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FALL/WINTER '08 \$



LIFE OF THE PARTY

VERONICA WONG AND DANIEL SCHILLER CELEBRATE
THEIR UNION WITH TWO DECADENT GLOBAL AFFAIRS

BY ALLISON BAGLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY FULTON DAVENPORT

The first time Veronica Wong laid eyes on her husband, Daniel Schiller, she was ready to call the cops. When she caught a strange man trying to steal a television from her friend's apartment, she grabbed a baseball bat. As it turned out, Schiller was her friend's seldom-home roommate and his only crime was looking for a lost shoe under the entertainment center.

Wong—who lived in Ecuador until her parents relented to her pleas and let her finish college in the States—met Schiller, a financial analyst at Energy XXI, while they were both students at the University of Miami. After two and a half years of dating, Schiller popped the question during the dessert course of a fabulous Miami meal.

Wong is not only the first out of three daughters to wed, but also the first grandchild on either side of her family (she has 18 cousins!). "In Ecuador, when you get married," she says, "it's this huge deal, especially for Catholic families."

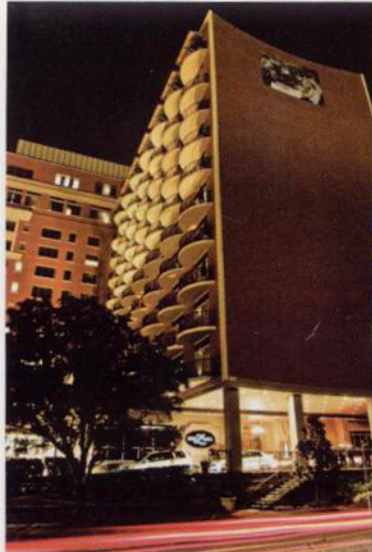
Leading up to the big day, Wong and Schiller kept busy with an engagement announcement party and a blessing of the rings ceremony held on a deserted beach in Ecuador. Then Schiller's parents, John and Kristi Schiller, hosted an engagement party at their River Oaks home in Houston.



Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Schiller at
their Ecuadorian extravaganza.

When the wedding day arrived, 1,000 guests—including 160 from Houston—attended the couple's traditional Catholic ceremony followed by a lavish reception in Guayaquil, Ecuador. More than 10,000 orchids, flown in from New Zealand and beyond, decorated the Hilton ballroom. A feast featured international cuisine—including Japanese, Chinese, Italian and Lebanese delicacies—topped off with 20,000 hand-decorated desserts from all over South America and the U.S. For the carnival celebration at 2AM, guests donned masks from Venice, hats from Argentina and leis from Hawaii. Female guests were given flip-flops as they danced the night away to spicy Latin rhythms. When the couple finally said goodnight at 6:30 in the morning, they were among the first to leave. "It was amazing," says Wong. "The ballroom was like my own fairy tale—the whole scene was out of a dream."

But the party didn't stop there: Three months after their wedding—and back in the U.S.—



"We're so grateful because with two parties, you can do absolutely anything you want!" says Wong of her dual celebrations. "I think we had a good combination of both cultures."



Clockwise from top left: Exterior view of Hotel ZaZa; the ballroom at Hotel ZaZa, decorated by The Events Company; the Ecuador ceremony in a traditional Spanish-style church; a mod lounge scene at the Hotel ZaZa affair; and friendly company during the Texas reception.



both families met for a grand welcome dinner at the Petroleum Club of Houston.

Then the newlyweds geared up for their second reception, held at Hotel ZaZa on February 1. More than 450 guests, including Joanne King Herring, Erica Updegraff, Susan Glesby, Leigh Williams and Brian Beatty, joined Wong's friends and family, in town from Ecuador.

Wong donned her wedding dress once again—pairing the bone white Reem Acra creation, embroidered in delicate silver, with Jimmy Choo sandals. After the couple greeted guests and took photos, she unveiled her second look—a Nicole Miller Collection gown paired with gold Manolo Blahniks. Corinne Williams of Façade and Cerón perfected

tenderloin. "It couldn't have been better," says Schiller. "Veronica had a huge smile after the party!" An 11-tier cake, with layers of Italian crème, butter-raspberry and lemon-white cake, was the *pièce de résistance*—it even featured details replicating the embroidery on Wong's gown. The creation was completed with thousands of hand-painted sugar orchids and peonies. "It was very, very unique for Houston," says Who Made the Cakes's Nadine Moon of her tallest cake yet.

Just as impressive was the groom's cake, shaped like a case of wine with detailing down to the labels on some of Schiller's favorite bottles. Guests couldn't believe it was edible. "It was breathtaking," says Wong.

Singer-songwriter A.J. Croce flew in from L.A. to start the party before Texas favorite, '80s cover band The Spazmatics, took the stage. Once again, Wong and Schiller showed their guests a grand time with revelers trickling out at 2AM.

"It was just perfect," says Wong. "We're so grateful because with two parties, you can do absolutely anything you want! I think we had a good combination of both cultures." ■

Wong's makeup and hair. And her jewelry—all vintage, including her ring—came from her great grandmother, a part of the family collection.

The Events Company transformed the hotel's ground floor into a minimalist design on a completely white palette. The chic lounge-like feel incorporated seating areas with oversized white couches, orchids, loads of candles and crystal accents. "It was modern and minimalist, but with a mixture of elegance and Southern décor," says Wong. "It was the complete opposite from Ecuador, which was very traditional."

Poster-sized images from the Schillers' South American wedding—photographed by Fulton Davenport of PWL Studio—hung from the walls and a hand-painted portrait of the bride by Lisa Jane was also on display. Guests enjoyed food stations from Hotel ZaZa like seafood, hand-rolled sushi, Italian specialties and Southern favorites like roast beef and pork

PLACE OF HOUSTON RECEPTION HOTEL ZAZA EVENT DESIGN THE EVENTS COMPANY CATERER HOTEL ZAZA CAKE WHO MADE THE CAKE! FLORALS AND LIGHTING THE EVENTS COMPANY MUSIC A.J. CROCE AND THE SPAZMATICS LINENS THE EVENTS COMPANY INVITATIONS SARAH PRYE BRIDAL GOWNS REEM ACRA FROM SAKS FIFTH AVENUE AND NICOLE MILLER FROM NEIMAN MARCUS HAIR CERÓN MAKEUP CORINNE WILLIAMS OF FAÇADE