

10 **Ways** to Improve Your **Boudoir** **Photography** **NOW**



TOOLS TO HELP MAKE YOU A BETTER & MORE PROFITABLE
BOUDOIR PHOTOGRAPHER!

by Edward Verosky

Introduction

Boudoir photography can be one of the most rewarding types of portraiture you, as a photographer, will offer to your client. Rewarding for you, because you love to make beautiful photographs that make people happy. Rewarding for her, because it offers the chance to create images that can have a profound and positive effect on her self-image.

And whether the final images you create for your client are to be shared with someone she loves, or made solely for her own appreciation, these are pictures that will be treasured for many years.

I wrote this book with the pro and semi-pro photographer in mind. Presumably, you are reading this because you want to either start working with boudoir, or you simply want to improve your understanding or approach to your boudoir clientele.

In the pages to follow, we'll cover the unique nature of boudoir and I'll offer valuable advice that should help you become a more effective boudoir photographer right away. This guide is intended to be a quick read--not a complete course in photography. A basic understanding of your gear, and some experience with portraiture will make this book even more valuable to you.

What Is Boudoir?

First, let's define what boudoir photography is, for the purposes of this book. Boudoir might easily be classified as a subset of glamour photography. Both genres generally feature a female subject with an emphasis on sensual, sexy, and flirtatious looks and poses.

But while glamour photos tend to feature women in sexy outfits, exaggerated poses, and slightly unrealistic situations, boudoir is more about lingerie, seduction, and relatively plausible scenarios.

The bedroom is the true atmosphere, or location, of boudoir. And lingerie, or less, is the only dress code. However, these are only guidelines as the glamour and boudoir genres tend to overlap quite regularly. After all, if your client wants her session to include some swimsuit pin-ups, who are you to say no?

With that all said, let's get started!



1. Your Subject's Secret Fears & Motivations: The Psychology Behind Boudoir

Whether your subject is a paying customer, or simply a friend, girlfriend, or aspiring model, it can be helpful to show her the same considerations that you would any true photography client. Boudoir photography clients require a high degree of sensitivity and understanding. While a traditional portrait session can be a little intimidating to even the most confident subject, boudoir tends to take the intimidation factor up several notches.

Your subject is keenly aware that she will be center stage, attempting looks and poses that she's not quite sure she's capable of. Her goal is to look beautiful in lingerie or less, yet she is likely nervous at the thought of being undressed and directed by a relative stranger, or even a familiar photographer, in front of the camera. If that weren't enough, she, like most of us, would probably change a few physical characteristics about herself if she could.



So, she wants to know that she can trust you with all of this. She wants to know that you will make her feel comfortable, and make her look beautiful.

Clients often refer to a boudoir session almost as if it were the topic of a dare. Saying things like, “I’m really nervous about the whole thing, but I’ve decided I’m just going to do it!”

This should be a strong clue as to the dynamics involved in many aspects of your client’s decision making process, session experience, and feelings about her finished images.

Reasons for wanting to do a boudoir session vary from client to client. Many will acknowledge they are reaching a turning point in their lives and would like to mark it with beautiful photographs of themselves. Perhaps they are thinking of starting a family, and would like to capture the look of their pre-baby body before it changes. Maybe they have started seeing themselves in a new and liberated light and wish to explore this side of themselves in this way.

But, without venturing too far into all the potential psychological dynamics that may, or may not, be a factor, here are some traditional reasons why your client may be contacting you.

- **Wedding Gift:** To present to the groom the night before, day of, or days following the honeymoon. Many brides have half-way joked that giving the groom a little album of sexy pictures just prior to the big day would serve as “altar insurance” to guarantee he would show up for the wedding!
- **Anniversary, Holidays, Valentine’s Gift:** What better way to spice up another year?
- **Weight Loss Reward:** After dropping a few pounds, many women use a boudoir session as not only an incentive to lose the remaining weight, but as a reward for all their effort.
- **Just Because:** This reason is often more complicated than it sounds. But suffice it to say that the decision to do a boudoir shoot “just because” could involve anything from a self-esteem check, to a gift to someone she loves, to a reaffirmation of her desirability after a recent break-up.

But, whatever the reason, it’s hers, and that’s what makes it valid.

Communication Is Key

Good communication is probably the single most important factor when it comes to making your client happy with the entire photo shoot experience. It is the foundation for everything from building rapport, to sharing expectations and goals for the pictures, to keeping things fun and productive during the shoot.

Communication with your client starts well before she initially contacts you. It starts with your marketing.

The look and feel of your web site, promotional material, portfolio images, and accompanying text all come together to deliver that first message. In some cases, the message received and conveyed by her trusted friends who've also seen your web site can set the tone for any future contact with you.

Many clients will first learn about your boudoir services through a simple web search. This means your web site will make your first impression for you. Make it count. Show your site visitor that you are a professional by displaying example boudoir images in good taste. Through your web presentation, let her know that you understand and respect her concerns.

