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FEBRUARY 2005 INSTYLE.COM AOL KEYWORD: INSTYLE



# SURPRISE PARTY

She's no stranger to crowds, but when **BRITNEY SPEARS** wed dancer **KEVIN FEDERLINE** in a secretly planned September ceremony, the superstar opted for an intimate gathering of 27 guests at a private L.A. home, with 4,000 flowers, a backyard tent—and Southern fried chicken



"Impulsive" is definitely an adjective that could be used to describe Britney Spears. But last April she set a new standard when she met dancer Kevin Federline at the L.A. club Joseph's. Love was the last thing on her mind, "but he was like a magnet," Spears, 23, has said. A week later, set to leave on her Onyx Hotel tour, Spears took a detour instead: "I was supposed

to get on a plane ... and I turned the car around." The singer proceeded to invite Federline, 26, on her European tour.

With romantic backdrops provided by Paris, Amsterdam and London, the couple's serious attraction turned into full-fledged love. On the flight home, as they were discussing their future together, Spears surprised Federline again, this time

with an impromptu marriage proposal.

"I thought the guy was supposed to ask the girl," Federline has said. In fact, at first he was so taken aback that he said no. "A couple of minutes went by, and then I asked her." Lucky for him his soon-to-be fiancée hadn't changed her mind. "My head was spinning I was so happy," Federline said. As for Spears:





A post-ceremony toast. Spears wore an embroidered lace-and-crystal choker and demi-gloves. The groom wore a Kiton tuxedo. Bottom: Federline with his groomsmen. "It's great to see Kevin with someone who really cares about him," best man Jimmy Federico (far left) has said.

duchesse satin taffeta. "Britney's from the South, so she wanted everything to be comfortable and intimate," says Fox. The bride took that cue for her own attire, changing out of her wedding gown and into a lace minidress, also from Lhuillier, for the party. **COMFORT FOOD** True to her Louisiana roots, Spears requested that Catering by Field whip up a "country food" menu. The result? Fried chicken fingers, sweet-and-spicy ribs, crab cakes and mashed potatoes, with peach cobbler for dessert.

**RAISE THE LIGHTS** For their first dance the couple swayed to Journey's "Lights."

**SUITE ENDING** As a wedding-night surprise for his bride Federline had Mark's Garden decorate Hotel Bel Air's presidential suite with rose petals, gardenias, Swarovski crystals and 250 candles. —Anna Nordberg







Clockwise from top: The tent sparkled with crystal chandeliers. The bridal party, which included Britney's sister, Jamie Lynn (far left), ham it up as Kevin kisses his wife. The bride's bouquet and Sergio Rossi sandals. Perfect Endings' Sam Godfrey created the white-chocolate buttercream cake, topped with edible roses and pearls and mounted on a pedestal of roses.



"I finally found my happily ever after."

The couple knew they didn't want a long engagement, so Spears turned to Alyson Fox, of the mother-daughter team Levine Fox Events, to plan an October wedding at the Bacara Resort in Santa Barbara. But as details leaked to the press, the duo decided to move the date up to September 18 and the location to Fox's Studio City, Calif., home. Says Fox: "Britney didn't want all the hoopla; she just wanted to marry Kevin. They are very much in love."

**NO DRESS REHEARSAL** The 27 relatives and friends who arrived at Fox's home expected an engagement dinner but were greeted with an invite that read "Surprise! It is with much love that we welcome you to our wedding ceremony tonight." Despite the short notice, no one had to walk down the aisle in jeans, as the appropriate bridal-party attire had been smuggled into the house. The groomsmen quickly changed into Vestimenta tuxedos, while the bridesmaids slipped on Monique Lhuillier gowns.

**THE CEREMONY** Pachelbel's Canon in D major played as Spears met her husband at the altar in a Lhuillier strapless Italian-silk gown with a cathedral-length veil and a beaded, hand-sewn train. The nondenominational Christian ceremony featured tears and even a few giggles when the bride dropped the groom's wedding band. "The minister said, 'Don't worry, it's a good sign,'" says Fox. After the ceremony guests celebrated with glasses of pink champagne.

**PETAL POWER** The living room was transformed into a ceremony-worthy site with the help of more than 4,000 fuchsia, burgundy and deep-red roses from Mark's Garden. "Britney loves warm colors," says Fox. "She didn't want an all-white wedding; she wanted it to have some punch."

**LOUNGE TIME** For the reception, held in a backyard tent, Fox created a cozy shabby-chic atmosphere with oversize, white slip-covered sofas and cocktail tables covered in