

EXCLUSIVE

A Wedding To Remember

Joe Diffie marries the woman of his dreams

Joe Diffie's wedding to Theresa Crump was touching and loving – and at times funny, thanks to a dog named Lobo.

"I've never seen Theresa more beautiful," Joe says proudly after the wedding at Nashville's Opryland Hotel. "She just took my breath away."

Joe looked dashing in his banded collar three-quarter length black tux coat. Theresa was radiant in her elegant white satin gown with a lace bodice and delicate beaded embroidery. Her long curly brown hair spilled out beneath a pearl tiara, cascading over her bare shoulders.

As the big moment approached, Joe reflected on that fortunate occasion in January 1999 when he met Theresa in Orlando. "We never went out on a formal date," says Joe. "Instead, we went to an Italian restaurant with some of her friends." It was love at first bite – and soon they were burning up the phone lines before Theresa moved to Nashville.

At the wedding, tears of joy welled in Theresa's eyes as Joe stood by her side. About a hundred guests watched the ceremony. Joe's close friend, producer Lonnie Wilson, served as best man, and Theresa's sister, Connie, from New York was maid of honor.

"I don't remember half of it," Theresa recalled later. "I got halfway down the aisle and was praying that I could make it to the altar without crying. Then Joe looked at me with that little smile and I lost it – I was gone."

Joe confessed that he, too, teared up and nearly started crying. "But he held up pretty good," says Theresa with a grin.

One of the most touching moments came when Joe's sisters, Monica and Meg, performed a goose-bump-raising rendition of "The Lord's Prayer."

There were also lighthearted moments provided by the



(Above) Joe and Theresa share a moment after their nuptials. (Right) Joe removes the garter. (Far right) The happy couple exchanges bites of cake

Story by Gerry Wood
Photos Leslie Emmetts

JOE DIFFIE

was just great to us," says Joe.

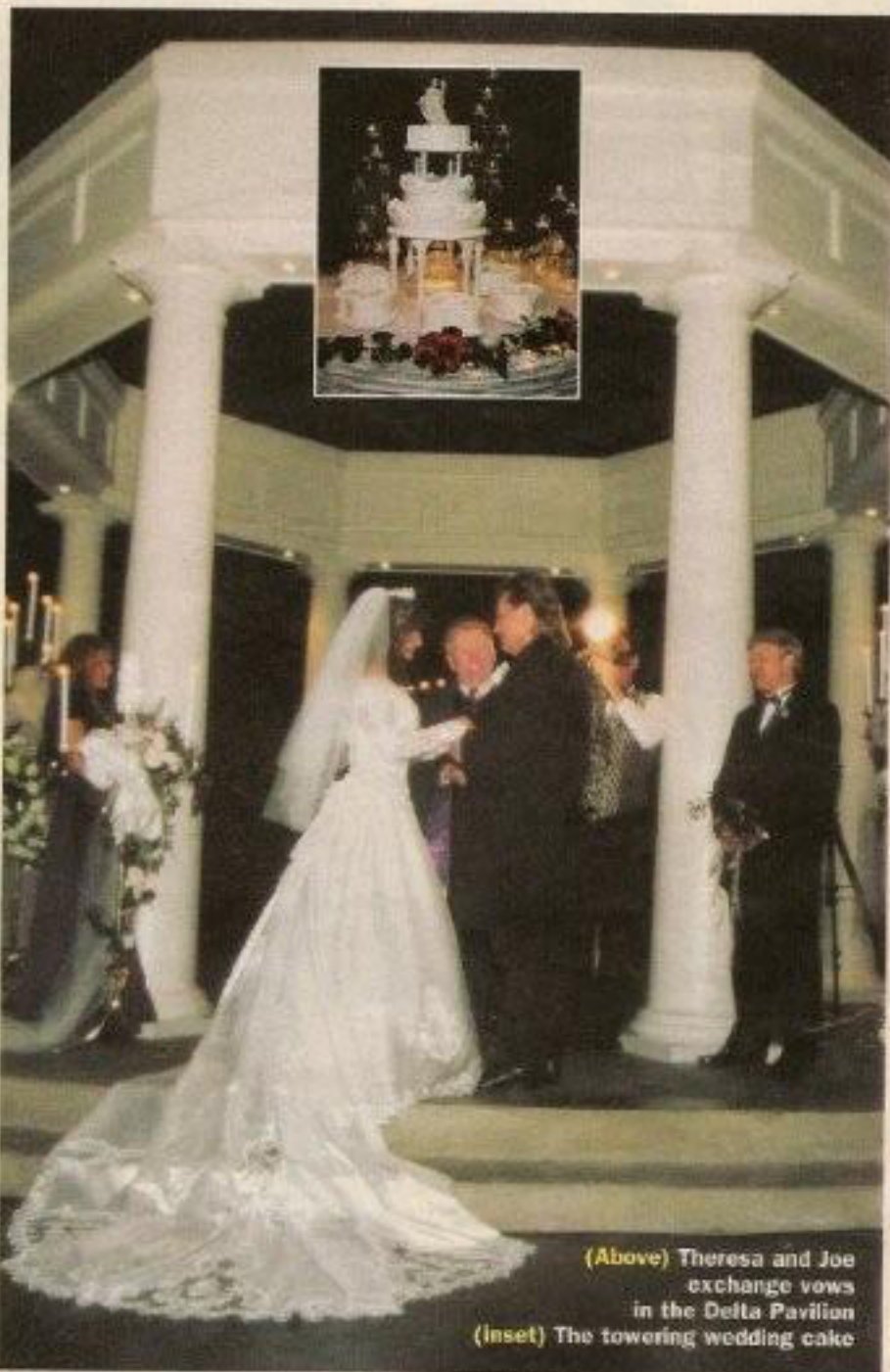
The next morning the blissful couple was honeymoon bound, spending two days in San Diego and a week in Hawaii.

The honeymooners quickly displayed the give-and-take that makes a marriage work. "I had to make a deal with him as far as the sun goes," says Theresa. "I said, 'Okay, if we're going to play golf today, tomorrow we're just laying in the sun!'

He was good about that and it worked out great.

"We are so happy," she says grinning. "I waited a long time to find the perfect man, and I'm glad I waited."

Joe's glad too. "I feel more settled down now," he explains. "We had a blast at the wedding and reception. I'm telling everybody we had such a good time and so much fun that I'm thinking about throwing a party again next year at the same place!"



(Above) Theresa and Joe exchange vows in the Delta Pavilion
(Inset) The towering wedding cake

honorary ring bearer, Lobo, Theresa's 9-year-old Chihuahua.

"We called him the *best dog*," says Joe. "My son, Drew, carried him down the aisle and put him in a little chair."

"He did really well in his little chair," praises Theresa. "The only time Lobo got out of his seat was when we turned around and started to leave. He started to come with us, figuring it was okay to walk out with us. We got a laugh out of that."

A sumptuous reception followed the 20-minute ceremony officiated by Dr. Perry "Red" Michel. But first, the newlyweds giggled as they fed each other portions of their towering three-tiered cake.

Joe scratches his head and smiles as he recalls the only



minor wedding foible. "It was funny," he says. "We asked the hotel people to keep the wedding kind of private. Theresa spent the night at the hotel and when she woke up that morning, there were signs out saying: Joe Diffie & Theresa's Wedding, 7:30 At Delta Pavilion With Reception To Follow.

"I was like, 'What are y'all doing?'"

So much for plans for a "private" wedding. But hotel officials quickly cordoned off the wedding area for Joe and Theresa and their privacy was maintained. "Opryland Hotel