



Trash the Dress



Wedding dresses have gotten more and more expensive over the years—some easily reaching the cost of a decent used car. So what do brides do with these priceless gowns after the big day? Trash 'em!

Trashing Trend

Well, maybe not *every* bride trashes her dress. Some brides sell them or donate them. Most probably still have them cleaned and wrap them up in the hopes of passing them down to their daughters. But there is a new trend that's appealing to today's brides. It's called "Trash the Dress." Now, this doesn't mean the wedding—or marriage—was a disaster. It has nothing to do with trashing the groom. Actually, it's art.

The idea was the brainchild of photographer John Michael Cooper, who says the concept has nothing to do with being destructive but rather going out and creating some art. The interesting element is the contrast between the pure, untouchable bride, and that same bride having fun—wild, messy, dirty fun.

Artist Lynn Michelle Renken, another photographer who has been capturing Trash the Dress moments on film since the early 2000s, believes the whole idea is for the bride to come up with a more creative way to express herself. It's a chance to do something she, obviously, can't do on her wedding day.

Photography One Step Further

The wedding day photos are all about the couple, the purity, and the sheer perfection of the moment. Sure, they're having fun. There's joy. There are smiles. But there's something solemn on that day as well. It's sacred.

So after all that hard work of choosing just the right dress, having photos taken, and striving to keep the dress clean all night long,



there is something fun about using that same dress to get a little crazy. And capture it all in a very different type of photograph.

Renken says she tailors these types of photo sessions to each individual bride or couple. People have really done a lot of creative things for their “trashy” photo shoot, but ultimately, it depends on what the bride’s interests are—and how comfortable she is with mussing her dress. The gowns are rarely completely destroyed, but they probably won’t be able to be worn again either.

Trash It!

Some brides choose to go it alone for their Trash the Dress photos. Others include the groom. Some share the experience with other brides—everyone dressed up in their bridal finery.

One bride, who trashed her dress along with three close friends, was in it for the fun. The group hopped on four-wheelers and rode through mud puddles, producing photos that reflected pure delight.

Shana Dahan had her Trash the Dress pictures taken in the Las Vegas desert. Her parents had to ask: Was she sure this is what she wanted to do? She was. And the photos of a beautiful bride in a beautiful dress leaping through the blowing sand are striking. Dahan called it exhilarating.

Jessica and Samuel Goulet decided to act out a part of their wedding vows for Trash the Dress—“til death do us part.” The pair dug themselves a shallow hole in the sand, lay down in their wedding clothes, and scattered dirt on top of themselves. A bit macabre, perhaps, but the photo was certainly one to remember.

Rock the Dress

While open to the idea, some brides are a little leery of the phrase, “Trash the Dress.” Some photographers have started calling it “Rock the Dress” to put a more positive spin on it. They’ve moved past the mud to include photos of the couple rocking out in activities they enjoy—all dressed up. Scuba diving, horseback riding, and nature walks with the dog have all been captured in digital glory.

One bride got together with her new husband, her wedding dress, his tux, some paint, and a couple of brushes. Smiling and laughing, the pair shook colorful droplets all over each other. Now *that’s* art.