

Dave and Quin Cheung embrace romance, and it shows in their every image and in the effort they put into building great client relationships. Says Quin, “I’m proud to say that so many of our couples are our best friends.”

## WEDDINGS

By Stephanie Boozer

# Geek-chic

For this happy couple, client satisfaction is a serious commitment

One minute into a conversation with Canadians

Dave and Quin Cheung, and you can’t help smiling. Their genuine passion for their work and

each other is simply effervescent.

“We like to make people smile and laugh,” says Quin, half of the self-proclaimed “geek-chic” duo behind DQ Studios in Calgary, Alberta. “He’s the ‘geek’ and I’m the ‘chic,’” she laughs.

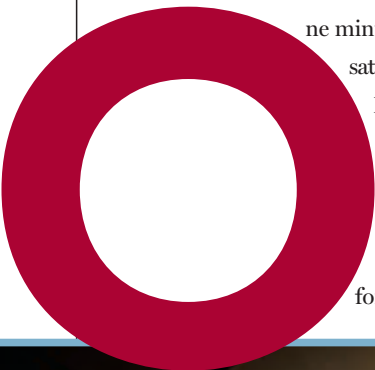
“We’re quite opposite personality-wise,” says Quin, who had vowed to never, ever

work with Dave when they got married. But that was 11 years ago, and Dave was working in the family business, selling pianos—the couple met, incidentally, through music.

In photography, though, the opposites were a natural mesh. “Our differences really worked well together,” says Quin. “We’ve grown into something inseparable ... synergistic, and the images we come away with are so much better than they would be otherwise.”

“We’re also mildly competitive, and that pushes us,” says Dave.

The path to this bliss wasn’t exactly



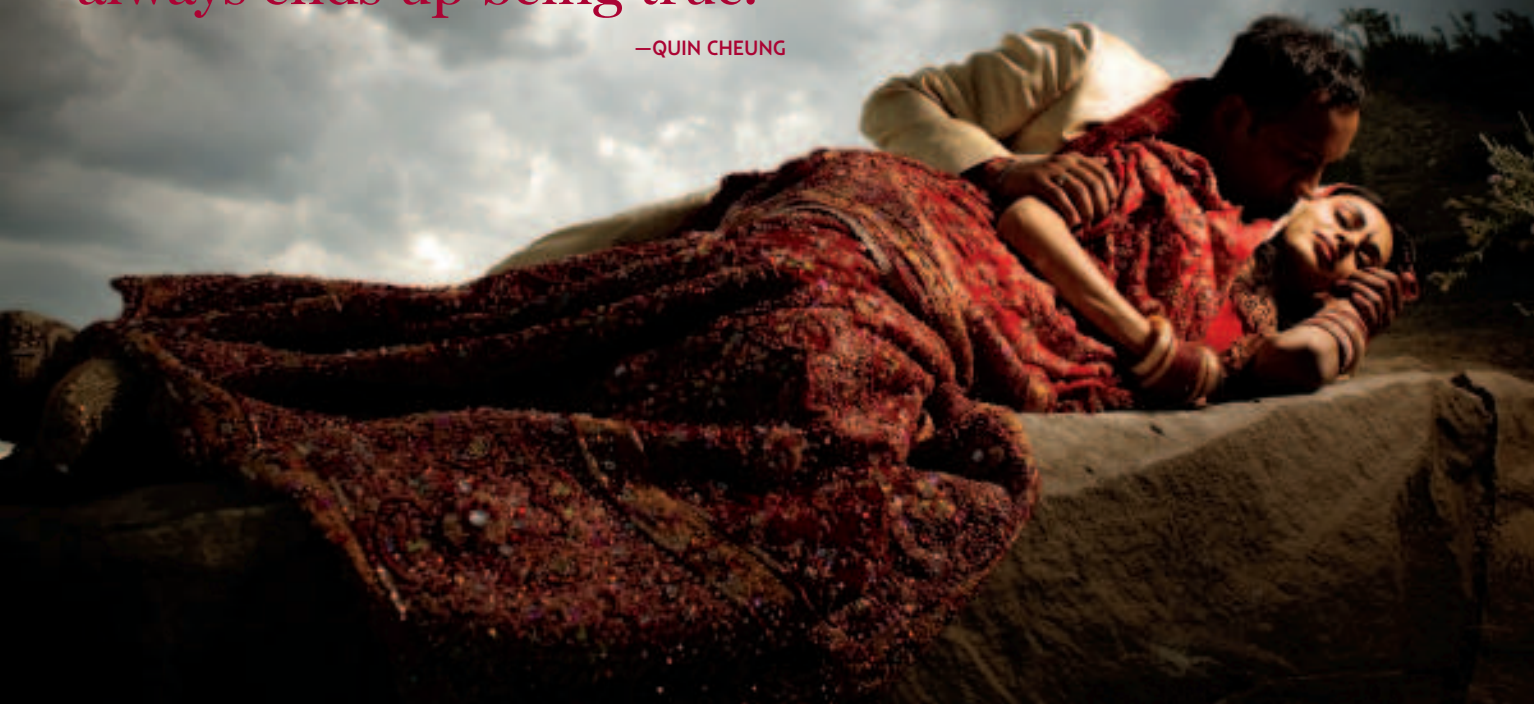
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—QUIN CHEUNG



