

Blush Photo/Black Dog Photo Co: Putting it all in focus.



Ryan and Ashley Smas
Owners/Photographers

What were you doing before you started Black Dog/Blush?

Ashley: I was working in non-profit for the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association.

Ryan: I worked for a number of local studios and as a yearbook representative for Herff Jones before going full time in the photo business.

As a business owner, what is one thing you never imagined yourself doing?

Ashley: I never envisioned spending hours styling a cheeseburger! Painting with oil, using sponges and pins, even using the occasional blow torch...

Ryan: Some of the more adventurous shoots we have done. Going up in the bucket of a de-icing truck to photograph jets during the RNC, photographing molten 2,000 degree metal being poured into molds, photographing Harleys doing burnouts from the back of a Subaru with the hatch open, those are a few that come to mind!

What is something that defines your position and the vision for Black Dog/Blush in the future?

Ashley & Ryan: We are excited about the direction our business is headed! Moving from a wedding photography model into artistic infant/family and commercial photography reminds us of the feeling we had starting the business almost a decade ago. The nervous anticipation of putting ideas into reality, and watching as they start to work (or don't). Both of our backgrounds in college were commercial photography, so going that avenue has been really cool for us, we get to work together on a lot of projects. And we always want to keep that connection with our clients. So instead of having one really special day, now we get to have an amazing relationship with people and watch their children grow.

What's the most ridiculous fact you know?

Ashley: A cat was once the mayor of a town in Alaska for 20 years!

Ryan: High Glens Park here in the falls had one of the first roller coasters in the US.

What makes the CF community special to you?

Ryan: I think the best thing about living and working in CF is all the amazing people that are just doing so many cool and creative things. A perfect example: Ashley's sister was in town; we wandered around Front Street, ate some food, and

(cont.)



Blush Photo/Black Dog Photo Co.

just had the best time and all felt like we were on vacation– and we walked from the house.

What makes Blush Photo so unique?

Ryan: It's so amazing that Ashley creates custom sets for her photography sessions. She really enjoys talking with parents and finding out what their kids love, or what their nursery theme is, and then builds and styles a unique set around that!

Is there a story behind your business name?

Black Dog Commercial was named after the original black dog, Bailey. Ashley had Bailey in college and he was with us for our entire early life together: Marriage, house, kids... seemed to make sense to name the business after him.

What do you like best about living/working in CF? What are your hobbies and interests?

We are in love with all of the unique and creative things entrepreneurs are doing along Front Street! Art, food, beer, games, it's so fun to just go meander and see what everyone is up to down there!

What's something that drives you crazy?

Ashley: Ryan.

Ryan: Ryan.

Anything else we should know?

Ashley: I'm obsessed with *The Golden Girls*. In fact I named our dog Betty White. But on a more serious note, I started a charity at Akron Children's Hospital. We photographed babies in the NICU and donated the photos to the family. It's so rewarding to be able to help families going through a difficult time.

Ryan: I met Tony Hawk in the bathroom at the X-Games. It was awkward. ■



All photography by Black Dog Photo Co./Blush Photo

FIND BLACK DOG PHOTO CO./BLUSH PHOTO ONLINE:

<https://blushphoto.co/>

f www.facebook.com/blushphoto

<https://blackdogphotocophoto.com>

f www.facebook.com/blackdogphotoco

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE DOWNTOWN CUYAHOGA FALLS PARTNERSHIP TODAY!

Business and Community Member Levels available. Complete and submit the membership form online:

www.downtowncf.com/member



DOWNTOWNCF.COM | THE FUN FLOWS HERE.