

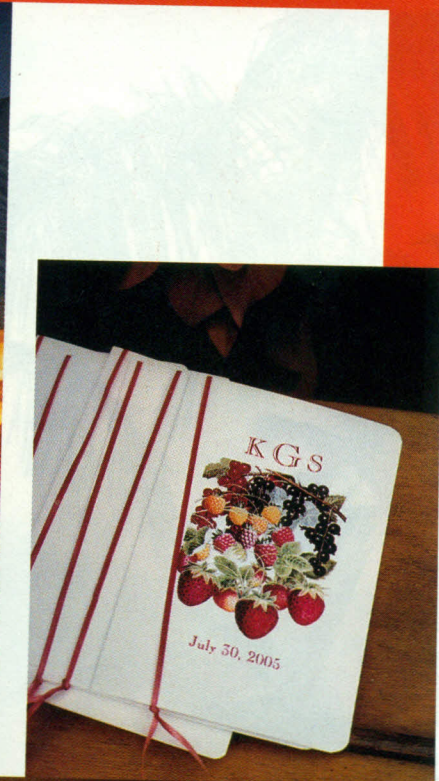


Kristine Mellor, the quintessential California girl, lived for beach weekends with friends and sunsets with her dad. So of course the 29-year-old middle school teacher would shoot for the shore when planning her July wedding to Scott Gardner, 35, an energy investor. "I wanted everything to feel fresh, alive, and summery," says Kristine, who decided that the small town of Carmel would be a divine destination for a weekend wedding. "It was like a little vacation for everyone," she recalls. Come Saturday afternoon, the 200 guests traded in swimming togs for more formal attire and gathered at the quaint seaside All Saints Episcopal Church, where Kristine and Scott exchanged brief and simple vows. The couple then hopped into a vintage Rolls-Royce and headed to the Tehama Golf Club, known for its cliff-top ocean views. Summer fruits, bright blooms, and coral accents decorated tables set up beneath a billowy tent. In lieu of favors, Kristine and Scott kept to the seasonal theme and made a donation to Summer Search, a group that sends low-income kids to camp. Though most of the revelry took place under the lantern-lit shelter, the bride—her groom in tow—slipped out to see the last of the day's rays. "Sunsets are very special to me, so when I have the chance to catch one I take it." Spoken like a true belle of the beach.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Ribbon-festooned bouquets of the bride's favorite flowers—dahlias, tuberoses, and hydrangeas—complement the bridesmaids' strapless, tea-length coral dresses. Kristine's organza gown waits for its big moment; the original Jin Wang creation "felt comfortable yet sexy." Scott's smart Brooks Brothers suit, paired with a coral and cream striped tie, echoes the day's fresh feel as the couple strike a pose on the sand.

WRITER **KIM ACOSTA**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Dining alfresco under the glow of moon-shaped lanterns. Programs bearing a fruitful logo capture the spirit of the day. San Francisco faves, Wonderbread 5, rock the party with retro tunes. Table decor includes coral linens, votives, and petite vases. Turn to Shopping Guide.



our favorite things

- >> **A SEAWORTHY SIGN-IN** In honor of San Francisco's Fish Bowl bar—the site of Kristine and Scott's first love connection—the couple asked guests to write their best wishes on fish-shaped paper, then drop them into fishbowls. (Goldfish crackers swam about in the welcome bags.)
- >> **WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN** Kristine's veil incorporated lace from her mother's wedding dress and a bow borrowed from her grandmother's gown.
- >> **GIVING DAD HIS DUE** Kristine surprised her father with his favorite dessert, apple pie, and his own cake-cutting ceremony. "He paid," she says. "He should get what he likes!"
- >> **AN "A" FOR EFFORT** Two of Kristine's eighth-grade students hunkered down in her living room and helped assemble the welcome bags provided for out-of-towners.



At 32, Michael Grossman knew his mother's greatest wish was to enjoy a *mizinke*, the Jewish dance honoring parents whose last child has married. Though he'd been set up a hundred times, the New York bachelor flew to a friend's midwestern wedding solo. There he chatted all night with Meg Mitchelson, 31, who was recently divorced. "We met up again six weeks later," she says, "and the connection was instant."

When Michael told his mom that he'd found someone terrific, he stressed that they'd met at temple; after all, it was a Jewish wedding. "But then he confessed that I wasn't Jewish, lived in Kansas, and had three children," says Meg. "Luckily, they didn't hold it against me!"

Two years later, the couple wed in front of 320 guests at Cipriani 42nd Street, a historic bank building in the heart of New York City. The nuptials included several Jewish wedding traditions embraced by Meg, who had converted to the religion. "We circled one another and then the children, together, binding us all as a family," she says. Tree branches—from the homes of Meg's and Michael's parents as well as the Kansas City compound where the new family would soon settle—formed part of the huppah. "And, of course," Meg adds, smiling, "my mother-in-law got her *mizinke*."



TOP: Meg's Badgley Mischka dress with detachable train adorned the bridal chamber, where, after the ceremony, Meg and Michael would celebrate their first moments as a married couple. **ABOVE:** Meg's daughter Meryl, 3, sports a cropped do given by big sister, Maura Kate, 5, who played "beauty salon" when Mom wasn't looking. **RIGHT:** All three children, including son Cole, 7, lead Mom and stepdad down the aisle to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The couple step outside into the July sunshine for a photo op. The Sylvia Weinstock buttercream cake features wheat "embroidery" on the layers, and the couple's and their parents' favorite flavors, including coconut and caramel. Centerpieces are filled with flowers and fruits in pinks and limes: roses, hydrangeas, sweet peas, and calla lilies, with a helping of blueberries and kumquats.

