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# a night of art & culture

Lola Ogunnaike to Deen Solebo

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Opposite: Lola wears a silk gown designed by Rogelio Velasco and Lola's close friend Kibwe Chase-Marshall; a vintage brooch adorns the bodice. Her veil is from Wedding Atelier. She carries a bouquet of roses and calla lilies. Deen's tuxedo was custom-made by Eredi Pisanò. This page: The ceremony was held in the church where the bride was baptized. During the reception, the newlyweds changed into traditional Nigerian attire.

YOU COULD SAY THAT Lola Ogunnaike and Deen Solebo danced their way into each other's hearts. The couple was introduced one summer evening in 2001, when a group of friends went to a nightclub in New York City. Long after everyone else had gone home, Lola and Deen, an investment banker, were still on their feet. Sparks flew as the couple danced until dawn. A romance quickly developed, and after a four-year courtship, Deen surprised Lola with a ring.



They wed on August 5, 2006, in a Baptist ceremony in Lola's family church in Washington, D.C. For the reception, the couple and their 250 guests moved to the nearby National Museum of Women in the Arts. "I consider myself a woman in the arts, so I loved the idea of having my wedding in a women's museum," says Lola, a culture reporter for the *New York Times*. Guests mingled on the grand main floor for cocktails, then repaired to the mezzanine for dinner, which consisted of Western fare as well as Nigerian dishes, including jollof rice, fried plantains, and a spiced bean dish called *moi moi*. "We wanted to include all of the Nigerian traditions that would accompany a wedding," says Deen, who was born and raised in the West African country.

The couple did just that. Halfway through the reception, they changed into brightly colored traditional Nigerian garments, as did their parents. When they returned to the celebration, the couple and their families danced to West African music as their guests showered or "sprayed" them with money in a customary show of appreciation for the party. "After meeting my husband, I've learned so much more about my roots," says Lola. "I'm even prouder of my culture now."

Later, as a disc jockey friend kept the party going, Lola and Deen ended the night the same way they had begun their romance—dancing.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Anthony Amos TEXT BY Heidi Cho



*"After meeting my husband, I've learned so much more about my roots," says Lola. "I'm even prouder of my culture now."*

This page, counterclockwise from top: Lola poses with her maid of honor, younger sister Nikki (left), and several *bridesmaids*, who wear dresses from Thread and carry calla lilies. Violet Bakare, the bride's aunt (right), walks with another guest after the ceremony. Lola's *mother* takes a respite from the festivities. Guests sample Nigerian dishes from the buffet; dendrobium *orchids* in tall, slender vases decorate the reception tables. Opposite, clockwise from top left: Lola and Deen start the party by dancing to Maxwell's

"Fortunate." The sumptuous five-tiered *wedding cake* is layered with chocolate ganache, covered in ivory fondant with buttercream details, and topped with an elegant gum-paste bow; the couple's monogram adorns the middle tier. The *groom's sister* (left), Dupe Solebo, catches up with a guest against a backdrop of artwork. The Eric Lewis Groove *jazz band* plays throughout the cocktail hour and dinner. Following the meal, Deen and Lola and their guests gather on the main floor for a *group picture* taken from the mezzanine. Lola's parents, Jide and Elizabeth Ogunnaike, stand with a guest. Center: Friends and family *dance* late into the night to music spun by a disc jockey.



where to buy it? turn to the last pages for our shopping guide

**Sources**  
 RECEPTION LOCATION *National Museum of Women in the Arts*  
 EVENT PLANNER *Bella Notte*  
 FLORAL DESIGN *Philippa Tarrant*  
 CAKE *Allie's Cakes*

