

MOBILE FILMMAKING GUIDE

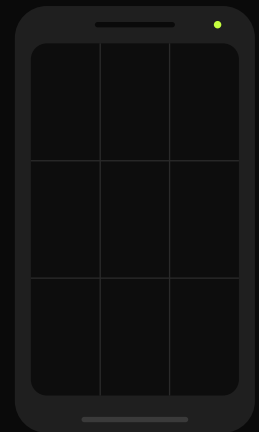
Catering Service

Film your own Instagram content
with just a smartphone.

Spreads, setups, the moment guests gasp at the buffet. Catering looks best when you film the chaos and the calm.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Phone basics every owner should know**
Lens, light, lock — the cheat sheet.
- **Up to 30 shots designed for your business**
Each one drawn so you can copy it on set.
- **Tips that pros guard like trade secrets**
We give them away. You keep your customers.



PHONE BASICS · READ THIS FIRST

10 things pros do that amateurs skip.

Every shot in this guide assumes these ten basics. Read once, then forget about them — they become muscle memory after a couple of days.

01 Clean your lens.

Wipe with your shirt or microfiber. Fingerprints destroy cinematic look in two seconds.

03 Lock exposure & focus.

Tap-and-hold the screen until "AE/AF Lock" appears. Slide the sun icon to fine-tune brightness.

05 Steady your hands.

Brace elbows on a counter, lean against a wall, or use a stack of books as a tripod.

07 Vertical for Reels (9:16). Horizontal for YouTube

Most posts go vertical. Lock orientation in your phone's Control Center so it doesn't flip mid-shot.

09 Three takes minimum.

First is rehearsal. Second is good. Third is best. Storage is free. Mediocrity is expensive.

02 Use natural light.

Turn off ceiling lights. Position your subject 90° to a window — never directly facing it.

04 Get close. Don't zoom.

Zoom = crop = blur. Walk closer instead. Phones distort under 30 cm — stay 60+ cm from faces.

06 Shoot in 4K 30fps.

For slow-motion: iPhone uses 240fps slo-mo, Android picks 1080p slo-mo. Use only for water, fabric, or impact.

08 Roll early. End late.

Press record, wait 3 seconds, then start the action. End 2 seconds after the action. You'll trim later — never the other way.

10 Airplane mode while filming.

No notifications. No calls cutting off your hero shot. It also stops random app updates from heating your phone.

CAMERA SETTINGS

Best quality settings for your phone.

Set these once, forget about them. They're the difference between a video that looks like 2015 and one that looks like a TV ad.

iPhone

- **4K at 30fps (or 24fps for film look).**
Settings → Camera → Record Video → 4K at 30fps. 24fps is more cinematic; 30fps is safer for fast action.
- **Slo-mo: 1080p at 240fps.**
Settings → Camera → Record Slo-mo → 1080p HD at 240 fps. Use only for water, fabric, sweat — not for talking.
- **Turn ON: Grid + HDR Video.**
Settings → Camera → Composition → Grid (rule-of-thirds). Settings → Camera → Record Video → HDR Video (newer iPhones only).
- **Format: High Efficiency.**
Settings → Camera → Formats → High Efficiency. Saves storage; quality stays the same.
- **Cinematic mode for talking heads.**
iPhone 13+. Auto-blurs background. Use for interviews, reactions, owner-to-camera shots.
- **Tap-and-hold to lock AE/AF.**
Yellow box appears. Tap-and-hold = box turns yellow + says "AE/AF Lock". Slide the sun icon to fine-tune brightness.

Samsung Galaxy

- **UHD 4K at 30fps.**
Camera → Settings (gear icon) → Video size → UHD 30. For social media, this is the sweet spot.
- **Super Slow-mo: bursts only.**
Camera → MORE → Super Slow-mo. 960fps for split-second moments. Don't try to film 5 seconds of slo-mo with this.
- **Pro Video mode.**
Camera → MORE → Pro Video. Manual ISO, shutter, focus. Lock ISO at 100 in daylight, 400 indoors.
- **Turn ON: Grid + Stabilization.**
Camera Settings → Grid lines → 3x3. Stabilization: ON for handheld, OFF for tripod (it crops the frame).
- **Director's View.**
Records front + back camera at the same time. Perfect for owner reaction + product shots.
- **Tap-and-hold to lock focus & exposure.**
Yellow circle appears. Slide the sun icon to brighten/darken. Same as iPhone.

LIGHTING

The single biggest upgrade you can buy under \$100.

If your videos look like "hostage footage", the problem is almost always lighting — not the phone. One light + one window = pro look.

THE 90° RULE

Stand your subject so the light hits them at 45° from the side — never straight-on (flat) and never directly above (raccoon eyes). The simplest free version: subject 90° to a window, you stand on the dark side and shoot toward them. Magazine cover light, zero dollars.

