



PHOTOS: KENNETH & ELAINE SOONG OF JUSTMARRIEDPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

For her trash-the-dress photo session, Karla-rae Morris posed in a scrapyard, a dumpster, a canola field and lying on the wheel of a huge and very dirty truck.

# High trashion

Ditching the dress when the wedding day's done

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Karla-rae Morris had heard of the trash-the-dress trend, but trash the bride?

Yet she didn't hesitate when photographer Kenneth Soong asked her to jump into a rusty old dumpster in her \$600 wedding dress.

Morris, who lives in Fort McMurray, also had her photo taken in an Edmonton scrapyard, lying on the fender of a truck wheel, and in a field of bright yellow canola.

"It was actually dirtier in the field

than in the dumpster, because to get to it, we had to cross this marsh that had baby slugs sticking to our feet and stuff. It was so gross," laughs Morris, 28. "And so much fun!"

"Trashion" sessions are the hottest trend in post-wedding photography. Newlyweds, or the bride alone, throw out all the stuffy rules of the wedding day and mess up their wedding finery as much as they want, while a professional photographer clicks away.

The trend originated in the United States about five years ago, when some brides literally trashed their dresses, mostly by rolling around in

the surf on a beach, says Soong, who runs Just Married Photography.com along with his wife, Elaine.

Brides are now snapped changing tires by the side of the road, riding horses or motorcycles — even rock climbing.

The trend is still fairly new to Edmonton, but more women are booking trashion sessions when they arrange to have their traditional wedding photos taken, Soong says.

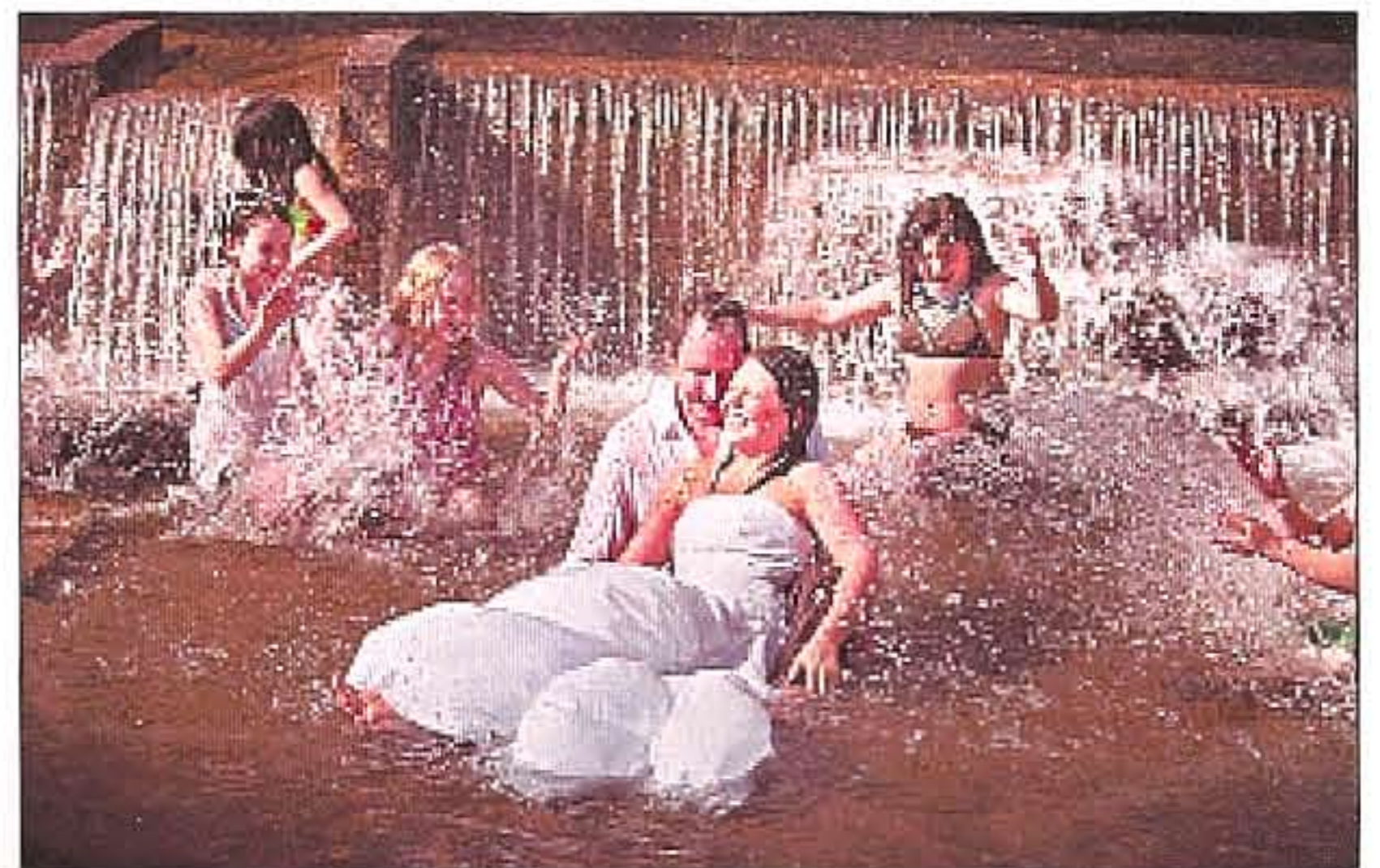
"Trashing the dress just for the sake of trashing isn't what trashion sessions are all about," he explains. "We wouldn't do anything extreme with the dress unless we knew it would yield the most amazing imagery. In that sense, it's more about creation than destruction."