WRITER **KIM ACOSTA**



our favorite things

- >> **A SLAM DUNK** Who says a wedding deserves only one Sylvia Weinstock confection? The celebrity baker created a basketball cake for Meg's nephew, Connor, who was also celebrating something special—his 13th birthday.
- >> **FIELDS OF GOLD** The bride carried a bouquet of wheat in memory of her grandfathers, both of whom were Kansas farmers. The stalks, harvested by her uncle, were wrapped in a ribbon embellished with a diamond-studded tie tack that had belonged to "Papa," her father's dad.
- >> **BELLINIS AND ... BBQ?** Cocktail hour featured tributes to two gustatory creations: Bellinis, the champagne-and-peach-puree cocktail invented by Giuseppe Cipriani in Venice, Italy, in 1948; and Gates barbecue sauce (served with chicken croquettes), a Kansas City legend.
- >> **THINKING AHEAD** One of the reasons Meg and Michael chose to be married at a national historic landmark was that they knew the building had staying power; the couple hope to expand their family one day, and want to be able to show future kids the scene of their wedding.

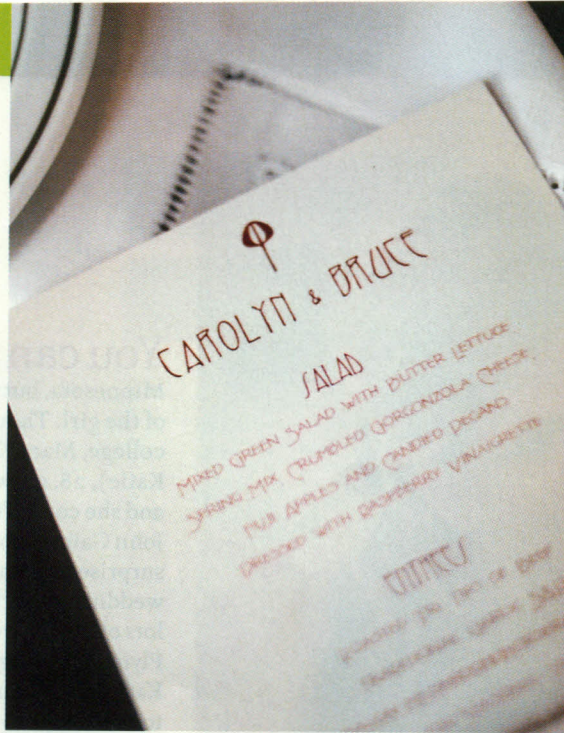


ABOVE: A vine-canopied terrace beckons guests outdoors for the cocktail hour. The handcrafted details and leaded glass windows throughout the club wowed Carolyn, who chose the venue at first sight. **RIGHT:** The bride's best friend and the groom's daughter carry vibrant bouquets of roses and sweet peas.

WRITER KIM ACOSTA

Hilltop vows, an Art Deco ballroom, a lively party—Carolyn Brizzolara, 43, and Bruce Godfrey, 51, made sure all aspects of their wedding represented their northern California hometown. Says Carolyn, “It’s full of gorgeous views and Craftsman-style architecture”—perfect for a September wedding. Bruce asked that the event not conflict with a California Bears football game, so Carolyn planned the celebration for a Sunday, when the team is off. Many out-of-town guests spent part of the weekend cheering on the Bears and sightseeing across the bay in San Francisco, but, come ceremony time, all eyes were on the bride as she emerged from the Botanical Gardens of the University of California, Berkeley, in a silk-organza Le Spose di Gio gown. “It felt ethereal, walking through the trees with the sun shimmering off my dress,” she says. After the vows, the couple took a quick ride to the Berkeley City Club, which was designed by Hearst Castle architect Julia Morgan in 1929. “The ballroom was magnificent even when it wasn’t decorated,” says Carolyn. The reception’s mood and movement were caught on canvas by artist Greg Kalamar. Says the bride, “It’s fun to look at it now and think ‘That’s my mom—dancing!’”





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Luscious centerpieces filled with roses, hydrangeas, and dahlias, plus pears, grapes, and pomegranates, perch atop chocolate-colored linens, hinting of fall. Letterpress menus tantalize guests. Bruce's niece Samantha, 4, is the picture of patience before the ceremony. Live event artist Greg Kalamar captures the unfolding scene in a painting that the couple later hung in their dining room. CENTER: All the stationery—invitations, programs, place cards—reflected the Art Deco theme. Turn to Shopping Guide.



our favorite things

>> **THIS MAGIC MENU** Humbled by the unwavering support of friends and family throughout the planning, Carolyn and Bruce hosted 50 people for dinner in their home after the rehearsal. They hired a favorite neighborhood joint from their dating days to cater the event. "The chef put love juju in our food," says Bruce, referring to the West African superstition.

>> **A SOULFUL ENDING** Instead of following convention and choosing classical recession music, Carolyn and Bruce boogied to a soloist's rendition of Aretha Franklin's "Baby I Love You."

>> **'TIS BETTER TO GIVE** The couple requested that in lieu of traditional wedding gifts, guests donate to a Berkeley charity or another organization of their choice. "We feel so fortunate," says Carolyn. "We really wanted to pass that on."

