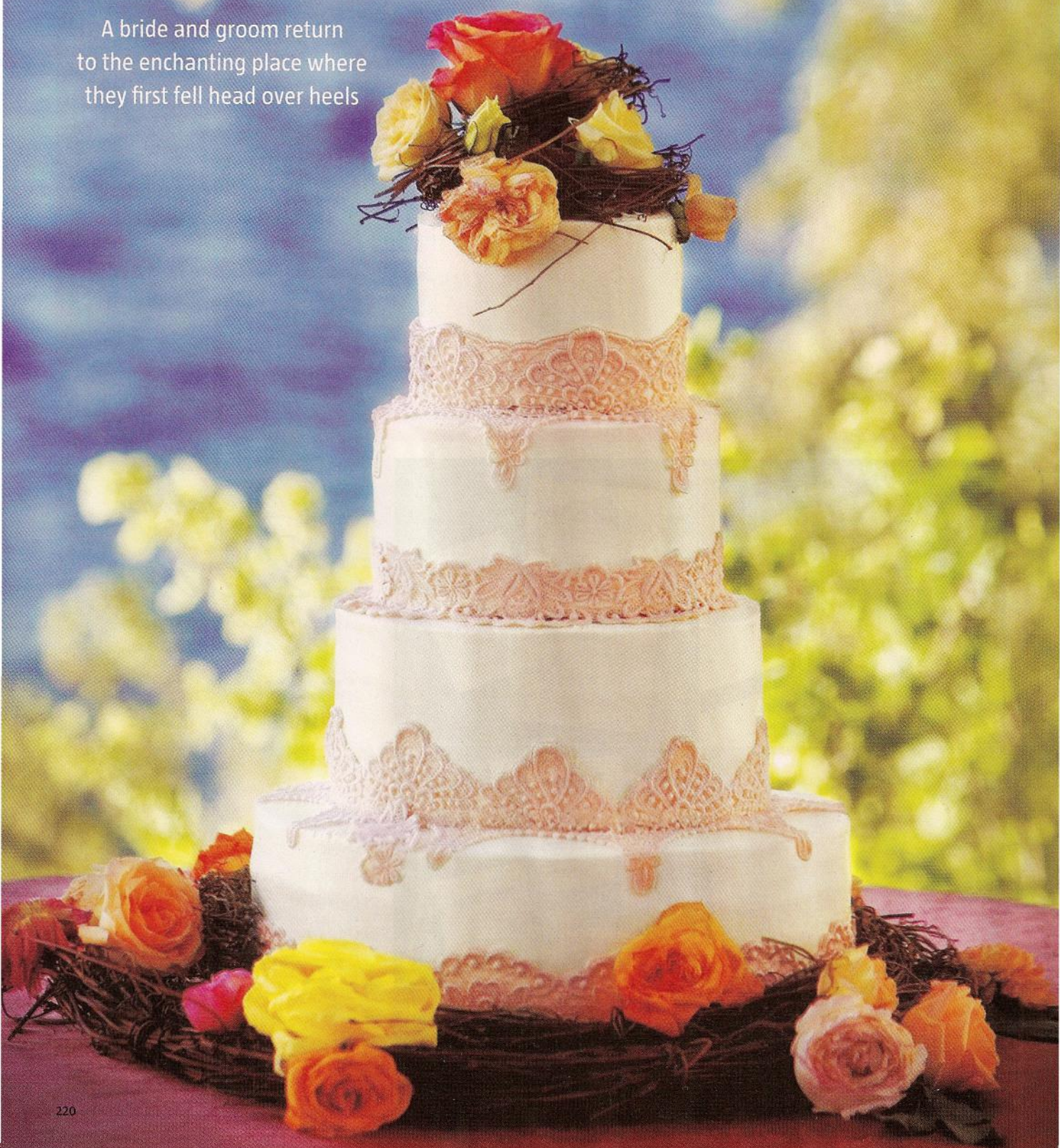


Sweet Love

A bride and groom return
to the enchanting place where
they first fell head over heels



KATE and KEVIN

Lake Tahoe, NV

LAKE TAHOE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A special place for Kate Dietrich and Kevin Davis. They met and fell in love when they were both working at a hotel there; and after they moved away to live together in San Luis Obispo, CA, the couple continued to reminisce about the good times they'd had in the area. Then on a surprise return trip to the lake, under the guise of celebrating Kate's birthday, Kevin took her for a walk to one of their favorite, secluded spots in the woods. He had secretly asked a friend of his to lay out a picnic there earlier, champagne and all. "I saw it and thought, 'That's weird. Nobody ever comes out here; what's that?'" Kate recalls. "Then Kevin ended up proposing to me."

