

CASE STUDY Michel Focard de Fontefiguieres

From French extraction but based in the UK, Michel Focard de Fontefiguieres undertakes only around 15 weddings a year, but these can include huge social events at grand country houses, while the House of Commons is also a regular venue.

The work supplements the other strands of Michel's career, which includes the photography of properties at the top end of the price scale to illustrate brochures produced by upmarket estate agents and some commercial photography of items such as jewellery and exquisite hand made furniture.

"I started as a photographer in 1987 and shot a lot of big houses which have appeared in *Country Life* magazine," says Michel. "From there things just grew logically really and, as people who moved in country house circles started to get to know me and my work better, I became accepted by them and would be recommended for other photographic jobs that might arise. This eventually led me to weddings and, since the number I take on is relatively small, I have really enjoyed being involved with this part of the market and I have great fun shooting them."

Some of the weddings that Michel covers can be on a grand scale – "I had 150 people lined up on the steps of Westminster Hall on one occasion, and got everyone's attention by telling them that they looked groovy" – and he has had plenty of experience of the big occasion and tries, where possible, to get involved to advise on what is practical and how the day should be organised from a point of view of achieving a good set of pictures. Big greetings lines are not recommended for a start, and Michel has developed the art of working quickly but also dealing confidently with his clientele who need the reassurance that the photographer is in control and knows what he is doing.

"You need to be on top of your subject and to deliver some fantastic pictures at the end of it all," says Michel. "Because I was shooting architecture I started out with a Sinar 5x4in camera and a Hasselblad, but when I moved across to digital I chose the Canon EOS 1Ds Mark II, since this was the only 35mm-style digital model I could



IMAGES Michel has been a photographer for twenty years and although he enjoys shooting weddings, his main work comes from the commercial sector

find that could offer me the quality of medium format."

Because of the upmarket nature of the weddings he so often undertakes, Michel offers his clients the opportunity to have their images presented in a bound volume. Produced by Booked, these are luxurious, hand finished bespoke items that ooze quality and carry the right amount of upmarket appeal for the seriously wealthy client.

The use of this form of presentation has also had a pay off in terms of the work Michel is currently carrying out for a master furniture maker, who has now ordered provenance books containing his pictures that are supplied alongside bespoke pieces that may have cost upwards of £20,000.

Contact details

- www.focard.co.uk
- www.bookedimages.com

