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# Just Married, Again

A swanky vow-renewal celebration  
is a happy surprise for the bride, celebrating  
her 30th wedding anniversary



A

NSWERING A KNOCK AT

the front door of her St. Louis home one day in May, Thelma Steward was a bit stunned to find a tuxedo-clad gentleman bearing an invitation with her name on it. But then her daughter appeared beside him, and Thelma discovered the invitation was to attend her own vow renewal—scheduled to take place five hours from then. The celebration was a surprise 30th anniversary gift from her husband, David, who had discreetly planned it over the course of two and a half months with the help of NYC event designer and 2004 MB Trendsetter Michelle Rago.

First, Thelma needed to choose from four wedding gowns ("She deserved to be queen for a day," says David). She was also presented with a set of diamond jewelry by Roberto Coin and a team of beauty pros for the occasion—all gifts from her husband.

At 6:00 p.m., Thelma donned an ivory gown by Carmen Marc Valvo and walked down the aisle at Salem Methodist Church in St. Louis, to exchange vows with



Above: Thelma and David joyfully say their I dos for a second time under a lush, flower-bedecked arch. Below: Pale pink and chocolate brown invitations featuring a light, scripted font and butterfly emblem, by Grapevine, signaled the chic springtime theme to guests.



Opposite: The bride's hot pink bouquet of calla lilies and peonies is embellished with glittering crystals. This page, above: As Thelma unwraps David's gifts, their daughter, Kimberly, shares in her delight.





*Right:* The butterfly emblem is carried onto decorative menu cards arranged on silk napkins at guests' place settings.

David for the second time. At their original wedding, just seven guests had been present; this time, as the couple's longtime minister delivered the service, 80 of their family members and friends were there to witness the happy moment, and their children and son-in-law proudly stood with them, as bridal attendants.

Afterward, the couple convened at their favorite restaurant, Tony's, for a spring-themed reception. Peonies were featured prominently, in butterfly- and bow-adorned centerpieces topping the tables, as well as on ribbons strung with peony blossoms and hung from light fixtures for a festive Maypole look. As the couple's children and friends toasted them and recounted their history together, the crowd dined on grilled halibut, sirloin with roasted shallots and basil butter, and pan-roasted chicken with green peppercorn semiglacé. Jazz vocalist Denise Thimes performed sultry tunes throughout the evening, beginning with Nat King Cole's "Our Love Is Here to Stay," an apropos choice for the couple's (second) first dance.

The whirlwind continued, culminating in another toast—the happy couple speaking of their love for each other—but that wasn't the end of the celebration for Thelma and David; they made up for the honeymoon they never got to take after their wedding by spending a quiet week together at their Missouri lake home. —*Eleni Kostopoulos*



Above: The couple's son, David II, and son-in-law, Jamil Blackwell, eagerly await the bride's arrival to the ceremony. Left: An elegant pink, five-tiered wedding cake by Sugaree Baking in St. Louis features an intricate spring-inspired print in relief.



### *Learn From Thelma and David*

**CREATE A WHIMSICAL WALKWAY.** To hint at the spring theme that would shape the couple's reception, Rago replaced the traditional church aisle runner with a sophisticated silk version embroidered with colorful butterflies.

**LET YOUR WEDDING COLORS INSPIRE THE CAKE FLAVORS.** The couple's five-tiered cake was iced with pink fondant and decorated with a brown butterfly pattern, to match the reception decor. The flavors inside—chocolate mousse and raspberry—also reflected the party's two hues.

**TO PULL OFF A SURPRISE, ENLIST HELP.** David recruited their daughter, Kimberly, to make major decisions, and his assistant coordinated details like keeping his wife's calendar clear. "It was the surprise of a lifetime!" says Thelma.







Above: Floral-covered ribbons hanging from light fixtures are offset by low centerpieces of peonies in various shades of pink. The arrangements, set in paper-wrapped glass vases, are adorned with silk butterflies.



Above: The bride carries a pink peony bouquet; her daughter carries a smaller version of the same. Left: A diamond necklace, bracelet, ring and earrings by Roberto Coin are among the day's dazzling surprises for Thelma. Below: Tented escort cards decorated with a graceful butterfly design (a motif chosen to symbolize growth and maturity), by Grapevine, are artfully displayed.

