

## Designer of Brazil's Capital Gets a Gift for his 99th Birthday: a New Bride

Contributed by Elma Lia Nascimento  
Saturday, 18 November 2006

When the architect who dreamed Brasília fell down in his Rio apartment's living room last month and had to be rushed to a hospital, more than one newsroom in Brazil probably checked up to make sure they had a glowing obituary in hand just in case.

After all, Oscar Niemeyer will be celebrating his 99th birthday this coming December 15. The man, however left the hospital ten days later in good spirits and started physiotherapy. Soon after, by mid November, he was already busy, working from home at several projects of his architecture office.

Still, nobody was prepared when it was announced this Friday, November 17, that the almost centenarian Niemeyer had married his long time secretary, a much younger Vera Lúcia Cabreira, 60, on November 12.

The whole preparation and the wedding itself were done in secret by the two lovebirds. One of the reason for that was the opposition of Ana Maria Niemeyer, the owner of an art gallery in Rio, who is the architect's only child.

The wedding ceremony happened at Niemeyer's Copacabana apartment, before two witnesses and a justice of peace. At least someone in the family seemed happy with the news. Kadu Niemeyer, 52, the grandson of Oscar told reporters that his grandfather was overjoyed at being married again.

Oscar Niemeyer married Annita Baldo, his first wife, when he was 21 and she 18. That marriage lasted 76 years, until October 4, 2004, when Annita passed away. The old Niemeyer has 5 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and 5 great-great-grandchildren.

Before the wedding, Vera Lúcia confirmed to a Globo reporter that she was going to marry Niemeyer and that the couple still hadn't discussed if they would go on a honeymoon trip: "We haven't talked about this. First we are waiting for the doctor to give his OK."

Ana Maria heard in the newspaper that the father was going to marry, but she didn't believe it. She then asked Vera Lúcia about it, but the secretary denied every thing: "I asked her what was this story of marriage, but she denied. She told me there was no story of marriage." Naturally, Vera was lying.

Niemeyer not only is back to work with lots of plans of things to do with the new bride, he is also back to his cigars and to a glass of wine at dinner time, with his doctor's blessing.

The architect is well known for more than half a century now and has left samples of his talent around the globe. In Brazil he is responsible for the main buildings that symbolize the federal capital Brasília, like the cathedral, congress, the foreign ministry and the Palácio da Alvorada (Dawn Palace), the president's residence. He has also works in Pampulha (Minas Gerais) and in São Paulo (the Copan building and some structures at the Ibirapuera Park).

And he is the man who designed Haifa's University in Israel, the Museum of Modern Art in Caracas (Venezuela), the Leisure Island in Abu-Dhabi (Arab Emirates) and several buildings in France, including Grasse's Urbanization Project.