

Beginning Boudoir
Guide

6 Key Steps To Shooting *Boudoir*

Quick & Easy
Guide On How To
Shoot Boudoir

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Table of Contents

Introduction	
Welcome!	4
1. Understand the Exposure Triangle	5
Aperture, Shutter Speed, ISO	5
Shooting in an Automatic Mode	6
Photography is Like Riding a Bike	8
2. Train Your Eye to See Light	10
Re-create Lighting Set Ups	15
Using Light to Shoot Boudoir	15
How to Learn Light	16
3. Have a Clean, Private, Safe Place to Shoot	18
Give Them a Tour	20
4. Find Subjects to Practice On	20
Model Mayhem	21
Free Account	21
Local Facebook Groups	22
TFP or Paid	23
5. Use a Posing Guide	24
Less is More	26

6. Learn to Build Trust and Comfort	26
If You're a Male Boudoir Photographer	27
Establish Trust and Legitimacy	28
Have a Professional Website	28
Have a Friendly Profile Picture	29
Testimonials	29
Behind the Scenes Footage	30
Have a Distinct Style	30
Summary	31
Practice, Practice, Practice	31
When Will You Know You're Ready?	32
Conclusion	32
Related Resources	33

Introduction

Welcome!

Welcome to **6 Key Steps To Shooting Boudoir!**

In this guide we're going to explore **six key** areas you'll need to know about to begin shooting boudoir. Some may be completely new to you, or you may be transitioning from shooting another genre and need only apply what you already know in a new fashion.

Either way, this informative guide (*written from first-hand experience*) will break down six key steps you need to get started shooting boudoir and get you headed in the right direction to building a **lucrative boudoir business**.

Here's to your boudoir success!



Charles Mitri

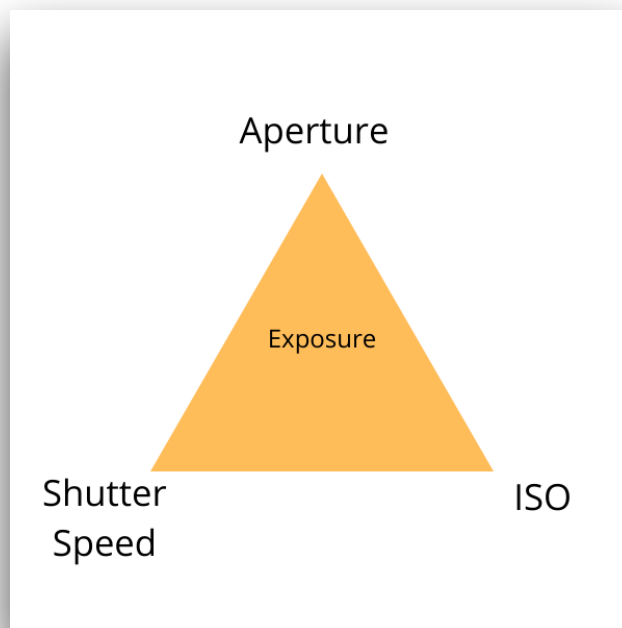
1. Understand the Exposure Triangle

If you're transitioning from another genre, you may be able to check the box on this first step, but for those learning how to shoot boudoir and ***are new to photography as well***, this first step is crucial.

You can't run before you walk, as the saying goes... or as I like to say, you can't build a house until you know how to use a hammer and ***your camera is the tool that builds your image with light***.

That's how I like to look at it.

Aperture, Shutter Speed, ISO



The exposure triangle consists of your aperture, shutter speed, and ISO settings and ***it's the relationship between all three that gives you the exposure you're aiming for*** when creating an image in manual mode with your camera.

If you don't know how adjusting these three settings affects your image, then you need to find a photography course online, watch YouTube videos, or find someone that is willing to teach you.

You have to be familiar enough with your camera that you understand how adjusting one will affect your exposure because ***it's in manual mode that you have independent control over all three settings.***

Knowing the exposure triangle is the foundation of photography and it's imperative you understand how it works.

Shooting In An Automatic Mode

I mean, sure, you can set your camera to an automatic setting like aperture priority or shutter speed priority and get “properly” exposed images, but it's extremely limiting. It would be like taking a road trip on a bike that has one gear instead of twenty.



The different gears are used to adapt to the changing conditions of the road, and with photography, those changing conditions have to do with light, area of focus, and camera shake.

