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“Wetaas–Kettler Wedding”

Oslo [21 June 2003] Bente Marit Katharina Wetaas and Paul Carlisle Kettler were married this afternoon in St. Olav’s Cathedral. Guests for the international wedding included relatives and friends of the Norwegian bride and American groom, who met by introduction of close mutual friends.

The bride was radiant in her cream *peau de soie* gown by Venus of California, a princess influenced *empire* design with beaded bodice, plunging neckline, and capped sleeves. She wore a string of family heirloom natural pearls to complement her dress, and carried a bouquet of a dozen white roses with white freesia, lisianthus, harvest brodiaea (dwarf cluster lily,) and blue brodiaea. The bride’s 80 year old father, Henry Wetaas of Oslo, escorted his daughter down the aisle to meet her husband-to-be, resplendent in his midnight blue Maranzone tailored suit.

The bride’s matron of honor, her cousin Sissel Næss of Karasjok, recently of Kabelvåg, wore her traditional native Sami costume. The groom’s best man was long-time friend and Princeton classmate Harlan Tonie Wright of Richmond, Virginia. The Norwegian ladies in attendance, almost to an individual, wore their native national costumes, providing tradition and color to the nuptial event.

Those assembled for this highlight of the Oslo summer social season bore witness to the couple’s vows in a solemn Catholic service offered by Father Lars Frenel. Following the blessing of the ring, a traditional American eternity design of twenty-seven matching diamonds in a platinum setting, the groom placed it on his bride’s finger with the words, “With this ring I thee wed, and with all my worldly possessions I thee endow,” the same expression spoken by his father to his mother.

Organist Helge Landmark provided instrumental music to the bride’s entry march “Purpose” by Norwegian composer Rikard Nordraak, and to the singing of two Swedish hymns important from the bride’s childhood. He also performed Johann Sebastian Bach’s “Air” and Duke Ellington’s “Come Sunday.” As well, he played to singing of the American Negro spiritual “This little light of mine,” and to “Stewards of Earth,” joined by the concluding strains of “Finlandia” by Jean Sibelius. Following the spiritual, the couple lit a unity candle as an expression of their fidelity and common life purpose.

The sonorous baritone voice of Bjørn Olav Urving singing *Panis Angelicus* enhanced the musical service. Following a reading of the poem “Prayer at Maria altar” by the bride’s brother, Dominican priest Father Jon Atle Wetaas, came the dulcet tones of Solveig Lagos Andersen singing Schubert’s *Ave Maria*. The bride, with all the guests’ eyes affixed, laid in prayer a single white rose at the Maria altar.

At the ceremony’s conclusion the couple smiled to clicking shutters of the many in attendance who wanted photographs of the happy bride and groom. The

well-known recessional by Mendelssohn accompanied the couple into the gleaming Oslo afternoon sunlight to an informal reception on the steps of the church.

Dinner followed at Holmenkollen restaurant, to which the bridal party and guests repaired in MaxiTaxis, enjoying the ride and scenery to the hillside venue in the northwestern wooded precinct of Oslo. Following a champagne cocktail reception on the terrace, with view to Oslo Fjord and the maritime traffic of cruise and pleasure craft, those assembled entered the formal dining room.

To the talented piano music of Ulf Nilsen, the wedded couple and their guests enjoyed a multi-course repast prepared by celebrated Holmenkollen *chef de cuisine* Harald Osa, and featuring a traditional Norwegian *entrée* of red deer with red wine and mushroom sauce, complemented with a well finished Minticillo Crianza '98. Interspersed among the courses the bride's father, groom, matron of honor, and the groom's best man, among others offered speeches praising the couple, and on occasion, providing humorous insights into the bride's and groom's pasts. As well, the group sang songs, both with nostalgia and mirth, from traditional sources and from Broadway and Hollywood musicals, led brilliantly by Tone Kunst, toastmistress and sister of the matron of honor.

To the veranda moved the joyful crowd for coffee and cognac, as the restaurant staff cleared the floor for the wedding march and waltz. During this interlude, Aase Laila Andersen, the bride's long time friend, read a spellbinding fairy tale in English, in accommodation to the couple's American guests. The accomplished concert pianist, who has been blind from birth, then presented an Oscar Petersen jazz selection to a hushed audience.

Following, the couple marched with their guests, and then danced their waltz with Mr. Nielsen's accompaniment to the music of “Around the world I've searched for you,” by Harold Adamson and Victor Young. This selection, representative of the meeting of the bride and groom, was the theme song from the 1956 Michael Todd musical film adaptation of the Jules Verne classic, “Around the World in 80 Days.”

The bride and groom then together cut the wedding cake, a closed marzipan of three tiers. After feeding themselves the traditional bites, the groom offered tasty slices to all. From that point the party continued with dancing to popular disk jockey Morten Wichstrøm, with lively conversation heard through the wee hours.

Prior to the wedding royal photographer Vilde Sannås of the Sturlason studio recorded the couple on film in the historic setting of 700-year-old Akershus Castle.

The newlyweds are headed to Longyearbyen in Svalbard for their honeymoon, after which they will reside alternatively in their residences in Oslo and Chicago.