

10 Things you should know before hiring a caricaturist

* Professional Cartoonists have usually undergone formal training in the arts industry. However it is not a necessity. Always request to see the most recent examples of their work prior to committing to a requested service. Samples should indicate the exact nature of their style and provide you with an indication of what to expect. You should not be given examples of artwork completed more than 12 months old. Artists always improve over time and certainly their expertise and style inevitably change or improve. Two to three examples are usually suffice.

* Professional Cartoonists should always provide a rough draft or sketch prior to completing the finished artwork. This allows the client the opportunity to make changes or suggestions to the piece. If you are a relative of the subject this may be difficult in assessing likenesses. With day to day contact you may not realise the subtle differences in appearances to your relatives. Cartoonists are visual and are receptive to anything that they feel needs to be exaggerated for clarity. If you find the drawing may not appear to be true to nature, try showing the rough sketch to friends or co-workers and provide some feedback to the Cartoonist. It is not uncommon for next of kin to initially panic at first sketches, keep in mind you have a different perception as to how you see that person. Cartoonists can only go by images and not by personality physically (with exception to live caricature).



* Price always varies according to a number of variables. Best to make sure that you have considered the following:

- Is your caricature for commercial use (newspaper, magazine etc.) or for personal use?
- What size do you require the drawing to be ? A4 and A3 are standard sizes.
- Do you need Colour or just Black/White artwork?
- Do you require framing?

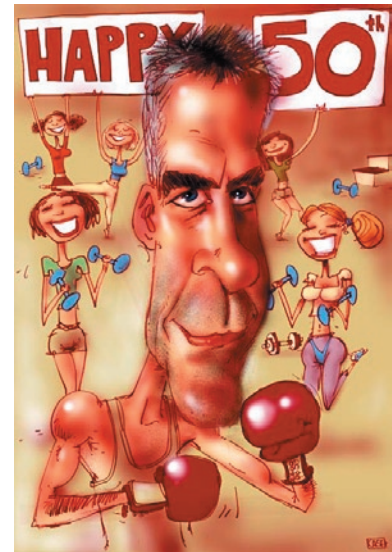
* Material used vary according to the style of the Cartoonist. You should check on your first contact as to how the final piece will be rendered. Some Cartoonists are now referring solely to digital prints of the artwork as this allows for faster and more accurate dried finishes. Traditional mediums tend to take longer as there are drying times that must be considered.

* Most Cartoonists are members of the Australian Cartoonists' Association (ACA). This is a non profit organisation that enables its members to network and provide more information regarding the industry. If you approach a Cartoonist and you find them to be not suited to your intentions or they are unavailable for the job, you may ask them to refer a colleague or give details of the Secretary of the ACA from which you can locate more Cartoonists to select from.

Artwork © Lee Sheppard, Steve Case 2003

* Live performances are done by few Cartoonists. Those who specialise in this area usually have agents but can be approached independently. Samples are sometimes hard as most work is given away on the spot during functions. Live Caricature is popular at Conferences, Events, Weddings, Birthdays and any general exhibition that requires live entertainment. Always check with the Cartoonist for any special requirements or needs they may need. eg. lighting, passes, access etc.

* Finished artwork is in most cases supplied unframed. If you require framing it is an additional cost to the artwork which will have been quoted. Cartoonists in most cases have an arrangement with a local picture framer to supply frames. Please mention at the time of your request to have a quote done for framing.



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* Artwork produced via photos can be the most efficient but also the most tricky. Clear recent photos of the subject are required. Images taken at night do not provide clear images, especially with dark hair against a dark background. Photos should try and indicate the subject from many different angles such as profile, 3/4 view and full frontal shots. The better the photos the more accurate the capture of the subject.

* Time is very crucial when commissioning Cartoonists. It is important to provide enough time for the Cartoonist to schedule their work to fit in with your deadline. For personal commissions always allow a minimum of 5 working days or more if you require framing. Check with the Cartoonist with regards to works required within a shorter period of time.

* Background information on the subject can prove vital to the humour in the drawing. Mention things like hobbies, habits, job description, likes and dislikes or any clues that might inspire the Cartoonist to provide you with some humorous action in your piece to capture the likeness.



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