It's important to establish a friendly and non-intimidating impression with your site. Often, your potential client will have to overcome a few concerns just to get up the nerve to contact you.

Phone and In-Person Consultations

Even if your client initially contacts you by e-mail, it's been our experience that she won't often take the next step until she speaks to someone over the phone, or meets with you in person.

Be prepared to answer questions when your client calls. But, also realize it's not only what you say, but how you say it, that helps establish enough of a comfort level for her to consider working with you. She's really looking for clues about your personality and sensitivity to her concerns. She wants to know that hiring you won't be a mistake.

Our clients will often start the conversation by telling us that they've been thinking about doing this as gift to for loved one, or as a way to mark a turning point in their lives.

As stated earlier, the reasons are many, but the desired result is universal: a tangible and visual representation of her beauty, allure, and sexual appeal. Make no mistake, this will not only serve as a gift to someone she loves, but also as a gift to herself.

Few people are comfortable with the unknown, and hiring a boudoir photographer for the first time is fraught with concerns and apprehensions.

Try to paint a simple picture for your client about what to expect. Tell her about your working style, the type of atmosphere you'll create for her session, and describe what your typical boudoir sessions are like for you and your clients.

Here are a few questions and concerns that sometimes arise during our initial consultations:

- **PRIVACY:** Some people are very concerned about privacy, both during the session, and in terms of who will have access to their images. Others will be excited about the possibility of having their images displayed on your site, blog, or gallery pages. We tell our clients that only the people they allow are on set during their shoots. Besides the client, there is rarely more than a female assistant, myself, and a friend of the client present during our sessions.

Another privacy concern involves who has access to the actual images. To clients with this concern, we explain that we will NOT publicly display any image of them without their written permission.

We also keep working and backup copies of all sessions in case they lose their copies, or wish to order more images from their session. If the client requests to view their image proofs on-line, then we explain that we take every precaution to protect



Tip: Always ask your client if there is a particular idea or sentiment she'd like to get across in some of her images. For example, if you are shooting bridal boudoir photos, she may want to incorporate a garter, white lingerie, and/or a veil in some of her shots.





their images from public view--password-protected galleries are provided, but there is no guarantee that files on a 3rd-party web server will be completely secure.

- **SELF-IMAGE ISSUES:** One of the most common questions that come up is about retouching and reshaping. A client will often point out that she wouldn't mind if we took steps to hide certain imperfections.

We make it clear that virtually all of our finished boudoir images benefit from some amount of retouching or editing, letting her know there is nothing unusual about the concerns she has with her skin or body.

It is up to the individual photographer, and/or his client, to determine how far he will go when altering the look of a client's physical appearance in an image. However, I tend to think of boudoir images as an expression of how my client feels about herself when she's feeling incredibly beautiful or sexy, or how her guy feels about her when he pictures her in his mind, or when romance takes over. So, retouching to some degree, is almost always a given.

During the course of your consultations it will be necessary to discuss the look, and content, desired in the finished images. By look, we're referring to matters of style, attitude, and general "feel" of the pictures. Content refers to what is actually visible in the images. When discussing these issues, it is usually helpful to approach them straight on as a matter of practicality. This is not the time to be vague. You and your subject absolutely must be on the same page by the time you begin shooting her pictures. Otherwise, the session will be either marred with uncomfortable moments, or you'll end up disappointing your client with images that resulted from "playing it safe."

Sometimes a client will openly and directly tell me what she would like to show, or play down, in her images. Other times, the client will have an idea of her personal limits in mind, but tells me she'd prefer to decide whether or not to approach those limits during the course of the shoot. In all cases, the client is in total control when it comes to what she will or won't reveal to the camera.

Even if her original intent is to do some topless shots, for example, if she decides she'd rather not, during the session, then the idea is dropped, no questions asked. The opposite situation is more likely to happen, by the way. As your subject becomes comfortable and confident with you during the shoot, she may decide to reveal more

physically, or in attitude, than originally planned.

I often start off by showing examples of my work. Since my portfolios contain a wide variety of styles, poses, and levels of undress, it's easy for the client to key in on certain ones by saying, "I really like the way this looks," or "I want to try something like that."



2. Prepare Your Subject For A Successful Shoot

Even before the actual date of your shoot, you can give your subject a set of tips and guidelines to help her arrive better prepared for a productive boudoir session. Here are a list of tips I send to my clients about a week before they arrive. I've been told countless times how much our tip sheet was appreciated and how useful it was.