Automatic settings will also be of little use if you're trying to shoot certain kinds of shots, like a silhouette. Your camera will struggle to find proper exposure for all that light entering your lens and you'll need to override the automatic setting (*in manual mode*) to properly expose for that silhouette.



Besides, if you continue to shoot in an automatic mode ***you'll never understand the relationship between light and your camera*** — you'll never really understand

photography, and if you want to charge people and become a professional then understanding the exposure triangle is vital.

Photography Is Like Riding A Bike

I like to compare learning the exposure triangle to learning how to ride a bike. When learning to ride a bike you

struggle and fall many times before you finally experience the proper relationship between ***forward momentum, balance, and terrain.***

Then, once you're up and riding, it's something you never forget.



It's kind of the same thing with photography. You have to know that if you're shooting a subject in natural light and want the image to be brighter, then lowering your shutter speed is what's needed.

But what if you're already at a low shutter speed and going any lower would introduce camera shake that could make your image blurry? That's when understanding how

to adjust another setting of the exposure triangle comes into play.

You can't enter a bike race until you first learn how to ride a bike.

Makes sense, right?

But trust me, there are plenty of people who don't understand that there's a lot more to photography than just buying an expensive camera, pointing it at your subject, pressing the button, and “*Voila!*” you have a beautiful image.

This first step on your road to shooting boudoir is learning how your camera works by understanding the relationship between aperture, shutter speed, and ISO, also known as the ***exposure triangle***.

So, if you're serious about this boudoir thing then get a professional or semi-professional camera and start experimenting and practicing with ***aperture, shutter speed, and ISO in manual mode***.

2. Train Your Eye To See Light

Photography is fundamentally all about light. You have to train your eye to see light, all kinds. How many kinds of light are there? Quite a few.

Natural light

Artificial light

Ambient light

Directional light

Flat light

Front light

Edge light

Back light

Cross light

Light from above

Light from below

Soft light

Hard light

Gelled light

Bounced light

Warm light

Cool light

Those are all I can think of at the moment. There may be a few I missed but the point is that light comes in many different varieties.

Understanding and recognizing all these different types is key to becoming a boudoir photographer. Let me rephrase that, ***understanding and recognizing all these different types of light is key to becoming an exceptional boudoir photographer.***



Personally, I love light... or rather the relationship between light and shadow. It's what drives me as a photographer.

Photographers capture their subject in some kind of light,



whether intentionally or accidentally. Your goal should be

to capture your subject with the kind of light that you're drawn to.

Different movie directors use light in different ways. Michael Bay loves edge light in *Armageddon*. David Fincher uses dark and moody light in *Seven*. James Cameron makes it cool in *Terminator II*.

Start to notice light in everything, TV shows, commercials, music videos, print ads, paintings, live theatre, photographs.



Eventually, you'll start to *really* see light and you'll begin to recognize its many flavors.

Re-Create Lighting Set Ups

The next step is to learn how to re-create and manipulate light yourself.

There are many photography tutorials you can watch or buy online that explain all about that. ***Creative Live is a good place to start.*** Check 'em out [here](#).

Using Light To Shoot Boudoir

What kind of light do you like? You may not know at this point because you may not be that familiar with the language of light.

That's fine, we all start knowing nothing.



If you study light, you'll eventually start to speak its language and one day become fluent in it. You may even invent your own language with it.

You see, boudoir is not just taking pictures of women in sexy lingerie, at least it's not for me. It's about taking pictures of women in sexy lingerie ***in a certain kind of light that creates a certain kind of mood.***

