

REGINA GARDNER & STUART KATZ
OCTOBER 9, 2005 BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA
PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRIAN KRAMER

Modern-day fairytale

Perhaps it was the Writers Guild Theater's Hollywood influence, but the night Gina Gardner and Stu Katz first met was taken straight from the script of a romantic comedy. While attending a work-related event at the theater, Gina and Stu noticed one another across a crowded room. Stu was determined to strike up a conversation with her, but in a plot-thickening turn of events, Gina left before he had the chance.

Gina was certain she would never see Stu again, but luckily his coworker knew her name and where she worked (both Gina and Stu are attorneys) and through the power of the Internet, Stu was able to track her down ("Some would say 'stalked,'" teases Gina). Needing no reminder of who he was, she excitedly accepted a date with the handsome stranger.

The
Beverly
Hills



Beauty

Eric Hernandez, Salon Provence, hair
Valerie Samelle, Valerie Beverly Hills, makeup

Bridal Designer

Kenneth Pool

Bridal Salon

Saks Fifth Avenue

Bridesmaids

Vera Wang

Cake

Delica Bakery

Calligrapher

Elegant Invitations

Consultant

Linda Howard's Sensational Celebrations

Entertainment

West Coast Music, ceremony & reception

Favors

Cookies By Design

Floral Design

Mark's Garden

Flower Girls

Kaya Couture

Formalwear

Hugo Boss, groom

After Hours, groomsmen

Honeymoon

Hotel Bora Bora

Le Tah'a Private Island & Spa

Invitations

Elegant Invitations

Jewelry

Philip Press, XIV Karats

Lighting Design

The Lighter Side

Lingerie

La Perla

Mothers' Gowns

Mark Zunino, MOB

Saks Fifth Avenue, MOG

Photographer

Brian Kramer Photography

Registries

Bloomingdale's

Gearys Beverly Hills

Neiman Marcus

Williams-Sonoma

Rentals & Linens

Classic Party Rentals

Party Designs By Dina

Shoes

Manolo Blatnik

Venue

Beverly Hills Hotel, Beverly Hills, CA

Videographer

Videcam Productions





Two years later, Stu brought Gina back to the theater for what she thought was a movie screening. But to her surprise, an usher opened the doors to reveal an aisle lined with candles. On a table for two arranged beneath the screen, a printed email reminiscent of their first exchange was waiting. It read: "Because we never had the chance to speak the first time we were in this theater, I hope you will give me the chance to ask you a very important

question." And with that, Stu got down on one knee and asked for Gina's hand. The rest, as they say, is history.

Armed with the dream of a garden ceremony and a reception steeped in glamour and elegance, the bride and groom chose the legendary Beverly Hills Hotel as their wedding venue. The hotel's existing pastel color scheme, along with Gina's favorite tones—champagne, white, and celadon—helped create an enchanted décor. With green crystal chandeliers hanging from the trees and a gazebo enveloped in lush white flowers, the ceremony setting was everything the couple had envisioned. Its romantic design was mirrored in the ballroom's regal candelabra centerpieces and a canopy of roses and orchids that sheltered the couple's sweetheart table. "It felt like our own secret garden," remembers Gina.

But before the intricate details—from the guest book filled with meaningful quotes to the groom's cufflinks (a play on his last name)—were revealed, minor calamity threatened to derail the big day. Just one week before the wedding, Gina's mother slipped and broke her hip while walking to answer the front door. It was frightening and emotional on many levels for the two families, but after emergency surgery, Gina's mother was able to attend her oldest daughter's wedding. "She was in the hospital for five days and was literally transferred to the hotel the day before the wedding," remembers Gina. "My mom was truly incredible, and she refused to let her injury stop her from enjoying our wedding to the fullest." Everyone banded together to support the mother-of-the-bride, including her dress designer, who made several visits to the hospital to refit her gown. Gina's mother looked stunning as she joined the procession in her wheelchair, and the audience gave her a standing ovation. "The entire focus of our wedding changed the week before. Instead of being so concerned with the details, we realized just how fortunate we were to have everyone we loved in one room, happy and healthy," asserts the bride.





After being married by their childhood rabbis, the newlyweds joined their guests in the ballroom to celebrate the overwhelming feeling of good fortune. From the moment the couple twirled their way through a choreographed first dance until the last feather boa was handed out by the band, the custom-made white dance floor was the center of the party. Except for when the couple's favorite course—dessert—appeared. In addition to a traditional wedding cake, guests enjoyed a chocolate lover's plate inscribed with the newlyweds' names and wedding date. A selection of kosher candies and sweets shipped from a candy maker in Stu's hometown of Chicago was also served. To top it all off, the newly-minted Mr. and Mrs. Katz gave each guest cat-shaped cookies as a farewell gift.







Remembering the almost 300 people (many of whom made the trip from Chicago and beyond to be with the couple) who joined them in celebration, Gina and Stu feel their wedding reflected the true meaning of the day: the union of two extended families. "It is the one day when everyone who has been a special part of your lives is there for you, and that is the most incredible feeling on earth." In true happily-ever-after form, Gina adds: "It was the most magical evening of my entire life. I felt like Cinderella." JACQUELYN KISKER