BOUDOIR PRE-SESSION TIPS & INFO

- **Age Verification:** Please bring a valid photo ID (Driver's License). Note that taking revealing pictures of underage women can lead to problems for the photographer, so we take no chances here.
- **Beauty Makeovers:** Getting nails, hair, and makeup done are a great idea. But trying a new facial peel or hair removal technique just before your session is not advisable. Also, trying to get that "tan" just a few days before your session can cause problems, not to mention tan lines. Stay away from anything that might adversely affect the look of your skin.
- **Get rest, drink water:** Everyone looks better after getting the proper rest the night before. Water helps add life to your complexion.
- **Come to your session sober:** You'll want to feel relaxed and confident for your session. However, being the star of your own photo shoot takes a fair amount of concentration and effort. The photos just won't look right if you're not totally coherent and not able to take direction properly.
- **Don't wear tight or binding clothing before your session:** These can leave marks and lines on your skin that take time to go away.
- **Give yourself plenty of time to get there:** When you don't feel rushed, you don't feel stressed. So, have everything ready to go well in advance, including hair and makeup. Then you'll have the luxury of taking your time, with no worries.
- **Makeup:** For boudoir, a more dramatic look tends to work best. False eyelashes usually enhance the overall look for the pictures, too. A professional makeup artist can advise you on getting just the look you want for your pictures. We can recommend several at very reasonable rates. Bring a makeup kit and hair products along with you for touch ups.
- **Hair:** Again, we recommend styling that goes a little beyond your everyday look. Volume and style for sultry and/or playful looks.

Other Tips: Wear clear deodorant. Light or no perfume. Also, stubble can really ruin a "smooth" look, so prepare accordingly. Look over some pictures that appeal to you (online, magazines, etc.) and practice a few poses and facial expressions that you might want to try.

Along with my tip sheet, I also include a sheet that can help my client think about ideas or items she'd like to bring along. Doing this often helps her visualize looks she might want to try. It's useful when it comes down to communicating to me what she wants, or doesn't want, out of the shoot:

BOUDOIR SESSION PHOTO IDEAS

There are so many opportunities to get creative with your boudoir pictures! Lingerie of various styles, shoes, and even an article of your loved one's clothing add dimension and possibilities. Different outfits, backgrounds, poses, and attitudes can all help to enhance variety and give you more pictures to choose from. Here are some ideas to get you started (and going through some lingerie catalogs and web sites can give you ideas and inspiration, too):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lingerie: incl. hosiery | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexy shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessories: necklaces, bracelets, earrings | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheer fabrics & scarves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> His shirt, tie, boots, team jersey, football... | <input type="checkbox"/> Hat, gloves, and other props |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Costume: If the theme holds a meaning to you | <input type="checkbox"/> Bridal Veil for "Bridal Boudoir" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swimsuit | <input type="checkbox"/> Shorts, skirts, and tops |

Which of the following best describes what you'd like your photos to look like? Keep in mind that your session is limited by time, so a large number of outfit changes and background changes is not always possible. However, we try to create a session plan so we can capture a wide variety of looks, while maintaining a cohesive style for your album. The choices you make here, and when consulting with us, will help define the session goals.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hi-Fashion: Lingerie Ads, Perfume Ads, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Old Hollywood: 1940's starlet | <input type="checkbox"/> Playful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Serious and Sensual | <input type="checkbox"/> Coy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexy | <input type="checkbox"/> Sultry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Romantic | <input type="checkbox"/> Sophisticated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dreamy | <input type="checkbox"/> Dramatic |

So, use these tips and idea sheets as a starting point for preparing your subject for her boudoir session. Add or remove items to make it more relevant to your style of boudoir, or to your clientele.



Tip: To get more ambient light to record in the shot (like, say, from a table lamp) you can simply use a slower shutter speed. I will often switch to 1/40 sec. for such purposes. Just remember to switch back to 1/250 (or your max x-sync speed for your camera) when you don't need the slower speed anymore.

3. Set Limits For The Best Results

Most of your clients won't be professional models, so you need to help make sure they're not overwhelmed by the process of preparing for, and shooting, their boudoir pictures. One of the ways to do this is by establishing simple limits on time and options.

Every part of the process takes time and energy to complete. Everything from makeup and styling, to the number of outfits your client will want to attempt to shoot, all have a direct impact on how much you can expect to accomplish during the actual photography. Keep in mind that most clients don't have the practice, or performing stamina, to go for several hours in front of the camera. Even with frequent breaks for changes, styling touch-ups, and waiting on the photographer between setups, the shoot time will eventually take its toll on your subject.

Photography Time

Each client has a different threshold for how much camera time she can comfortably handle. In my experience, the lower limit is around 45 minutes. The upper limit is about two-and-a-half hours. I try to keep it to no more than two hours. If you continue shooting once you've crossed her tolerance threshold, it will be evident in



your photographs. It will also taint your client's memory of the whole experience.

Makeup & Hair

If your client is getting her hair styled, and makeup applied by a professional, you should expect it to take up to 2 hours, more or less. Setting time limits here is not always possible, especially if the makeup artist and/or stylist isn't working under your direction. But, you can recommend your client find someone who can do a good job given a reasonable amount of time. It's best if the styling is done either off-site, or somewhere other than the actual set where you'll be shooting. This gives your client a welcome change of scenery as she moves to the next phase of the shoot, wardrobe.

