

BY SARA STURGES

### A RIP-ROARING WEDDING

It wasn't a typical day at the Santa Barbara Zoo. That's because Kristin Dreier and Rob Wilson made a commitment of love in front of lions and guests; they sealed their vows with a diamond ring and two rubies.

The Dreier/Wilson wedding, Nov. 12, 2005 was as grand as a lion's roar, bringing in five WESTIE award nominations and two awards for most creative invitation and most creative food presentation.

The International Special Events Society's WESTIE awards recognize achievement by event planners, caterers, florists, and decorators in the Western United States region.

"I can honestly say that we are the only couple we know who had a red-tailed hawk as a guest at their wedding," Dreier says. "My guests loved that they could enter the zoo before the wedding and walk around to see all the animals and other aspects of the zoo, which was important to us. We wanted them to see why we love the zoo so much."

#### Symbolic day

The two rubies on her ring are symbolic of her and Rob's birthstones. They were born two days apart by mothers who were best friends.

Dreier, a graphic designer and vice

president of the Dreier Group, designed her wedding invitations with a logo that was used throughout the wedding. The logo consisted of one white circle enclosed by two red circles, symbolizing her idea that two rubies equals one diamond.

The invitations sparkled with a white Swarovski crystal between two red ones on red sparkling card stock. A separate, white card enclosed with the invitation, displayed an array of the bride's choice words, such as "dreams, trust, destiny, love, meant to be, cherish and happiness." After each word the couple's logo appeared along with red hearts.

Their logo also was printed on napkins, chair cards, restroom tissues and water bottles.

Tracy Lavery-Beard, the wedding's event manager, says she's most proud of the efficient manner in which guests moved through four identical buffet lines.

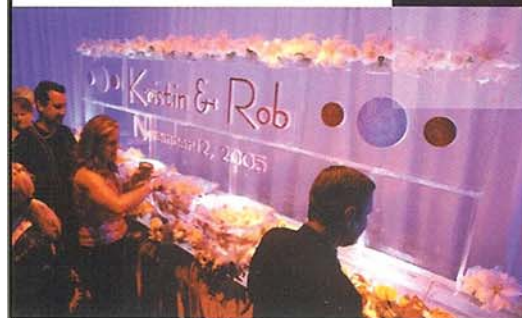
"With 270 guests, people usually don't get served quickly," Lavery-Beard says. "All of the guests were served in 12 minutes, and no one stood in line."

Cynthia Miranda, creative director of Mondial Catering, located in Santa Barbara, says the menu included comfort



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food with a classy twist. Guests were greeted with a caramelized onion and goat cheese tart plated appetizer, as they walked into the tent. On the buffet line, Kobe meatloaf with homemade tomato jam, quantum buttermilk fried chicken, roasted broccoli with feta in a picholine olive vinaigrette, Moroccan spice salmon in a tomato-mint salsa and four other items were offered.

Springs, Calif., created Dreier's ice dream.

A full cappuccino bar, provided by Cappuccino Connection of Santa Barbara, was stocked well with liqueur and cognac to provide guests with espresso, hot chocolate and coffee. Two 8-foot tall chocolate fountains also offered some thrills. One fountain contained dark chocolate, while the other flowed with milk chocolate, to give guests their choice for dipping strawberries, peaches, pineapple,

Guests also were enchanted with a 9-foot high, 14-foot long ice cream bar made completely of ice.

Ice dream

Guests also were enchanted with a 9-foot high, 14-foot long ice cream bar made completely of ice. The bar, designed by Lavery-Bear had seven flavors, each in its own ice bowl, six sauces and 11 toppings. Cool Events, located in Santa Fe

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dried fruits and Rice Krispy Treats.

Miranda says the desert spread was curtained off until dinner was complete. "People didn't know it was there," she says. "It was such a nice element of surprise for them.

The dessert spread also included carrot cake bites, white chocolate dipped strawberries and lemon meringue tartlets.

#### Let them eat cake

The wedding cake, created by Sarah Farmer of Sugar in Santa Barbara, which also makes cakes for Oprah Winfrey, came in three flavors: strawberry and cream, lemon buttermilk and old-fashioned chocolate marble. Dreier designed the cake in an art deco style, says Farmer. It had four large tiers and encompassed a wintry feel with its red and white themed colors.

The wedding ceremony, cocktail reception and dinner reception took place in three locations at the zoo.

"Moving nearly 300 people from location to location created a challenge," Lavery-Beard says. But she and Curtis Markley, the event rental manager and event coordinator, who coordinated pop-artist Pink's wedding, successfully

moved everyone in six minutes from the ceremony to the cocktail and dinner receptions – nearly 900 feet away.

Guests were guided up a lighted path from the cocktail reception at the elephant junction to the dinner reception on a hilltop that overlooked the Pacific Ocean and the zoo's gardens.

In front of the post-ceremony reception tent was a 10-foot by 4-foot ice sculpture, by That's Cool Events, of the wedding invitation.

Inside the tent, bartenders poured martinis down ice luges into guest's glasses. The luges were in the shape of "W's" for the couple's newly shared last name. The bartenders also made specialty lemon drop martinis – the same drink the couple had on their first date.

The main bar popped out from the tent and greeted guests with photos of the couple's dating history.

"When you looked at the bar, it was like looking at their family room," Lavery-Beard says. "It set a different tone than just walking up to an ordinary bar and ordering a drink."



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