



In Lulita Duke's case, the bride wears (in addition to her Carolina Herrera lace gown and veil) . . . a big smile for her late-summer, late-afternoon wedding. The flowers, including the all-white bouquet of roses, orchids and sweet peas, are by the aptly named New York firm Beautiful Flowers. Opposite: Shortly after taking Lulita's hand in marriage, John Reed takes it to his lips for a kiss.



# Summer Romance

Lulita Duke weds John Mitchell Reed.



Photographs by *Liz Banfield*





In East Hampton, New York, Lulita Duke, a clothing designer and entrepreneur, married John Mitchell Reed, who works in fixed-income sales and trading at Bear Stearns. **How They Met:** As youngsters growing up on Long Island, Lulita and John met through a mutual friend; fifteen years later, when both were attending Fordham University's business school, the same friend reintroduced them. "This time it was a bit of a secret set-up," Lulita recalls. "Our friend Vincent thought we would get along." And Vincent was right: within a year the new couple moved to San Francisco, where they now live. **The Proposal:** "John took me to a beach in the Marin Headlands; he's a surfer, I'm a watcher, and he told me we were going to see a surf contest. But when we got there, the beach was empty. I said, 'There's no contest here. . . .' So we sat on the rocks and talked, and I didn't even know it was going to be a proposal—until he pulled out a ring. *Then* I didn't care anymore about not seeing any surfing." **The Ceremony:** The nuptials took place on the petal-strewn lawn of Lulita's parents' house in the Hamptons, adjacent to Boys & Girls Harbor, the well-known summer camp for inner-city children that the bride's father, Anthony "Tony" Drexel Duke, founded in 1937. (Today the organization provides

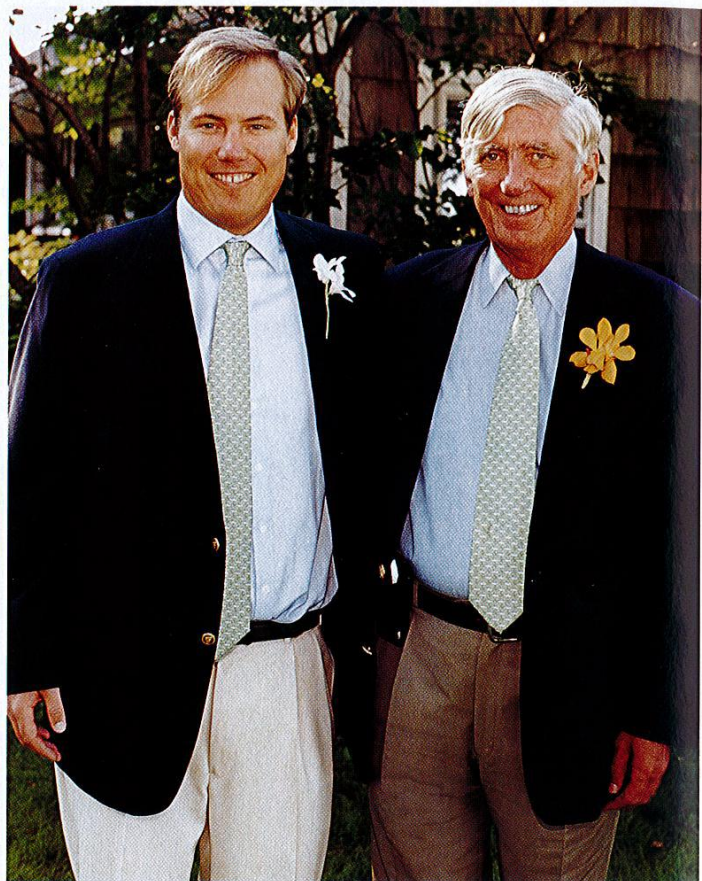
about 6,000 children a year with educational- and cultural-enrichment programs at six New York-area locations.) The vows were "quite traditional," says Lulita. "It was a fairly long ceremony, almost an hour, including Communion, but it was special because John's godmother, an Episcopalian reverend, presided." The look of the event, however, was a little untraditional for the Northeast: "My mother's family is Cuban, based in Miami, and we wanted to have a Latin-Caribbean theme, so along the aisle we used sugar-cane stalks to hold arrangements of very hot-colored flowers—bright reds, pinks and oranges." **The Bride Wore:** A strapless Carolina Herrera lace gown with a short veil and a cathedral train. "I wish I could wear my dress

**Above left:** Dad Tony Duke escorts Lulita. **Right:** Georgianna Duke, the bride's niece and goddaughter, serves—enthusiastically—as a flower girl. **Opposite, top:** An aisle bordered with petals leads down the lawn to the waterfront wedding site. Arrangements along the way feature stalks of sugar cane. **Bottom, from left:** Washington Duke, one of the bride's brothers; the bride with her mother, Luly Duke, the founder of Fundación Amistad, a nonprofit group dedicated to improving Cuban-American relations.









every day," she says. "It was so beautiful. I have a friend who actually puts hers on from time to time. I know how she feels!"

**The Reception:** After the vows, the 300 guests—who included, amazingly, 150 relatives of the bride—walked to the Harbor's softball field, where dinner was served in an all-white tent with poles decorated to look like palm trees. The menu was tropical as well: Miami caterer Alejandro Mugerza served mini Cuban sandwiches and *mojitos* during cocktails, followed by paella for dinner. Even the wedding cake was Cuban—a rum-flavored *panetela* decorated with meringue kisses, the bride's favorite dessert. **The Honeymoon:** Ten days at La Casa Que Canta, the all-suite cliffside hotel in Zihuatanejo, Mexico. "Every night someone from the staff created little pictures on our bed out of carnation petals—they were like paintings. And just outside was the Pacific. It was incredible." **Her Best Advice:** "You're so busy making sure that your wedding is nice for everyone who attends, but step back now and then and really look at it and feel it for yourself. And *enjoy* it! It's hard to do but really worth it." ❧

This page, clockwise from top: Among the nine bridesmaids is Lide Banks, a friend of the bride's from their high-school days; the groom and his father, Corprew; and ribbon-tied programs. Opposite: As the couple go up the aisle, down comes a flurry of petals—as well as a tear or two, no doubt. The bride's beaming parents look on at left.