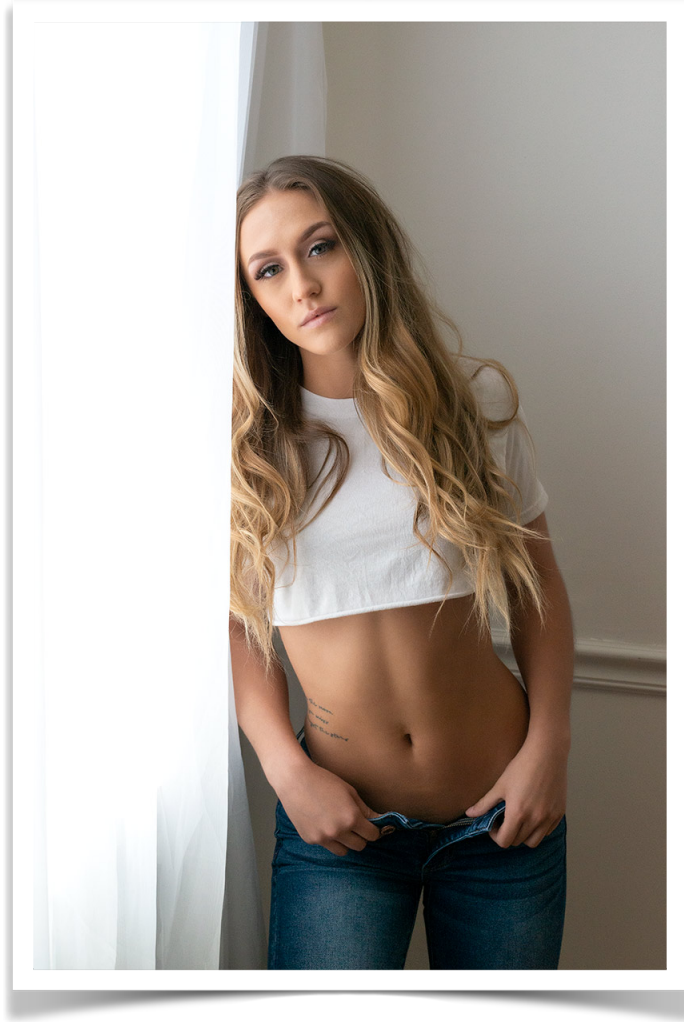


How To Learn About Light

Learning about light takes time. Start with the most simple, like natural light through a window since it's readily available and free.

(Hey, you can't beat free!)

There's a lot to understand about shooting a subject with natural light, for example, the closer your subject is to the window, the softer the light will be. The further away she is, the harder it will be.



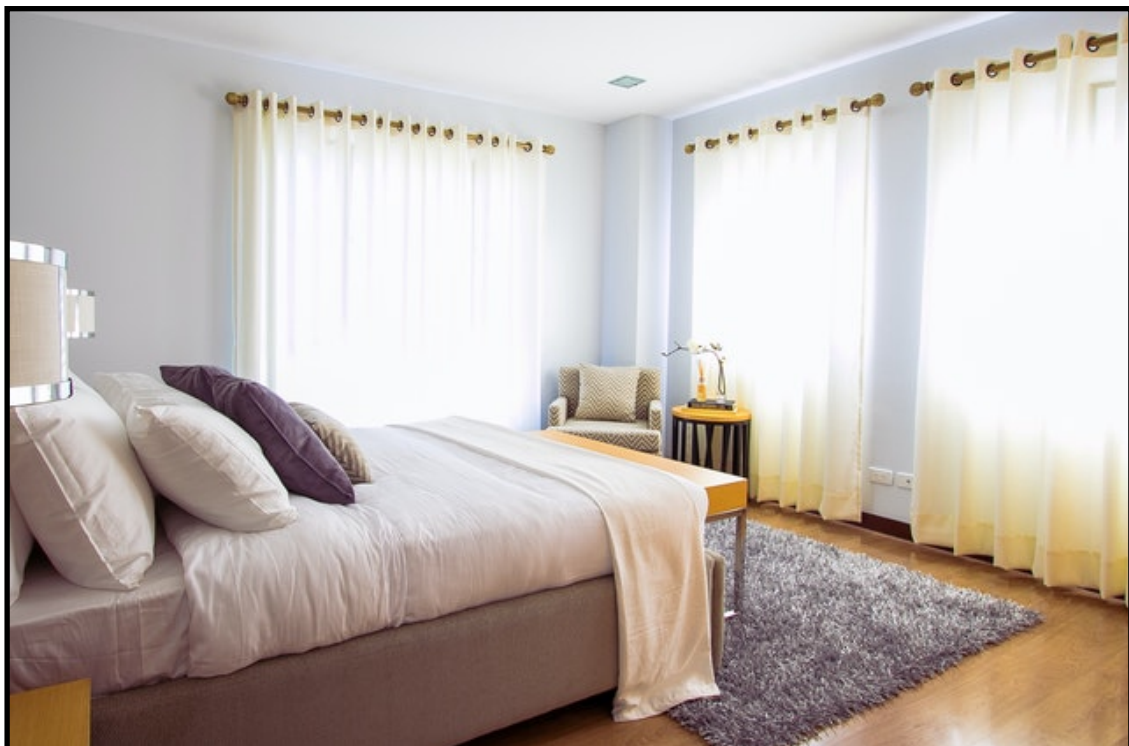
After you have some experience understanding and seeing light, you'll start to have a preference. ***That's when you can dive in and learn all about that particular kind of light.***

It may come to pass that you get bored with a certain type of light and want to find something new. So, you look around and seek inspiration. Eventually you'll come across someone's use of light that stops you dead in your tracks.

