

US EXCLUSIVE

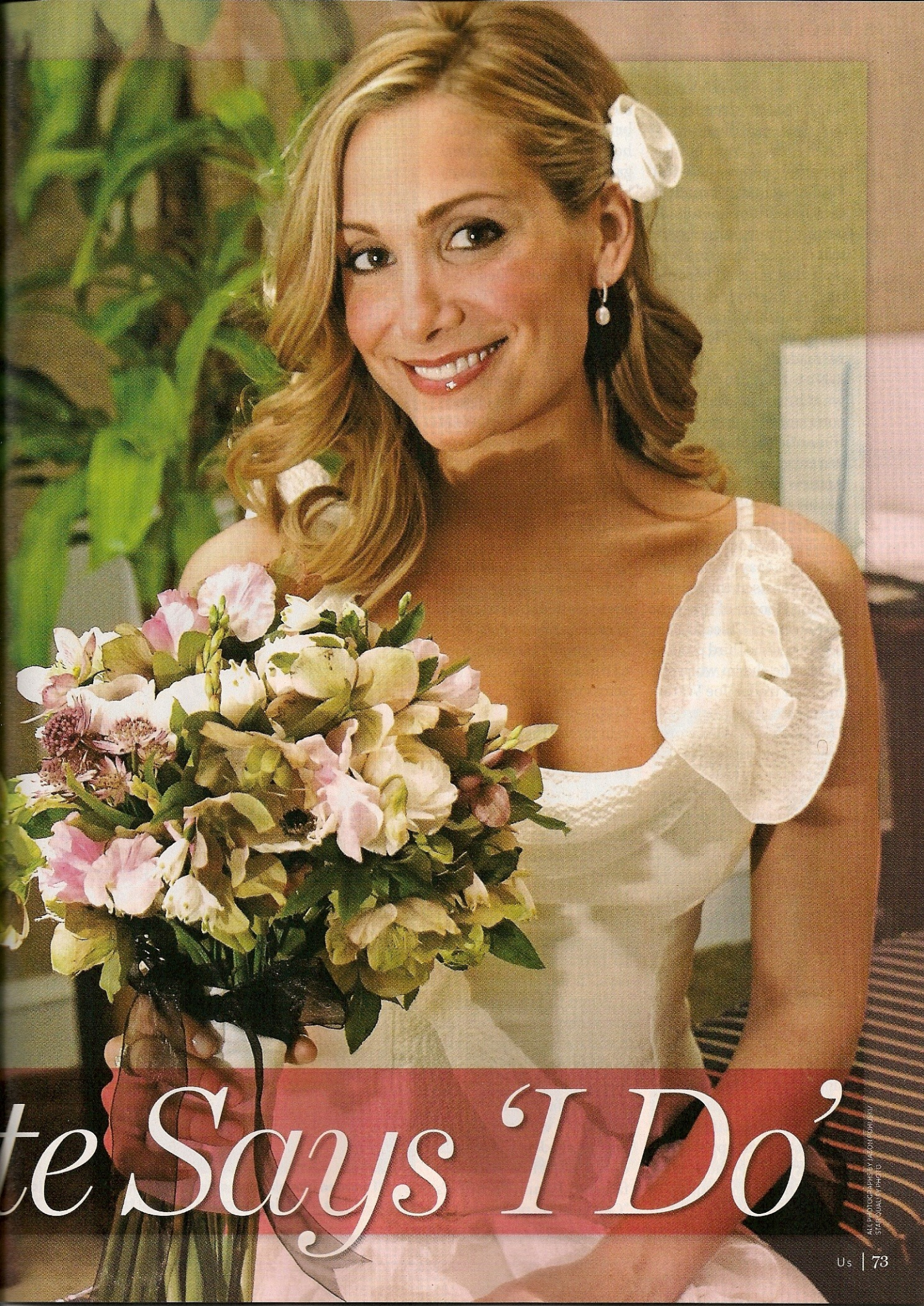
A downpour
couldn't dampen
Jen Schefft's spirits
as she finally wed
her dream man

BY LESLIE BRUCE
& JAIME BUERGER

*"There was
no crying. I was
just so happy that
this moment in my
life, with Joe, was
finally here."*

JEN SCHEFFT TO US

A Bachelorette



te Says 'I Do'

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY JASON COOPER FOR
STAR QUALITY PHOTO

MOST BRIDES dread wedding-day rain, but Jen Schefft is a glass-half-full kind of woman. "It made it that much more of an adventure," the ex-Bachelorette tells *Us* of the Chicago downpour that marked her first day of married life. "The wind was blowing, everything was so difficult, but we made it!"