TYPES OF LIGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW**Ring light**

Even, beauty-friendly. Best for face content (salons, beauty, talking heads). \$30–80.

Drawback: flat. Skin looks airbrushed but boring.

Softbox

Big, soft, flattering. Best for portraits and food. \$40–80.

Bigger = softer. The bigger the softbox, the more flattering the light.

LED panel

Versatile workhorse. Best for products, B-roll, wide shots. \$50–150.

Add a piece of white shower curtain in front for instant softbox.

RGB tube light

Adds colour and atmosphere. Best for fashion, bars, restaurants. \$60–120.

Don't overuse purple/red. One coloured rim light + one neutral key = pro.

WHAT TO BUY (AMAZON)

- **Neewer 480 LED Panel** · ~\$40
The starter panel everyone recommends. Adjustable brightness + colour. Search "Neewer 480 LED".
- **Neewer 18" Ring Light Kit** · ~\$60
Phone holder included. Perfect for face content (salon, beauty, owner-to-camera). Search "Neewer 18 inch ring light".
- **GVM 50RS RGB Light** · ~\$65
Adds colour. Great for fashion, restaurants, salons. Search "GVM 50RS".
- **Lume Cube Panel Pro 2.0** · ~\$89
Pocket-size pro panel. Travels well. Search "Lume Cube Panel Pro".
- **Aputure Amaran AL-MX** · ~\$109
Tiny, professional-grade quality. Premium pick. Search "Amaran AL-MX".

THE 2× LENS TRICK

Why your face shots look bad — and the 30-second fix.

TRUE STORY

A barber friend kept asking why his customers' faces looked bad on camera. Two reasons: (1) lighting, and (2) he was filming too close with the regular lens. We switched him to 2× zoom and made him stand back. He was so happy he still thanks me a year later. Here's the rule:

The Rule

For face shots: stand 1.5–2 metres back, switch to 2× zoom.

Never get close with the standard 1× lens. Phones distort under 60 cm.

WHY IT WORKS

The wide-angle lens (1×) bulges what's close. Noses get bigger, ears get smaller. The 2× zoom on Pro iPhones (and many Samsungs) is a real telephoto lens — different physical glass — that flattens the face. The result is the same look magazines use for portraits.

WHICH PHONES HAVE A REAL TELEPHOTO?

- **iPhone Pro / Pro Max (11 onwards).**
2× or 3× telephoto built-in. Tap the 2 or 3 button above the shutter.
- **iPhone 14 Pro Max / 15 Pro Max.**
Up to 5× telephoto. Use 2× for faces, 3× for product, 5× for tighter portraits.
- **Standard iPhones (11, 12, 13, 14, 15 non-Pro).**
Only 1× lens — the 2× is a digital crop. STILL use it for faces; the crop is better than the wide distortion.
- **Samsung Galaxy S/Note (S20+ onwards) Plus & Ultra.**
3× telephoto. Same rule — use it for any face shot.
- **Samsung A-series & older Galaxies.**
Usually digital zoom. Same trick: 2× still beats 1× for faces.

FACE-FILMING CHECKLIST

1) Light from 45° (window or panel). 2) 2× zoom, stand back. 3) Subject 1 m from background. 4) Tap-and-hold to lock focus on the eye. 5) Roll for 30 seconds — real expression appears around second 12.

TRIPODS & PHONE PLACEMENT

Where you put your phone is half the shot.

Most amateur footage is filmed from standing height. That's why it looks like a security camera. Pros change the height for every shot.

USE A TRIPOD WHEN...

- **Any product shot (jewellery, food, packaging).**
Hand-held macros never look pro. Always tripod.
- **Top-down (overhead) shots.**
Hand-holding overhead is impossible. Tripod or stack of books.
- **Any shot longer than 5 seconds.**
Five seconds is the longest a human hand stays steady.
- **Talking heads, interviews, sit-downs.**
Lock the frame. Let the speaker move.
- **Slow-motion + time-lapse.**
Both magnify camera shake. Mandatory tripod.

WHERE TO PLACE YOUR PHONE

- **Eye level.**
Default for talking heads and interviews. Most flattering. Stand or sit subject; phone at their eye height.
- **Hip level.**
Heroic feel for products and architecture. Buildings, cars, furniture, hero shots.
- **Below knee.**
Power shots. Cars, gym lifts, fashion runways. Subjects look ten feet tall.
- **Top-down (overhead).**
Flat-lays, food, hands at work. Use a tripod with horizontal arm, or lay phone face-down with the lens off the table edge.
- **On the ground (literally).**
Drama. Cars driving past, runners, dogs. Pebble or coin under the phone for slight tilt.

