Karla Robleto & Robert Dabney

the location:
THE RITZ CARLTON LAGUNA NIGUEL, DANA POINT, CA

the photographer:
MARIO ROMERO FOR VERO IMAGE

the first time they met
Karla attended a party, during which she received an invitation to attend another gathering. Since the invitation was not extended by the host, Karla was reluctant to accept. However, the host arrived and personally extended the invitation. Captivated by Karla he asked one of her friends to make sure she got there!

the proposal
Four years later, on the anniversary of their meeting, Rob arranged a Sequoia National Forest vacation. "I decided the most special way to propose would be in nature and felt a waterfall would represent the everlasting flow of our love," Rob says. With the ring securely hidden, and to the sounds of flowing water, Rob shared his feelings and proposed.

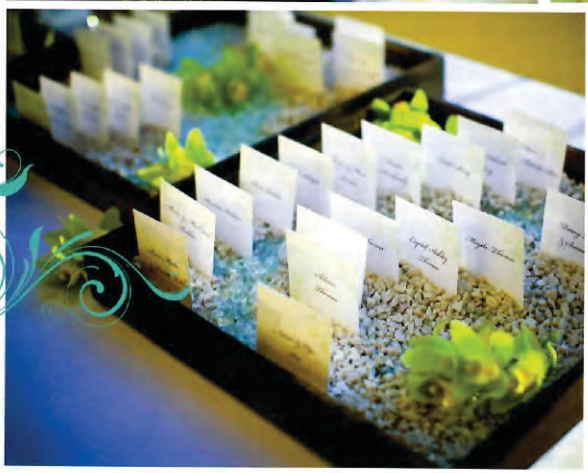
the wedding
Karla and Rob wanted a very chic wedding with a Latin, South Beach-style flair with a touch of Costa Rica. The ceremony took place on the lawn of the Ritz Carlton where Manzanita branches were fashioned into a wedding. In keeping with their spiritual expression, they performed a unity sand ritual, each pouring a different colored sand to mix and blend in a vase.

For the ceremony, Karla wore a Pronovias gown in ivory with a Spanish flamenco-style cut by The Montclair collection. Her bouquet, created R. Jack Balthazar, was green Cymbidium orchids with Larkspur and fiddlehead fern, wrapped with chocolate ribbon. Hair and makeup was fashioned by the Cloutier Agency, and Karla's bridesmaids wore lovely Alfred Angelo dresses. Rob chose a black suit, ivory vest and shirt, all from Friar Tux.

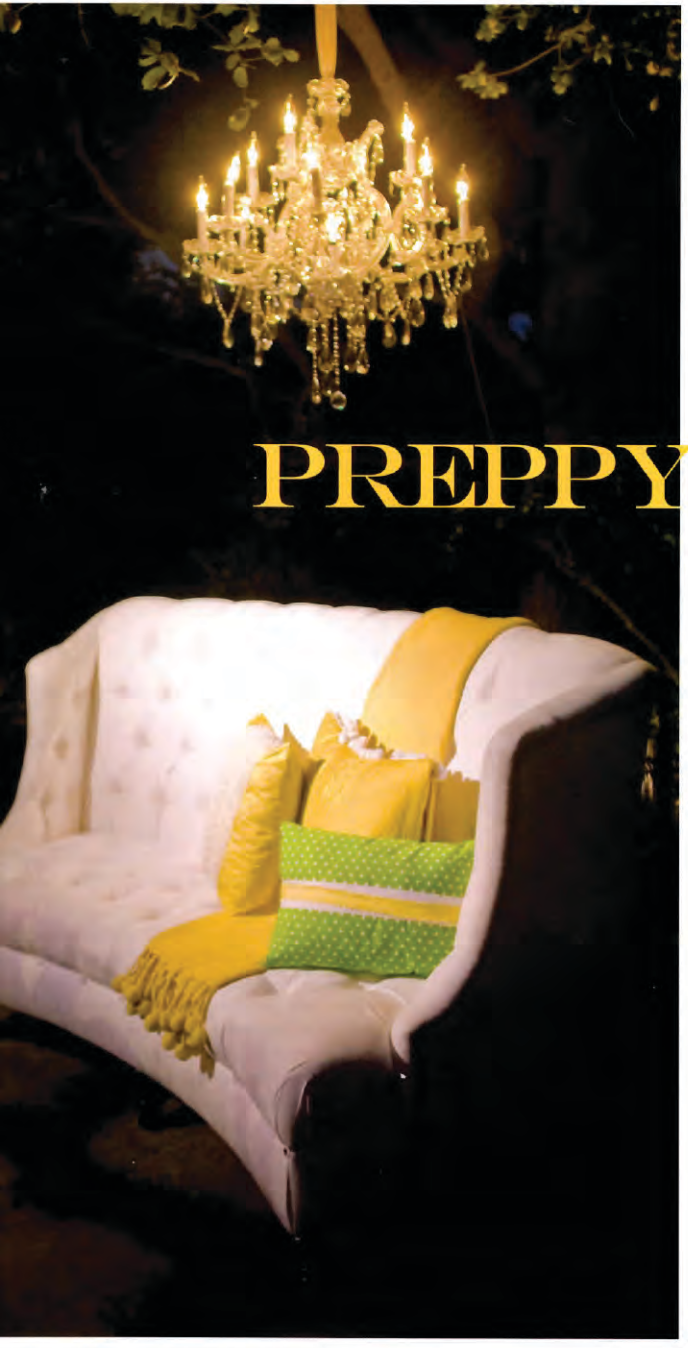
As the sun set over the ocean, the Ritz's terrace became a beautiful modern lounge where guests enjoyed a Spanish guitar trio, Mojitos, and Duck Brosciuto hors d'oeuvres. Later, moving into the ballroom, event designer Kristin Banta transformed the reception into a darker, sexy scene with chocolate brown undertones surrounded by a high-gloss, all-white dance floor achieving the "supper club" feeling. The entertainment kept the "club" rocking with De Bois Entertainment.
The delicious faire, created by The Ritz Carlton, began with a Crispy Lobster Roll in Ginger Coconut Thai Curry Sauce, followed by Orange Glazed Duck Breast. The main course included Duet of Grilled Hoisen Ginger Beef Filet and Grilled Halibut with Tatsoi. Wines included Mumm Cuvee, Ferrari-Carneros Fume Blanc, Antinori.