The resulting photos are very much like high-fashion photography — unique, amazing, breathtaking, says wedding planner Monica Hill, of Aisle Plan Your Day.

And it's not just new brides trashing their dresses.

"Some women in our (wedding planners) association, who got married 10 years ago, are pulling their dresses out of the closet and out of boxes just to do one of these photo shoots," says Hill, who got married in 2006, and has booked her own trashion shoot for April.

Arlene Oak, an assistant professor of human ecology at the University of Alberta, says the trashion phenomenon is part of the "spectacle" aspect of weddings.



Melanie Chestnut and husband Josh in the Alberta legislature fountains

"It's also an aspect of conspicuous consumption, in some ways, because you wear this (dress) for one day, then you obliterate it on purpose. To spend a couple of thousand dollars on a dress and then essentially throw it away, is an extreme statement."

Melanie Chestnut, 24, of Fort McMurray, says trashing her \$1,000 dress by frolicking with husband Josh on the High Level Bridge and in the fountains at the Alberta legislature made her feel "like an absolute superstar, like a movie celebrity."

"My (strapless) dress was ridiculously heavy, full of water. I thought it was going to fall off when I got out (of the fountain) because it was so heavy I couldn't even carry it. It was crazy!" Chestnut says laughing.

Hailey Taylor, 24, and husband Danny, who moved to Vancouver from Edmonton 18 months ago, also chose a wet theme, but with a twist. Their steamy, sudsy photos were shot at a coin-operated car wash on the south side. Danny's dad let them use his old-school Mercedes Benz.

Taylor wore her \$2,500 wedding gown for the photos taken on dry land, but cheated in the car wash

by wearing her \$300 grad dress, which, when covered with suds, looks similar.

"My (wedding) dress is a Maggie Sottero gown and I couldn't completely part with it," she explains. "I knew that with the car wash scene, because it was really, really soapy, it would have ruined the dress."

The grad dress was a write-off, Danny destroyed his suit and both ruined their dress shoes, but it was definitely worth it, Taylor says.