Wardrobe Limits

Before they arrive for a shoot, our clients often ask about the number of lingerie sets and outfits they should bring. My answer is usually, "We'll try for three or four different outfits, but bring more than you think you'll need." It's always good to have several options to choose from, just in case something doesn't quite look as good in front of the camera as it did in the store. But, three or four changes is about the limit for a two-hour shoot.

Consider that lingerie can take a little longer to put on than, say, a pair of jeans. There are things to lace up, seams to line up, straps to straighten and adjust, and tags and threads need to be clipped off any just-bought items. Not to mention selecting jewelry and shoes, and making any makeup and hair changes. For four outfits, if you figure about 15 minutes or so for each change, that leaves you with only about 15 minutes to shoot each look (with a two-hour session). And since you'll want to try more than a couple of poses, perspectives, and possibly even some lighting changes for each outfit, that doesn't leave you much time for additional changes.

The whole boudoir photo shoot experience can be exhausting for any client. But for many, the process of organizing the shoot date, trying to visualize and select the right outfits, sitting for hair and makeup, fretting over all the usual self-image issues, and dealing with the natural nervousness in front of the lens, can be overwhelming. It's up to you to help her deal with many of these issues. And when she is on-set in front of your camera, it's imperative that you make the shoot proceed as comfortably, and as efficiently as possible. Discussing and setting limits on time and wardrobe will help you get the best results.

Something To Avoid: Some of your clients may insist on reproducing images they've found in magazines or on the web, actually thinking that providing you with an idea and pose to copy will make your job will be easier.



Tip: Some of your clients will be more mature than others, or otherwise have less than perfect complexions. You should have a very candid discussion with them about how much retouching they'd like to have done on their final images. I like to strike a balance between nice smooth skin and a realistic texture. I don't want my clients to look like plastic people. See the section on retouching for good starting tips on how to deal with these issues.



Bringing examples as a loose guide to what kinds of looks she likes can be very helpful. But, faithfully recreating an image is far more time consuming than it

sounds. Plus, you and your subject could be setting yourselves up for disappointment.

She's not likely going to look like the girl in the picture, and you're not likely going to have the set, props, lighting, crew (and model) that the original photographer had at his disposal.

It's understandable that some of your subjects are so worried about the shoot that they think copying an image they like would be "safer" than trusting herself and the photographer to do a good job. However, this is really not the best way to go.

My advice is to let your clients know, in advance, that you are not in the business of copying photographs. Tell them you prefer to tailor your shots to suit each individual client's body type and personality, for the best results.



4. Use Encouragement & Direction To Get The Most From Your Subject

One of the most common mistakes to avoid as a photographer is not providing enough feedback for your subject. She needs to know where she stands with you at all times. Your silence while shooting will only make room in her head for questions about her pose, expression, and whether or not she's doing a good job in front of the camera. Letting her know what to do and how well she's doing it, will help make her a better and happier subject.

To help with those times that there's a lull in the banter, due to your having to concentrate on some technical aspects, or simply because you're "in the zone" and forgetting to keep the conversation flowing, you should have some music always playing in the background. It makes a huge difference.

Encouragement for your subject starts the moment she enters the room. Find something you can genuinely compliment her on. Tell her that she's going to look amazing in the photographs. Keep in mind that she may not respond well to over-the-top comments about how "sexy" she is, or light-hearted flirting. While this may seem an obvious way to encourage someone who is about to take off her clothes, it generally isn't advised, and will probably have the opposite effect you are looking for, or worse. Comments should be professional and practical for the task at hand.

Let her know you're taking care to notice details about any problems with an outfit, poses, her hair, etc. She'll appreciate your attention to detail. She wants to make sure she isn't embarrassed by the photos. And your tactful approach to making sure everything is well placed will give her the confidence of knowing she's in good hands.

Before you start shooting, tell her what to expect in terms of your posing direction, or how you shoot. Give her a few examples of how you might call out some direction. Let her know that if you're not saying anything for a few moments, that it's because she's doing great, and you're just getting a succession of shots that all seem to be working.

During shooting, a frequent and enthusiastic, "That looks great!", "Beautiful," or "Awesome!," every few shots can really keep her excited and upbeat about her performance. Simple but honest gestures and smiles will go a long way. But, keep all of your feedback and encouragement within the context of the shot. Everything you respond to should be about how she looks for the camera, not how she looks to you.

5. The Two-Light Setup That's Foolproof

There are whole books written about one-, two-, and multiple-light scenarios. You can take workshops to learn the intricate details about metering, and light balancing and the quality of your light. And you can experiment to your heart's content as you develop skills that will undoubtedly improve your portraiture. But this book is about doing things the easy way, and learning effective and simple techniques right now.

So, with that in mind, I'm going to explain how I use two basic lights to get most of the effects I need during any boudoir shoot. These are so simple, you'll be amazed at how well they work, and how consistently good your boudoir shots will look. This is no replacement for actually learning about professional lighting techniques, but using these simple methods will get you the results you need when you don't have time to setup lots of lights and do lots of metering and adjustments.

