

FAR AND AWAY: TOMKAT TYING THE KNOT IN ITALY

Couple to exchange vows Nov. 18

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How do you say "TomKat" in Italian?

Grab your passport and your bilingual dictionary, because Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes are getting married next month in Italy.

The high-profile couple will exchange vows Nov. 18, with the bride wearing a dress designed by Giorgio Armani, Cruise's representative Arnold Robinson said yesterday.

One of Holmes' sisters contacted by *The Blade* confirmed that the wedding date is set but would provide no more details or comments, explaining that the family wishes to keep a low profile.

The wedding announcement ends months of speculation about when Holmes, 27, and Cruise, 44, will marry. They became engaged in June, 2005, and their daughter, Suri, was born April 18.

Sheila Cameron, a Cleveland-area native living in California who started the Web site www.freekatie.net, said there's still the question of whether Nov. 18 is for real.

"I think skepticism would be sort of the word that frames it the best. We've been waiting for this wedding for, I think, 16 months now," she said. "Even with this date confirmed now, I think we're all in a wait-and-see mode."

This would be the first marriage for Holmes, a Notre Dame Academy graduate who starred in TV's *Dawson's Creek*. Cruise was previously married to Mimi Rogers and Nicole Kidman.

Italy - Rome, specifically - is where the couple was first photographed together in April, 2005. Two months later, they were engaged when Cruise proposed at the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

For many people, theirs is a relationship that never seems to get old.

Mrs. Cameron's Web site, which features message boards and 28 TomKat-related designs for T-shirts and other items, still averages between 50,000 and 80,000 unique visitors a month, she said.

"It's still an interesting story because you're still not quite sure what this guy is gonna do next," said Robert Thompson, director of the Bleier Center for Television and Popular Culture at Syracuse University.

First there was the couch-jumping incident on Oprah. Then the war of words with actress Brooke Shields over her use of anti-depressants to treat postpartum depression. Then the pregnancy and more recently, a Suri-palooza of publicity when pictures of the baby were released in *Vanity Fair*.

There remains the questions of how Cruise's career will be affected by all of this and how the marriage will go, but the hubbub can't go on forever, Mr. Thompson said.

"It won't be too long that questions about Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes will be answers to really difficult trivia questions," he said.

For those locals who don't score an invitation to the Italian mega-wedding, don't worry. There will be something



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else to keep you busy on Nov. 18: the Ohio State-Michigan football game.

Given the possibility that both teams could be undefeated, it might be a story that's actually bigger than a Holmes-Cruise wedding, especially for locals who can watch it on TV.

"Short of the fact that one of the two participants has an Ohio connection, [the wedding] is hardly a great moment in Buckeye history," Mr. Thompson said. "Whereas the football game is."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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