TRIPODS WORTH BUYING

- **Joby GorillaPod Mobile** · ~\$30
Bendy legs wrap around chairs, railings, branches. Most versatile \$30 you'll spend.
- **Manfrotto PIXI EVO** · ~\$45
Sturdy mini-tripod. Best for tabletop/macro shots.
- **Ulanzi MT-08** · ~\$25
Extends to 90 cm. Great budget tripod for vlog-style shots.
- **DJI Osmo Mobile 6 (gimbal)** · ~\$159
Worth it once you're past the basics. Smooth tracking, walking shots, follow shots.
- **Free version: stack of books.**

MUSIC & SOURCES

What music to use, and where to download it.

Music is half of every Reel. The wrong track turns a beautiful video into a stock-photo ad. Here's where to get good music — most of it free.

FREE

- **YouTube Audio Library**
youtube.com/audiolibrary. Free, royalty-free. Used by millions of creators. Search by mood + length.
- **Pixabay Music**
pixabay.com/music. Free, no attribution required. Good for Instagram and websites.
- **Free Music Archive**
freemusicarchive.org. Older but reliable. Indie folk + lo-fi gold.
- **Instagram + TikTok in-app library**
Use the Reels music tool. Free for Reels but won't work for ads or YouTube.

PAID (worth it for businesses)

- **Epidemic Sound** · \$15–49 / mo
epidemicsound.com. Used by most YouTubers. Huge library, easy to search by vibe.
- **Artlist** · \$14–25 / mo
artlist.io. Premium quality. Great for Reels + ads. Single subscription covers all platforms.
- **Soundstripe** · \$11–13 / mo
soundstripe.com. Smaller library, cheaper, well-curated.
- **Musicbed** · \$25+ / mo
musicbed.com. Film-quality. Premium pick for big-budget shoots.

WHAT MUSIC FITS YOUR BUSINESS

- **Restaurant, café, bakery** Mid-tempo jazz, lo-fi, indie folk, acoustic. 80–95 BPM.
- **Salon, spa, beauty, boutique** Chill house, R&B, indie pop, ambient. 70–100 BPM.
- **Gym, fitness, sports, auto** Hip-hop, drill, electronic, rock. 110–140 BPM. Drops on motion.
- **Real estate, architecture, hotel** Cinematic orchestral, ambient piano, soft strings. 60–80 BPM. Builds slowly.
- **Construction, industrial, trades** Driving rock, motivational electronic, energetic indie. Strong percussion.
- **Office, corporate, agency, consulting** Uplifting corporate, light electronic, calm ambient. Avoid stock-photo cheese.
- **Wedding, event, photography** Emotional piano, romantic strings, indie folk. Slow builds.
- **Pet, kids, family** Light upbeat, ukulele, whistling melodies. Wholesome but not childish.

EDITING IN CAPCUT

Free, on your phone, good enough for ads.

CapCut is what most professional Instagram creators actually use. It's free, it lives on your phone, and the auto-caption feature alone is worth \$30/month — except it's free.

QUICK START (10 MINUTES)**01 Download CapCut.**

App Store / Google Play. Free, no ads in the app itself.

02 New Project.

Tap the big +. Select your clips from the camera roll. Import all at once — you'll trim later.

03 Trim each clip.

Tap a clip on the timeline → drag the white handles. Cut the boring start and end of every clip.

04 Add transitions.

Tap between two clips → pick a transition. Use "None" or simple cuts; fancy transitions look amateur.

05 Add music.

Tap Audio → Sounds → search by mood or paste a CapCut-imported track. Drag music to start at clip 1.

06 Auto-captions.

Tap Text → Auto-captions → select language. CapCut transcribes in 30 seconds. Edit any wrong words.

07 Add B-roll cut-aways.

Tap Overlay → Add overlay → pick a clip. Layer over your main shot for visual cuts.

08 Export at 1080p 30fps.

Top-right export button. 1080p is plenty for Instagram. Higher = bigger file with no visible benefit.

CAPTIONS

80% of Instagram videos are watched without sound.

Add captions or watch your retention drop. Captioned videos get 12% more views on average — easier to scroll past silence than silence with words on it.

WHERE TO ADD CAPTIONS

- **CapCut auto-captions** · Free
Best for mobile. 30+ languages. Edit wrong words by tapping the caption.
- **Instagram in-app captions** · Free
When posting a Reel: tap Captions sticker. Auto-generated, instantly.
- **Submagic** · ~\$15 / mo
submagic.co. Premium animated captions. The ones you see on viral Reels with the highlighted words.
- **Captions.ai** · ~\$10–20 / mo
captions.ai. Designed for short-form video. Templates built-in.
- **Veed.io** · Free tier + paid plans
veed.io. Browser-based. Good for editing on a laptop instead of phone.
- **YouTube Studio auto-captions** · Free
Upload to YouTube as a private video → grab the captions → use anywhere. Free trick.