I'm going to explain exactly how I shoot the majority of my shots, and what gear I use to do it with. First, this is how I set my gear up (I usually leave it all assembled, since I don't change it much). Understand that this is only an example lighting kit. You can use anything from professional studio lighting, to natural light and mirrors, as long as it works for you.

I had several goals in coming up with this particular setup:

- Portability and Minimal stacking of connectors and adapters
- Keep the configuration solid and not prone to damage
- Completely eliminate the use of PC connectors (an inferior design prone to failure with use and wear)
- Keep costs low but maintain dependability

Items used for each of the two lights in my setup:

- Light Stand
- Umbrella Adapter (Swivel Bracket), Item #0041 From FlashZebra.com
- Brass Stud/Spigot with 1/4"-20 thread screw, included with Umbrella Adapter
- Flash Shoe Adapter with 1/4"-20 thread hole, Item #0068 From FlashZebra.com
- Hotshoe to PocketWizard Adapter Cable, Item #0138 From FlashZebra.com
- PocketWizard Transceiver Unit
- Umbrella (I use the shoot-through technique)

Now, keep in mind there are several ways to get a flash on a stand, with or without an umbrella modifier. This is an example of what you might want to try, but there are other products that have more or less the same basic elements to mix and match.

In the collage shown, you have from left to right, and top to bottom:

1) The basic light stand with a built-in stud on the end.

2) Attach an umbrella adapter (swivel bracket) as shown. The end with the hole for the umbrella is on top. Some of these have a cold shoe already attached, but mine does not. I attach one myself (see next steps).

3) You'll want to tightly screw the stud/spigot into the flash shoe adapter next. Then place that into the top hole of the umbrella adapter. For example sake, the images show where the stud goes, but again, you'll want to attach the stud to the shoe adapter BEFORE securing it to the umbrella adapter.

4) Finally, I attach the 0138 unit securely to the shoe adapter. Note: You could just bypass the previous shoe adapter step, and screw the stud directly to the 0138, but I prefer not to. Also, I'm not sure it's entirely necessary, but I like to place a small piece of electrical tape over the four little contact points on the 0138 where they would otherwise come into direct contact with the ones on the flash unit itself. Call me paranoid, but I don't want anything screwing up the circuitry in my flash. The main (center) contact point remains bare so as to allow the flash to be triggered.



As shown in the picture, make sure the angle adjusting knob/lever of the umbrella adapter is on the RIGHT hand side as the flash is pointed away from you. The angle of the hole that holds the umbrella in place is setup so that it only works properly this way. Your flash will not be angled correctly into the umbrella otherwise.

Attach your flash, plug in your PocketWizard unit, slip in the umbrella, repeat this for the other stand, and you're set!

Now, using these two lights for incredible shots is probably even easier than assembling the configuration! Think of it this way: One light serves as your main light. The other light is simply set on the OPPOSITE side of your subject, at a slightly different distance, power setting, or both.

Here are the basic settings I start with:

Camera Settings: Manual, Balanced for Flash, f4.0, 1/250, ISO 100.

Main Light Flash: Manual, 1/8 Power.

Second Light Flash: Manual, 1/16 Power.

The main light is the main thing you need to get right. The idea is to position it at a standard 45/45 orientation to your subject's face, which is my starting point with most portraits I take. That is, the light should be about 45 degrees to either her right, or left, and angled down about 45 degrees from above.

How do you determine the proper settings, distances, and specific positions of the second light? It's not a perfect science, so don't worry about it. You're shooting digital, so just take a shot at the normal settings I just listed, and you'll easily see where you need to make an adjustment.

I generally start with the main light about 3 ft. away from the subject. The second light, acting as my rim light or kicker, is set about 6 ft. away from the main focus of the subject (where my main light is doing most of its work).

So, there it is. My own personal two-light system that ALWAYS produces the results I need. Naturally, you'll want to vary the position of your lights for different effects, or use just one light for more dramatic effects. I'll even place that second light behind a piece of white fabric, or hit a light-colored surface behind my subject for a nice high-key effect. With this as your starting point, you'll learn to achieve almost any look you want with two simple lights!



6. The Retouching Tools That Always Work

A question that usually comes up early in consultations prior to a boudoir session is about retouching. It only makes sense that your client would want to look her absolute best in her pictures. I reassure my clients right away that retouching is part of the package when doing this kind of photography. We're trying to produce an idealized image of a woman, after all. So, things like skin blemishes, pimples, wrinkles, dark circles under the eyes, and more are handled as a matter of course. How much of this type of work you wish to take on is up to you, your client, and her budget, but there should be a minimum you are prepared to do.

There are, of course, ways to get around most retouching. You can use actions and filters that will simply obliterate skin detail. Since I prefer to show more dimension and texture in my images, I can't rely on blowing detail out all the time. That means I have to use more professional retouching tools to achieve my look.



