

Martha  
Stewart

# Living

A SPECIAL ISSUE FOR  
THE BRIDE AND GROOM

## WEDDINGS

MUSIC CAKES DRESSES BRIDESMAIDS  
PEARLS SHOWERS BOUQUETS





*AN AISLE OF GRAPEVINES* Kim designed the invitations (far left) and chose the frog motif, pulled from a Dover book, for its jubilant elegance. Grapes on the vine add a bacchanalian note to the celebration (top). Kim added the finishing touches to her heavy-weight satin Dolce & Gabbana dress (left). Rows of grapevines make the perfect wedding aisle (below). The beaming bride and groom (middle left). Small wildflower-and-herb bouquets decorate each table (bottom left).

## KIMBERLY STAHLMAN TO MICHAEL KEARNS

FIELD STONE WINERY, HEALDSBURG,  
CALIFORNIA 9.1.96



PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMY NEUNSINGER TEXT BY FRANCES BOSWELL

THIS PAGE: PICTURES BY BRIDE: MALLORY SAMSON



Set on the crest of a vineyard in California's Alexander Valley, the marriage of Michael Kearns and Kim Stahlman was a celebration of the couple's transcontinental romance. For ten years, off and on, the two circumnavigated each other while Michael, now a researcher in artificial intelligence, lived in California and Kim studied urban planning at Columbia University in New York City. Their wedding proved a marvelous reason to reunite with West Coast classmates, to woo New York City friends with the beauty of wine country in mid-crush, and to barbecue, their favorite way to entertain.

Michael and Kim encountered their future caterer, Carrie Brown, while on a vacation and wedding-scouting mission. They stopped at the Jimtown Store, a specialty-food shop and catering business in Healdsburg, California, where they split a sublime tuna sandwich and got to talking with Brown, who owns the shop with her husband, John Werner. They knew that with her colorful and zany approach to food and entertaining, Brown would design a menu in keeping with the couple's elegant but quirky ideas about their nuptials.

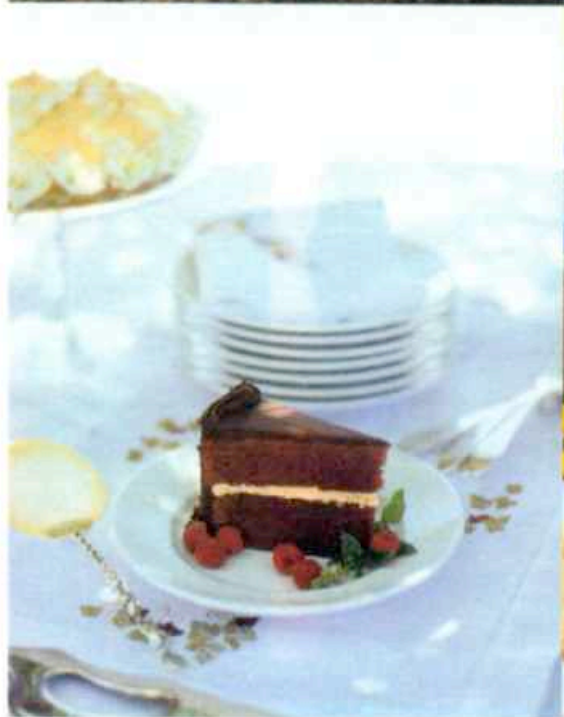
And she did. The dinner was perfect. It complemented the not-at-all-serious nature of the Dixieland music, personified the whimsical frog motif that Kim had selected for the wedding invitations and party favors, and wound down in sync with the evening's outrageous setting sun. The menu—a daring but delicious zinfandel-and-champagne punch, crostini with creamy goat cheese and olive salad, a wild bouquet of jicama spears and local melons with chile and lime, grilled lamb chops with fig-and-black-olive tapenade, and grilled cumin prawns—did not adhere to any of the more traditional “must serve” rules. Nonetheless, people relished the food and were more than delighted with the array of desserts: chocolate wedding cake with espresso-buttercream filling for Michael, lemon-meringue tarts for Kim—and everything in between.

**CROSTINI AND DIXIELAND** A giant oak tree, trimmed with buckets of mixed flowers, marks the wedding site (left). A Dixieland musician struts his bass past the buffet (below). Bottom, clockwise from top left: A waitress carries a tray of creamy-goat-cheese-and-olive-salad crostini. Japanese lanterns illuminate the party after the sun goes down. Jicama spears and ripe orange melon with chile and lime is no ordinary hors d'oeuvre. A stamped brown-paper bag filled with gummy frogs and chocolate-covered espresso beans is given to each departing guest.





*THE COLORFUL MENU* Clockwise from top left: A platter of grilled summer vegetables, including carrots, white button mushrooms, green beans, and red and yellow bell peppers, is garnished with sprigs of fresh oregano and served at room temperature with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar. Just a splash of late-harvest zinfandel is mixed with champagne to make a festive wedding cocktail, perfect for a toast. Thickly sliced heirloom tomatoes, strewn with marinated bocconcini and fresh basil leaves, are as impressive looking as they are delicious. Smoked-salmon-and-caper petits fours are embellished with fresh herbs and colorful edible flowers.



*Clockwise from top left: Michael and Kim, surrounded by a vineyard in Alexander Valley, enjoy a quiet twilight moment together. Every plate has a wonderful balance of flavors and colors: grilled vegetables with oregano and balsamic vinegar, grilled baby lamb chops with fig-and-black-olive tapenade, spicy cumin prawns, and sliced heirloom tomatoes with basil and bocconcini. A dessert buffet table is laden with chocolate, vanilla, and ginger cookies, meringue kisses, chocolate cakes, lemon-meringue tarts, and a mixed-berry trifle with zabaglione. The old-fashioned chocolate wedding cakes are filled with espresso buttercream. SEE THE RECIPE SECTION*