

MATCH POINT

Our Studio Time usually profiles spotlight wedding and event videography studios that promise greatness, in due time. But sometimes, we are reminded that we would be remiss in overlooking studios that have come through on that promise already and that are at their ripest.

You might recognize Laura and Steve Moses of Vantage Point Productions (www.vantagepointweddings.com). Of course you do. In March, you voted them into the EventDV 25 all-star team as one of the hottest and most influential videography studios in the world—for the third time in a row.

The Moseses are true industry Olympians, having won eight WEVA Creative Excellence Awards (two gold awards in the last 2 years), six 4EVER Group Artistic Achievement Awards, and multiple other international awards in their 21 years as a full-time production company. They are also mentors to you, their fellow videographers. Exhibit A: Vantage Point, Laura's quarterly column in *EventDV*; the couple's three instructional and inspirational DVDs; and myriad national speaking engagements, including WEVA Expo and the upcoming In[Focus] video event. They've been called the "prom king and queen" and "model husband-wife team" of wedding video, and Steve has somehow acquired the honorific title "the mayor." But forget the awards and accolades for a moment, since they're not what define this couple. And they certainly don't tell the whole story of their lives in this business, or this business in their lives. The mountaintop didn't come to the Moseses. Here's a brief review of their road to success and what they saw and learned along the way.

IT'S A LONG WAY TO THE TOP ...

Back in 1982, the burning question on Steve's mind wasn't Canon or Panasonic, HDV or AVCHD. He just needed to know: paper or plastic? He worked at a family-owned grocery store for a time, but he was, not surprisingly, unfulfilled in that line of work. He knew his future lay in cameras, not in canned goods. So he took out a Yellow Pages ad, and soon, his first paying gig was in the bag. Like most debut wedding video projects, it wasn't his proudest piece of work. He says, "I'd be scared to see it today."

But 2 years later, his proudest moment did happen. He married Laura, who at that time was working at a large communications company. Luckily for the couple, her

VANTAGE POINT PRODUCTIONS



They've been called the "prom king and queen" of wedding video and the industry's "it" couple. Their website promises "haute wedding films" with an emphasis on cultural sophistication and style. (Image by Cean One Photography)

www.vantagepointcustomfilms.com
<http://steveandlaura.typepad.com>

salary was steady, and they received benefits through her employer. This allowed Steve to treat his production company as a side project, albeit a lucrative one. Laura remembers the early '80s as a good time to be in video. "It was a new, enticing medium that consumers were excited about," she says. As a video producer, a rare commodity in those days, Steve built up a strong corporate and event video client base within a span of a few years. In 1986, he became a full-time video producer.

But before Steve and Laura became business partners, they became parents. As many moms do, Laura, who was still working outside the home, really wanted more time with her kids. The obvious solution, working for Vantage Point, "had never occurred to me," she says. "Then one day Steve quipped that it would be great if I could be a part of the business."

IT'S ALL GEEK TO ME

Laura and Steve were now a husband-and-wife videography team. But unlike Steve, Laura didn't look at videography as a dream fulfilled. To Steve, it was a labor of love, but to Laura, it was just work. "I never really understood what Steve's shooting experiences were like until I came on board. I was an outsider. It was like Steve talking about his golf game: I try to smile and nod, but my eyes just glaze over."

Her first shooting assignment could be a metaphor for her ambivalent feelings about the craft at that time. "Steve sent me to shoot the baptism of a 7-year-old girl. Only when I got there, it wasn't a baptism at all," she says. "It was a First Holy Communion. There were about 40 7-year-old girls, all brunettes wearing the same white dress. I had my sights on 'our' girl for about 30 seconds and then she disappeared into a sea of white organza and I was never able to spot her again."

Steve's arrival on the videography scene, on the other hand, was no accident. Video production was a natural



For Steve, video production was a natural progression from his formative years shooting 8mm film in the early '60s. (Image by Dave Williams)



"When I sit down to edit a film," Laura says, "I never know where it's going to go. It's a creative journey, and I just trust my instinct and go where it leads me." (Image by Derek Moses)

progression from his formative years shooting 8mm film in the early '60s. He remembers, "I cast my cousins and neighborhood kids in comedies, monster movies, stop-action films, travelogues, and parodies. Later, my 8mm camera went with me snow skiing, down a waterslide at a water park, and I got some killer footage parasailing."

Then in 1980, while vacationing in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, he spotted something peculiar: a tourist using a camera/VCR combo. On that trip Steve would shoot his last Super 8 movie, *Iguana With the Wind*. "As soon as I got home I bought my first video equipment."

In those days, you were a DIY videographer, or you weren't one at all. Before WEVA, Video University, and WedFACT, the only training resources were the kind in print, leaving Steve to teach himself how to use the equipment. He, in turn, trained Laura.

But it wasn't until she put down the cameras and got into the editing bay that her eyes opened to the beauty one could create with video. "That's when it became a true passion and artistic outlet," Laura says. "I didn't see the art in video production until I started editing. For me, art was music and writing. I had always been a classic film buff, but I was one of those who didn't 'get' wedding video. While Steve was always proud of his profession," she confesses, "I thought it was kind of lame. The bizarre '80s wedding culture and the limitations of linear editing probably played a hand in this. For me it was simply a means to get to be with my kids during the week."

Laura, as we all know now, came into her own as a filmmaker too. Like a sponge, she soaked up knowledge from Steve and from as many how-to books as she could get her hands on. "Basically, we just jumped in and learned by doing and then committed ourselves to self-education," she says, and by learning through trial and error. Not many people know that 5 years ago Laura made a short independent film. It was an experience she calls "absolutely invaluable."

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Benjamin Franklin once compared an unmarried man to the odd half of a pair of scissors. It's an apt description of what Laura and Steve would be without each other. In their marriage and in their business, they are partners until the end.

While too many couples can't agree on whose turn it is to make dinner or walk the dog—much less who should handle publicity and website upkeep—Steve and Laura have it all figured out. Steve works the phones and bookkeeping, while Laura handles the blog, website, and public relations. They share in the tasks of filming, editing, DVD authoring, and local networking. Their partnership in business and in love is what they treasure most about Vantage Point.

As a married couple, they say it's vital to nurture one another's growth and success and wholly respect each other. It's what makes or breaks a husband-wife team. "I've noticed that in all the very successful husband-wife teams there is a strong element of respect between the couple," says Laura.

Of course, they've had many years of perfecting their skills at blending their two worlds, and they have had some memorable moments along the way. Steve recalls, "Right after we got married, Laura, not used to having a home business, walked into my office half undressed with a laundry basket ... while I had a corporate client there. I don't know who was more shocked, him or her—or me, for that matter. She never made that mistake again!"

When their children were young, Steve says the kids had to learn how to act professionally as well because clients would often visit their home-based studio. When a client would visit, there could be no toys in the front yard, manners were mandatory, and noise was out of the question.

He concedes, "It was kind of hard on the kids. On the bright side, they learned good manners, we got to spend more time together as a family, and we had a better profit margin."

When asked whether they have a signature style to their shooting and editing, Laura gives an explanation that seems to parallel her evolution as a videographer, as well as their future together. "Steve started the basic format that we use, and I helped to develop its style. When I sit down to edit a film I never know where it's going to go. It's a creative journey, and I just trust my instinct and go where it leads me."

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