I have found a few very simple tools and techniques work the best to keep my time in front of the computer at a minimum and still get great results. It's up to you to learn to use these tools, experiment, and build your own style of working, but these are good starting points:

The Most Important Tools in Adobe® Photoshop® for Skin:

The Patch Tool: Allows you to draw a selection around an area and replace it with a better patch of skin in a very seamless way. This works great for pimples, smaller blemishes, and wrinkles. Zoom into the area that you want to fix, and work in small patches. This will give you more realistic looking areas of skin than trying to fix large areas in one swoop.

The Spot Healing Brush Tool: I use this to a lesser extent. It's better when you're faced with lots of small bumps or spots that you need to get rid of, one at a time, very quickly.

The Clone Stamp Tool: Unlike the Patch and Spot Healing tools, the Clone Stamp won't actually hold as much original texture, at least the way I use it. This can be helpful. For bags and circles under the eyes, set it to somewhere between 15% and 25% opacity and target a smooth area of skin as the sample area. Clone out the rough spots under the eyes using a good sized brush and repetitive stamping. Doing this in a separate layer (using the setting, Sample All Layers), will allow you to adjust the entire layer's opacity and blending to achieve a believable smoothness. I also use the Clone Stamp tool to clone out distracting hairs, loose threads, unsightly veins in the eyeballs, and other small areas.

The Liquify Filter: Only use if absolutely necessary and near the final steps in your post work on the image. This is the go-to tool for bringing in a less-than-flattering tummy, or taking a few inches off an arm or thigh. You can create a composite image from all visible layers onto a new layer and apply the Liquify Filter to that. I find the Forward Warp Tool to be the most used, with the Pucker Tool coming in a distant second. Using the Freeze Mask Tool is useful to keep areas near the changes from warping.

The Surface Blur Filter: This is the main tool I use for overall skin smoothing. Setup a composite layer so you can adjust the opacity (to what degree your changes affect the underlying skin texture) when done. I like to start off with a radius of about 20 pixels, and a threshold of about 30 levels. Since the filter will affect the entire image on that layer, you'll need to add a layer mask with a black fill, then paint out

the mask where you want the effect to show through (on large skin surfaces). Again, adjust that layer's opacity to bring down the effect as much as possible to attain a balance of real skin texture and the filter's softening effect.

Simple suggestions, for sure. But that's the idea. They work and will accomplish everything needed, most of the time. There are a number of books and tutorials available if you would like to learn more about using image editing software to improve the look of your boudoir photos.

7. The Four Best-Selling Poses

Here are four of my best-selling poses. For various reasons, these are the ones that most of my clients seem to love the most. Upon close examination, it's easy to tell why they work so well, with so many different body types. For example, the pose shown below can hide the tummy while accentuating the legs, and breasts. Opposite page, top, shows a pose the most women intuitively know will work well, as soon as they see it. Many clients have pointed to this pose in my web site or sample prints and mentioned how it will make their stomachs look flatter. It's also a very candid look with many possible variations. Opposite bottom, the "Look Up" makes just





Tip: Some of the best poses aren't as simple as they appear on the surface. This one, for example, requires your subject arch her back and lift her bottom to the ceiling, then slightly turn it toward the camera. Tell your client to try the pose, then let her know that you'll count to three so she can get into the pose just before you take the shot, then she can relax. It's not a pose you'd want to hold for more than a few seconds! As with most of my two-light setups, I have the main light near the top part of the body (head and shoulders, feathering off onto the rest of the body), and the second light opposite it as a rim light adds a nice shine/highlight to her bottom, while blasting light from the back. It's a beautiful effect.





about anyone look really glamorous while hiding the areas of most concern. Another example of this pose can be found on pages 8-9. Finally, the pose shown on the preceding spread is my most requested. It can be done as a two-piece, topless, or completely nude. But the most common way to shoot it is shown; panties or “boy shorts” that reveal much of the bottom, no top, and spiked heels.

Getting your subjects into these poses will require you to explain them clearly, and possibly even demonstrate. Actually, I recommend you try out these, and other, poses yourself just to see what they feel like. It will give you an appreciation for what your clients have to go through! These poses aren't easy, especially when you're not an experienced model, and are somewhat nervous to begin with.

Print out examples of the poses you're trying to achieve and let your subject try to recreate them. You don't have to be exact, just close enough to get a great shot.

8. Five Go-To Shots When All Else Fails

We've all been there. Sometimes, no matter what you try, for whatever reason, the shoot just isn't coming together. Maybe your subject is just having a hard time relaxing. Maybe you're just feeling a lack of connection, or are otherwise feeling uninspired. The good news is, you don't have to get frustrated or settle for something that you or your client will be unhappy with. You can spend a lot of time trying to “work through” it, or you can try to fix a stale shoot before it gets even worse. You're about to add five strong tools to your arsenal that will solve this problem. Select any, or all, of these five shots to try when nothing else seems to be working. These are simple enough to remember and execute easily, but very effective when nothing

else seems to work. Who knows, one of these might be just the thing you and your client needed to get back on track.