CAPTION DESIGN RULES

- **Bottom-third position.**
Above Instagram's UI (the like / comment / share icons). Otherwise UI covers your words.
- **1–3 words at a time.**
Match the rhythm of speech. Don't drop a full sentence on screen at once.
- **Big, bold, simple font.**
Inter, SF Pro, Helvetica, or CapCut's default. Avoid script and serif fonts.
- **Highlight key words.**
Use one accent colour (your brand colour, or warm yellow) for emphasis words.
- **Match cut speed to caption speed.**
If clips are 2 seconds, captions should change every 2 seconds. Sync = pro.

PRO TRICKS

The things pros do that you won't read in any tutorial.

Real production secrets. Most are free. Use one and you'll see the difference; use all of them and your content will look like an agency made it.

01 Wipe the lens between every shot.

Phones gather oil from your face every time you pick them up. A 2-second wipe between shots is the difference between sharp and hazy.

02 Lock exposure on the brightest important thing.

Tap-and-hold on the lit subject — not the dark background. The phone tries to balance everything; you have to overrule it.

03 Roll early. Stop late.

Press record 3 seconds before the action. Stop 2 seconds after. Always trim later — never the other way.

04 Three takes minimum.

First is rehearsal. Second is good. Third is best. Storage is free; reshoots cost time.

05 Use the 2× lens for faces (the barber rule).

Stand 1.5–2 m back, switch to 2× zoom. Faces flatten and look like portraits. Never close-up at 1× — phones distort.

06 Light from 45°, never head-on.

Window on the side. Subject 90° to it. Magazine cover light, zero dollars.

07 3-second clips for Reels.

Most amateur Reels die because each clip is too long. Cut to 3-second beats. Watch any viral Reel — you'll see it.

08 Cut on action, not on stillness.

Cut while a hand is moving, head is turning, mouth is opening. Static-to-static cuts feel jarring; motion-to-motion feels invisible.

09 Audio matters more than video.

Bad audio kills good footage instantly. Use the phone close to the subject when sound matters; record audio twice if needed.

10 Shoot on the rule of thirds, not the centre.

Subject's eye on the upper-third intersection. Centre framing feels amateur unless deliberately symmetrical.

11 Match clip length to the music beat.

Use a metronome app or just count. Each clip should end on a music beat. Cuts on beats are why pro Reels feel addictive.

12 Underexpose by half a stop for cinematic look.

When you tap-and-hold to lock exposure, slide the sun icon DOWN slightly. Slightly darker = moodier = more cinematic.

13 Airplane mode while filming.

Notifications interrupt rolls. Updates heat the phone. Turn it on. Turn off Bluetooth too — battery.

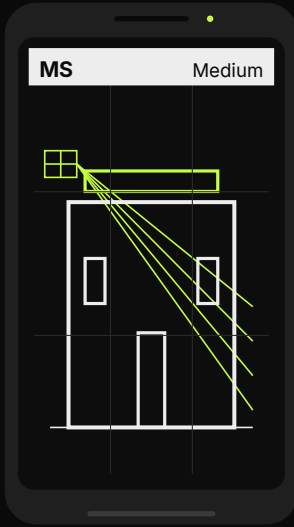
14 Front-facing camera = lower quality. Always.

Use the rear (main) camera even for selfies. Get a friend to hold it, or use the timer + tripod. Quality jumps instantly.

15 Slow-mo only when motion deserves it.

Water, fabric, sweat, impact, hair flips, drops. Don't slo-mo a static product or a face — it just looks weird.

CATERING SERVICE

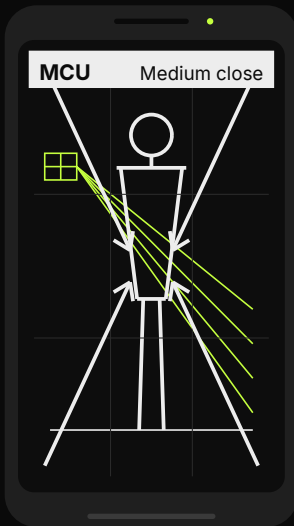


01 Truck loading at dawn

MS. Trays into the van.

PHONE TIP

Schedule for early morning. Light is soft + nobody's around.

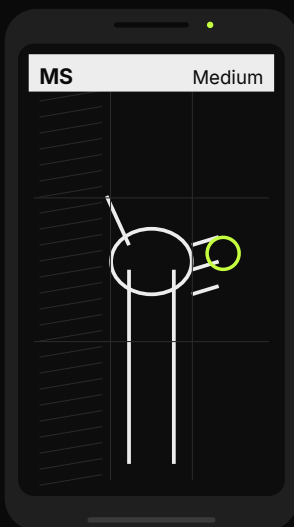


02 Driving to the venue

MCU. Phone on dashboard.