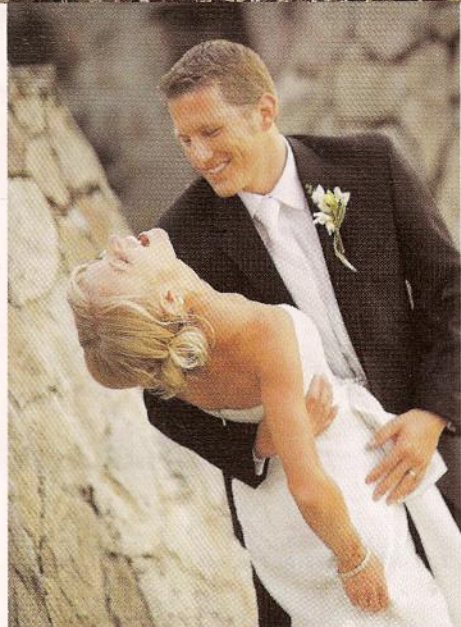
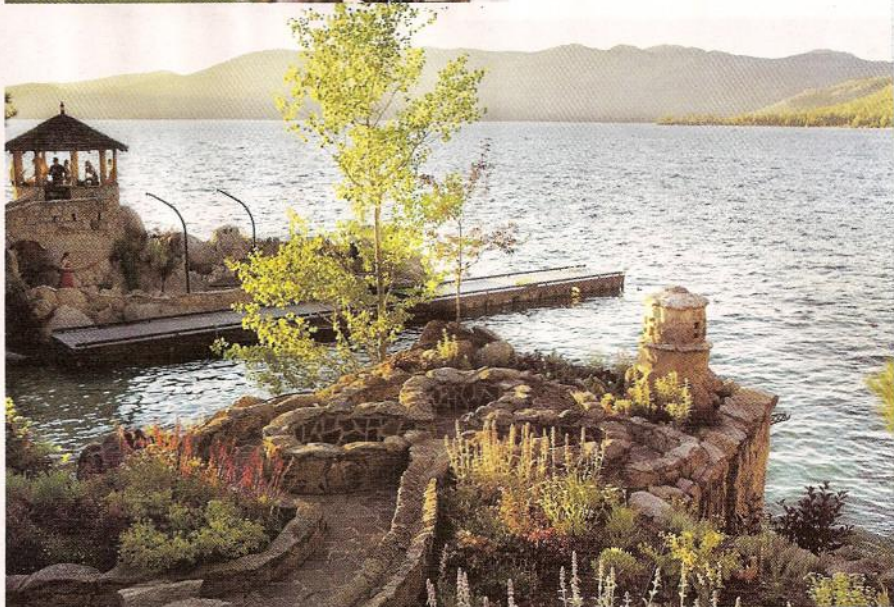
So Lake Tahoe was the natural choice for the couple's 116-guest wedding, in July 2007. And the Thunderbird Lodge, which overlooks the water and dates back to the 1930s, proved to be a perfect venue. During their outdoor ceremony, Kevin and Kate threw blossoms into the lake—a local wedding tradition—to honor loved ones who had passed away. Afterward, guests drank pear Melba martinis, which matched both the event's pink and salmon flowers and the stunning sunset that reflected off the water.

After dining on macadamia nut-crusted ahi tuna and rib-eye steak (or eggplant and polenta), people chose from three types of cake: tiramisu, vanilla chocolate marble with mocha buttercream and ganache fillings, or lemon cake with berries, vanilla custard and buttercream. "Some guests ate a piece of every flavor," Kate recalls. "We had no leftovers!"

