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TALES OF LOVE

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AN ANGEL
SWEET NOTES
OF A RISING STAR

Country Club Christian Church





Scenes From A Wedding

Two spectacular weddings define personal glamour and romance.

words **KIMBERLY WINTER STERN**

Volumes have been written about love and marriage. Over the centuries, poets, philosophers, pundits and prophets have analyzed and celebrated the reasons we marry. Ancient and pure are our motives, symbols of those insatiable and romantic Greek and Roman gods of love. The partners we seek, experts have chronicled, possess qualities of mutual respect, equality and sacrifice.

We marry for tomorrow and the glorious and unknown promise of “for better, for worse.”

Millions of words have been written about weddings. Style gurus, trendsetters and runways dictate the season’s look yet personal panache ultimately guides how we individualize our unions and celebrate the occasion with family and friends.

Perhaps we choose the ritual of tradition, opt for the elegance and glamour of formality or create our own reality with fantastic and bold statements that knock convention off its pedestal. Ultimately the wedding is a deliciously intimate palette of style and taste.

We take a peek behind the scenes of two storybook weddings where Hepburn-esque qualities of well-chosen pedigrees defined the festivities. Each wedding began with an iconic vision: the über-glamorous Gunter-Johnson nuptials were steeped in details inspired by an ethereal confection of a dress; the oh-so-romantic Pruett-Sharp celebration began months before the “I do” on a terrace underneath a starry Italian sky.

In the afterglow of a wedding laden with personal sentiment, memories that linger are those shared from the heart, no matter if they’re simple, subtle or sublime. After all, as French philosopher and writer Voltaire penned, “Love is a canvas furnished by Nature and embroidered by imagination.”



SOME ENCHANTED EVENING

Jenny Pruett and long-time boyfriend Mike Sharp were on holiday in Florence, Italy, with her family in April 2008. One night following a relaxing dinner in the hotel's dining room the young couple retired to the upper terrace overlooking the stunning city. They were sharing a quiet moment, taking in the night air and enjoying the scents and sounds of the Mediterranean surroundings when Mike dropped to one knee and presented Jenny with a custom-made diamond ring.

"I looked at him thinking, 'Is this for real?'" says Jenny. "When he proposed, I was more surprised than anything."

Family members rejoined an emotional Jenny and Mike and finally revealed the secret they'd been bursting to tell: they knew all along of Mike's intentions. In fact, Jenny's father Jim had ferried the engagement ring through the entire trip, carrying it all through Amsterdam to its final destination. The groom-to-be, a self-professed romantic, had followed tradition and asked Jim for his daughter's hand.

The betrothed couple set a date for October 17, 2009, and secured Country Club Christian Church for a late afternoon exchange of vows. They chose the palatial Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art for a dinner-dance reception because it reminded them of the old world ambience that captivated them during the Rome and Florence trip. Jenny and Mike wanted to create a supernova, sophisticated affair that blended an aura of romance and visual drama.

"I shared with my vendors the story of how Mike proposed," says Jenny. "They all captured our dream."

Jenny hired Kenneth Sherman, vice president of Kansas City's 40-year-old venerable floral and design house Trapp and Company, to oversee décor for the church and the Nelson. Cocktails, butlered hors d'oeuvres and after-dinner dancing to the sounds of the KC All Stars would be in Kirkwood Hall, and Rozzelle Court, the architecture of which mimics the dramatic style of a 15th-century Italian courtyard, would host 176 guests for a sumptuous buffet dinner featuring beef tenderloin and cedar-smoked salmon.

"Romance and high glamour were the touch points of the wedding and reception," says Kenneth. "Jenny settled on gorgeous fall jewel tones in saturated reds, corals and greens."

The four bridesmaids wore deep cabernet dresses and Jenny's dramatic, off-white modified mermaid couture by Junko Yoshioka featured a short train and bubble veil and was the neutral inspiration for her bouquet of creamy roses; her attendants carried plump bouquets of Tabasco, Circus and Big Fun roses.

Sherman and his team designed tall cylinder vases with black river rocks, gold cymbidium orchids and curly willow hung with sparkling votives for the tables topped with satiny gold lamour runners. Uplit cube vases accented each table, creating a mesmerizing shimmer throughout the majestic room. Tables in Kirkwood Hall had flowing chocolate pintuck linens and arrangements with the same genre of flowers.

Cake goddess Kay Benjamin created a breathtaking white tiered cake with chocolate mousse filling; it held a place of honor in Kirkwood Hall and mimicked the color scheme.

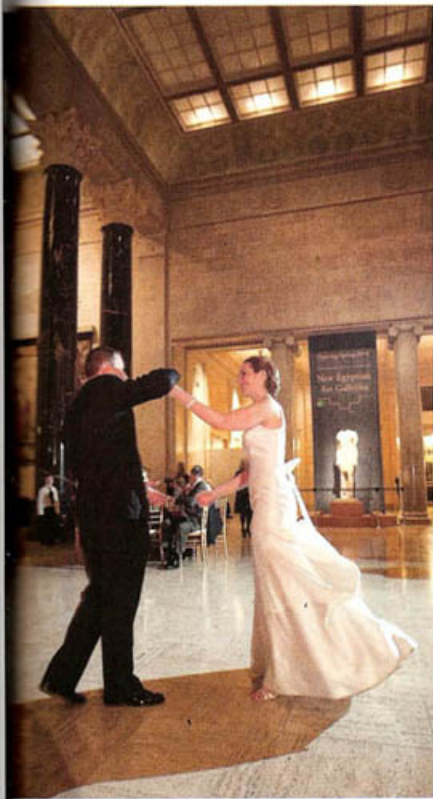
Jenny looks back on her wedding day and says she and Mike couldn't stop smiling.

"Everything was as it should be," says Jenny. "Our most memorable moment was 'I do' and our favorite part was dancing and sharing pure joy with a contingent of family and close friends."

As the newly married couple exited the Nelson, Jenny looked back for one last sweeping glance of the scene and decided there was absolutely nothing she would change about the evening ... it perfectly personified the story of their romance. ♦

Pruett-Sharp photos by Paul Versluis.





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Nick Bolton, eligible bachelor of 2010.

Photo: Paul Versluis



Photo: Jamie Squire Photography