



CENTERFOLD

Boudoir photographs turn the girl next door into a sexy, confident pin up **By Echo Surina**

FOR HER 29TH BIRTHDAY, SAN DIEGAN Susan Allain gave herself a gift that would last a lifetime: self-portraits inspired by vintage pin-ups. Her husband, who was deployed in Iraq at the time, also received a set of her boudoir photographs, accompanied by notes saying, “Do you know this girl?” and “This girl misses you.”

“Every guy wants pictures of [his] wife like that, but you get afraid to ask,” says Allain’s husband, Chris. “There is nothing raunchy. You like seeing a bit of a devilish side, and the shots came out great.”

Boudoir photography is a hot trend in portraiture that started in Southern California about five years ago and is spreading to other parts of the country. Fun, fashionable and PG-rated, these photos are like a mini-fashion shoot for the everyday woman. The subject typically wears lingerie and the photos are all about celebrating and commemorating female sensuality—from carefree and flirtatious to sultry and serious. What’s more, boudoir photography is just as much a gift for each woman as it is for her lucky mate, as the sessions will leave her feeling beautiful, sexy and confident.

Clients—women in their 20s to 50s—typically gift the photos to their groom on their wedding night or use them as anniversary presents. Jill Vander Borcht gave an album to her husband for his 30th birthday, but had another reason for steaming up the camera.

“I was also working out really hard to prepare for my wedding, and I wanted to reward myself by making a permanent memory of that discipline. I enjoyed everything about the process—posing, finding my groove in front of the camera and hanging out with [my photographer],” Vander Borcht says of her experience with Newport Beach-based Christine Farah Photography. “I didn’t even notice I was in my underwear most of the time, and that would probably be the only thing that was slightly surprising—it was such a comfortable, fun and natural process.”

Vander Borcht had her photos taken at a girlfriend’s house, but other common sites include the photographer’s studio, the client’s house or a hotel suite. “Spoil yourself, shop for some fun clothes, go to the spa the day before, and remember it’s going to be fun,” says Suzanne Hansen of Suzanne Hansen Photography, a San Diego wedding and events photographer who expanded her portfolio two years ago to include boudoir sessions. “And hire a professional hair

and makeup artist as they’ll help put you at ease.”

When asked about some inspiring shots, Hansen rattles off an endless list. “Ellie on roller skates in the plaid dress was so classic; Jennie serving pie; Diana with her gorgeous lavender ostrich fan; Whitney with the suitcases and the pug dog ... I love them all,” she says.

At Woman Captured by Boucher, a studio in Carmel Mountain Ranch, the all-female staff works hard to ensure each set is made to look like the client is in a mysterious and unique location. Owners Marissa Boucher and Kimberlee West say their goal is to celebrate each woman individually, capturing her in a new light that can reignite confidence and the way she sees herself. And based on the testimonials they receive again and again, their method is working. For aspiring photographers, they’ve even published a guide to boudoir photography called *The Boudoir Photography Divas’ Bad-Ass Training Guide*.



BOOBY BOUDOIR



BOOTOY BOUDOIR

BOUDOIR BEST BETS

How to get the most from your boudoir photo shoot

- Do your research and hire someone you truly trust and can be comfortable with. Check out the Web sites of various boudoir photographers and follow up with those whose work you like.
- It's not unusual to be apprehensive. Calm the nerves by asking a girlfriend to accompany you or enjoy a glass of Champagne or wine. (Some photographers bring their own Champagne or serve it in studio.)
- Personalize your shoot with props from home. And don't forget items that will be sentimental to him—his white T-shirt or even his boxers.
- Don't wear a bra on the day of your shoot as the straps can leave marks.
- Be extra flirtatious the week before your boudoir session. This can help unleash the sexy side of you and provide for a better photo shoot.
- If this will be a wedding gift, don't forget to bring your bridal jewelry or veil as these items can be worked into the photos.
- Get a manicure and pedicure before your shoot, and be plucked and trimmed.

Photographers suggest bringing a few outfits, which can include lingerie or some of the groom's favorite things, such as a sports team T-shirt or jersey, necktie, boxer shorts or uniform. "A lot of women are doing their boudoir shoot as a gift to their significant other," says Jennifer Dery, a San Diego-based wedding photographer who also offers boudoir photo sessions at her Sassy Pants studio. "If you want a photo of you with an item that is special to your significant other, then you should bring it. It can be as simple as a tie or as big as a surfboard!"

Helene Cornell, founder of Booty Boudoir in South Park, even provides wardrobe suggestions: Trench coat, glasses and scarf for the secret-agent look. Polaroids and an old Super 8 for the sexy-photographer look. And, of course, just a sheet and you in bed to capture the "sulky bedroom diva."

"No matter your shape, age or color, there is nothing more magnetic than a sexy and confident women," Cornell says. "We have received several heartfelt e-mails from our clients' husbands thanking us for unleashing the sexy side that they know and love."

But of course it's not just the grooms who love boudoir.

"I love doing boudoir because I can show women another side to themselves that they rarely see," says photographer Christine Farah, who travels throughout Southern California. "I refer to it as 'boudoir therapy' because all of my clients leave the session with renewed confidence. [A client told me] I made her feel truly beautiful for the first time in her life and that my photos had brought her to tears. I would not trade that moment in for anything in this world."

And chances are, nor would that pretty woman in the picture.



SUZANNE HANSEN