PHONE TIP

Mount the phone. Hand-holding while driving = unsafe + shaky.



03 Setup, table going up

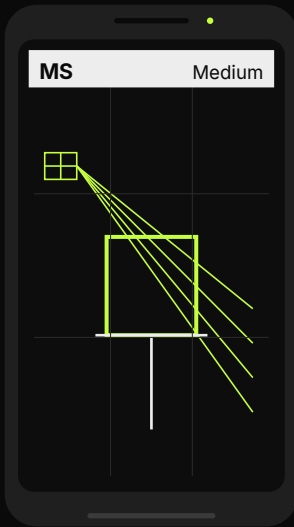
MS 60fps. Folding leg snaps in.

PHONE TIP

60fps for the snap. Audio is the win.

CATERING SERVICE

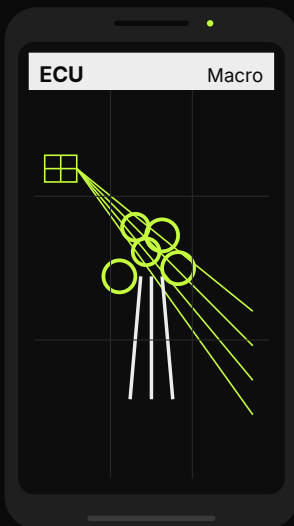
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**04 Linen cloth, slow-mo**

MS 240fps. Tablecloth billows out.

PHONE TIP

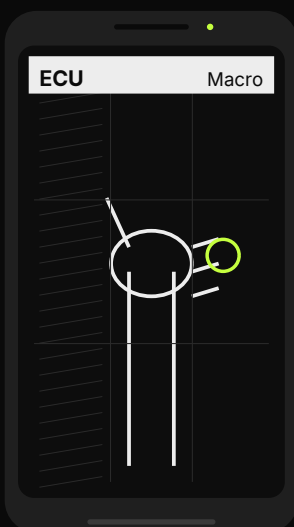
Backlight required. Linen needs light to read.

**05 Centerpiece placed**

ECU. Hands setting flowers.

PHONE TIP

Real flowers. Top-down or eye level — both work.

**06 Plates lined up, ECU**

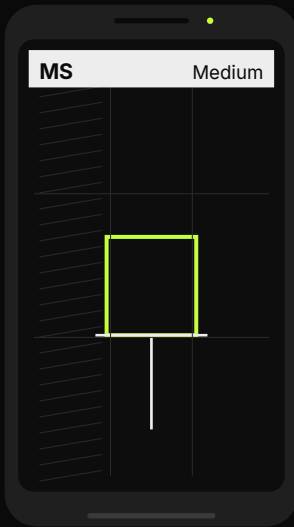
ECU. Stack of china.

PHONE TIP

Audio of the stack-clink. Mic close.

CATERING SERVICE

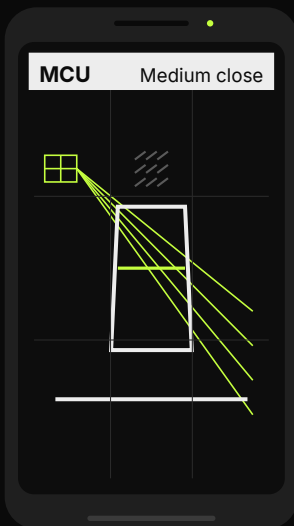
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**07 Knives + forks aligned**

MS top-down. Cutlery in rows.

PHONE TIP

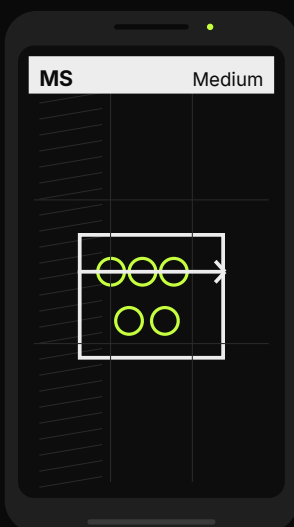
Phone overhead. Geometry is the shot.

**08 Glassware filled with water**

MCU 60fps. Pitcher pouring.

PHONE TIP

Backlight on the stream. Water needs light.

**09 Buffet line, MS slide**

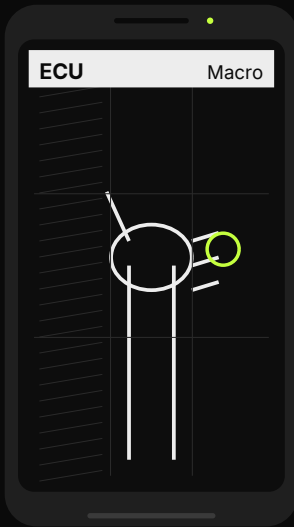
MS. Slide horizontally across the spread.