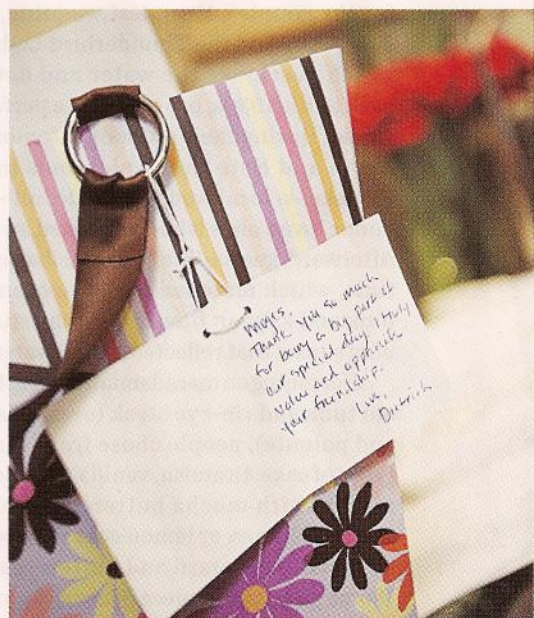
Once the sun went down, everyone headed into the lodge for dancing. The DJ, who is also a musician, played guitar and sang Ben Harper's "Not Fire, Not Ice" for the pair's first dance. "It was a cool touch to have it performed live," says the bride. By the end of the evening, the couple had a whole new set of meaningful Tahoe memories. "We always used to say that the best times of our lives were there," says Kate. "Now that's definitely true." —Esther Haynes



Opposite: Kate's flower-topped cake, by local caterer D'Lish, stands out against the blue backdrop of Lake Tahoe. This page, clockwise from top: Dahlias and garden roses add splashes of color to the chairs and arbor at the ceremony site. A waterfront stone path provides a peaceful spot for the couple's memorial to honor passed loved ones. Kevin, in a Calvin Klein tuxedo, dips Kate, in her Monique Lhuillier gown. The table markers are named after places that hold special meaning for the couple; Red Dog is a "cool little ski bar" they love, says Kate.



Clockwise from top: The dinner tables are strategically placed to showcase the gorgeous view of the lake and mountains. Personalized gift bags, filled with Tahoe postcards, frosted votives and glass coasters etched with leaves, welcome guests. The newlyweds toast to their future together. Kate's bouquet of white roses, dahlias and peonies, by Tahoe City, CA-based Bellissima Floral Creations, is flanked by her bridesmaids' blossoms.

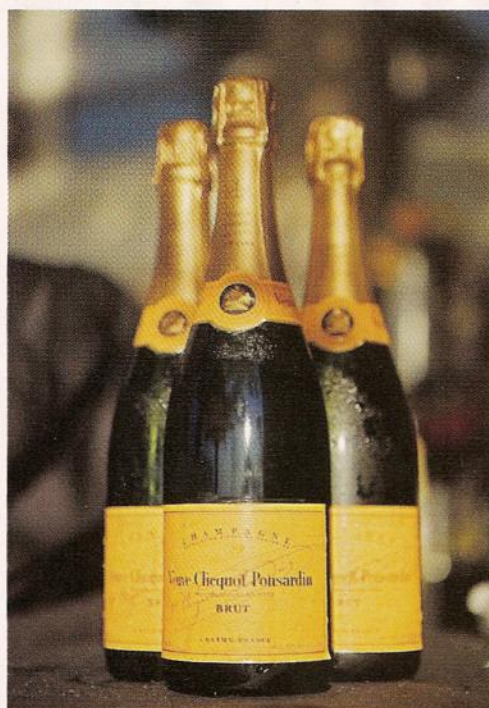


Learn From Kate and Kevin

TREAT GUESTS TO A TOUR. The couple offered everyone a guided walk through the grounds of the Thunderbird Lodge prior to the ceremony. "It's an amazing place," says Kate. "People got a piece of Tahoe history."

SHARE A SECRET PROMISE. After publicly saying "I do," the pair recited private vows to each other inside the lodge. "Basically we walked down the aisle and up to a secluded room," says the bride. "It was important to take that time and experience the energy of the moment."

OFFER RELIEF FOR FEET. Because it was a long day with a lot of walking, Kate set out baskets of white flip-flops for guests to use at the reception. "Many people later said, 'Thank you so much!'" she recalls.



Clockwise from above: Kate and Kevin make a graceful exit after their reception, surrounded by bubble-blowing well-wishers. Tamarind barbecued shrimp skewers with ponzu are among the various passed appetizers (including peach and brie phyllo tartlets) offered to guests following the ceremony. Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin is the couple's wedding champagne of choice because it was the bottle Kevin had waiting in the woods when he proposed to Kate.

