

What You Need to Know About Selecting a Senior Portrait Photographer

Compiled from our web site's blogs...

Graduation Photography Information - #1 Price

Friends and loyal clients provide my competitor's Senior Portrait marketing materials to me each year. (Thank you VERY much!) I analyze their offers and research their web sites. My goal is to stay competitive with regard to price and to exceed their services.

My first reaction after reading the two I received this week was - WOW those are some great prices, there's no way I can compete. (How do they stay in business I wondered?) Then I started to "do the math" and found that these studios are really far pricier than we are. Both offer various levels of sessions ranging in price from \$19 to \$149. There are NO prints (no proofs - nothing) included. One of the least expensive packages is \$175 and includes (1) 5x7, (2) 4x5 and (8) wallets. So the least you would pay is \$224 and you'd get the prints mentioned above. Did I mention that the prints are all one pose?

Our studio offers much better value! There are no sitting fees and every dollar that you spend is credited toward your prints. In the end, for your investment you could get (mix and match the poses) (6) 4x6, (6) 5x7, (6) sets of 8 wallets PLUS an 8x10 and 11x14. Add to the great value the flexibility of mixing and matching your poses, print sizes and quantities to build what you want in your package and we're looking really good - competitive for sure. (The above is not a package - just an example that matches the competitor's offering as best I can - it's just an example.) The difference here is not price - it's our open disclosure of how much you'll spend.

While I want you to be our guest at our beautiful (and really really big) new studio, I also want to help you make informed decisions about where to have your senior portraits made. Whether you use us or our competition, make sure that you really understand what you are getting and the total that you'll be spending. "Do your homework" (do the math, research the quality of the results) before committing to your session. When you do, I know you'll want to book your appointment with us.

Did I mention that the sooner you book your session the more likely it will be at the most convenient time for you? Sort of the early bird gets the (fattest) worm philosophy.



262.679.7900

Graduation Photography Information - #2 No-Package

What is a "package"?

To most photography studios it's a way to sell the print portion of their product. Most studios:

- * Create packages that are convenient for them to offer.
- * Price the packages so that they are more attractive than "a la carte".
- * Lure you in with a low cost package then try to sell you a higher priced one.

The result for you is sales pressure and too few of some sizes - too many of another. Often there are restrictions on how many poses are included. To get additional poses or "just one more" of a specific size is often so cost prohibitive that you end up buying a bigger package (since it's a better deal) and end up with even more prints that you don't want.

The bottom line is that packages are convenient for the studio - not necessarily for you. Packages are also a way for the studio to increase your spending.

The No-Package Studio - MindWorks Photography

That's why we don't do packages! We offer a simple solution intended to fit your needs. You pay one fee, then design your own "non-package" by selecting the poses, sizes and quantities that you want. You can purchase more than your fee covers - at the same prices as you paid for the initial photos. We want you to get what you want. No pressure, just fun!

Need a portrait (graduation, family, pet)? Contact us! info@MindWorksPhotography.com or 262.679.7900.

Graduation Photography Information - #3 Location

Where to Have Your Senior Portrait Session

Our typical session is captured half indoors and half out. The in-studio portion allows us to control the light and environment completely, and to use backdrops that are complimentary to your wardrobe, skin and hair. Outside we travel to local parks (Muskego Park, Veteran's Park, etc.) and occasionally farther (Frame Park, Lake Michigan's shore). Sometimes we go to your home!

Occasionally mother nature's plans don't match ours. On those days we either re-schedule a brief outdoor session or we spend more time in the studio using more backdrops. The latter happens mostly when schedules for the make-up session just aren't coming together.

We're flexible. In-studio, outside where ever you want your portrait created!

Oops - forgot to mention that a location is included! No extra fee!!!!



262.679.7900

Graduation Portrait Information Series #4 Posting and Retouching

What happens after a session - graduate or any other...

First, view every image. Only those that are "bad" (blurred, blown-out light, black, etc.) are discarded. There are typically very few of those. Then the images are processed from their original, raw form (much like a film negative) into a form that can be manipulated and used. Their first stop is the web. Our site has a Photo Gallery - like a big building - that houses all of our collection. In the Gallery there are categories - like a wing of a building - where all of one category are concentrated. Examples are High School Graduates, Portraits - People, and Weddings (and more). In each category there are Sub-Galleries - like rooms in the wing of the building. Each room is dedicated to one person or event - or to one graduate.

After your Senior Portrait session we create a room just for you in our gallery and "hang" your photos there for you and your friends and family to view.

Not Yet Retouched

We take lots of shots. One of my competitor's web sites claims that photographer's who do this don't know what they're doing and are hoping that if there are enough shots a few will be good. My philosophy is to provide a wide range of poses, props, and backgrounds so that my subject will have lots of really good choices. We also believe in having fun that is focused on the subject. So if we can pack lots of fun into ~ 2 hours, why not share all of the memories - not just my pick of them. It's about your experience as much as the result.

With lots of shots (>150 in most cases) we don't retouch until after you have made your selections. At that time, at no extra cost, we crop to the size you want, retouch faces-teeth-eyes, and remove any distracting elements from the portrait.

In the end you get to see all of your session, remember the laughs, select the shots that speak to you - that show you the way you want to be seen, and have all your selections retouched into beautiful portraits. That's what happens after your session!



262.679.7900

Graduation Photography Information Series #5 Session Length

How long will this take? vs. How long can I have?

Some seniors want to get their portraits done as quickly as possible. Others want to savor the experience. We try to accommodate both. In reality it takes about 2 hours to get a couple of backdrops and poses at each inside and then drive to a "location" and get a few scenes with a few poses in each. When needed to we can get it done in an hour by limiting the number and complexity of wardrobe changes. We can't really run over as there is often another appointment coming in.

To be sure that your session will make the most of your 2 hours arrive dressed for the first shoot, and have your wardrobe organized. Then relax and have fun - we'll do the rest!

Graduation Photography Information Series #6 Wardrobe

How many changes may I have?

We don't limit your options here. Time tends to be the limiting factor. The more you are in the dressing room, the less we are shooting. Don't let that stop you! We can strike a happy balance between variety in wardrobe and time in front of the camera. The best rule is to bring more than we'll need. That way we have options and can be creative as the session unfolds.

A few words about what works best... solid or lightly patterned clothing works best. Colors should compliment your skin tone. White is highly reflective and tends to "blow out" or wash out the face. Red and orange have the potential to create a color cast on the face. Bare arms tend to draw the eye away from the face. We have an awesome brochure on this subject - please ask for one (rather than me trying to re-create it here).