the honeymoon
Karla and Rob honeymooned for twelve days at the Hyatt Regency Resort & Spa in Maui, Hawaii where they found the perfect Maui vacation, right on Kaanapali Beach!

• SUSAN HART HELLMAN



Wedding Consultant: Kristin Banta Events; **Ceremony & Reception Site; Caterer & Cake; Wedding Night Accommodations:** Ritz Carlton Hotel, Laguna Niguel; **Photographer:** Vero Image, Mario Romero; **Officiant:** Greg Mohr; **Bridal Salon & Designer: Ceremony:** The Montclair Collection, Pronovias; **Bridal Salon & Designer: Reception:** Mary Me Bridal, St. Pucchi; **Hair & Makeup:** The Cloutier Agency, Eric Sebbag & Camille Clark; **Bridesmaid Dresses:** Alfred Angelo; **Formalwear:** Friar Tux



WRITTEN BY: Alisa Jennifer Kay
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: Alyssa Nicol Photography

Coordination, Production & Set Direction:
Kristin Banta Events
Event Design Direction, Floral & Event Rentals:
R Jack Balthazar
Event Rentals:
Town & Country Event Rentals
Cake:
NancyKay Confections
Linen:
Wildflower Linen
Lighting:
JFox Event Lighting

PREPPY MARTINIS & CAKES

Preppy is defined as "a student or former student of a preparatory school or a person whose manner and dress are deemed typical of traditional preparatory schools." Preppy colors are always bright; favorites include pink and lime green. Preppies may not always match, but they are always coordinated. This "preppy-look" is the inspiration behind this martini and dessert lounge. With event designers, R Jack Balthazar and Kristin Banta of Kristin Banta Events, preppy created a setting of crisp colors such as white with accents of "lemons… really acidic yellow combined with that popping acidic green, and to top it off, with a hint of cherry… a little sassy … a little riskier… a little more couture," Banta explains.

With its color combinations and mismatched pieces, the lounge has a sense of being unpredictable, but somehow, everything works synergistically. "It has an Abercrombie and Fitch feeling, or perhaps, Ralph Lauren...that is, with an edge," states Banta. The W-monogrammed white linen created by Wildflower Linen plays the chief role for this environment, where as the decadent tufted white couch and ottoman make a rich statement, the colorful throw pillows become the regal pieces, and the beautiful chandelier provided by Town & Country Event Rentals suspended from the tree above, provides the final touch of luxury. The trophy

containers with blooming florals and candles by the fireplace make a defined statement, and the last important, perfectly matched element are the mini-cakes and petit fours.

"Mini-cakes are interesting because each guest can have their own cake. You can have multiple flavors, you can use them on a dessert bar, and you can use them as a centerpiece at a table. It's a very personalized touch," said Nancy Kay of NancyKay Confections. "They are also great as wedding favors with a monogram on top, because we can box them up too." She created cakes for this lounge that were upbeat, bright and whimsical. So what goes into a preppy mini-cake? "Chocolate Black-Out cake, with Vanilla fromage with a homemade toffee center," Nancy Kay said, describing the luscious cakes. She also created Triple Chocolate *petits fours* for this look – something so small can be so decadent – with Triple Chocolate cake fondant and a fresh raspberry as the garnish.