The “Pillow Talk”

Ask your subject to lay on her side as if she's about to have a conversation in bed. You might ask her to pretend the person she's talking to is telling her something REALLY



interesting, how much he loves her, or something funny.

This pose is excellent for enhancing any size bust, making arms look thinner, and allowing your subject to cover her waistline with her arm, fabric, a pillow, or later via your creative cropping.

Make sure to do variations on this pose but don't keep her in it too long. It can be hard on the shoulders and elbows after a few minutes.

The “Hair Fan”

This is something I usually do toward the end of the shoot, especially if my client is placing a lot of emphasis on her hairstyle (this is not something to try if she's not a fan of the messy look).

Have a simple directional fan (like a basic oscillating fan in the stationary mode) set up to blow wind slightly upward toward her face. Explain how the shot works before you get started:

She's going to throw all her hair forward and let it hang over her face. The idea is to raise her head and let the wind start working her hair off her face rather slowly. She can help by moving her head side to side to eventually get most of her hair to work its way off her face. The entire time, she should keep her eyes on the camera, lips parted.



Your best shots are going to happen as she's working the hair off her face and peeking through it to see the lens. You should repeat the shot three or four times to get a lot of images to choose from. Try to make it better with each attempt. There will always be one or two “winner” shots from this that just look amazingly sexy!



Tip: When you are getting a look that you know is a winner, show your excitement! Your subject will feed off your enthusiasm, and her confidence will show through, guaranteeing better pictures. When she sees that you are excited about how well the pictures are turning out, she'll relax and start having fun. Always give your subject a reason to feel things are going well. Nothing's worse for her than wondering if she's doing a bad job, or looking foolish, or unattractive in front of the lens.

The “Look Down”

You already know that all photos don’t have to involve your subject looking directly into the lens. Some of the best photos have the quiet, candid look. The following is so easy to get right, it’s almost a guaranteed favorite.

Simply have your subject sit on the edge of a bed or chair, extend her torso (sit up tall), and lean forward slightly. She can then drop one exposed shoulder and look down at her wedding ring, a necklace in her hands, or even a spot on the floor. Your angle should be just above her--as if from the standing perspective of a tall person.

The “Look Up”

From the previous section, “The Four Best-Selling Poses.” The great thing about this easy winner is that you can go directly from the “Look Down” into this pose. It provides everything needed for a beautiful shot, with almost any body type. There are a few things to consider when posing this one, so it’s not quite as easy and care-free as the end result would suggest. But it’s well worth the effort. This is a consistent seller with my clients.



With your subject sitting on the edge of a bed or chair, position your light up above her head for a pleasing portrait as she looks up at the camera. You should be on a solid support, like a stepladder, just above and behind her to one side.

You’ll have to decide, based on what you’re trying to accomplish with the shot, on how exactly you’ll have her pose. But, generally, I like to have the subject push her chest out, with a slight lean forward, then toward the camera side. This not only enhances the chest, but also allows it to block the mid-section leaving only legs to show beneath.

You can vary the angle of the head, expression, and other elements. I’ve included this example to show how moving my main light opposite the normal position can

produce quite a different result from my usual setup shown on pages 8-9. But, the one thing I like to gently remind the subject of is to avoid crinkling up the brow as she looks up. “Make sure your forehead is complete relaxed when you look up, so you don’t furrow your brow,” is my typical instruction.

The “Daydreamer”

This one is the final go-to shot, and my favorite for the following reasons: it’s easy and relaxing for the subject, it’s flattering for nearly every body type, and it has a way of getting her “in character” to feel beautiful. She’s able to take her focus off the camera and you, yet still feel like she’s getting all the direction she needs for a very pretty shot. I think many of my clients can actually sense that this shot looks



amazing, just by being in this pose. And, of course, that gives them a confidence that will carry over into the remainder of the shoot. It's also a best-seller!

I usually start off by telling the subject that this is a “day-dreamy” kind of shot. For the most part, all she'll have to do is lay down and look up at the ceiling (maybe pretending there's a skylight above her), and let me find the angles to make it work. This lets her know, most of the work is on me for this shot. Of course, I'll direct her for variations on the pose as we go along.

Have her lie down diagonally, feet toward one corner of the mattress, head toward the other. There should be lots of space between the top of her head and the end of the mattress.

Next have her bring both knees up, feet flat on the mattress. Tell her to bring one of her knees down slightly, so you can break the symmetry. Keep the knees and thighs together to avoid a gap between the legs. What you've created with the thighs is a flattering triangle. It's often useful to have her left hand resting on or near her left thigh, maybe to show off her wedding or engagement ring, or to help press down on a gapping garter strap, etc.