PHONE TIP

Slow pan. Let the food breathe in frame.

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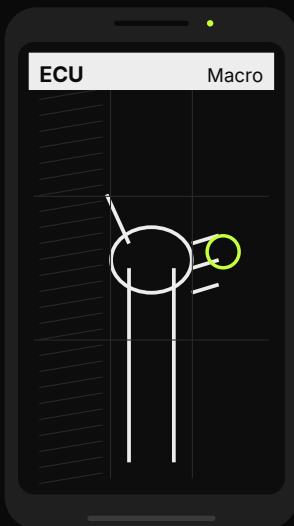
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**10 Hands plating canapés**

ECU. Tweezers placing tiny details.

PHONE TIP

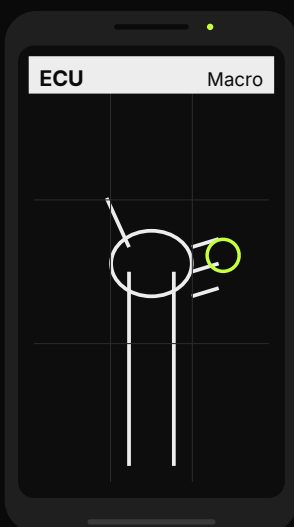
Stable hands. Brace your wrist on the table.

**11 Roast carving, slow-mo**

ECU 60fps. Knife through meat.

PHONE TIP

Sharp knife. Sharp blade = clean cut on screen.

**12 Sauce spoon, drizzle**

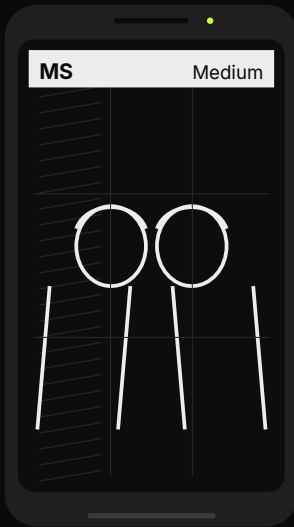
ECU 240fps. Sauce ribboning.

PHONE TIP

Backlight. Sauce is invisible without it.

CATERING SERVICE

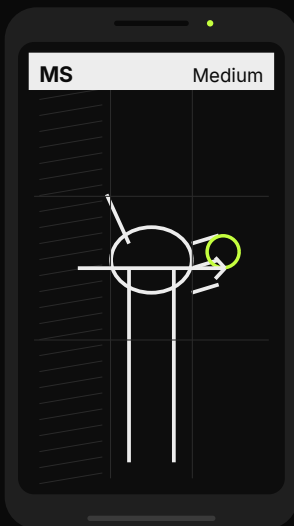
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**13 Tray hand-off, server**

MS. Tray going from chef to server.

PHONE TIP

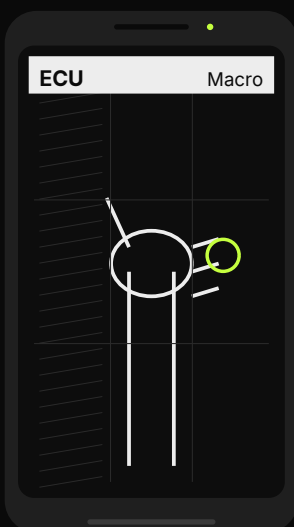
Side angle. Front blocks the action.

**14 Server walking with tray, top-down**

MS 60fps. Phone above the tray.

PHONE TIP

Tray steady. The phone moves with the server.

**15 Wine glasses being placed**

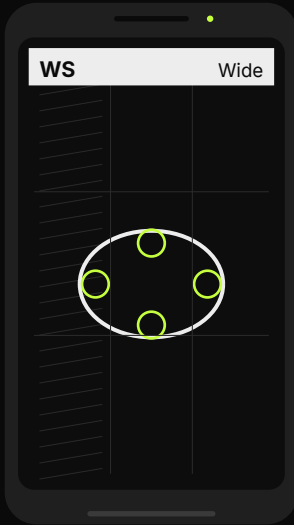
ECU. Stems on the table.

PHONE TIP

60fps. The set-down is half a second; slow it.

CATERING SERVICE

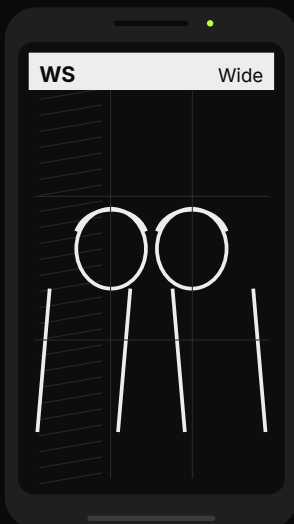
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**16 Table set, top-down**

WS. Whole table from above.

