

A winter's TALE

One chilly December morning
Joseph Berkeley proposed to
Linda Blaker. They must have
loved the snowy season
because their wedding was lit
by the warm glow of
Christmas candles.



by Andrea Dawn Clark



When Linda walked into her Wall Street office she didn't know quite what to make of a message that read "Joe Berkeley called." She didn't know anyone named Joe Berkeley. When she called him back, Joe revealed that he was "a friend of a friend" and, more importantly, an avid sailor. Joe, an advertising creative director, had learned from their mutual friend that Linda also loved to sail. And since he was looking for someone to sail with that winter he asked Linda if she would be his crew—a "crew" of one, mind you. At first Linda wasn't keen on the idea of sailing with a stranger, but when Joe mentioned they'd be

sailing in *Rum Dum*—a famous dingy once owned by an America's Cup skipper—she threw caution to the wind and agreed to meet him.

Linda and Joe spent that winter—and the following four years—rising at the break of dawn to be the first ones off the dock. Their passion for sunrise sails endured every season—even the frosty month of December. In fact it was on an icy winter morning, in the vessel where they met and fell in love, that Joe asked Linda to close her eyes and





Every element in Joe and Linda's wedding was touched by the yuletide spirit. Bridesmaids wore forest-green dresses and held bouquets of red roses. Christmas trees sparkled with gold stars and evergreens outlined the entranceway. Even the cake knife had a sprig of holly tied to its handle.



put out her hands. "It was so cold I could barely feel what he put in my hands," says Linda. "When I opened my eyes and saw that little blue box, I just started to cry."

Not only did Joe choose the perfect ring for Linda, but he also had a hand in selecting her wedding gown. "Joe knows a lot about fashion because his family is in the fur business," says Linda. Joe showed her a picture of a simple yet refined Tatiana of Boston dress he liked. Linda took the hint and headed for Tatiana's Boston boutique. "Tatiana came out with the exact dress Joe showed me, so I knew it was the one." Linda and the designer got along famously. Every vision the bride-to-be had—like attaching fur trim (a gift from her future in-laws) to the bodice—Tatiana happily accommodated.

On December 14, 1996, Joe and Linda exchanged their vows at an altar aglow in

golden candlelight. Then, at the Riverside Yacht Club, in Greenwich, Connecticut, the newlyweds walked into a winter wonderland. The halls were decked in the spirit of the season—red and white poinsettias adorned every corner and gold ribbons and white lights illuminated evergreen trimmings. The Noel-nuptial motif didn't stop there. Santa—a.k.a. the club manager dressed in a Saint Nick suit—handed out Godiva chocolate wedding favors. The most romantic touch was the placement of the wedding cake. The bride and groom insisted that the cake be placed in *Rum Run*, the birthplace of their love. To say the least, it was a "marry" Christmas for all, and all had a good night. ■



OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT: Linda and Joe's first dance. RIGHT: Linda does some pre-bride primping. Nervous, anyone? THIS PAGE, ABOVE: Ho, ho, ho! Joe's brother, Nick, meets "Santa". LEFT: Linda's new father-in-law dips the bride.