An image will grab hold of you like a hypnotic trance and won't let go. That's probably your next area of exploration into light. At least that's how it works with me.

So, be a student of light and learn to recognize all its wonderful flavors.

3. Have A Clean, Private, Safe Place To Shoot



When starting down the road to shooting boudoir, you're going to need a clean, private, safe place to shoot.

This could be your living room or spare bedroom, a rented studio, or your subject's place, but ***shooting boudoir requires a space where your model can feel comfortable both physically and mentally.***

Posing provocatively in lingerie takes a certain amount of courage for most women, and having a comfortable place for them to be vulnerable in contributes a lot to putting them at ease.



Give Them A Tour

Currently, I shoot in a studio that has a front room and a back room connected by a hallway, along with a storage room and bathroom.

One of the first things I do when my subject arrives is give them a tour. This affords me the opportunity to partake in small talk with them while I show them around.

The more familiar they are with their environment, the more relaxed and comfortable they'll be and that will ***show in their expression and body language when the camera starts clicking.***

Knowing they're in a clean, private, safe environment is key to having a focused and calm subject, and a successful shoot.

4. Find Subjects To Practice On

Starting out, you'll want to practice and you're going to need subjects to practice on.

If you don't have any friends that are willing and able, your next best place to find someone will be either ***Model Mayhem*** or a ***local Facebook group*** whose members include photographers, models, and makeup artists.

Model Mayhem

Model Mayhem is a website (modelmayhem.com) that connects mostly aspiring models with photographers.

You can sign up for a free account which allows you a certain level of access in contacting other members, or you can pay a small monthly fee for more direct access.

Free Account

With the free account, you can only contact other members who are your ***“friends”***. That requires you to send a “friend request” first to models you'd like to work with and they in turn would have to accept that request before you can email them.

With the next level up, the ***Premium Level*** (currently \$6 a month), you can directly contact up to 100 members a month without being “friends”.

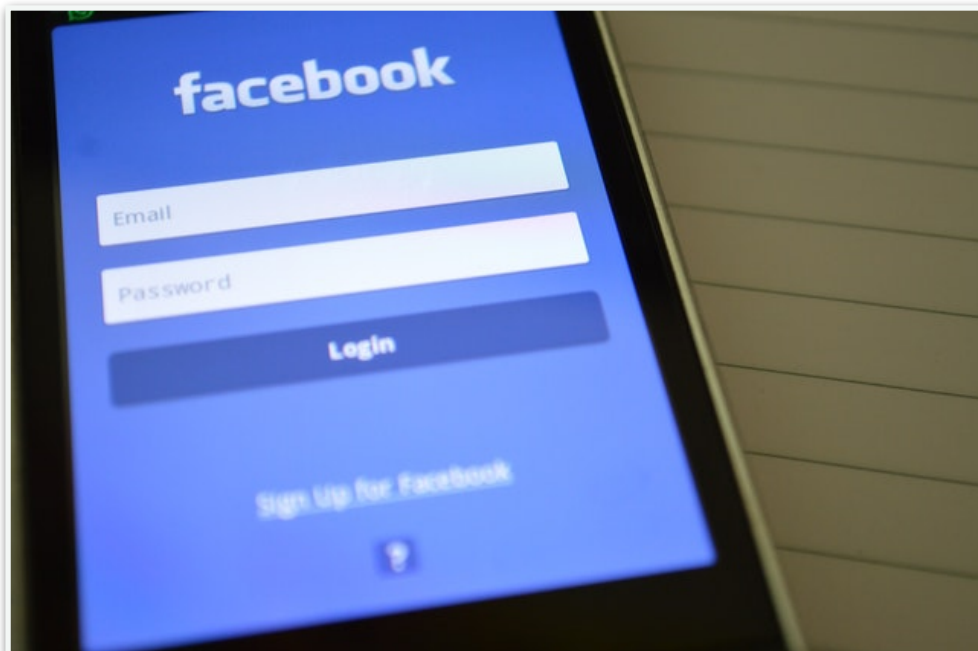
When setting up your profile be sure to include a good sample of images that models can check out to see if you're someone they want to work with.

