

Capturing special moments

BACHRACH STUDIO PORTRAIT

Controlled lighting provides high-lights in hair and dramatic side-lighting brings out facial structure. Here Robert Bachrach had the lighting ready in advance so he could concentrate on capturing the subjects' expressions during the photo shoot. Typically, studio portrait photographers aim to capture serene expressions.



ALL PHOTOS
BY ROBERT BACHRACH

Attention to details gives photos a professional look

By ROSEMARY HERBERT

With graduations, weddings, family reunions, vacations and other family outings packing the calendar, you're sure to be snapping plenty of photos this summer.

But if you're like most people, your investment in a "fool-proof" automatic camera has produced adequate but unexciting pictures.

To help you make the most of your family photo opportunities, we asked two experts for advice on taking pictures that are worth a thousand memories.

Robert Bachrach, photographer and fourth-generation owner of Bachrach Studio in Boston, is a master of manipulating light in controlled conditions. He shot the studio portrait shown here of his 14-year-old daughter Kristina and 11-year-old son Erik. He also used an automatic camera to shoot these "ordinary" and "out of the ordinary" backyard photos.

Boston Herald photographer George Martell is a pro at producing photos in any kind of conditions.

Because most family albums contain posed pictures of individuals and groups as well as on-the-spot action shots, we asked Bachrach and Martell what to keep in mind for each.

Bachrach's advice for posed people pictures:

- Look for cloudy-bright conditions or shoot early or late in the day. Shooting early also maximizes chances that people are lively and refreshed.

- If you must shoot at high noon, when shadows are harsh, look for shade and use fill-in flash. Or pose subjects with the sun behind them (although not glaring into the lens) and use fill-in flash.

Martell's tips for on-the-spot action shots:

- A true candid captures a moment. Wait and watch for one with camera ready.

- Zoom in and fill the frame. Play with the zoom and try tight shots as well as wider ones.

- Move around. Vary your angle and get a different one from the other shutterbugs on the scene.



ORDINARY

Shot in cloudy-bright conditions at 5 p.m. from a distance of 12 feet.

BACHRACH'S TIPS

- The automatic camera has supplied some fill-in flash, but the exposure in the background is equal to the exposure on the foreground, so the subjects and background are equally noticeable.
- Line up one subject's eyes with the nose level of the other.
- Avoid cutting off feet.
- The natural-looking embrace comes from shooting quickly before subjects stiffen up.
- Too much space above subjects' heads.
- Watch the position of subject in relation to the background — avoid settings where trees or other objects will look like they're sprouting from the subject's head.
- Shadow obscures eyes here because fill-in flash had to work from a distance.

MARTELL'S TIPS

- In posing, vary the heights of the subjects.
- If you want an environmental shot, consider using a background that says something about the subjects or the occasion, like a favorite tree house or an amusement park scene.
- Lines of deck railing lead the eye toward the subject . . . but, Bachrach says there is too much of it.



OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Shot in the same conditions as far left from a distance of 6 feet.

BACHRACH'S TIPS

- Her hair is nicely arranged. If a teen wants to primp, have her do it before you bring in the younger child.
- Heads tipped toward each other lead eyes to the center.
- Have the subjects' eyes in the top third of the frame.
- Both subjects are involved in the embrace.
- Think about using vertical rather than horizontal format.
- "Lines" of the embrace frame the subjects within the photo.
- Relaxed hand makes him look comfortable.

MARTELL'S TIPS

- Moving in tightly and filling up the frame with the subjects eliminates background problems. Shows off what you want to show off.
- Focusing in on the subjects makes the background blur.
- Shooting from a position slightly lower than the subjects is effective.

Outdoor photos, above left and right, are taken with a flash-equipped automatic Fuji Discovery 800 zoom camera and 200 speed Fuji film.