If you're wondering what type of couple would be drawn to this darling look, wonder no more, "Those that want a really clean, crisp environment with a pop of excitement. Preppy can be incredibly sassy and adventurous…with the right kind of décor-partnership, you can achieve something that suggests mischievousness," Banta says. The martini cart and shaker next to sugar-rimmed glasses and swizzle sticks are sweet and sassy ways to showcase glasses. Guests can eat with "Grandma's Heirloom" flatware, and with champagne in silver buckets with stacks of limes and lemons, etched glass containers of lemonade, and vessels of colorful candy sticks, family and friends will thoroughly enjoy indulging. By embellishing every day spaces, taking the known and turning it into the unexpected, "you get a 'fantasy' feeling with a 'lived-in' comfort," Banta said. You can have this amazing fantasy scenario in very residential spaces. This BBQ and cabinet area which is several decades old "has an east coast sensibility....so find a little nook, and create a martini feel!" Banta concludes.

Looking preppy means looking expensive in an understated way. Banta encapsulates the design perfectly, "It's Martha Stewart with a martini," Banta says with sassiness. And if you think Preppy means prude, you're wrong. "Who knows what kind of deviance that will happen under the weeping willow just around the corner?" Banta said. ●

WRITTEN BY: Alisa Jennifer Kay
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: Alyssa Nicol Photography

Spanish MOONLIT EVENING

Imagine the day closing into night, and having the glow of soft candlelight surround you as you bask in the calming moonlight. Now imagine family and friends surrounding you, the scent of fresh roses – this is the feeling of an Old World Spanish style wedding ceremony, which is warm, inviting, reminiscent of comfort, softness and warmth.

Wrought-iron is a classic staple when decorating in the Old World Spanish style. It can be an accessory in chandeliers, wall-sconces and candelabras. For this design, wrought-iron candelabras were used with embellishments of red roses, but those were all secondary inspirations. "We definitely needed wrought-iron, and natural wood to carry out the lightness of the setting, otherwise, it could have easily become too Goth due to it being a nighttime environment," Kristin Banta of Kristin Banta Events explains, but it was, "the cake that was the first inspiration for this setting. The cake was a very important element; in fact, the palette became directly from the cake color."

The cake design featured a bold color palette of

Coordination, Production & Set Direction:
Kristin Banta Events
Event Design Direction, Floral, Event Rentals:
R Jack Balthazar
Event Rentals:
Town & Country Event Rentals
Cake:
NancyKay Confections
Linen:
Wildflower Linen
Lighting:
JFox Event Lighting
Pool Bridge & Subflooring:
Event Construction Services, WOW Pool Covers

deep saturated turquoise and dark crimson red, paired with ornate wrought-iron detail. "This was a red velvet cake with a white cream cheese filling," said NancyKay of NancyKay's Confections. Capturing the overall image of what an event designer envisions is important, but integrating in the details is essential. "If I am working with a designer, I talk about the mood and feeling they want. I want to see what elements of the design are key, and with this design, Kristin Banta wanted the wrought-iron look on the cake – that was the most important element and the most challenging," said Kay. "To find the wrought-iron pattern, meant walking blocks and blocks in order to locate an authentic gate with the design that most inspired me."

To add a touch of old to this setting, reclaimed wood benches and stools were incorporated with bright fabric details and black lace fans resting a top each. "Rene, of R Jack Balthazar wanted to use inspired pieces, refurbished benches, and things that were unorthodox – so we decided, 'let's completely go against the grain, and think about something different from the standards,'" Banta declares.

To make a grand and romantic entrance to the altar, a bridge was built across the pool for the bride and groom to walk across. The bridge featured a custom aisle runner designed by Wildflower Linen in turquoise and black lace details, and was surrounded by floating rafts of candlelight and florals to create a feeling of exotic romance and sensuality. "Not everybody wants to get married in broad daylight," Banta said, expanding that some couples may want, "something a little sexier."

In fact, Christina Coe, owner of Event Construction Services (Walk On Water, WOW) shares, "Dancing on water is very popular and exciting for weddings. We we can turn a pool into a dance floor where guests can dance on the Plexiglas, and see the water underneath; it's very dramatic." Coe further shares that the use of roses, candles, and water is always a beautiful combination; it adds a touch of sophistication and romance. "We've floated thousands of rose petals in the pool, then built a clear Plexiglas subflooring over the top of the water where guests can dance, walk over, or a couple can even have their reception tables positioned." Coe adds, "We keep creating new designs and technology, especially with the new LED lighting... you can create any color reflection through the water you want. This is an incredible sensation, and very exciting for the guests to see various colors rotate, and illuminate through the water."

So what type of couple would be drawn to this mysterious look? "Someone that is a little bit daring, likes drama, and is inspired by Spanish architecture, or someone who likes that drama and ethereal feeling evoked by being in a Spanish Mission. There's a history there...there's a reach into the past, but a chic, modern editorial presence resonates as today's style and trends," Banta said.