If you're just starting out shooting boudoir and don't have any boudoir images, then post the best work that you do have — just post *something **that shows you're serious about your photography.***

The more professional your profile looks, the more likely models will want to work with you. It helps if you include a link to your photography website as well if you have one.

Local Facebook Groups

Joining a local Facebook Group whose members consist of **photographers, models, and makeup artists** is another great place to find subjects to practice on.



Go on Facebook and do a search for “photographer/model groups in (name of your city/town)”. There are bound to be several in your area.

If you’re close to a big city, there will be quite a few to choose from.

Join the groups that look the most appealing and post that you’re looking for models to shoot boudoir with. Just be real honest about where you’re at skill-wise because you don’t want to set any expectations you can’t meet.

There are lots of women who will jump at the opportunity to be photographed **but pick wisely**. Explain in your post (*or privately to those who respond*) where your current skill level is at and what you hope to accomplish with the shoot, and also what they’ll be getting in return, namely images.

TFP or Paid

These shoots will either be **TFP** (*trade for photos*) or you may have to pay a model if you can’t find any willing to do a trade with you.

You’ll likely get a more experienced model of higher caliber from those that require payment but you should be able to find some who are willing to do a trade shoot. It’ll

depend on where you live and how active the modeling scene is in your area.

In fact, ***it would probably be better to have a less experienced model because you want to practice coaching them into different poses.***

5. Use A Posing Guide

Earlier I mentioned how photography is mostly all about lighting, well, ***shooting boudoir is mostly all about posing.***

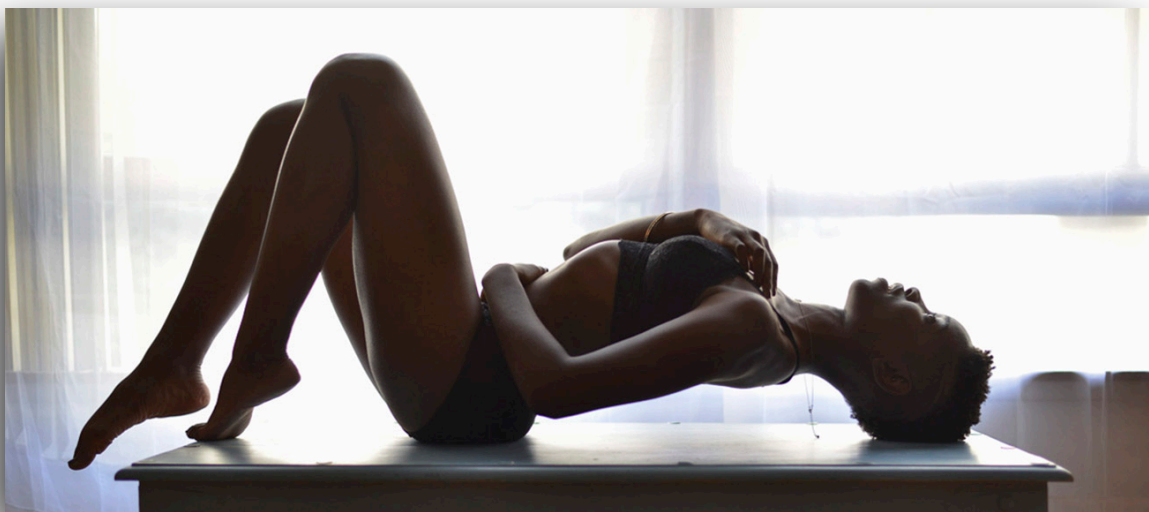
There is a lot the photographer has to take into account in order to pull off a successful boudoir shoot and at the top of that list is knowing how to pose their subject.



I recommend you have some kind of posing guide handy to refer to when shooting because chances are you're not going to remember all those poses you looked at earlier.

There's no shame in referring to a guide during a shoot. I still do it today because I want to make sure I don't forget anything. It's like a play list for a band. A band will have a list of songs in the order they plan on playing them during a performance.

A posing guide is also helpful to show your subject what a pose looks like because sometimes models don't take direction well, or *you* may have trouble giving direction.



Having a picture will help both of you.

The model can see exactly what you're going for, and you can look at all the fine nuances, as well as, the broad strokes.

Less Is More

A big mistake when first learning how to shoot boudoir is trying to shoot too many poses in one session.

I believe it's better to attempt fewer poses and really spend time getting them right and ***explore shooting them at different angles and distances*** than it is to attempt too many poses that you rush through and that end up being mediocre because you didn't spend enough time on them.

