

LAURA DARK PHOTOGRAPHY

PORTRAIT SESSIONS

PREPARATION GUIDE



FOR EVERY REGULAR PORTRAIT PACKAGE & THEME

Your idea. Your experience.

Use this guide for every regular portrait package and theme. Bring a detailed concept or one small starting point; we will help you build the rest.

Packages covered: Basic, Classic, Upgraded, Signature, Elevated, Premier, Classic for Two, and Laura Picks.

Themes covered: Conceptual & Fine Art, Fantasy, Gothic Romance, Seasonal Romance, Victorian & Steampunk, Pinup, Fashion, Cosplay, Couples & Family, and other planned portrait concepts.

Your package determines the included looks, styling services, and finished images. Your theme is the visual direction for those portraits. Boudoir clients also use the separate Boudoir Preparation Guide. Featured-animal clients should read the animal-session section and their booking instructions.

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Check your client portal and session instructions for the details of your booking. Basic clients arrive camera-ready when hair and makeup are not booked.

Start with a feeling.

Dark romance. A favorite character. A color you love. A version of yourself you have always wanted to meet.

Complete your pre-shoot intake

Share your inspiration, likes and dislikes, wardrobe ideas, styling preferences, and editing requests before the appointment. Upload clear reference images and wait for each upload to finish before submitting.

Tell us what matters

Explain what you love about a reference: the light, mood, pose, color, makeup, or clothing. We create your portrait around you; a reference gives us a useful starting point.

Check the plan against your package

Review your included looks, sets, and styling services. Extra outfit options give us flexibility, but do not automatically add changes, images, or photography time.

Confirm specialty details early

Custom props, character clothing, specialty makeup, featured animals, locations, and advanced effects need advance planning. Ask about availability, feasibility, and any extra cost before buying pieces for the session.



Dress for the story. And for yourself.

Explore the studio wardrobe

The studio wardrobe spans sizes 00-6X, with selected gowns, dresses, corsets, robes, wigs, headpieces, wings, and accessories. Individual pieces fit differently. Confirm the particular item, size, and availability before relying on it.

Check what your concept includes

Studio wardrobe is provided for selected concepts, including Gothic Romance, Seasonal Romance, and Victorian sessions. Bring your own specific pinup, conceptual, fashion, and cosplay outfits unless another arrangement has been confirmed.

Try on the complete look

Sit, stand, turn, and raise your arms in your outfit. Check comfort, closures, straps, hems, and movement. Try it with the exact undergarments, shoes, and accessories you intend to wear.

Pack each look together

Clean and steam clothing in advance. Keep coordinating pieces together on hangers or in separate bags. Personal jewelry, heirlooms, and meaningful accessories can make the portrait feel more like you.

For boudoir, bring your own lingerie and personal garments. The studio has selected corsets, robes, and accessories, rather than a complete lingerie wardrobe.

Small details. A complete look.

Shoes and undergarments

Bring clean shoes that suit your outfit and any stockings, socks, or personal undergarments you need. Choose pieces that feel comfortable and work with the neckline, fit, and coverage of your clothing.

Hands and nails

Hands often become part of the portrait. Check for chipped polish and choose clean, intentional nails. A fresh manicure is optional. The same applies to toes if your chosen look includes bare feet or open shoes.

Jewelry, glasses, and personal pieces

Pack the items you want photographed and tell us which are important. Let us know if you prefer to wear your glasses, remove them, or discuss options. Fragile, sentimental, or valuable props should be planned in advance.

Hairpieces and character details

Tell us about wigs, extensions, armor, headpieces, prosthetics, or elaborate accessories before the appointment. If you bring your own extensions, have them installed beforehand unless the team has confirmed another arrangement.

A backup outfit or spare pair of stockings can help. Keep your booked number of looks in mind when choosing what to pack.

Prepare for your beauty plan.

When professional styling is booked

Unless your stylist gives different instructions, arrive with clean, completely dry hair and a clean, moisturized face without makeup. Share hairstyle, eye, lip, color, and overall mood references in your intake.

Basic packages and sessions without styling

Basic does not include hair and makeup. Arrive with your hair and makeup finished unless you have separately booked styling. Contact the studio in advance about availability, time, and price for any added service. Promotional packages may restrict add-ons.

Understand the included services

Classic and higher standard packages include one professional hair and makeup service per person. Basic does not include styling. Multiple looks do not automatically include multiple hairstyles or makeup designs. Your booking confirms the services included.

Share sensitivities and special requests

Tell us about cosmetic, adhesive, latex, or other product sensitivities and allergies, including lash-glue concerns. Lashes are included with studio makeup applications. Advance notice gives the artist time to discuss suitable options.

Keep skincare familiar in the days before the session. Allow time after any planned hair coloring or grooming for your skin and hair to settle.



Arrive at your start time.

LAURA DARK PHOTOGRAPHY
607 Main Street
Groveport, Ohio 43125

Follow your session instructions

Most sessions begin at the Groveport studio. Check the meeting location in your booking, especially for outdoor or specialty sessions. Confirm parking, entry, and any access needs with the studio before you travel.