Not that inclement weather was anything compared to her previous romantic storms: one broken engagement to Bachelor Andrew Firestone, and then a stint as 2005's Bachelorette, which ended with her turning down a proposal.

But on May 15, in front of 113 guests at the Private Dining Rooms of Spiaggia restaurant in Chicago, Jen, 32, proved the third proposal was the charm when she married trader Joe Waterman, 35. Even her dad, Dave Schefft, who works in real estate titles, joked in his reception toast, "You're finally getting married! We never thought it'd happen!"

The Nuptials

Jen's big day began when she woke up in her hotel suite at the Drake on Michigan Avenue, where Joe stayed in a separate room. "I was unexpectedly calm," says the usually type-A bride. "Even my friends were freaking out, like, 'What's wrong with you?'" Seconds matron of honor Lauren Specht: "She had it under control." That isn't to say getting ready didn't present problems. As her fiancé, who sent no fewer than two bouquets to Jen's room, played golf in

the drizzle with his groomsmen, the admittedly klutzy bride tended to her nails, hair (done by Charles Ifergan), makeup — and a nasty blow to her forehead. "I bent down to get something out of my bag, nailed my head on a mirror and it turned into this huge bump," Jen says. Specht elaborates: "I come back in the room, and she's holding a Miller Lite bottle to her head!" Still, spirits remained high as one of the bridesmaids ran out for subs and Jen did her own makeup — with extra foundation and powder covering her swollen brow. It wasn't until the bride slipped into her Carolina Herrera gown, she tells *Us*, that she finally had time to think: Oh, my God, I'm getting married! (No wonder she requested champagne to calm her nerves!)

Originally planning to walk across the street to Spiaggia, the rain forced the bridal party to take a cab. What should have been a three-minute ride became 15 minutes stuck in traffic. Jen's humor had returned, however: "I put on one of those old-lady plastic caps to protect my hair," she says. "It was so funny."

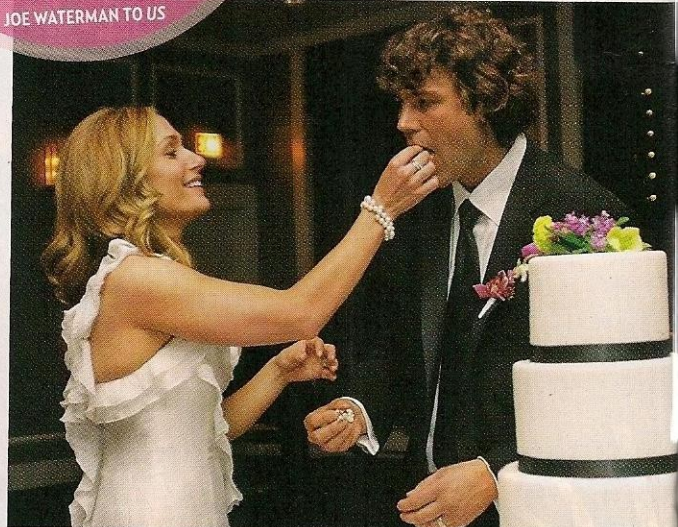
When the group finally arrived at Spiaggia at 6:15 p.m., they ascended to the spacious third floor, overlooking Michigan Avenue, to begin the 25-minute ceremony. "I was just beaming," recalls Jen, whose walk down the aisle with her father to Johann Pachelbel's "Canon in D," presented the



"I shook her dad's hand and thanked him, and I just told her I loved her. And then we started the ceremony."