So, have some type of ***posing guide handy*** you can easily refer to whether it's images on your phone, a Pinterest board you've made, or a physical folder with images from magazines or print-outs from the internet.

Trust me, you'll be glad you did.

6. Learn to Build Trust and Comfort

There's a certain etiquette one must be aware of and experience in order to avoid any awkwardness that can naturally arise from shooting women in such revealing outfits.

Trust, safety, privacy... these are all part of the process from first contact all the way to delivery of your final product.

That's why practicing is a critical part of learning how to shoot boudoir. ***You're not just learning how to photograph women in a boudoir style, you're also learning how to build trust and comfort.***

This holds true to an even greater extent if you're a male boudoir photographer.

If You're A Male Boudoir Photographer

Being male and getting into boudoir comes with an entirely different set of dynamics than if you're female.



You're going to have to work twice as hard to build trust and prove your legitimacy than you would if you're female. That's just the way it is.

Unfortunately for all the male photographers out there who are true working professionals and respectful of everyone they work with, there are plenty of **“guys with a camera”** whose real motivation is to use photography as a means to an ulterior end.

You're going to have to pass every woman's trust test before they'll even consider working with you. So, how do you do that?

Establish Trust and Legitimacy

Fortunately, you can establish trust and legitimacy in many ways and I recommend using as many of them as you can.

Have a Professional Website

Having a website dedicated to your photography tells people that you take your craft seriously enough to have invested in your own site. It also tells them you plan on being around for a while.



Have a Friendly Profile Picture

Having a friendly picture of yourself shows everyone you're not hiding and proud of what you do.

Testimonials

Collect as many testimonials as you can, and on video if possible. Hearing a testimonial from a woman who shot with you is ten times more powerful than reading one on your website.

With video testimonials you also get the ***emotion*** connected to those words and that's usually pretty powerful.

Behind The Scenes Footage

Include BTS footage of you interacting with a subject during a shoot. This goes a long way in allowing potential clients to see how you behave and also ***what your personality is like.***

Have A Distinct Style

Having your own distinct style tells people that you're also an artist, and ***artists get taken more seriously than photographers who just take pictures of women.***

If you're an artist with your own unique lighting, composition, use of color, setting, or anything really, then you're creating a look that will make you stand out.



Work towards finding, defining, and mastering your own style of boudoir after you get the basics down. It will set you apart, make you memorable and in demand for that particular style women can't get anywhere else.

Summary

Okay, so those are my six key steps to learning how to shoot boudoir, however, I want to leave you with one more piece of advice and that is...

Practice, Practice, Practice

In order to get good at anything you have to practice.

Practice takes the pressure off having to deliver results when you're still learning.

I still practice to this day.

I practice shooting with different types of light, different backgrounds, different modifiers and colored gels — whatever I might want to include in my regular boudoir sessions.

I practice too because I love photography and it's just fun for me to go off by myself or with a TFP model and experiment and be creative.

When Will You Know You're Ready?

If you're wondering when you should start charging for your services, check out my article, ["When Should I Start Charging For My Boudoir Photography?"](#)

Conclusion

I hope these six steps have given you a quick and easy roadmap to get you started down the road to shooting boudoir.

There's a lot to learn whether you're new to photography and boudoir or just new to boudoir so go easy on yourself. This doesn't happen overnight but if you have a passion for it and persevere, you'll keep improving and moving forward, and you *will* become successful.

Thanks for your time!

Charles Mitri

Founder / Lounge Boudoir

[Bella Mitri Boudoir](#)

For more articles and videos on everything boudoir check out [LoungeBoudoir.com](#) and Lounge Boudoir on YouTube!

Related Resources

If you're looking to start building your portfolio I recommend using a **TFP agreement** with your models. Check out mine at:

<https://loungeboudoir.samcart.com/products/my-ultimate-boudoir-tfp-agreement-and-model-release-bundle>

If you're already booking clients and getting paid then you'll need a **boudoir photoshoot contract** to protect yourself. You can read all about it by clicking the link below.

<https://loungeboudoir.samcart.com/products/my-ultimate-boudoir-photo-shoot-contract>

If you're a male photographer who wants to understand how the boudoir genre works and your place in it as a man, check out my ebook, **"Shoot Boudoir Like A Man!"** at the link below.

<https://loungeboudoir.samcart.com/products/shoot-boudoir-like-a-man->

Now make it happen!