straight. The couple had no idea they’d wind up shooting weddings, or even working behind a camera. Dave held a pre-med degree in biochemistry, and Quin was a business school graduate holding a corporate job at global giant Accenture. On the side, the couple kept their musical passion alive by starting a garage band, and frequently performed at weddings. “Quin’s an awesome bass player,” Dave says.

With the birth of their first son, Quin’s priorities changed. Her corporate ambitions seemed lackluster. She needed a job that allowed time for family and fed her soul as well. Dave wanted exactly the same thing.

A spark had been quietly smoldering ever since their pre-baby backpacking trip through France. “We fell in love with street

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shooting,” says Quin. Collectively they decided to fan that flame, and they met with a photographer they knew from their wedding gigs. “He took us under his wing and showed us everything about the business.”

It was love at first click.

The Cheungs limit their yearly bookings to 15, partly to keep fresh creatively, and partly because they retouch every single image their clients see, anywhere from 600 to 1,000 images per wedding. That’s hard evidence of how highly the Cheungs value customer service.

“A DVD of [raw] images may not be the best thing in terms of how the client will remember the event,” says Dave. “As photographers, we’re trying to capture and distill the day so they can enjoy it for years to come. When they sign the dotted line, all they’re really getting is a promise that we’ll show up on their wedding day. We have to shift our thinking from being mere service providers to actually being promise keepers. Our job isn’t done after the wedding.

“Clients often don’t fully understand until after the wedding what an impact the imagery will have,” he continues. “We’re working



toward not only artistry and profitability, but client satisfaction as well. As we learn to service our clients better, increasing profitability has been a nice byproduct.”

It sounds costly to spend so much time on each client, but the Cheungs find it translates into better relationships, repeat business down the road, and higher sales. “We say we’re your photographers for life; it

always ends up being true,” says Quin.

The growth of the business didn’t come without mistakes and obstacles. Trial and error led to some of their greater successes, including the creation of the problem-solving products QuiKeys and QuiKlips. QuiKeys, a USB plug-in keyboard used in conjunction with a Wacom tablet, provides a shortcut to actions in Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom and in album design. QuiKlips is a belt clip for flash units that keeps them instantly accessible.

“We never meant QuiKeys to be a product to sell,” says Dave, who developed it to streamline their own digital workflow. But it didn’t take long for the buzz to build among fellow photographers, and QuiKeys were a hit.

Products aside, the Cheungs’ success stems from their dedication in the service of photography. “A wedding allows you to enter into somebody’s life who would otherwise be a stranger,” says Quin. “I’m proud to say that so many of our couples are our best friends. We wouldn’t trade these relationships for anything.”

“We’re hopeless romantics,” Dave agrees. “We want to help our clients start off on the right foot; that’s why it matters so much to us.” ■

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