JOE WATERMAN TO *US*

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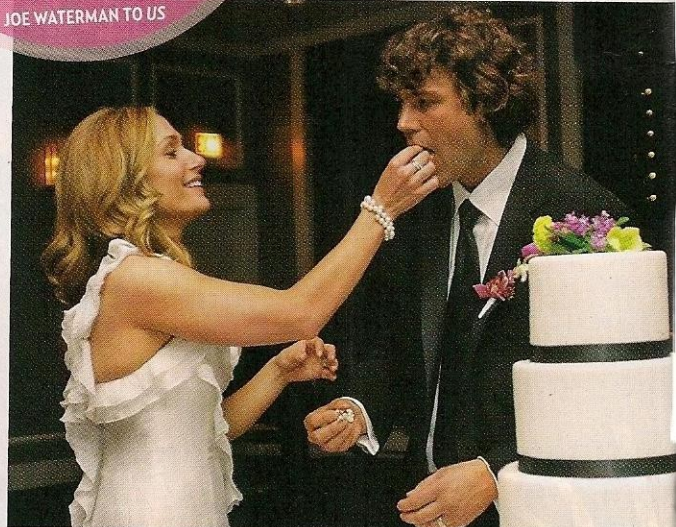
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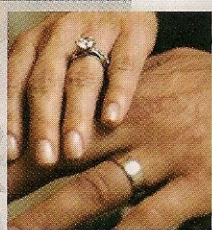
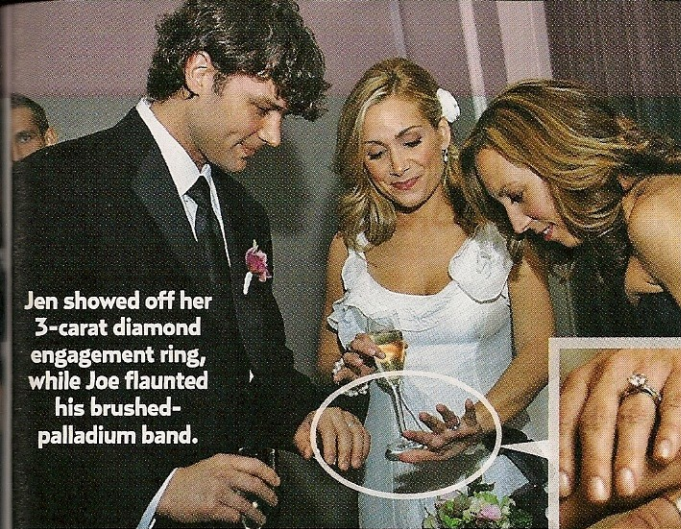
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Jen showed off her 3-carat diamond engagement ring, while Joe flaunted his brushed-palladium band.



plucky bride with yet another potential pratfall. "I warned her about a cord running across the aisle," Specht says. "And as soon as she walked in, of course she stumbles."

Recovering quickly, the bride joined her fiancé, and in front of guests, including both sets of parents as well as Jen's brother and her fiancé's sister,

Jen held his trembling hands as his minister-friend performed a secular ceremony (though both are Christian).

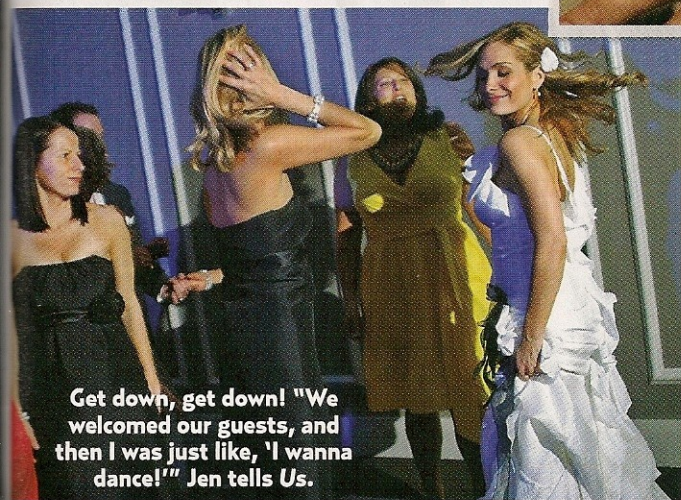
"She looked gorgeous, and I'm just the luckiest guy in the world," Joe tells *Us* of Jen, who brushed a stray hair from his face when she reached him. The couple read one another the vows they chose, and Jen's friend Anna Bluhm recited the anonymous wedding

poem "Sooner or Later" that Jen had found online. Then, after Joe mistakenly aimed Jen's wedding ring at the wrong finger before he slipped it on, the newlyweds exited to Stevie Wonder's rollicking "Signed, Sealed & Delivered."