PHONE TIP

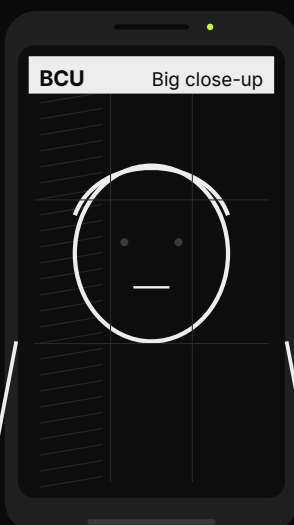
Step on a chair. Top-downs need height.

**17 Guests seated, wide**

WS. The first arrivals.

PHONE TIP

Real guests, with permission.

**18 Chef plating live, BCU**

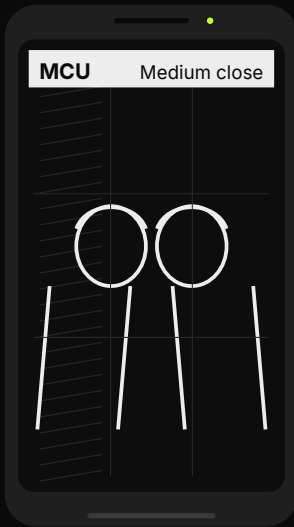
BCU. Concentrated focus.

PHONE TIP

Lock exposure on face. Don't let kitchen lights fool the camera.

CATERING SERVICE

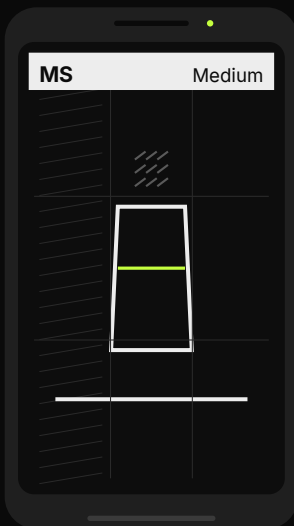
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**19 Server greeting guest**

MCU. Real interaction.

PHONE TIP

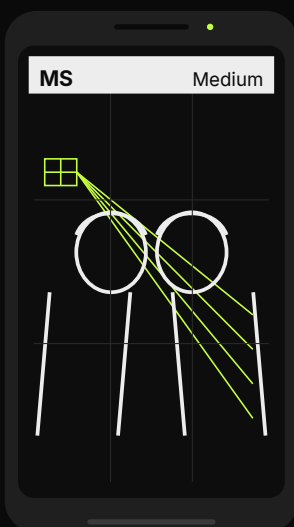
Don't direct. Servers are pros — let them work.

**20 Champagne pop, MS**

MS 240fps. Cork flying.

PHONE TIP

Stand back. Cork goes far.

**21 Toast moment, two-shot**

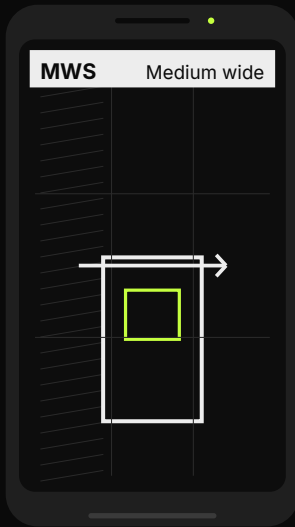
MS. Couple raising glasses.

PHONE TIP

Backlight. Glasses raise into halo.

CATERING SERVICE

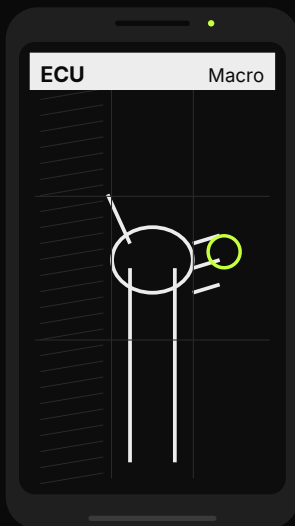
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**22 Cake being wheeled in**

MWS. The trolley arriving.

PHONE TIP

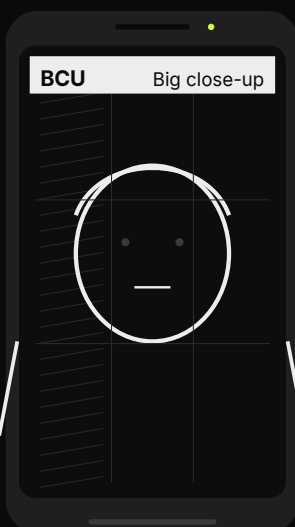
Track from the side. Cake on its way is the moment.

**23 Cake cut, ECU**

ECU 60fps. The first slice.

PHONE TIP

60fps. The slice is fast.