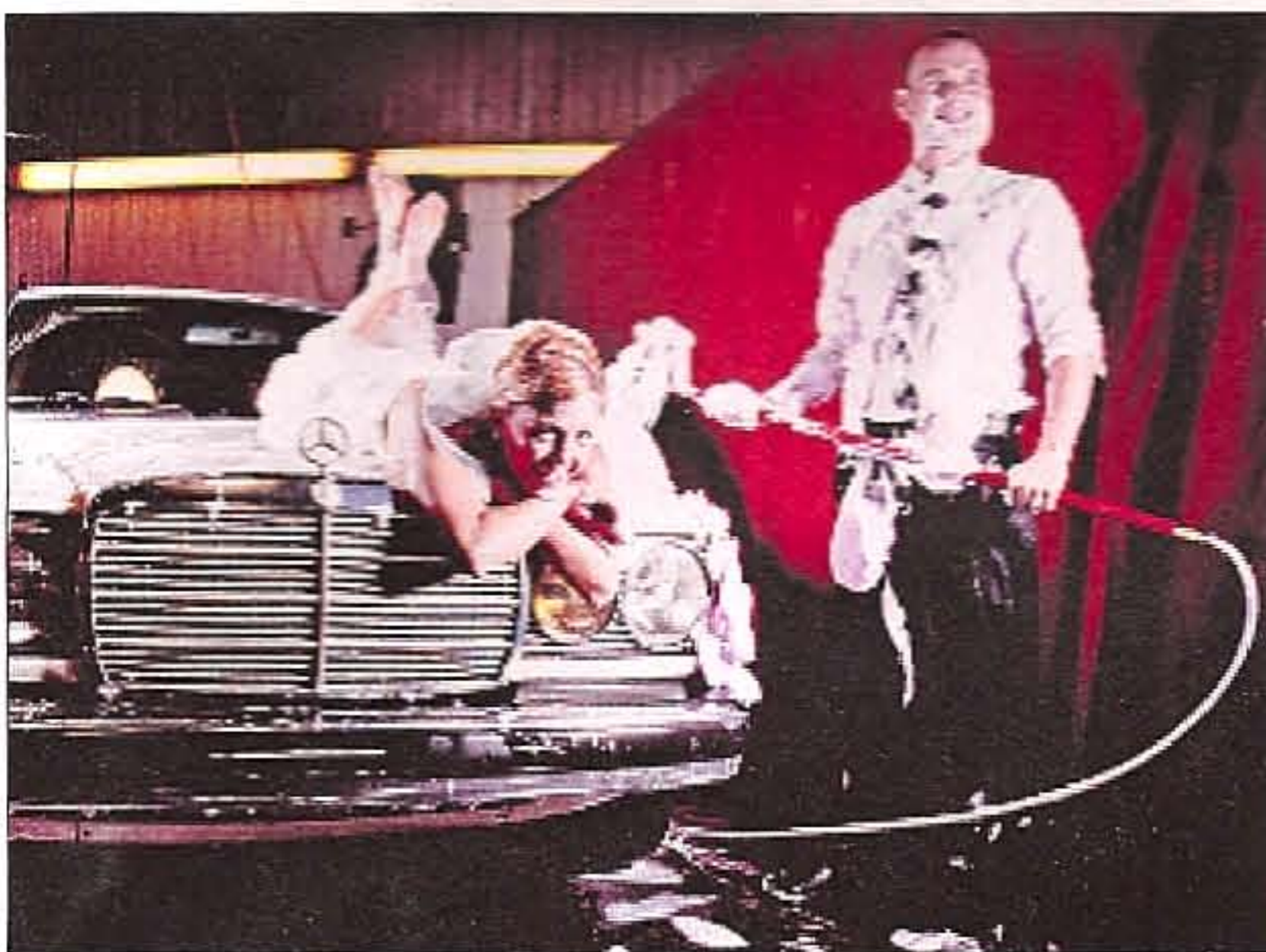
"On your wedding day, it's really hard to completely let loose because you have so much on your mind.

"(Trash the dress day) is a day to have fun with the photographers, a day for me and my husband to just be ourselves completely and not care if we're ruining our clothes or getting them dirty."

All three brides intend to keep their wedding dresses for sentimental reasons, though Morris is the only one planning to store hers in its filthy, post-trashion state — "because it's more of a memory that way."

"It's probably the funnest thing I've done in my life."

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Hailey and Danny Taylor trashed a dress, a suit and two pairs of shoes.