer Eric Dahl, who accompanies Gordon on shoots when not doing his own.

Gordon and Keiko take their “service mindset” one step further: When traveling, they actually *study* it. “Because we’re in the industry, we’re always trying to learn more about how other companies service their clients, and what amenities they offer. This is our ongoing education.”

What have they learned? “To offer service before it is asked; to pay extreme attention to detail; and to treat our clients with the greatest respect,” said Keiko. “We want to give service not for what we get from it, but because it comes from the heart.”

And that’s just what they do: create an individually crafted, luxury wedding experience for you—with heart. This is how A Paradise Dream Wedding keeps it personal, said Gordon. “We treat each and every couple to the dream they deserve.”

*Gordon Nash and his associates are members of the Professional Photographers of America. Visit Gordon’s photography gallery at [www.gordonnash.com](http://www.gordonnash.com) or [www.mauiwedding.net](http://www.mauiwedding.net).*