

Wedding dress ruin in a snap

The latest trend in weddings is to trash the dress and treasure the photos, write **Paddy Hintz and Kirrily Burns**

WHEN Canadian Tammy Roche married a typical Aussie bloke, she wanted an iconic Australian image to celebrate the union. She also wanted something different.

The trouble was, Roche married her partner, Brisbane concreter Mark, barefoot in the snow at Banff, Canada, in December last year.

Her solution was to later trash her wedding dress while wading through pounding surf on The Spit at the Gold Coast and rolling around in sand with the highrises of Surfers in the background in a photographic tribute to her marriage.

The result is a compelling set of images taken by Brisbane photographer Vincent Swift where a \$2000 dress plays a decided second fiddle to the fun-loving personality of a far-from blushing bride.

The Morayfield couple's decision to trash Roche's wedding dress, pictured above, in a \$500 shoot well after their wedding day is a concept that has taken off in the US and Canada and now spread to Australia.

Website trashthedress.wordpress.com encourages brides to send in photos of themselves getting down and dirty in their wedding dresses under the slogan, "it's about creation, not destruction".

Blog founder Mark Eric says trashing the dress is an opportunity to break from tradition and have fun while producing some striking, if unconventional, wedding pictures.

His website shows brides floating in lakes, lying on sandy beaches or standing stranded in deserts.

"A few years ago, photographers joked that the picture of the bridal party jumping in the air was the new cheese," Eric says. "The main idea behind the trash the dress session is that it's OK to break from tradition, even if it means getting the dress a little dirty. That's the foundation to great pictures. Once a bride is willing to unbustle, and step away from the spotless altar, true images can be created."

It's a movement that the Beenleigh-based Swift is keen to promote.

"This is what I really love doing," he says. "You get to shoot the couple in a way that's purely natural. You can see from the photos that they're having a really good time."

Roche says getting the right photographer is crucial as her "typically Aussie" husband at first was not excited about the concept.

"The key to this kind of thing is the photographer," Roche says. "Vince was really out of the box. He was running around and jumping and was in the water before we were."

"He was creating the atmosphere rather than just directing it."

The images of Roche's wedding so impressed bride Nicola Frey from Shailer Park on Brisbane's southside, when she saw them in Swift's studio, she decided to trash her wedding dress in Southport's Broadwater.

"It was crazy because when we got married a year ago, I couldn't find a photographer and my brother-in-law took the photos," Frey says.

"I just didn't want all that corny stuff when it came to the photos."

"My husband thought it was great. He got to pash me all day!"

For about \$500, both couples ended up with more than 100 images as well as a 45cm x 75cm canvas of their favourite picture.

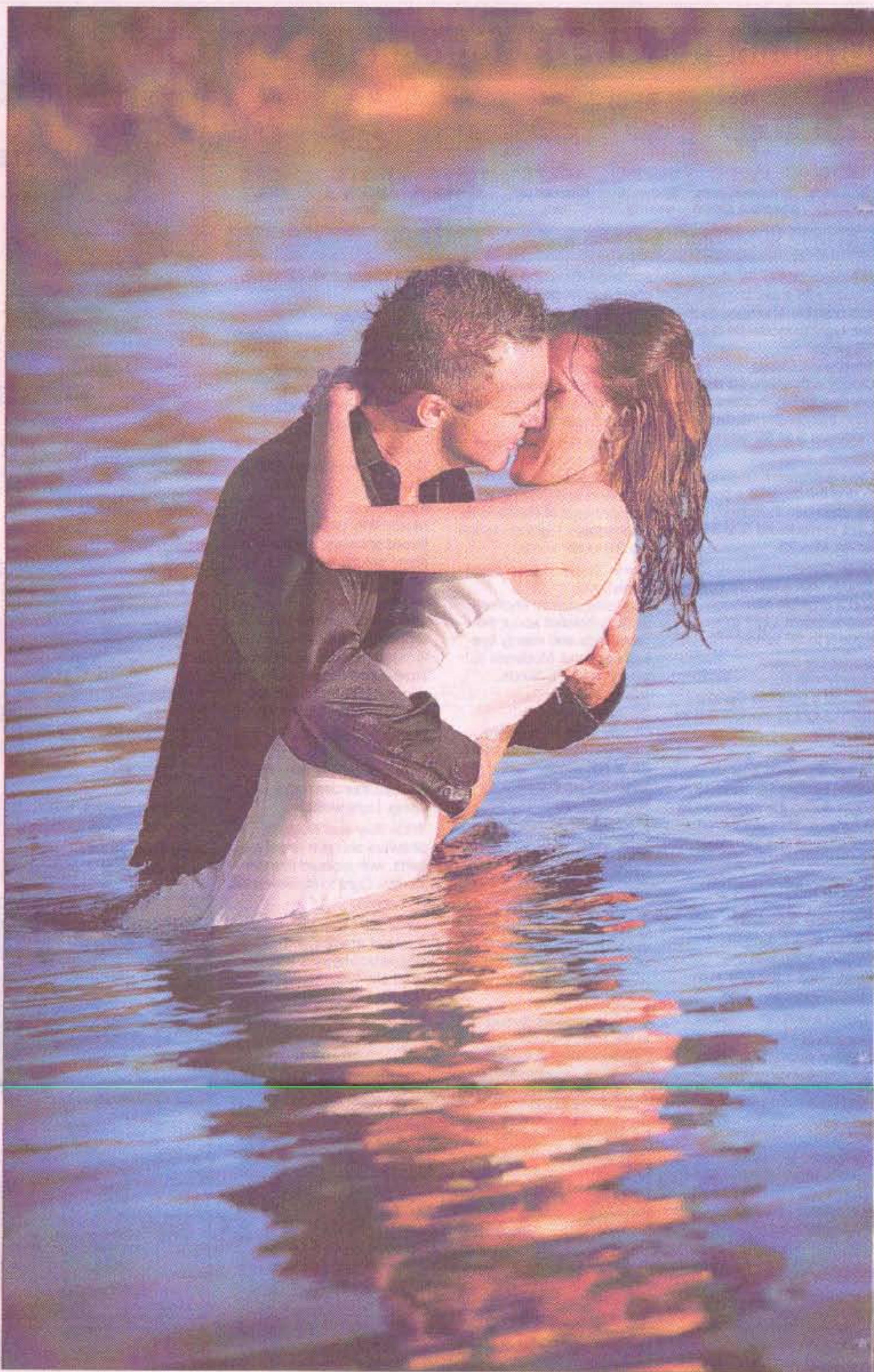
In the past six months, Trash the Dress Australia's website has recorded hundreds of hits a day, with a record 1884 hits in one day, according to website administrator Chris Buechner.

The Australian site shows photos of brides submerged in water, sitting in dirty stairwells and getting up close and personal with hubby over a greasy car engine. One series shows a bride tearing her tulle dress to shreds.

Roche's dress, however, was far from destroyed, despite its treatment at the beach.

After washing the garment carefully herself, she managed to sell it.

"I did tell the girl who bought it that it had been through the snow and the surf and she couldn't believe that it had been through all that," she says.



PARTNERS in brine ... Justin and Nicola Frey, above, and Tammy Roche, inset.

Pictures: Vincent Swift