Hair and makeup time is already included

When styling is part of your booking, it is built into your appointment. Arrive at the scheduled start time. If you are delayed, contact the studio promptly; arriving late reduces the time available for photography.

Arrange guests in advance

Come without additional guests unless they are participating in the photographs or the studio has approved them ahead of time. Accessibility, medical, and other support needs can be arranged with the team.

Keep essentials within reach

Bring water and any personal essentials you may need. Wear comfortable arrival clothing. Check your appointment time, package, directions, invoice, and session notes in your client portal before leaving home.

You do not have to know how to pose.

That is what we are here for.

We guide the details

Laura directs expression, hands, posture, angles, and movement throughout the session. Posing and lighting are shaped around the person and the concept.

Tell us what feels comfortable

Share mobility needs, injuries, sensitivities, or positions that do not work for you. Ask for a break or a different pose whenever you need one. Choose wardrobe and coverage that feel right for you.

Make preferences part of the plan

Tell us what you love about yourself, what you want emphasized, and anything you prefer to keep covered. Discuss privacy and image-sharing preferences before the session and refer to your agreed permissions.



An extraordinary guest. A carefully planned session.

Featured animals are arranged in advance

Wolf and other specialty sessions depend on selected dates and professional handler availability. Check the specific species, date, package, location, and preparation requirements with the studio before booking.

Age requirements

Wolf participants must be 13 or older. Fox sessions through The Ohio Canid Center, falconry through The Ohio School of Falconry, and snake sessions are 18+. Clients under 18 require parent or legal guardian permission.

Follow the professional handler

Only scheduled participants may be present around the animals. Do not approach, touch, feed, or direct an animal without permission. A specific animal, pose, or physical interaction cannot be guaranteed.

Check clothing, props, and personal pets

Do not bring treats or animal-derived clothing and props unless approved. If you would like photographs with your own pet, contact the studio first so the session and any arrangements can be discussed. A pet should never be an unannounced addition to a specialty-animal session.

The finished portrait. Still yours.

Share editing preferences before the shoot

Professional basic retouching is included in standard packages. Explain what you want softened, refined, preserved, or left as it is. Discuss scars, tattoos, skin texture, medical devices, or other specific requests in your intake.

Plan advanced effects

Detailed face, body, hair, nail, or wing work may require upgraded editing. Compositing, replacements, fire, water, and other advanced effects may require extreme FX editing. Confirm feasibility and additional pricing before the session.

Your booking sets the image count

Your package determines the number of finished images included. Extra finished images and specialty edits are additional purchases. Check current package details rather than assuming every photographed frame will be delivered.

Your online gallery

Finished digital images are delivered through a SmugMug gallery. Follow the studio instructions for your session and use the gallery link provided in your client portal. Prints, books, canvas, and other products are available separately.

Ask the studio about selection, editing, and delivery for your specific session. Specialty artwork can require a different workflow from a straightforward portrait.

Prepare without the pressure.

Once you have booked

Complete your pre-shoot intake and check your appointment and package. Share your vision, styling references, editing preferences, allergies, and comfort or accessibility needs. Confirm studio pieces and specialty details.

In the weeks before

Shop with time for delivery, exchanges, or alterations. Try on complete outfits. Confirm custom props, personal costumes, and any wigs or extensions that need advance preparation.

During the final week

Recheck garment fit, straps, fastenings, shoe comfort, and personal accessories. Keep skincare familiar. Send any last planning questions before appointment day.

The night before

Clean or steam your outfits and pack by look. Set out comfortable arrival clothing. Check directions and session instructions, charge your phone, and get the rest that works for you.

On the day

Follow the hair and makeup preparation for your booking. Bring your wardrobe, accessories, water, and personal essentials. Arrive at your scheduled start time and tell us anything that will help you feel comfortable.



Your session-day checklist.

- ☐ Pre-shoot intake completed, with reference uploads finished.
- ☐ Appointment time, meeting location, directions, and session instructions checked.
- ☐ Included looks, sets, people, styling services, and finished-image count reviewed.
- ☐ Studio wardrobe, specialty pieces, and props confirmed in advance.
- ☐ Personal outfits tried on, cleaned, and packed by look.
- ☐ Coordinating undergarments, shoes, stockings, jewelry, and accessories packed.
- ☐ Clean, completely dry hair and a clean, moisturized face if professional styling is booked; otherwise, hair and makeup finished.
- ☐ Allergies, mobility needs, comfort boundaries, and editing preferences shared.
- ☐ Water, personal touch-up items, and any essentials packed.
- ☐ Any additional guest, support person, personal pet, or specialty-animal arrangements confirmed with the studio.

Bring yourself, your ideas, and the pieces that feel like you. We will help with the rest.

You bring the story.

We will help you tell it beautifully.

QUESTIONS BEFORE YOUR SESSION?

Message the studio through your client portal
or visit lauradark.net/contact-2/.

GROVEPORT STUDIO / COLUMBUS, OHIO

Portrait Session Preparation Guide / 2026

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