Have her take her other hand and place it near her ear. I like to have her take a strand of her hair and twirl it in her hand for that extra sense of unconscious flirtatiousness. Let her relax into this pose as you find different angles to shoot from.

Finally, try combining this with the “Look Up” by positioning the camera where she has to look back, and up, with her entire face in order to avoid the furrowed brow look. Parting her lips, bringing her hands closer to her face, even closing her eyes, will all provide you with a huge number of options

Tip: Try using the two-light setup for a more glamorous look, and a single light for a variety of dramatic effects. Here, I've created a semi-high key effect simply by using broad lighting as the main, along with a light colored comforter as the background. The second light was setup to mimic a window light coming in from one side.



9. How to Get The Candid Look They Love

Most of my clients are looking for a certain style based on what they've seen on my web site. They'll often describe it as classy, or sophisticated. And sure, great lighting, hair and makeup, a classic pose, post-processing, and many other factors come together to give me that certain look that sells. But, the obvious pictures aren't always the favorites.

As a photographer, it's likely that your inner camera is almost always on. In other words, you are probably seeing and composing images as you go through everyday life. Keep this working for you during your shoots, too! I can't tell you how many times I've put the camera down as the subject adjusted a strap, or went to the mirror to make some adjustments to her outfit, makeup or hair, only to see the perfect candid shot ready to be captured.

Lean to take those opportunities! Don't let them pass you by. The dynamics change dramatically when the "real" pictures aren't being taken. Your subject will have a completely different expression on her face, and usually carry herself in a more natural and relaxed manner. This is where you'll discover her natural beauty and sexiness coming through.

But, how do you go from shooting the posed shots to turning the camera on her in the real, candid moments? It all depends, but I usually just start off by taking a couple of shots without saying anything.

If I need to, I'll move one of my lights to make the shot work. Since, during the actual photo shoot, I've already mentioned several times that my first couple of shots for each setup are just for checking the light, she's gotten used to the lights flashing as part of the process. If I sense that she's wondering what's going on, or realizing that I'm probably actually taking pictures, and not just testing/metering, I'll say something. "This would make a great shot. Just forget about the camera right now and keep doing what you're doing."

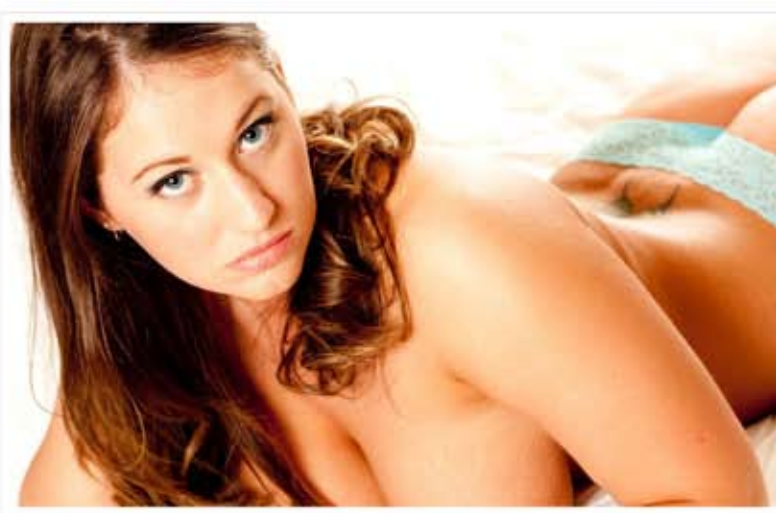
These candid looks will usually evolve into posed shots. For example, if I've posed her at the edge of the bed, and she's waiting on me to adjust my lights or gear, she might notice her shoe is not quite buckled at the strap. So, she reaches down to fix it and I notice, "Wow, that looks awesome!" So, I tell her about how her fixing her shoe would make a good shot, and we recreate the moment, making adjustments to the position of the legs, arms, tilt of the head...everything, until it's perfect. Now, she's got a beautiful shot neither of you planned for. And you've got a great new pose to add to your repertoire!



POSING EXAMPLES

Feel free to print these out for use as a posing guide. It's a great way to get your session started, or to help when you run out of ideas.







Conclusion

I really hope you've enjoyed this book, and found it helpful. I also encourage you to learn as much as you can about the finer points of portraiture, and continue to learn new techniques as you progress in your career as a photographer. With photography, learning should never stop.

Photographing women has been, for whatever reason, something I've had a knack for ever since I can remember. Over the last several years, Boudoir has been a very profitable business for my studio. It is truly one of the most rewarding types of commercial portraiture I do. When I get comments about how happy and excited a client's loved one was to receive a set of her pictures, I feel a great sense of pride and accomplishment.

This book is my way of sharing what I've learned over the years.

If you would like more information on my books or work, please visit my web sites: <http://www.veroskyphoto.com>, <http://www.veroskyboudoir.com>

Suggestions, comments, or errors?

Please contact me directly at edverosky@hotmail.com

Thanks again,

Ed Verosky

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