**24 First bite reaction**

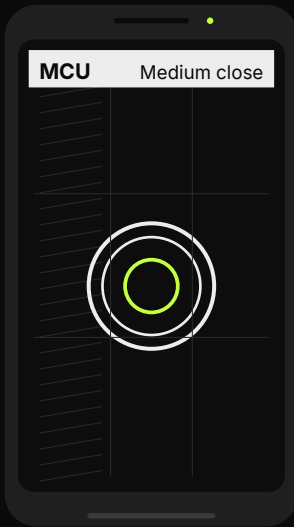
BCU. Real eyes-closed bliss.

PHONE TIP

Real reactions. Capture the first guest who tries it.

CATERING SERVICE

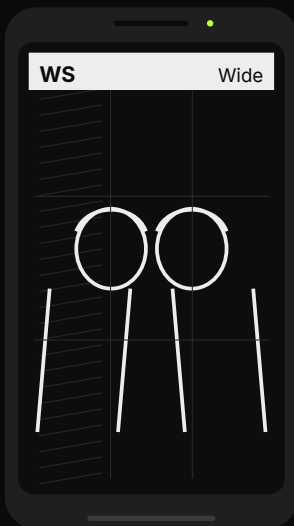
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**25 Empty plates, end of meal**

MCU. Cleared plates with napkins.

PHONE TIP

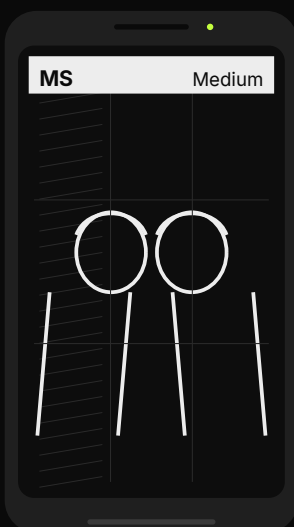
End-of-night content. Use as Reel finisher.

**26 Cleanup crew, time-lapse**

WS. Time-lapse of the breakdown.

PHONE TIP

Tape phone in a corner. 30 minutes of real time = 5 seconds of magic.

**27 Trays loaded back into van**

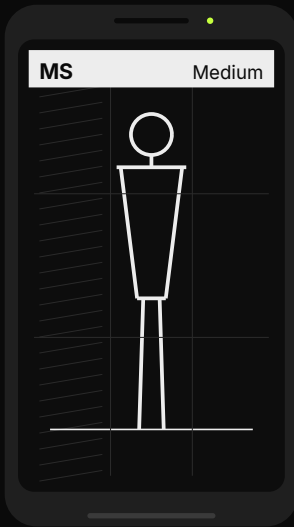
MS. Crew at the end of the night.

PHONE TIP

Real exhaustion = real work. Don't fake the energy.

CATERING SERVICE

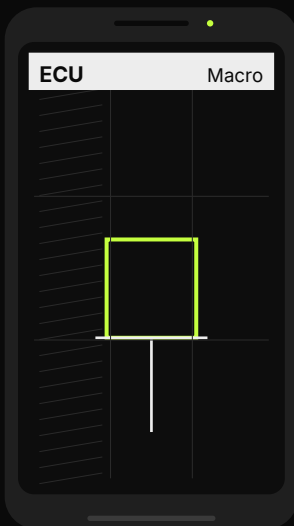
SHOTS · PAGE 10 OF 10

**28 Owner sitting alone, post-event**

MS. Quiet relief.

PHONE TIP

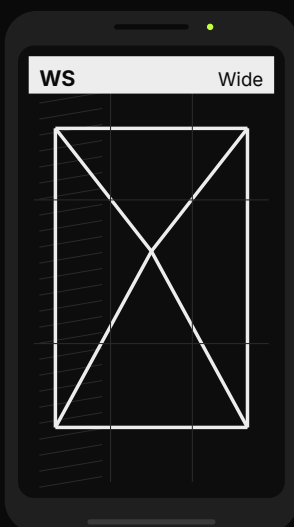
End-of-night moment. Real gold.

**29 Logo on the truck door**

ECU. Brand at end.

PHONE TIP

Always include the brand. Free advertising.

**30 Empty venue, lights low**

WS. The quiet aftermath.

PHONE TIP

End-of-night feels iconic. Use as Reel close.

YOU'VE GOT THE PLAYBOOK.

Now go shoot.

This guide was built specifically for catering services. Every shot in it works on a phone you already own. The only missing ingredient is the courage to press record.

Want a pro to handle the big stuff?

Brand films, commercials, drone work, and the moments you shouldn't trust to a phone — that's our day job. We work with shops, restaurants, clinics, and salons across Toronto. Send us a message and we'll come see your space.

NOVA FRAME GROUP

novaframe.ca

+1 437 450 1828

info@novaframe.ca

Toronto · Worldwide