

Trash the Dress is part of a national movement. The concept was first pitched locally by Rutherford to the Worcester Photography Meetup Group, and was well-received by area photographers. An inaugural Trash the Dress session was held at Oakland Beach in Rhode Island last summer. Photographers converged on the beach with make-up artists, hairdressers, stylists, models and dresses donated by Belchertown Bridal in Palmer.

The photographers who participated have used the photographs from that day to build their Trash the Dress portfolios and introduce the idea to their clients.

Rutherford has Trash the Dress sessions booked for warmer weather at a beach, a waterfall and even near train tracks. A bride's chosen setting can reflect her personality, from relaxed pastoral surroundings to rec-



PHOTOGRAPHY ABOVE AND AT LEFT / TEYA RUTHERFORD



PHOTOGRAPHY ABOVE AND AT RIGHT / SCOTT ERB

A Trash the Dress photo session allows brides and grooms to let their hair down, says photographer Teya Rutherford.



reating the famous beach scene in "From Here to Eternity."

"It's rather cathartic," said Rutherford, noting that the photo sessions allow brides, and often the grooms, too, to let their hair down. "Once the wedding is done, now let's have some fun."

In the last couple of years, Trash the Dress has exploded in popularity. The concept has expanded, in some areas, to include teenagers in their prom and homecoming dresses.

Scott Erb, of Erb Photography in Worcester, said it's an extension of a trend in the last few years toward editorial wedding photography — photos that are not posed, but capture moments as they happen.

"It's completely nontraditional," said Erb, adding that it appeals to those who are used to a bit of rebellion. "Some people say, 'I want to be different, and have something of my own.' Not everyone is going to do a 'Trash the Dress' portrait."

Reaction to Trash the Dress has been mixed, ranging from incredulous skepticism to eager creativity, Erb said.

Some Internet critics have scoffed at the idea, suggesting that brides would be better

Teya Rutherford owns Photography by Teya in Oxford.

off donating their gowns than trashing them.

Many Trash the Dress photos can be



PHOTOGRAPHY/TOM RETTIG

found on the Internet, offering local brides ideas for their shots. Some brides submerge themselves in lakes or streams, others are perched in trees.

"The traditional wedding photo is a dying breed — those stiff, posed pictures," said Bobbie W. Bush, a Salem-based photographer. "Brides today don't want that look. They want real emotion."

Trash the Dress takes editorial wedding photos one step further.

"The wedding photography industry is changing, becoming much looser," Bush said. "The whole wedding industry is trending more toward fashion. Whatever people see in magazines, they want to see themselves in that photo. But you can't do that on your wedding day, hence, Trash the Dress. This is a great way for a bride to fulfill her fantasy."

Gone, however, is the fantasy that a wedding gown will one day be worn by a daughter. Just like brides today don't want their mother's wedding portraits, they usually don't want their dresses, either.

"Really these days, wedding dresses are really nice to save for your daughters to play dress up," Rutherford said. **W**

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