Photography Watermark Font Checklist

A practical one-page test before you commit to a script, serif, sans-serif or monogram direction

1 Run the core checks

- [ ] **Define the job**
  Is the watermark for recognition, proofing, deterrence or a portfolio signature? One mark rarely does every job equally well.
- [ ] **Test actual small size**
  Place the full name on a real image at thumbnail and mobile size. Do not judge the font only in a large editor preview.
- [ ] **Use bright and dark scenes**
  Try white and black versions. A font that survives only with a heavy shadow is not yet robust.
- [ ] **Inspect thin strokes**
  Look for disappearing hairlines, broken joins and closed counters after JPEG export.
- [ ] **Check brand fit**
  The style should support the photography niche without overpowering the photograph.

Fast two-font comparison

Export the same photograph twice with identical position, size and opacity. Change only the font. Compare at 100% and at phone width, then keep the version you can identify first without zooming.

2 Reject fragile options

- [ ] **Needs effects to exist**
  If glow, outline or a dark plate is always required, the underlying letterforms may be too fragile.
- [ ] **Changes placement every time**
  Choose a repeatable safe zone and margin so recognition is consistent across a gallery.
- [ ] **Uses unverified licensing**
  Confirm desktop, web and logo-use rights before publishing client work or brand assets.
- [ ] **Looks elegant but reads slowly**
  Ornate joined letters can work at medium size yet fail when the full business name is small.

Controlled test finding

Across four controlled scenes, Inter and Montserrat retained the clearest small-size reading. Playfair Display, Cinzel and Marcellus were workable when kept larger. Thin scripts and Cormorant Garamond were most affected by light or detailed backgrounds in this test.

Exploratory observation, not an industry-wide performance claim.

Decision notes

Method: 8 OFL fonts, four controlled AI-generated scenes, fixed placement and opacity.