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REAL WEDDING

Two Of A Kind

DEBORAH GISS & TIMOTHY STALKER

FEBRUARY 22, 2003
BEVERLY HILLS, CA

Photographed by Karyn L. Giss and Jolie Margulies
Written by Aimee Manis



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Making for a great story to tell their grandchildren someday, Tim Stalker proposed to Deborah Giss in November of 2002, at the Jules Verne Restaurant at the Eiffel Tower. Unbeknownst to each other, they each had the same idea for celebrating the other's birthday by spending a week in Paris, but Deborah had no idea that there was a bigger event planned than just birthdays. Deborah had been taking French lessons, and Tim began studying the language on his own, so that he could speak his surprise marriage proposal to Deborah in French. When Tim popped the question, the response he got was "Comment?" which means "What?" in French. Although Deborah understood the words, her brain was having a hard time processing them! It was only after Tim's fourth attempt at the romantic question that Deborah finally realized that he was asking her to marry him, and her response was a "Yes!" and a "Oui!"

In spite of the slightly off-sync proposal, Deborah and Tim proved to think alike when it came to their wedding, and shared the same dream and vision of an romantic event with an intimate feel. The couple spent about one year of their fifteen-month engagement on intense wedding planning, assisted by a professional wedding planner. Though Tim and Deborah were surprised at just how bride-driven the whole wedding process tends to be, both the bride and the groom were completely involved in every detail of the event, and they made it clear to their vendors that all decisions would be made together. Above all, the wedding had to reflect their personalities and celebrate their love.

The couple was married in The Veranda Room of The Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills. The noon wedding ceremony was witnessed by eighty guests, including Deborah's sister and step-sister as bridesmaids and Tim's two sons as groomsmen. Having Tim's sons participate in the wedding made the service even more meaningful for the bride and groom, and seeing the three men standing at the altar together was one of Deborah's favorite moments. She explains, "Knowing that Tim's sons were happy to be part of the ceremony was more touching than I could ever express in words. I still feel truly honored to be a part of their lives and them a part of mine."

By taking bits and pieces from several ceremonies that they had read from Bel Air Wedding Ceremonies, the couple added their own touches, including their hand-written vows to each other that were personal and quite funny. For example, Tim had to promise to convert to Greenwich Mean Time from Tim Stalker time, and Deborah had to promise not to answer

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every question with a question. The guests laughed hysterically depending on which of the couple they knew best. There was also a "secret" part to the ceremony, in which both bride and groom had sent the officiant writings that they wanted to say to the other but wanted to keep as a surprise. So, when they each got to hear what the other had written, it was incredibly touching. A wonderful testament to the romantic yet fun, non-traditional ceremony is the fact that Tim and Deborah's loved ones are still talking about it today.

With several different areas in which the guests could mingle and circulate, an afternoon lunch reception was also held in the Peninsula's Veranda Room. The elegant setting was further embellished with vibrant red roses, in honor of the bride's favorite color, and perfectly suiting a February wedding. Different varieties of red roses overflowed from large black and white "Toile" printed ceramic tubs, creating a romantic, vintage feel. The wedding cake, rather cakes, added even more unique beauty to the breathtaking room. Because the bride is allergic to sugar, she arranged for the top two tier cakes to be sugar-free, tiramisu type confections covered in white frosting, surrounded by red roses, and topped with a specially-made chocolate Eiffel Tower. The rest of the cake was comprised of tiers of individual cakes, in four different flavors, each hand-decorated with three-dimensional flowers, leading up to the two top cakes. Each different cake flavor was decorated with a different type of red flower. The effect of the entire creation was stunning and just as distinctive as the bride and groom.

On top of their own commitment to creating a unique wedding, Deborah and Tim also give credit to the wedding consultant for making their event especially creative and fun for their guests. For example, a milkshake and smoothie bar was an unexpected conversation-starter and a great way to tie in Tim's personality, since milkshakes are a favorite of his and his sons. And a four-tiered dark chocolate fountain pleased all the chocoholics in attendance and was a wonderful visual treat for all. But, not to be outdone by the creative treats, Deborah's love of shoes inspired her own personal stamp on the reception. Each table was named for one of her favorite shoe designers, from Chanel to Gucci, Tods, and Jimmy Choo for the sweetheart table. The table cards were emblazoned with a picture of a shoe, which each guest matched to the appropriate designer to find their table assignment. For example, the Manolo Blahnik table had a stiletto pump on the table card and the guest's cards for that table were imprinted with the same image. Deborah's inimitable and whimsical vision was carried out perfectly. Some of the guests were so drawn in by the theme that they were asking to be seated at the table of their favorite designer!

Tim and Deborah's loved ones each took home a beautiful bag of gold foil-wrapped chocolate hearts bearing a tag that read "Je t'aime" which means "I love you" in French. The charming mementos were a perfect symbol for the one-of-a-kind wedding and the love of this two-of-a-kind couple.