

# EVENT OF THE FORTNIGHT

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Pictures by Mukesh Parplani

Saraswathy and Karnad: hooking the confirmed bachelor



(From left) Satyadev Dubey, Neera Benegal, Jennifer Kapoor and Shyam Benegal: celebrity set



Shashi, Jennifer and Vasant Karnad: a rush of guests



(From left) Vinod, Bindiya and Nafisa with the couple



Amrish Puri with Benegal and Nafisa



Saraswathy and Girish: happily ever after

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## The Karnad Wedding

**T**HE event of the fortnight was the catch of the year, Girish Karnad, tying the knot with his lady love of 10 years' standing, Saraswathy Ganpathy. That the evening saw the big names amongst playwrights, film-makers, socialites, ad men, and models emerge from their respective niches, speaks volumes for the bridegroom's versatility.

The wedding reception had all the makings of a society 'happening'. And it did seem as if Girish so far a confirmed bachelor, initiated into the now old new wave movement, was determined to do the whole thing properly. As if to say if one is going to join the establishment, one might as well go whole hog. And so, a reception was held for his friends from the world of art, at the Banquet Hall of the Sea Rock Hotel.

However, and this came as a pleasant surprise, the affair turned out to be rather unconventional. Neither was there any ornate decoration, nor were the guests flashily dressed. The proceedings went on in a controlled quiet style with singular lack of pretension. Girish, debonair, in a pale cream kurta and churidar stood by himself at the door and welcomed his guests and introduced Saraswathy, beautifully attired in a red sari.

**Long Affair:** Their love story began a decade ago, "I have known her for 14 years now", confirms Girish. This was in Madras when he was with the Oxford University Press (OUP) and Saraswathy was studying. Both went their

own ways after that interlude—to pursue their own ambitions—Girish to his film making and Saraswathy to her medical career. She was in America, he was in India. Several years went by in dallying over who was to compromise. Finally, she stepped down, "We decided to get married only last year when I was in New York," confesses Girish, and the marriage took place with a quiet registration ceremony at Girish's Bombay residence.

The bride unfortunately has to return to the States, to finish her term at the New York University Medical Centre. She will be coming back only next year to her new home "either in Bombay or in Bangalore," as Girish puts it. Relatives and well wishers flocked in from Dharwar, Girish's hometown, to see 'our Girish' marry his lady love. The rush of guests was so unexpected that the registration had to be postponed by a day. Everyone was pleased that he had put an end to the unconfirmed rumours, linking him with sultry dancers and young starlets.

**The Guests:** As the evening of the reception drew on, the star attractions began pouring in. Waheeda Rehman with Tina Munim in tow, caused quite a flutter, as they were among the first big names to arrive. Then of course the whole of Bombay's celebrity set was there. Shyam and Neera Benegal, looking very much at home weaving their way through the guests. A straggly-haired Sai Paranjpe who did a how wonderful-to see-you act with Sudha Om Shivpuri. All the three Puris—Om, Madan and Amrish stood in muted conversation with the Kantilal Rathods. Pratap Sharma caught up with Alyque Padamsee's news while Dr Narayanan Menon conversed with Rekha Sabnis. Satyadev Dubey slobbered over all the pretty young things, and Siddarth Kak towered above the others in his white kurta, while his wife Gita gossiped with the ladies in her mother tongue, Konkani.

Very much aware of the eyes of other guests upon them, Bindiya Goswami and Nafisa Ali, the latter discernably pregnant in her red zari sari, found something in common with each other, and stood holding hands, for the benefit of the photographers. Vinod Mehra occasionally, with an 'I-love-my-wife' expression, threw his arm around Bindiya.

Film-makers like Muzaffar Ali (*Gaman*) and Basu Chatterjee (*Man Pasand*) were on common ground, and Vijayendra chatted with a lost-looking Shekhar Kapoor, who was seen at intervals making conversation with the kids who extended their autograph books.

Karnad's lovely sisters star-gazed unabashedly while journalist Bharat Karnad, also from the family, preferred not to mingle. Conspicuous by their absence were Protima Bedi and Hema Malini though Hema's mother, Mrs Chakravorty nabbed Girish earlier in the evening and made him sit in a corner with her.

When the crowd had thinned out a bit, Girish sank gratefully into a chair and chatted with his friends, while Saraswathy, at last relieved of having to smile and do 'namaste' to every new entrant, sat with the family, who were patiently sitting in a corner most of the evening.

And so finally, Bombay's most eligible bachelor has been hooked.

—Rohini Soman