

Lisette Diaz & Michael Perez

WESTIN HORTON PLAZA | MAY12, 2007

Text by Kathryn Bechen, Photography by CeCe Canton

Since Michael and Lisette are leaders in San Diego's Latino community, a cross-section of San Diego's community leaders, including Federal Judges, politicians, and various members of the legal community, as well as international, state, and local beauty pageant title holders, were the guests for Lisette Diaz's and Michael Perez's stylish and traditional Mexican-American wedding.

Lisette is a former Miss United States World and Michael Perez is former General Counsel to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City and former Special Counsel to U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno. He has been featured in *San Diego Magazine's* "50 People to Watch" and *San Diego Metropolitan Magazine's* "40 Under Forty" notable San Diegans.

The couple's over-the-top engagement day started off with the groom chartering a private jet to fly both extended families to the Grand Canyon for breakfast. Then, the bride and groom flew to Catalina Island where he proposed on bended knee at the *Wrigley Mansion*. Then, they flew off to San Francisco for dinner and the symphony.

Friends and family were sent save-the-date announcements for the upcoming wedding—a CD of their courtship songs with a photo of them on the front. The postage stamps on the envelopes were also photos of them.

Lisette and Michael's traditional Christian wedding ceremony for 475 guests was kicked off with a video montage celebrating generations of Diaz/Perez wedded bliss. It included photos as far back as their great-great grandparents. Guests came from all over the U.S., as well as from Mexico and Canada to attend their red-and-gold wedding extravaganza.

The bride and groom had ten attendants each, as well as two flower girls, a ring bearer, three sets of godparents, and both sets of parents in their wedding party. An opera soloist sang "Ave Maria." Their service was bilingual and included many traditions, such as the "Mexican lasso," where a beaded rope is put around the bride and groom to symbolize their long and happy bond, and also "arras," where the bride's aunt and uncle presented the groom with 13 coins that he then gave to his bride to symbolize prosperity. They also did the "salt covenant," a Jewish tradition where they poured salt into each other's salt bags and shook them as a symbol that they can never be removed from each other. Bonita Valley Community Church's Youth Pastor, Nevin Sawler, sang "The Lord's Prayer," and as the ceremony concluded, a nine-piece Mariachi band played festive music.

The bride's exquisite silk dress, train, and veil were heavily beaded and embroidered with Swarovski crystals, and her bouquet was red roses with Swarovski crystals inserted inside. The groom wore a Ralph Lauren tuxedo with a red rose boutonniere.

Special rings engraved with scriptures were from *Tiffany & Co.* in New York, where they had flown to pick them out together. Lisette's mother gave her a charm that was the bride's grandmother's and was inscribed, "To my beloved wife, with all my love from your husband."

Their elegant reception was held at the *Westin Horton Plaza* where they took over all of the ballrooms on the whole second floor. The room was adorned with beautiful white calla lilies and red roses, and their names were lit up on the wall. Candelabra centerpieces and crystal coasters that said "Amor" completed the beautiful décor.

A fun photo booth with posters was set up at their reception so that guests could write messages to the bride and groom. Since the bride's family owns a bakery, part of their gift to them was a nine-foot wedding cake with seven layers that included white chocolate, Bavarian crème, French Bavarian cream, white chocolate macadamia nut, and black chocolate forest cake.

To cap off their magical day, the bride and groom spent their wedding night in the Presidential Suite at the *Westin Horton Plaza*. They arrived to find it filled with all their gifts. In "all-American" style, they later drove up the California coast and spent their honeymoon at Disneyland, Pismo Beach, and Hearst Castle. Part two of their honeymoon was a trip to the most romantic cities in Mexico, which included Oaxaca, Cuernavaca, Acapulco, Cocoyoc, Taxco, and Polanco, which is considered the Beverly Hills of Mexico City. ❁



WEDDING RESOURCES

Ceremony Location

Bonita Valley Community Church

Reception Location

Westin Horton Plaza

Wedding Coordinator

The Little Things

Officiant

Rev. Felipe Espinoza

Photographer

CeCe Canton Photography

Videographer

Digimage

Florist

Metro Floral/ Peggi Walker Designs

Linens

The Chair Affair

Ceremony Music

Renaldi Strings

Reception Entertainment

Mariachi Continental

Catering

Westin Horton Plaza

Invitations

Daydreams Invitations & Accessories

Makeup & Hair

Gloria Arroyo

Crown Couture

Rentals

Metro Floral