Party on

Postceremony, the guests moved to another room to nosh on hors d'oeuvres that included warm king crab and crispy polenta. By 7:30, the original space had been transformed into a dramatic dining room, complete with 13 candle-lit tables, accented by centerpieces of pink and purple hydrangeas, tulips and peonies. "It was very romantic and elegant," Jen says. Indeed, "the rainy weather made it feel even more intimate inside," Scarlet Petal florist Jenny Anselmo tells *Us*.

Get down, get down! "We welcomed our guests, and then I was just like, 'I wanna dance!'" Jen tells *Us*.



What She Wore



Jen chose pearl bracelets by local designer Erin Gallagher for herself and her bridesmaids.

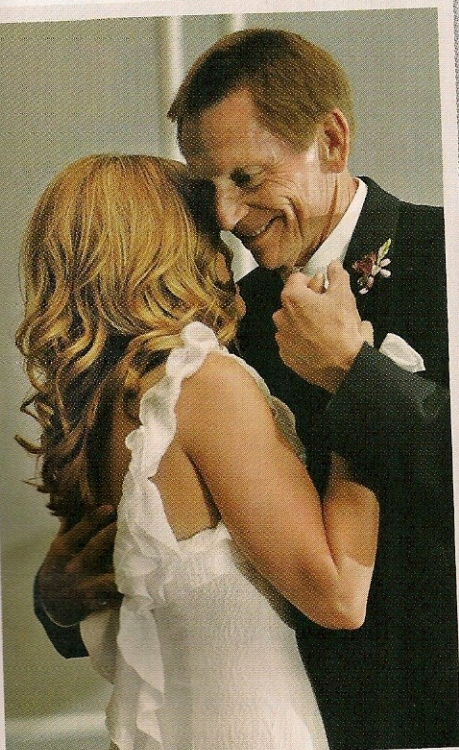


Jen stuck to her color scheme with black \$300 Stuart Weitzman peep-toe pumps.



"She wanted me to see it, but I said no," Joe says of Jen's \$5,000 Carolina Herrera gown.

Dave picked "My Wish" by Rascal Flatts for his father-daughter dance.



But elegance didn't keep the newlyweds from letting loose. After their first dance, to Michael Bublé's up-tempo tune "Everything," it wasn't long before Jen kicked off her shoes. "Of course, I stepped on my train and my bustle came undone, so we fashioned a ponytail elastic to hold it up," Jen says. "I was having fun, so I was like, 'Whatever!'"

The crowd was equally enthusiastic, so much so that Jen and Joe kept the music pumping and drinks flowing an hour past the original midnight end time.

Up Next

After a 10-day honeymoon in Maui, Hawaii, Mr. and Mrs. Waterman, who met on a blind date in early 2008, will return to Chicago. Jen, who was laid off

from her job as an ad-sales rep in October, will start a new job in public relations. And the duo will begin their life as a couple. "We can start to plan our future now," Joe tells *Us*. Adds Jen: "We definitely want to have a family — sooner rather than later." **US**



Jen tossed her bouquet to Beyoncé Knowles' "Single Ladies."



"She was the calmest bride I've ever seen," matron of honor Specht tells *Us*.



The Wedding Day Details

From the sleek black-and-white palette to the bustling Michigan Avenue backdrop, the Waterman wedding was the picture of urban sophistication.

The venue

The couple both wed and dined

in The Private Dining Room at Spiaggia restaurant in Chicago. The room's grand windows, flanked by neutral silver and gray drapes, overlook Michigan Avenue from the third floor.

The flowers The \$3,000 worth of seasonal blooms by Scarlet Petal of Chicago included table centerpieces of peonies, lilacs and tulips, as well as the ceremony decor of dogwood branches surrounded by hydrangea and eucalyptus.

The menu The guests dined on wood-roasted Italian steak, Russian rainbow trout and homemade wild boar-ragu gnocchi.

The music Mark Rankin of DJ-Chicago started the reception with Motown classics, then moved to



modern favorites — Jen's dad got down to Lady Gaga's "Poker Face"!

The cake Local bakery Sarah's Candies made a four-tier red-velvet cake with cream cheese frosting. The finishing touch? A black satin ribbon.

The favors Jen and Joe printed their faces on platinum, purple and pink shimmer collection M&M's.

